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## Elevating Inclusion: Understanding the Employee Experience of Latinx Immigrants in the Technology Industry

Angelica Coronel

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Elevating Inclusion: Understanding the Employee Experience of  
Latinx Immigrants in the Technology Industry

by

Angelica Coronel

A Dissertation Presented to the  
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences of Nova Southeastern University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation was submitted by Angelica Coronel under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Halmos College of Arts and Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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## Dedication

In deepest gratitude and profound love, I dedicate this dissertation to my remarkable parents, Eduardo, and Dalia. Their unwavering support, sacrifices, and boundless love have been the guiding lights throughout my life.

To my loving husband, Moises, whose artistic spirit has not only colored our lives but has also been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. Our years together have been a journey of growth, resilience, and shared dreams.

This work is a testament to the love and strength I have been blessed with from my incredible family.

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## Abstract

In a time characterized by an increasingly diverse U.S. labor force, immigrants have emerged as a vital yet often overlooked segment. As the workforce landscape evolves and employers seek to expand their Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) initiatives, understanding the unique challenges and perspectives of immigrant employees becomes crucial for fostering equity and inclusion in the workplace. The existing literature reveals a significant gap on workplace experiences of immigrant employees, particularly Latinx immigrants employed in the technology industry. Grounded in social identity theory, systems theory, and equity theory, this study adopts a phenomenological approach to understand how Latinx immigrant employees perceive and navigate the impacts of DIB efforts in the workplace, their encounters with conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts, and the meaning of these experiences for them. Fifteen Latinx professionals participated in this qualitative research, providing rich insights into their lived experiences through semi-structured interviews. Study findings reveal that Latinx professionals perceive a need to further develop workplace practices that prioritize conflict resolution guidance, cultural competency, career development support, and inclusive human resources practices. These findings not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience but also offer insights for organizations navigating the complexities of initiating and maintaining DIB efforts in the workplace.

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Today's workforce is undeniably characterized by its increasing diversity. In 2020, nearly half (47.5%) of the foreign-born labor force employed in the United States was Hispanic or Latinx. By age, the proportion of the foreign-born labor force made up of 25- to 54-year-olds (71.8%) was higher than for the native-born labor force (62.2%) while by gender, foreign-born men continued to participate in the labor force at a higher rate (76.6%) than their native-born counterparts (65.9%) and foreign-born women participated at a slightly lower percentage (53.2%) than native-born women (56.8%) (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021). The active participation of Latinx immigrants in the U.S workforce supports the notion that gaining insights into the employee experience of this demographic can help organizations elevate their DIB strategies and foster genuinely inclusive work environments.

Unfortunately, immigrants have often been neglected by organizational scholars (Valenzuela et al., 2020) and management research has failed to prioritize the study of immigrants' experiences in the workplace (Harrison et al., 2019). This qualitative research seeks to fill this significant gap in the existing literature by delving into the lived experiences of immigrant professionals. The purpose of this study is to expand the understanding of the employee experience of Latinx immigrants employed in the technology industry, particularly in relation to workplace conflict and the impacts of DIB initiatives in the workplace. The results of this study aim to provide insights that can support technology companies increase awareness of potential conflicts that may arise when adopting inclusive work policies and practices. Moreover, the findings aim to inform the development of future DIB strategies concentrated on enhancing both inclusivity and proficiency in conflict resolution within the workplace. Additionally, the

study seeks to broaden the understanding of the perspectives held by Latinx immigrant employees regarding these matters.

This chapter delves into the background of the research topic, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the central research questions, chosen methodology, key terms and definitions integral to the study, and the significance of the study within academic and professional contexts.

### **Background**

While immigrants contribute to various industries across the United States, recent data from the New American Economy & Envoy Global (2021) indicated that seven of the ten fastest-growing jobs for immigrant workers participating in the H-1B visa program are computer-related and the demand for computer-related occupations in the U.S is growing and outpacing supply. Also, the United States Department of Labor (2021), reported that immigrants made up 25% of the computer workforce in 2019 compared with 17.4% of the broader labor force. The active participation of immigrants in the technology sector stresses the significance of their labor for ongoing growth and innovation. As technology companies wrestle with a growing need for professionals with computer-related skills, employers' ability to attract, retain, and integrate immigrant workers becomes a critical factor in enhancing organizational effectiveness. (New American Economy & Envoy Global, 2021). Despite their recognized significance in today's economy, skilled immigrants are characterized as an understudied group of employees (Zikic, 2015). Bell et al. (2010) have branded immigrants as the invisible men and women in diversity research and have made a call together with other researchers including Binggeli et al. (2013) and Harrison et al. (2019) to further investigate the employee experience of immigrants from multiple dimensions. Neglecting a deeper understanding of the employee experience of

immigrants has the potential to hinder companies' effectiveness in recruiting and retaining immigrant talent, ultimately affecting the development of genuinely inclusive and diverse work environments.

Even though efforts have been made to improve the experience of employees who belong to certain social categories including immigrants, many employers are seeking to increase inclusion by relabeling long-established diversity management practices which have not been successful (Shore et al., 2018). Instead, when seeking to foster an inclusive work environment, it is recommended employers emphasize and embody a solid leadership commitment to inclusion efforts through tangible strategies and demonstrable actions (Shore et al., 2018). If leaders decide to take none to small action, organizations might experience what Foster and Kaplan (2001) called a "cultural lock-in". Cultural lock-in is defined as "the gradual stiffening of the invisible architecture of the corporation" that results in "the ossification of its decision-making abilities, control systems, and mental models" (Foster & Kaplan, 2001). This construct of "cultural lock-in" is a suitable frame to consider why organizations have been slow to diversify, particularly at senior levels. In other words, those organizations that refrain from enhancing DIB standards and embracing immigrant participation in the workforce are choosing to stay behind in responding to the diversity element currently impacting the U.S. workforce.

Embracing diversity in a work group can be a complex journey for employers. Research has shown that diversity in teams may indicate the potential for difficult interactions among team members and may foster a negative team affect (Hentschel et al., 2013). Destructive reactions or conflicts associated to team diversity can manifest in a variety of ways. For example, the presence of an immigrant colleague who benefits from working in the destination country might evoke feelings of inequity among native employees (Harrison et al., 2019). If an immigrant is

perceived as competing for a limited organizational resource such as promotion, they can be viewed as a value threat (Harrison et al., 2019). Moreover, a diverse workforce may experience lower employee satisfaction, increased turnover (Jackson et al., 1991) and intercultural conflict (Grimes & Richard, 2003). These negative effects are considered to be influenced by the structural effectiveness of DIB efforts. As such, the correlation between workforce diversity and the implementation of DIB efforts is perceived to be influenced by a variety of factors (Pasztor, 2016).

Although diversity can be considered a source of conflict in work teams, diversity can also be seen as an opportunity for learning and increased innovation (Hays-Thomas, 2015). The quality of relationships and interactions is likely to be more positive when individuals believe that others are interested in and have taken the time to learn about their backgrounds. Opportunities for learning and socialization among colleagues can result in the development of perceived deep-level similarity which Harrison et al. (2002) defined as the subjective comparison of an individual's attributes to other coworkers in terms of attitudes, perspectives, and values. Immigrants who perceive a deep level of similarity are more inclined to build high-quality relationships with their colleagues (Valenzuela et al., 2020). Moreover, in many cases, enhanced cultural and historical knowledge often leads to more effective interactions and better outcomes in diverse workplaces (Hays-Thomas, 2015). Mutual learning cultivates a work environment where group members can confront and challenge stereotypes and biases, whether conscious or unconscious that they may hold about their colleagues.

As multicultural organizations continue to evolve, fostering a work culture that values diversity and inclusion requires a commitment to exploring the experiences of immigrant employees. The lack of attention to the immigrant workforce, particularly Latinx immigrants in



the technology sector, not only limits the depth of understanding of this demographic and their perspectives, but also hinders organizations from developing strategies that can help to enhance inclusion and conflict resolution practices among a diverse workforce.

### **Problem Statement, Purpose of Study, and Research Questions**

A variety of factors including increased globalization, technological advancements, and expanding markets have incremented the need to understand and proficiently manage diverse workforces (Hays-Thomas, 2004). Managing and valuing diversity can be viewed as a strategic move towards enhancing workplace productivity and resource maximization (Ewoh, 2013). However, this strategic move also represents a challenge for organizations when trying to manage social interactions and relational dynamics among a diverse workforce (Guo & Al Ariss, 2015), particularly in industries heavily reliant on immigrant talent (Zikic, 2015). According to the United States Department of Labor (2021), the United States relies on foreign-born talent to fill computer-related jobs, reflecting a need to learn how to recruit and retain immigrant talent. Despite this, the scarcity of research focused on understanding the workplace experiences of Latinx immigrants in the technology industry remains prevalent. This lack of knowledge can be considered an obstacle for organizations looking to implement effective recruitment and retention strategies targeting immigrant talent, which is crucial for maintaining competitiveness (Forde & MacKenzie, 2009).

From a relational perspective, cross-cultural interactions at the workplace, particularly with immigrant employees, can pose challenges that may lead to cultural misunderstandings, which can ultimately impact the workplace environment and the well-being of employees (Malik et al., 2014). Understanding the nuances of cultural differences is crucial for effective collaboration within organizations. Gaining insights into the direct narratives of Latinx

immigrant employees can provide a valuable foundation for addressing potential misunderstandings and conflicts. By gaining insight into their experiences, organizations can gain knowledge on how to manage cross-cultural interactions, implement conflict resolution practices, and foster a more inclusive workplace environment.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to expand the understanding of the work environment encountered by Latinx immigrants within the technology sector. Specifically, this study aims to explore the effects of DIB efforts on the workplace experiences of Latinx immigrants, their encounters with conflicts related to the implementation of DIB efforts, and the significance of these experiences in shaping their overall work experience. The two main research questions for this study are the following:

- RQ1: How are conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts experienced by Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry?
- RQ2: What impact, if any, do DIB efforts have on the meaning of an inclusive work environment for Latinx immigrants?

### **Methodology**

This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing phenomenology as the chosen methodology, specifically existential phenomenology. The choice of existential phenomenology is driven by the aim to offer an in-depth portrayal of participants' work experiences and to explore the underlying meanings attached to those experiences from their unique perspectives. By employing this methodology, the research seeks to delve beyond surface-level observations and instead focuses on capturing the essence of the participants' lived experiences within the context of their workplace environments. Through existential phenomenology, the study aims to uncover the subjective interpretations that shape the way individuals perceive and navigate their

professional realities within the workplace. A comprehensive and detailed description of the methodology is presented in Chapter 3.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB):** Diversity means proportionate representation across all dimensions of human difference. Inclusion means that everyone is included, visible, heard and considered. Belonging means that everyone is treated and feels like a full member of the larger community and can thrive (Harvard University Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, 2020).

**Immigrants:** individuals who were born in a country other than the United States, who currently reside in the United States, and neither parent was a United States citizen. This includes legally admitted immigrants, refugees, temporary residents such as students and temporary workers, and undocumented immigrants. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021).

**Latinx:** gender neutral word for people of Latin American descent including indigenous, Brazilian, and other non-Spanish speaking individuals (Vidal-Ortiz & Martinez, 2018).

**Professionals:** members of the professions whose jobs require at least a baccalaureate degree from a U.S. university or college or its foreign equivalent degree (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study holds the potential to offer meaningful implications for the broader understanding of conflict within diverse workplaces, especially those employing Latinx immigrants. By shedding light on the dynamics of workplace conflicts, it has the potential to contribute valuable insights that could assist in effectively addressing and managing conflicts among a diverse workforce. Moreover, study findings could have practical applications for

conflict resolution practitioners, providing them a resource to enhance their awareness of potential conflicts that may arise from the implementation of inclusive workplace policies.

By delving deeper into the employee experience of skilled immigrants, this study has the potential to fill a gap in the existing literature. The current body of research often overlooks the workplace experiences of immigrants in the technology industry, even though immigrant talent is vital for the sustained growth of this field. The exploration of sentiments and perceptions among Latinx immigrants regarding their work environment and their ideas about an inclusive workplace has the potential to add a unique layer to current understanding of organizational dynamics.

Lastly, beyond academic circles, this research holds the potential to provide practical guidance to organizations and management researchers on how to shape DIB efforts for the inclusion of Latinx employees. Additionally, technology companies aiming to launch or enhance DIB efforts can leverage these findings to tailor their initiatives to the specific needs of Latinx professionals. In sum, this study has the potential to go beyond the academic realm and offer practical guidance for fostering more inclusive and harmonious workplaces.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the groundwork for the study was laid through an introductory exploration. This chapter delineated the contextual backdrop of the study, followed by a description of the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the two central research questions. Additionally, the methodology employed in the study was introduced, shedding light on the approach taken to investigate the research questions. Furthermore, key terms relevant to the study were defined to ensure clarity and offer a reference for terminology used throughout the study. The significance of the study was described to emphasize its potential impact in the

academic and professional realms. Chapter 2 will delve into the literature and the theoretical framework, providing a comprehensive understanding of existing scholarship and theoretical foundations relevant to the study approach and research questions. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, data collection and data analysis processes, study delimitations, validity and reliability strategies, and ethical considerations. In Chapter 4, the research setting, participant recruitment, data collection, analysis results, study trustworthiness, and research findings are discussed. Lastly, Chapter 5 describes the interpretations of findings, addresses study limitations, discusses implications and contributions to the field, offers recommendations for future studies, and summarizes study conclusions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### **Literature Review**

Immigrants play a pivotal role in the U.S. economy by enhancing the nation's productive capacity, and fostering innovation (Anderson, 2006). However, despite their significant contributions, previous research has demonstrated there is a notable gap in understanding the employee experience of Latinx professional immigrants working in the United States. Immigrant literature highlights that a successful integration of immigrants in the workforce remains a challenge for many organizations (Stebleton & Eggerth, 2012). This literature review section is focused on examining dynamics related to building inclusive workplace cultures, exploring factors influencing the career development of immigrants, reviewing the cultural adaptation and integration process of immigrants into the workforce, and exploring conflicts among diverse workforces.

### **Building Inclusive Workplace Cultures**

In response to the evolving dynamics of the workforce, employers are increasingly recognizing the importance of cultivating a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion; nevertheless, this is not an easy task. Ewoh (2013) argued that every diversity initiative must become integrated into the organizations' overall operating plans and strategies. This approach also involves the introduction of awareness and training strategies that can support changes in the behaviors and attitudes of employees committed to the diversity initiative (Ewoh, 2013). As with any other initiative, spreading the vision of the proposed action and influencing others to believe in it, is an essential step for organizations to follow when seeking to enhance DIB efforts. Influencing a team to value diversity primarily involves a shift in beliefs and attitudes away from the notion that "we are all alike" to the notion that "we are each unique and that is the source of

our greatness” (Ewong, 2013). Group boundaries must be conceptualized at a high inclusive level where members understand they can retain their individuality and recognize that they are part of a larger whole (Hays-Thomas, 2015). Previous research by McMillan-Capehart (2005) affirmed this notion by suggesting for employers to implement individualistic socialization practices to encourage individuals to accept their differences while supporting a collectivistic organizational culture. This inclusive approach has the potential to foster interpersonal relationships and cooperation without tempting individuals to question if there is a spot for them in the group. Additionally, this approach aligns with the collectivistic mindset particularly prominent in Asian, Black, and Hispanic individuals (Cox et al., 1991).

Furthermore, Shore et al. (2011) argued that recognizing and accepting a member’s uniqueness provides the group with opportunities to improve group performance. This notion is illustrated by Shore et al. (2011) in their proposed framework of inclusion. This framework explains that once members learn about the unique skills and/or knowledge a member can bring to the group and welcome this information, the group will enhance this member’s feeling of inclusion while at the same time benefit through improved performance. Groups that decide to follow an integration-and-learning perspective exhibit high-quality analyses, increase their ability to facilitate effective cross-organizational collaboration, and allow members within the group to enhance their skills (Shore et al., 2011). On the other hand, when groups fail to value and welcome the uniqueness of their members, they might adopt an exclusionist angle and provoke harmful cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and health consequences (Shore et al., 2011). A change to the structure, standards, or activities of an organization looking to enhance diversity can definitely create major alterations in the life of employees. It is important to note that

structures strongly influence the way groups relate to one another and define their values and goals (Cheldin et al., 2003).

Another important aspect that can influence the effective implementation of diversity and inclusion standards is the leader's perspective on the process. Leaders who hold negative views on diversity and inclusion may create divisions, induce perceptions of identity threat among team members, and create a negative impact on the functions of the team (Schölmerich et al., 2016). If leaders are not aware of their diversity and inclusion beliefs before starting to implement inclusive standards, they would most likely "pass on" their beliefs to team members without realizing it. These beliefs could be based on a variety of different thoughts including stereotypes, expectations, or prior experiences (Schölmerich et al., 2016). Schölmerich et al. (2016) affirmed that categorization tendencies make leaders prone to view their teams' diversity in terms of subgroups rather than individual differences, and strong categorization tendencies have the power of increasing intergroup bias because they encourage leaders to treat team members in terms of subgroups. Greer et al. (2012) agreed with this notion by stating that leaders with a categorization tendency will use similarities and differences between team members as a basis for categorizing them into smaller subgroups and this is what helps them to "make sense" of their team. For example, leaders working in an ethnically diverse environment will tend to see their members in terms of the ethnic group they belong to instead of as an individual (Greer et al., 2012). Additionally, leaders who follow a categorization tendency during a conflict have greater chances to take the side of one of the subgroups involved in the conflict and treat each subgroup differently (Schölmerich et al., 2016). On the other hand, when leaders hold positive diversity and inclusion beliefs, they are more likely to respond positively to perceived diversity and their team performance level may be unaffected, or may even be improved (Hentschel et al., 2013).



Hays-Thomas (2015) affirmed that even the best informed and most well-intentioned leaders can find themselves challenged by interactions in racio-ethnically diverse environments. Previous studies have shown that racio-ethnically and cultural diversity can lead to increasing misunderstanding, conflict, and stress (Ensari, 2001; Hays-Thomas, 2015); nonetheless, these challenges can also be transformed into opportunities to engage in high-quality decision-making processes, enhance creativity, improve innovation (Garcia et al., 2003).

Fostering an inclusive workplace culture must have a realistic sustainability plan. The enhancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in an organization needs to be recognized as a constant and ongoing process. Adhering to inclusive workplace standards is not a linear process with a definite number of steps. Instead, is a dynamic process invested in the daily activities of an organization; therefore, the sustainability of DIB efforts needs to be considered in permanent terms. Di Fabio (2017) affirmed that projects are more sustainable if they are characterized by coherence, direction, significance, and belonging. The psychology of sustainability and sustainable development highlights the need to achieve sustainable well-being from a prevention point of view. This includes creating organizational development and well-being through the promotion of relationships and positive narratives. Maintaining awareness of the importance of relationships and of constructing positive narratives is vital to mobilizing energy and coping with challenges. (Di Fabio, 2017). In essence, nurturing inclusive work environments can be viewed as a movement away from mere legalistic approaches and compliance, transitioning towards a methodology aimed at maximizing organizational resources and productivity (Ewoh, 2013). Within this movement, organizations are considered to have greater chances to augment their diversity, equity, and inclusion competency on a systematic scale, thereby extending their capacity to cultivate more equitable workplaces.

## **Navigating the Career Development of Immigrants**

Career development for immigrants in the workforce is a multifaceted journey shaped by a myriad of factors, including organizational dynamics, social networks, and systemic structures. As explored in the literature, immigrants encounter unique challenges as they navigate their professional paths within various industries and organizational settings. In terms of upward mobility, Smith (2005) noted that Latinx employees often need to accumulate more years with their current employers to access the promotion opportunities available to White men. Also, Ortlieb and Sieben (2014) conducted research indicating that immigrants holding university degrees often find themselves hired for entry-level positions with no clear trajectory for training opportunities that could facilitate upward mobility within an organization. While Ortlieb and Sieben's (2014) study focused on a German subsidiary of a U.S. trading corporation, it prompts consideration of whether comparable trends exist among immigrants employed in the technology company in the United States.

Regarding employment prospects, Rochin and Mello (2007) emphasized the robustness of the economy in terms of national employment in science and engineering. This presents significant opportunities for Latinx talent seeking to secure roles in growing fields like science, engineering, and technology. However, Rochin and Mello (2007) also highlighted the need for increased awareness of career development opportunities within the Latinx community. In terms of career outcomes, Waldinger et al. (1998) completed a study comparing the career trajectories of native-born and immigrant male graduate engineers in the U.S. The results highlighted a glass ceiling effect experienced by immigrants, with their native counterparts surpassing them not only in securing higher roles but also in earning higher wages. Additionally, earnings tended to decline for immigrant professionals in the later stages of their careers. Factors influencing the

career paths of immigrants are multifaceted. Syed (2008) emphasized the direct impact of organizational factors on the career trajectories of skilled immigrants. However, despite the significance of these factors, Syed (2008) affirmed that many organizations have yet to develop and implement effective approaches for managing diverse workforces including immigrant employees.

In regard to career challenges, immigrant women face unique obstacles in the workplace, including glass ceiling and discrimination. Research by Wilińska and Aygören (2013) illustrated how these challenges have prompted immigrant women to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. Their findings shed light on the discrepancy between the romanticized perception of entrepreneurship and the harsh realities faced by immigrant women, highlighting that entrepreneurship is often a necessity for making a living rather than a voluntary choice. Immigrant women involved in this study expressed that establishing their own businesses represented liberation from structural discrimination. They did not want to conform to a reality where their career advancement was hindered by systematic barriers. Instead, they sought autonomy and control over their professional growth.

In considering career success, it is crucial to recognize the significance of informal social networks. Ibarra (1995) studied the networks of both White and minority middle managers to illuminate the dynamics between race, career outcomes, and network interactions. The research revealed that minority managers tend to have less intimate network relationships and more racially diverse networks compared to their White counterparts. However, among minority managers identified as high-potential individuals, their networks showed connections with individuals from various racial backgrounds, with ties to white individuals being predominant. This perspective, framed within a systems approach, underscores the structural constraints

influencing network patterns and highlights the multifaceted factors shaping the career trajectories of middle managers. While the study did not specifically contrast the experiences of White and immigrant employees, it presents a compelling trend worthy of further exploration.

In sum, the career development of immigrants is influenced by a variety of factors. The studies described in this section highlight the complexities of upward mobility, workplace discrimination, the effects of glass ceiling, and the importance of informal social networks in navigating career trajectories. These insights underscore the need for proactive efforts to address systemic barriers and promote inclusive workplace cultures that value diversity and provide equitable access to advancement opportunities. Moving forward, fostering greater awareness, and implementing effective diversity and inclusion management strategies are essential steps in ensuring that immigrant professionals can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the organizations they serve. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs and experiences of immigrant talent, organizations can cultivate environments where all employees, regardless of background, can reach their full potential.

### **Cultural Adaptation and Integration of Immigrants**

Investigating the cultural adaptation and integration processes of immigrants unfolds a panorama of insights in varied societal contexts. Despite the limited research devoted to studying the cultural values of immigrants and their integration process (Taras et al., 2013), some researchers have explored how immigrants navigate their integration journeys. Research by Taras et al. (2013) was among the first ones to explore patterns of immigrant acculturation, the relationship between acculturation of visual and implicit cultural values, and predictors and moderators of the acculturation process. As part of their findings, researchers explained that visible value acculturation should not be interpreted as an indicator of change in the cultural

values of immigrants, instead researchers encouraged future questionnaire or interview-based research to assess changes in cultural values and provide compelling arguments on the importance of this research. Additionally, researchers stated that interaction with locals can accelerate the acculturation process while the lack of interaction with locals can reverse it with the potential of feeding the development of ethnic segregation.

Moreover, their study also revealed that value acculturation is slow and close to being insignificant in the first 10 years, suggesting that culturally sensitive practices are necessary for immigrant employees, regardless of their length of stay in the host country. Interestingly, Taras et al. (2013) also found that the size of the immigrant group in a specific location negatively moderates the process of acculturation, meaning that immigrants from overrepresented countries tend to acculturate slower, while immigrants from underrepresented countries are likely to learn and internalize the local culture faster.

Cerdin et al. (2014) examined the connection between immigrants' desire to migrate and their aspiration to integrate into the host country and in the workplace. Based on the findings, researchers developed a theory of motivation to integration, proposing that immigrants' inclination to integrate represents a function of how immigrants frame their experience prior to migration. In terms of gains and losses, when immigrants perceive the benefits of relocating to the host country to outweigh the losses incurred in their home country, they are more inclined to invest efforts in assimilation and reaching success in the new environment. The motivation to integrate represents the extent to which immigrants are willing to make efforts to participate and become functional in the host country (Kim, 2001). Notably, immigrants' motivation to integrate tends to rise when they are positively surprised by what they encounter in the host country, and likely to diminish when confronted with negative experiences (Cerdin et al., 2014).

Additionally, Cerdin et al. (2014) also found that immigrants' motivation to integrate is also impacted by organizational integrational policies, meaning that immigrants who feel supported by their employers are more likely to exhibit higher levels of motivation to integrate compared to those who experience a lack of support and feel alone within their organizations. When analyzing the theory proposed by Cerdin et al. (2014) from an organizational perspective, it can be concluded that managers could benefit from learning about the pre-migration experiences of immigrant employees to gain greater insight on their motivation to integrate in the workplace. While this research was conducted in France, it would be intriguing to investigate whether similar results emerge when studying immigrants in the United States.

Research conducted by Waters and Jimenez (2005) delved into the assimilation patterns of immigrant groups across four different dimensions: socioeconomic status, spatial concentration, language assimilation, and intermarriage. As part of their findings, researchers concluded there is a prevalent trend of immigrants largely assimilating into the American society across these dimensions. However, in presenting their results, researchers recognized there are two significant factors shaping the assimilation process of immigrants. One factor is the geographical dispersion of immigrants to nontraditional receiving areas, such as the Midwest, and the second factor is the continuous influx of immigrants through ongoing immigration channels. Waters and Jimenez (2005) emphasized the potential ramifications of these factors on the assimilation process of immigrants, urging researchers to incorporate these evolving dynamics into future investigations to deepen the understanding of immigrants' assimilation experiences.

In conclusion, the exploration of cultural adaptation and integration processes among immigrants reveals a multifaceted landscape influenced by diverse factors such as pre-migration

experiences, language assimilation, organizational support, and social interactions. As highlighted by the studies reviewed above, the assimilation journey is dynamic, shaped by geographical dispersal, ongoing immigration, and the intricate interplay of gains and losses perceived by immigrants.

### **Conflict Among Diverse Workforces**

Another often unspoken but underlying assumption about diversity speaks to the notion that diversity breeds conflict, which can impede work performance and reduce productivity (Swanson, 2002). As defined by Katz et al. (2011), conflict is an expressed struggle in which two or more interdependent parties are experiencing strong emotion resulting from a perceived difference in needs and values. In other words, conflict is an outgrowth of the diversity that characterizes our thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and our social systems and structures (Wallach, 2004). Ely and Thomas (2001) argued that when a work group perceives workforce diversity as a valuable resource for learning, employees have the opportunity to experience and engage in constructive intergroup conflict. On the other hand, if a work group views workforce diversity as making minimal or negative contributions to the work experience, conflicts are either resolved through power or suppressed. While the research by Ely and Thomas (2001) did not specifically target immigrant employees, it sheds light on potential dynamics within diverse workgroups.

Moreover, another powerful aspect of conflicts in diverse teams is the notion expressed by Block and Noumair (2017) who affirmed that emotions in diverse teams are not meant to be considered dysfunctional interruptions that should be managed, instead they argued that emotions should be seen as highly functional relevance detection mechanisms. Just like conflicts, emotions have the potential of creating both functional and dysfunctional behavioral

consequences for teams; hence, it is important for leaders to recognize that living with emotion, especially anxiety and discomfort, and accepting that emotional resistance goes with the territory of managing diverse teams (Block & Noumair, 2017).

In relation to addressing negative and challenging workplace experiences, Dietz et al. (2014) found that skilled immigrants are more likely to experience higher levels of employment discrimination than their local counterparts. As a response to this, Enoksen (2016) stated that providing opportunities for employees to gain awareness of discriminatory behaviors and promote the integration of immigrants in the workplace is an important step to create an inclusive work environments; however, Enoksen (2016) also argued that further research is needed to better develop interventions that can support a successful integration of immigrants into the workplace (Harrison et al., 2019). Nkomo (2014) supported this notion by emphasizing that organizations need to be structured for the inclusion of a diverse workforce, instead of adhering to structures that only secure the inclusion of the dominant group. Nkomo (2014) defended this argument by stating that organizations need to develop interventions and practices that combat discrimination, seek to implement more creative and innovative ways to embrace a diverse workforce, and address the historical dominance of some groups that have marginalized others in the workplace. Nonetheless, it is important to note that previous quantitative research on employment discrimination has been questioned due to issues related to linguistic and conceptual equivalency, measurement problems, and difficulties with the survey process (Binggeli et al., 2013); hence, Binggeli et al. (2013) argued there is a need to conduct qualitative or mixed methods research to obtain more accurate and relevant data on employment discrimination against immigrants.



In regard to intercultural work disputes, Chan and Goto (2003) affirmed that culturally based perceptions could affect how employees choose to resolve conflicts in the workplace. A potential solution that may support effective conflict resolution could be to encourage employees to enhance their awareness of their own biases (Chan & Goto, 2003). Previous research has also supported this recommendation by affirming that person perception (i.e. how an individual perceives the other on dimensions like agreeableness) has significant effects on how one resolves a conflict (Chan & Goto, 2003).

In summary, the exploration of conflict among diverse workforces reveals a complex interplay of factors that shape organizational dynamics and employee experiences. Diversity in the workplace is celebrated for its potential to enrich organizational culture and drive innovation. However, with diversity comes complexity, and one of the challenges that organizations face is managing the conflicts that can arise among diverse workforces. Seeing conflict as a potential catalyst for growth can lead companies to take full advantage of the transformational power of conflict. Usually, when conflict is managed effectively, people are stimulated to creativity, alternatives are considered, better ideas come fourth, and a better course of actions results (Gordon, 2003). Establishing an organizational culture open to conflicts, where conflict is presented as an alternative way of collaborating, may result in a higher level of understanding, communication, and collaboration (Andersen, 2006).

### **Theoretical Foundations**

This section provides a theoretical framework for analyzing workplace conflict and understanding the perspectives of Latinx immigrant talent regarding DIB initiatives. In this section, three theories were selected to illustrate the dynamics at play within diverse workplaces. Through the lens of social identity theory, systems theory, and equity theory, challenges, and

opportunities inherent in fostering inclusive work environments have been identified to better comprehend conflicts within organizations, and the factors influencing the experiences of Latinx immigrant professionals.

### **Social Identity Theory**

This theory focuses on the notion that the social groups to which one falls and feels a sense of belongingness to, (e.g., political party, race, nationality) offer a definition to one's self based on the defining characteristics of the social group (Hogg et al., 1995). Each group membership can be considered to be represented in an individual's mind as a social identity that describes and prescribes attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors aligned with the characteristics of the group (Hogg et al., 1995). Since individuals can consider themselves members of multiple groups, they assume multiple social identities (Pasztor, 2016); however, a specific social identity becomes salient on individuals depending on the given context (Hogg et al., 1995).

Hogg et al. (1995) stated that the concept of social identity can be explained by two processes known as categorization and self-enhancement. The former one refers to the tendency of individuals to categorize others based on the similarities and differences they hold with self as members of the same group or a different group (Hogg et al., 1995). In other words, individuals categorize others as in-group members or out-group members. It is important to note this process of categorization highlights the similarities of members of one's in-group and magnifies the differences between one and members of out-groups, consequently, promoting stereotypes of out-group members while supporting a perception of equality among in-group members (Hogg et al., 1995). In regard to self-enhancement, Tajfel (1982) affirmed that social comparisons made by an individual focusing on the in-group could provide a foundation for the development of a

positive self-image. As Hogg et al. (1995) explained, the process of self-enhancement occurs when individuals make comparisons between in-group and out-group members in ways that favor the in-group, meaning individuals demonstrate in-group favoritism as a way to maintain a positive self-image. In sum, the social identity theory approach emphasizes that groups serve as more than just passive environments for individual behavior, instead individuals are considered to be the product of group-life and its distinct psychological and social realities (Tear & Reader, 2023).

Considering this study will only recruit participants who identify as Latinx immigrant individuals, the social identity theory was chosen as a theoretical foundation since it offers an understanding of the connection between social structures and individual identity through the meanings that people attribute to their participation in identity groups (Mor Barak, 2008). Moreover, another important aspect of social identity theory that is relevant to the conversation on DIB efforts in the workplace is the concept of social categorization and its connection to intergroup discrimination. Research has shown that people tend to discriminate against members of out-groups simply because they belonged to a different group (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994), hence natives classifying immigrants as part of the out-group can contribute to expression of discriminative behaviors in the workplace. Additionally, it is important to consider that the way individuals perceive their social reality is influenced by their group membership; therefore, perceptions of organizational initiatives and policies are influenced by group identity.

### **Systems Theory**

Systems theory provides a lens to understand and interpret all types of systems present in a variety of contexts. As described by Meadows (2008), a system is a dynamic set of interconnected elements working coherently in a way that produces a pattern of behavior over

time. The foundation for systems theory is based on the notion that things are interconnected and events are influenced by changing circumstances. When developing a framework for general systems theory, Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy envisioned this framework would function as a guide for the study of processes of organization while providing insight on how things work together, offering an opportunity to explore how the parts of a system harmonize or instead fail to maintain a balance (Schellenberg, 1996).

Feedback is considered an essential element in systems dynamics because it represents information about the performance of a system. This information is in constant flow and helps the system to seek equilibrium within itself, a process also known as homeostasis. The concept of feedback loop is vital to understanding the principles of systems theory because the information carried within this loop produces an impact on the behavior of a system (Meadows, 2008). There are two different kinds of feedback loops, known as balancing feedback loops and reinforcing feedback loops. As the name suggests, the balancing loop seeks to either stabilize the system or resist change by working toward a specific goal while opposing whatever direction of change is imposed on the system. Alternatively, the reinforcing feedback loop enhances whatever direction of change is imposed on the system, acting as a source of growth, explosion, or collapse in the system (Meadows, 2008).

Another important concept in systems theory is bounded rationality. This concept speaks to the idea that the logic used to make decisions or engage in certain actions within one part of the system is not considered reasonable logic for the wider system (Meadows, 2008), meaning such logic only “makes sense” for the part of the system which adopted it, and it is not reasonable within a broader context. Bounded rationality suggests there is limited information in any single place in a system and the bounded rationality of each actor in a system may or may

not lead to decisions that benefit the system as a whole (Meadows, 2008). Providing more comprehensive, detailed, and timely information to other actors of the system can be a successful strategy to tackle the negative effects of delayed or incomplete information. Applying the idea of bounded rationality to the execution of DIB strategies in the workplace could offer a basis to understand why some employees might not engage in DIB initiatives or the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Lastly, when analyzing the topic of workplace DIB initiatives from a systems perspective, it is important to highlight that creating systems that ensure justice and equity is essential for building inclusive work environments characterized by transparency, fairness, and a sense of belonging. Based on the understanding that systems are dynamic, and their parts are interdependent, one can conclude the actions of each employee present in an organization will have an effect on the rest of the employees as well as on the system itself. Friedman and Allen (2014) affirmed that workers can vary or modify the inputs of a system, including their own actions, to create a change within the system. Additionally, changes within a system and its environment can be provoked by the process of adaptation, which represents the response of a system to the demands and pressures of external forces and conditions (Friedman & Allen, 2014). When analyzing the concept of system adaptation within the workplace setting, it becomes evident that social and political contexts can have an impact on the dynamics of organizations. Furthermore, it is important to note that systems theory offers a comprehensive perspective to the development and management of workplace conflicts by examining organizational structures, interactions, and feedback loops that may play a role in conflict situations, thereby providing insights into the multifaceted nature of organizational behavior and adaptation mechanisms in response to environmental factors.

## **Equity Theory**

Psychologist John S. Adams developed his equity theory in the 1960s (Virtanen & Elovainio, 2018) and provided a framework for understanding the effects of distributive justice, where particular outcomes are judged as fair or unfair (Blakely et al., 2005). When applying equity theory to the workforce environment, Adams (1965) explains that employees make judgments about whether outcomes (i.e., salary, performance evaluations) offered by the employer are fair by considering the input (i.e., amount of effort invested, quality of performance). The judgement based on an input-outcome ratio is considered to have an effect on the employees' perception of their relationship with their work and employer (Adams, 1965).

According to Adams (1965), individuals are motivated by the idea of reaching a balance in all areas of their life and each individual defines their own balance mostly by comparing their input and outcomes with those who are in the same occupational hierarchy. (Virtanen & Elovainio, 2018). If an employee believes their input-outcome ratio is unequal compared to the ratio of another employee at the same organizational level, this particular employee will be motivated to restore equity and will engage in specific behaviors to do so (Adams, 1965). The strength of the motivation to decrease or eliminate the inequity is considered to vary depending on the perceived magnitude of the imbalance (Adams, 1965).

Furthermore, equity theory offers predictions about how individuals will behave when reacting to what they consider under-rewarded and over-rewarded situations (O'Neill & Mone, 1998). For example, if an employee considers her input-outcome ratio is unfair when comparing it to the input-outcome ratio of another employee at her same occupational hierarchy, she can experience dissatisfaction and reduce her work efforts. This scenario represents Adams' concept of motivational drive toward equity, where individuals who perceive injustice and inequity in a

situation are motivated to restore equity (Blakely et al., 2005). Overall, one can say equity theory is rooted in social comparison and offers predictions about how individuals react based on such comparisons (O'Neill & Mone, 1998).

Over the last years, the concept of equity sensitivity has triggered the reemergence of equity theory among researchers, especially in studies involving organizational justice and rewards (O'Neill & Mone, 1998). As described by O'Neill and Mone (1998), the equity sensitivity construct represents an individual difference that indicates how individuals react to situations perceived as equitable or inequitable. When applying this concept to the workforce environment, research has found that equity sensitivity positively correlates with job satisfaction and organizational commitment and negatively correlates with intent to leave (King & Miles, 1994), suggesting that individuals' perceptions of fairness play a crucial role in shaping their overall satisfaction and commitment within the organizational.

Considering this research will study the impact of DIB efforts on the employee experience of Latinx immigrants, interpreting the research participants' narratives through the lens of the equity sensitivity construct can assist in understanding how their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to leave is influenced by social comparisons involving work colleagues at the same organizational level. Additionally, the application of equity theory to this study can provide clarity on the perceptions of fairness among Latinx immigrant employees in relation to organizational policies and practices, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of workplace interactions. Lastly, within the context of workplace conflict, equity theory offers a framework for understanding how perceptions of unfairness can contribute to the development of interpersonal or intrapersonal conflicts. By comprehensively understanding these

dynamics, organizations can develop more effective strategies for conflict resolution and cultivate inclusive organizational cultures that prioritize fairness and equity.



### Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research design and rationale, the selected methodology, the process of participant selection, and the methods that were employed for data collection and analysis. Moreover, this chapter describes the delimitations that shaped the scope of the study, and addresses the considerations of validity, reliability, and ethical conduct, emphasizing the integrity and trustworthiness of the research study.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

The growing recognition of the importance of understanding the unique perspectives of immigrant employees has become evident in previous research findings. Recognizing the limitations of quantitative approaches, scholars have emphasized the necessity for qualitative research to provide a deeper, more nuanced exploration of the experiences and perspectives of this vital demographic. In response to this call, this study followed a qualitative research approach aiming to capture the voices of immigrant professionals. As Cooper and Finley (2014) explains, a qualitative approach allows researchers to gain insight into the meanings and understandings of a social phenomenon while providing vivid and detailed representations of lived experiences and/or events. Using this research approach opened an opportunity to employ in-depth analysis and interpretation to explore the perspectives of Latinx employees on DIBs efforts, their encounters with conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts, and the meaning of these experiences for them.

Contrary to the technical rationality used in quantitative research, the methods used in qualitative research are flexible and can evolve across the research process; therefore, researchers can reorganize and reformulate perceptions and practices as they move forward in the study (Willis, 2007). This flexibility allows the researchers to challenge their previous beliefs

and understandings as they gather information throughout the study, supporting a holistic and fluid approach to the research process. The knowledge and understanding generated by qualitative research are recognized to be created by both, the subjects, and the researchers (Cooper & Finley, 2014), hence results are not considered absolute truths, instead they represent meaningful contributions to the understanding of a social phenomenon.

When engaging in the process of conducting qualitative research, researchers are encouraged to select the methodology that is best aligned with the research objectives and research questions. There are different types of methodologies including but not limited to grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, ethnography, narrative research, and action research (Cooper & Finley, 2014). In conducting this study, the chosen research methodology is phenomenology. This selection aligns with the primary research objective, which is to provide a detailed description of the participants' experiences and delve into the underlying meanings of those experiences. Phenomenology, as a qualitative approach, is well-suited for capturing the richness and depth of participants' lived experiences, allowing for a thorough exploration and interpretation of the subjective dimensions involved.

### **Methodology**

Phenomenology is considered both a methodology and a philosophy. Introduced by Edmund Husserl during the 1900s in the field of philosophy, this concept represented a new development designed to provide a medium to come in contact with concrete living experiences (Cooper & Finley, 2014). The founding principle of phenomenology is that experience should be examined in the way it occurs from the perspective of the one who experiences it (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Leading figures in phenomenological philosophy such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre proposed ideas arguing that complex understanding of

one's experiences involves perspectives and meanings unique to the person's situated relationship to the world (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009).

Phenomenology as a research methodology is focused on exploring the lived experience of a phenomenon and the meaning that experience holds from the one who experiences it (Cooper & Finley, 2014). Due to its reflexive approach to research, phenomenology relies on the reflections of the participants and the reflections of the researcher to offer a detailed and comprehensive description of an experience (Cooper & Finley, 2014). Also, the detailed examination of an experience, offers the researcher with an opportunity to identify similarities and differences across participants' experiences and recognize patterns of meaning for participants reflecting upon a shared experience (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009).

Moreover, the focus on developing in-depth descriptions of an experience for the purpose of generating better understanding can also help to bring greater awareness on what it is like to have a particular experience and what those experiences can mean for those individuals who have them (Cooper & Finley, 2014). Given that the central aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Latinx immigrants in relation to DIB efforts in their workplace, phenomenology was chosen as the research methodology.

Cooper and Finley (2014) describe three main approaches to phenomenology known as transcendental phenomenology, existential phenomenology, and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The first one, transcendental phenomenology, is focused on how a particular experience is understood through its meanings and essential insights. The second model, existential phenomenology, focuses on the human experiences in everyday life and views experience as a relationship between people and their world. Lastly, the third model known as IPA, places a stronger focus on individual experience and focuses on experiences perceived as

having a major impact on the individual. Even though there are differences among the three approaches, they all share a common focus on exploring how experiences are perceived and aim to create rich descriptions of participants' experiences.

Considering the focus of this qualitative study is to generate greater understanding on the impact of DIB efforts by exploring everyday workplace experiences, this research followed the existential phenomenology model. As described by Pollio et al. (1997), the existential phenomenology model involves the five stages described below:

1. The researcher selects the research topic and completes a bracketing interview or writes a personal statement on the research topic.
2. The researcher selects a sample and conducts phenomenological interviews.
3. The content of the interviews is transcribed and analyzed by the researcher.
4. The researcher shares analysis results with the participants as a way of strengthening the validity of the research findings.
5. The researcher prepares the final report of the research findings to present to the audience.

Additionally, the existential phenomenology model also employs the concept of the hermeneutic circle, which represents the notion that the researcher must consider the text gathered in relation to earlier or later portions of the text within the same transcript, and in relation to the text of other transcripts. In essence, the hermeneutic circle provides a useful way of thinking about the qualitative analysis as an iterative process that moves back and forth through a range of different ways of thinking about the data, rather than a strict linear analysis process (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009).

In sum, the application of a phenomenological approach to conduct this study facilitated the exploration of the effects of DIB efforts on Latinx immigrant employees, revealing the significance of these experiences through their perspective. This in-depth comprehension of the employee experience of immigrants within the technology field can potentially assist in informing future research or policy initiatives concentrated on the empowerment of inclusive work environments.

### **Participant Selection**

The United States Department of Labor (2021) reported that nearly half (47.5 percent) of the foreign-born labor force was Hispanic or Latinx in 2020 and a total of 8.2% employed foreign-born workers held engineering, computer, mathematical, and architecture occupations. By region, the foreign-born employees made up a larger share of the labor force in the West (22.4%) and in the Northeast of the US (20.7%) in 2020 than for the nation as a whole (17%). On the other hand, the foreign born made up a smaller share of the labor force than for the nation as a whole in the South (16.3%) and the Midwest (9.2%). For the purpose of this study, immigrants are defined as individuals who were born in a country other than the United States, who currently reside in the United States, and of who neither parent was a United States citizen. The target population is comprised of Latinx immigrants aged 18 years old and above, holding bachelor's degrees, employed as full-time workers in a technology company, and currently residing in the United States. Additionally, all participants had to be employed by a technology company registered with headquarters in the United States.

Following the inclusion criteria in phenomenology, this study employed purposive sampling, a strategy characterized by selecting participants who have had a particular experience (Creswell, 2009). Participants were expected to have experienced the implementation of DIB

efforts or witnessed and/or participated in DIB-related activities in their workplace. The first phase of the recruitment process consisted of promoting the research via LinkedIn by making a public post describing the study and inviting potential participants to contact the researcher by either sending a direct message via LinkedIn or sending an email confirming their interest in participating. Also, private invitations were sent via LinkedIn to potential participants and outreach for referrals among contacts working in the technology was completed through emails and phone calls. Individuals who confirmed their interest in joining the study received the informed consent via email, and were required to review, sign, and submit the consent before the interview was scheduled. A total of fifteen participants were included in this study. Additionally, to ensure this research does not cause harm or risk to the participants, the participants' identities will remain anonymous.

### **Data Collection**

Before starting the data collection process, the researcher engaged in bracketing as a way to gain greater awareness of personal biases, perceptions, and emotions. Bracketing is a method used to mitigate the potential negative effects of unrecognized preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the research project (Tufford & Newman, 2012). While there are various methods of bracketing, the researcher implemented two methods for this study, writing memos, and maintaining a reflexive journal. As Cutcliffe (2003) explains, the method of writing memos represents a reflective process on the researcher's engagement with the data. The researcher created a memo for each interview session to document reactions and observations about the collected data. Simultaneously, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal. Tufford and Newman (2012) affirm that the maintenance of a journal can enhance the researcher's ability to sustain a reflexive stance throughout the entire research process. The

journal included content related to the researcher's reasons for undertaking this study, her personal value system, previous workplace experiences as a Latinx immigrant professional, and feelings related to the research process. The researcher continued to implement these two bracketing methods throughout the entire data collection process and after completing it.

The data collection process started through the individual virtual interviews. Participants were scheduled for a semi structured interview to discuss their experiences and received the interview invitation via email. All interviews were conducted virtually using the Zoom platform and they were recorded using the record feature embedded in the Zoom platform. Before starting each interview, participants received a short presentation detailing background information of the research study and reviewed the informed consent once again with the researcher.

Once the interview formally started, participants were asked the following questions with the intent of establishing a degree of comfort:

- Could you please describe your current role and your team?
- How long have you worked with your current employer?

Afterwards, participants were invited to describe how their employer has implemented DIB initiatives in their respective workplaces and their experiences related to it. The next three key questions were asked to the participants:

- What has been your experience with your employer's initiatives to institute diversity, inclusiveness, and belonging in the workplace?
- How would you describe the DIB strategies your company has implemented?
- Have you experienced any conflicts related to the changes taking place due to DIB initiatives?

As the interviews moved forward, follow-up questions were formulated based on the participants' responses with the intent of eliciting descriptive replies that would help to answer the two central research questions. Participants were encouraged to talk at length in a freely and reflective manner. Additionally, interview transcripts were generated for each interview. All interview recordings and transcripts were stored in a password-protected file in the researcher's computer.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process followed a thematic analysis method and was informed by the model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This model includes the following six phases:

1. Becoming familiar with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Video recordings and interview transcripts were reviewed multiple times to develop familiarity with the data and start the process of identifying data (words and/or phrases) that described the nature of the experiences shared by the participants. At the same time, initial reactions and observations about the videos and transcripts were captured in the interview memos. This practice allowed the researcher to focus on the data and prevent distractions by thoughts from first impressions. All interview transcripts and interview memos were uploaded to the NVivo 14 software which served as the central repository for data organization. Additionally, before and during the data analysis process, bracketing methods were implemented to help



ensure researcher's preconceived ideas did not overshadow the essence of the data gathered through the interviews.

Later, the data recognized as meaning units was coded to capture the lived experiences and meanings that participants attributed to them. As described by Saldaña (1995), the first cycle of coding assisted in identifying initial ideas that could be further explored or discarded as the data analysis advanced and patterns became more noticeable. Values coding was used during the first cycle of coding while following the hermeneutic circle at the same time. Afterwards, codes were clustered into categories to reflect what was coming out of the data. The creation of categories represents the first step toward the identification of patterns and these patterns served as the basis for the identification of themes (Lochmiller, 2021). A thematic analysis was completed to group the identified categories into phenomenological themes. Moreover, theme descriptions were developed to describe the data in a comprehensive manner within the thematic structure. Next, a master table of themes was created to illustrate the connection of each theme with the participants' narratives.

The next stage in the data analysis process involved looking for patterns across cases. In this stage, each theme was compared using the classifications listed below:

- Gender of Participant (Female, Male, or Nonbinary).
- Time Residing in the United States (10 years or less, 11 years or more).
- Organizational Hierarchy (Managerial, Non-managerial).
- Company Tenure (2 years or more, 1-2 years, less than 1 year).
- Latinx Representation in Immediate Team (2 or more Latinx colleagues, Other Latinx colleagues – no exact number, Only Latinx employee, Did not disclose).

The results of the data analysis process followed a thematic format by structuring findings in relation to the themes. Rather than only highlighting essential aspects of the participant's experiences, a master table of themes was created to showcase theme connections for the entire group and illustrate participants' statements connected to each theme, categories, or subcategories. This approach, as Lochmiller (2021) explains, offers dual benefits. Firstly, it facilitates the construction of an empirical argument centered around the themes derived from the data. Secondly, it produces a strong understanding of the data by illustrating the relationships between various underlying data elements and the identified themes.

### **Delimitations**

The scope of this qualitative study was delimited by three main factors to maintain focus and relevance. First, the study exclusively targeted Latinx immigrants employed within the technology industry. Second, the participant pool was limited to immigrants holding bachelor's degree and currently employed in full-time positions in companies based in the United States. Additionally, participants were required to have experienced, witnessed, or actively participated in DIB activities within their workplace. This selection criteria was determined with the intent to explore the perspectives of a specific subset of the immigrant population that has been underrepresented in previous research literature. Particularly, the focus on Latinx immigrants with college degrees and their engagement with DIB efforts within the technology sector was chosen due to the lack of existing research addressing this demographic and their unique experiences regarding DIB efforts in the workplace.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Creswell (2012) describes validity as the level of strength of a qualitative research. Several methods including well-documented audit trail of materials and processes, and

participant verification are considered to enhance the validity of a research study (Leung, 2015). This study employed these two strategies to ensure a high level of validity. Detailed documentation of all research processes, interview memos, and a reflexive journal were completed to demonstrate clarity and transparency of the study. Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to review and confirm the themes generated from their contributions. This process is meant to enhance the trustworthiness in the research findings.

Other strategies such as clear and systematic data collection processes, and adherence to established research protocols are considered to enhance the reliability of a research study. As Morse (2015) emphasizes, reliability is about consistency in generating and interpreting data across different studies. This study employed rigorous adherence to study procedures as a way to ensure reliability of research findings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Several aspects must be considered to maintain the highest ethical standards throughout a research study. As suggested by Miller et al. (2012), there are multiple steps a researcher can take to reduce the probability of an ethical issue arising. For example, using a designated project email address and phone number, informing participants how their data will be used, and explaining to participants how the data will be protected in an effort to protect their identities, among others. Even though all the steps listed above were followed during this research study, there are additional ethical considerations that are important to recognize for this study.

Actions related to data collection and data sharing are associated with another important ethical consideration to consider. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymization of data collected electronically can be challenging, especially since this study is meant to rely on virtual data collection. Nonetheless, there are multiple steps to be considered in an effort to uphold an

ethical data collection and data sharing process. One of them is seeking informed consent to data sharing from participants. Miller et al. (2012) state that seeking informed consent for people to participate in research and for the use of data archiving and sharing is a fundamental ethical practice. In this research project, participants were required to provide informed consent to data archiving and sharing at the same time they accepted to participate in the research study. Participants were informed on how their data will be anonymized for public reports and publications, and on the basis that data will be available to others in an unedited form. Furthermore, participants were informed that digital footprints could weakened the power of data anonymization and creating a digital archive of collected data weakens control over data and its use. Having a clear and sincere conversation about the risk and benefits of digital data sharing was an essential ethical practice exercised in this study.

Finally, ethical considerations continued to be assessed throughout the entire research process. As Miller et al. (2012) state, ethical dilemmas can happen at any point during the study, and it is crucial for researchers to intentionally assess situations in a continuous manner and remain transparent about possible assumptions influencing the analysis and interpretations of different processes throughout the research study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The main purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the perspectives of Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry in relation to the impact of DIB efforts in the workplace. The two central research questions for this study were the following:

RQ1: How are conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts experienced by Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry?

RQ2: What impact, if any, do DIB efforts have on the meaning of an inclusive work environment for Latinx immigrants?

This chapter offers a comprehensive summary of the research setting, participant demographic details, the data collection and data analysis processes, strategies employed to ensure trustworthiness, and the research results. Furthermore, this chapter serves as a transition to introduce the interpretations of the research findings, recommendations, and implications, all further explained in Chapter 5.

### **Research Setting**

All participant interviews were virtual and conducted through the Zoom platform. Each interview was recorded using Zoom's built-in recording feature and each recording was saved within a password-protected file on my computer. The scheduling of each interview session was arranged via email or phone with each of the participants after receiving their signed consent form. The interviews were conducted in a dynamic manner and participants were encouraged to share at length rather than limiting the dialogue to a rigid question-and-answer structure. The researcher exercised judgement to identify instances where additional clarification was necessary

to comprehend the participant’s perspective. No exceptional circumstances were encountered during the interview sessions.

## Participant Recruitment

The first phase of the recruitment process consisted of promoting the research via LinkedIn by making a public post describing the study and inviting potential participants to contact the researcher by either sending a direct message via LinkedIn or sending an email confirming their interest in participating (see Figure 1). Additionally, a total of 60 private invitations were sent via LinkedIn to potential participants from April 2022 to September 2022. Figure 2 displays the LinkedIn invitations sent by the researcher and the number of responses accepting invitation to participate in the study. 9 out of the 15 participants were recruited via LinkedIn. 2 out of the 15 participants were recruited through outreach completed via phone calls and emails with contacts working in the technology field. Lastly, a snowballing approach was used to recruit additional participants. 4 out of the 15 participants were recruited through referrals made by other participants (see Figure 3).

### Figure 1

#### *LinkedIn Post by the Researcher published in February 2022*

**Angelica Coronel** (She/Her) · You  
VP, ICARE Program Manager at BankUnited

Want to help improve Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) efforts in the tech industry? Inviting Latinx immigrants working in tech to participate in my doctoral research by sharing their thoughts in a confidential virtual interview. This study seeks to expand the understanding of the employee experience of Latinx immigrants as it relates to the implementation of DIB efforts, and potentially inform the development of successful DIB strategies aimed at enhancing the inclusion of Latinx immigrants.

\*Eligibility Criteria:  
-18+ years old  
-Latinx immigrants (individuals of Latin American descent who were born in a country other than the United States)  
-Bachelor's degree (any field)  
-Employed full-time in a tech company  
-Currently residing in the United States

To find out more information, please send me a direct message or email me at [coronel.angelica02@gmail.com](mailto:coronel.angelica02@gmail.com)

#inclusion #diversity #research #tech

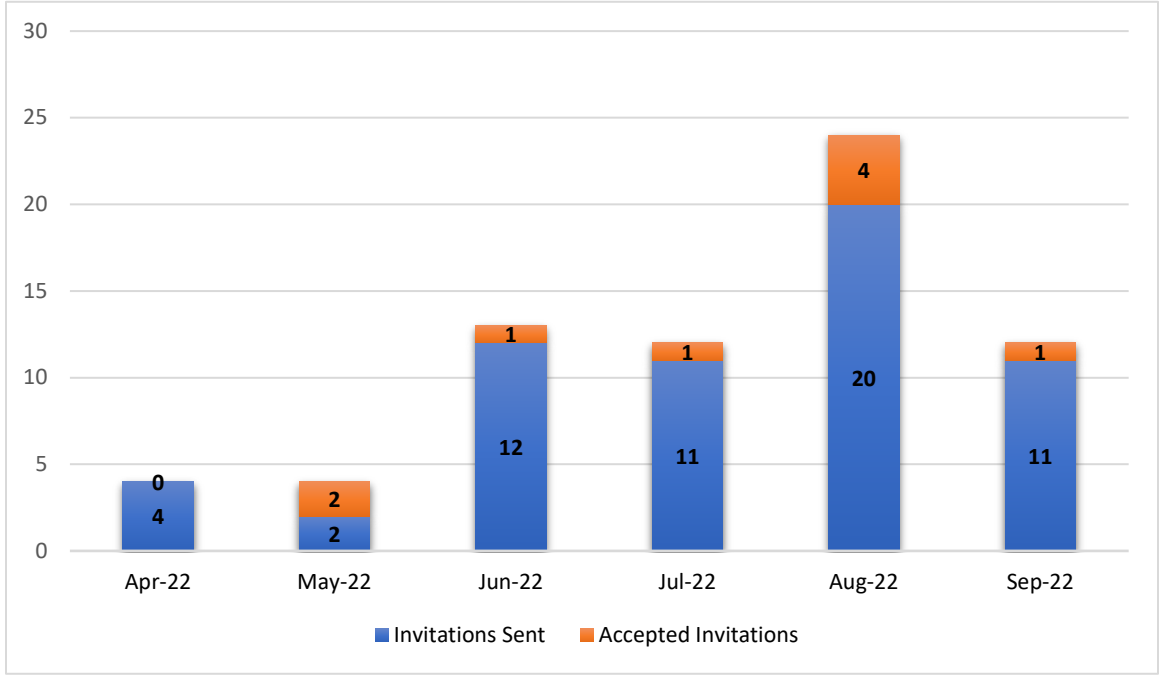
21 likes · 1 comment · 4 reposts

Like Comment Repost Send

1,298 impressions View

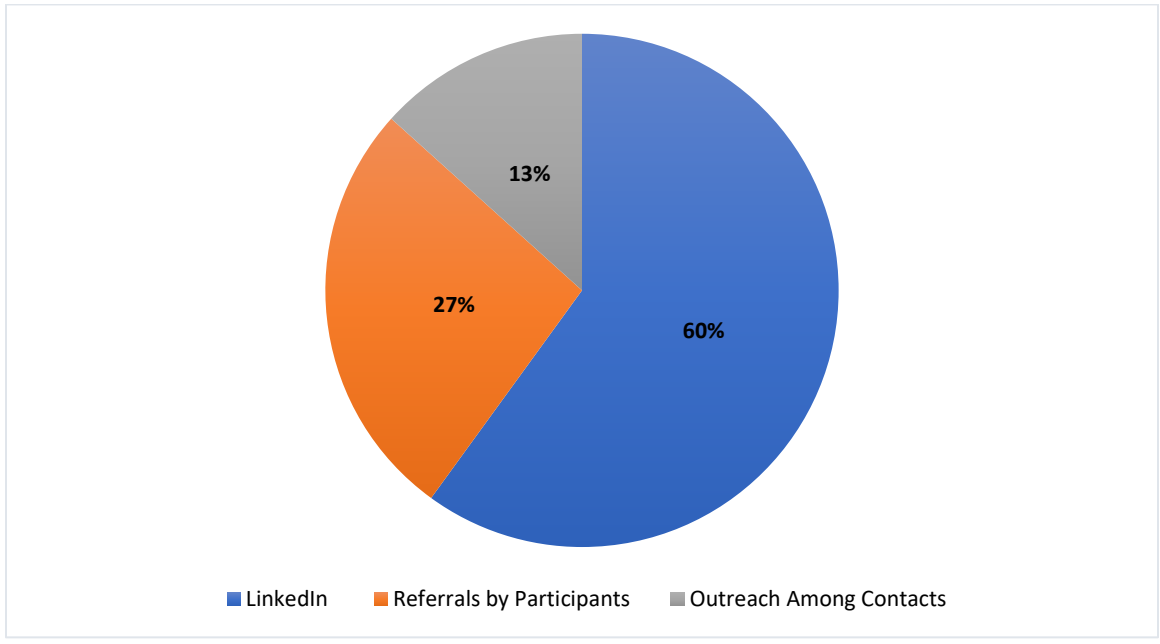
**Figure 2**

*Private Invitations Sent via LinkedIn and the Accepted Invitations Received by the Researcher from April 2022 to September 2022*



**Figure 3**

*Participants by Recruitment Channel*

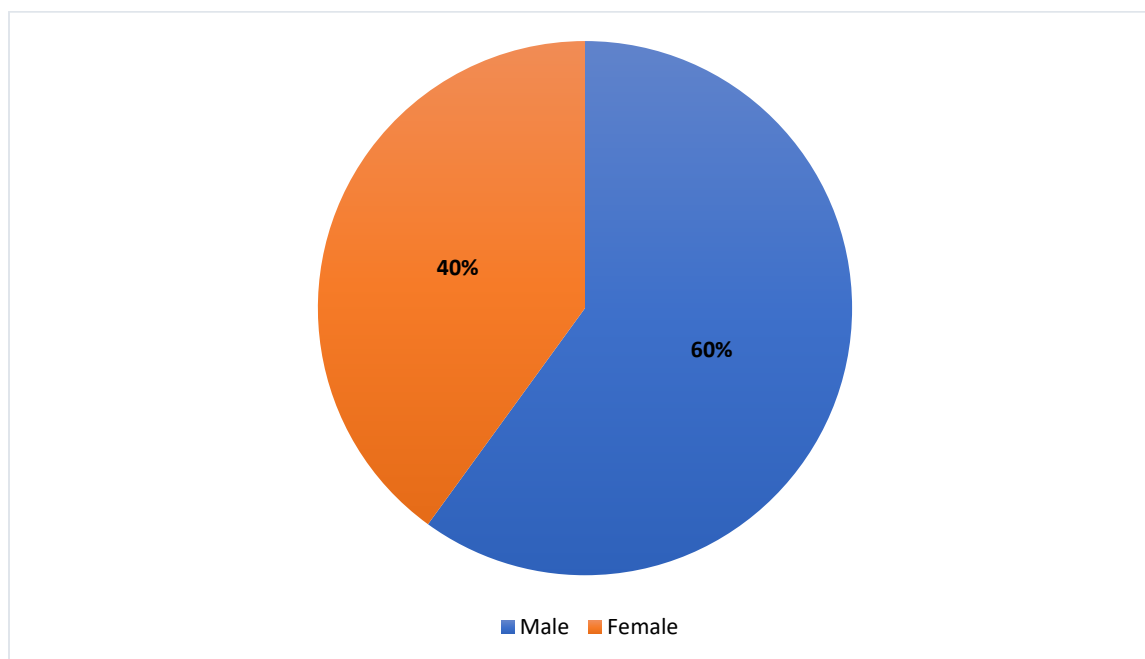


## Demographics

A total of 15 individuals participated in the study. The participants consisted of 9 males and 6 females (see Figure 4). All participants identified themselves as Latinx immigrants with bachelor's degrees working in a technology company with headquarters in the United States. Most of the participants (80%) have been living in the United States for more than 10 years (see Figure 5) and the majority of them (73%) have been working with their current employer for less than 1 year (see Figure 6). Most of the participants were working in a non-managerial role at the time of the interviews (87%), whereas only 2 (13%) were working in a managerial role (see Figure 7). Out of the 15 participants in the study, 8 of them disclosed having a Latinx colleague within their immediate team, while 5 of them disclosed being the only Latinx employee within their immediate team (see Figure 8). Figures 4 to 8 illustrate participant demographics.

### Figure 4

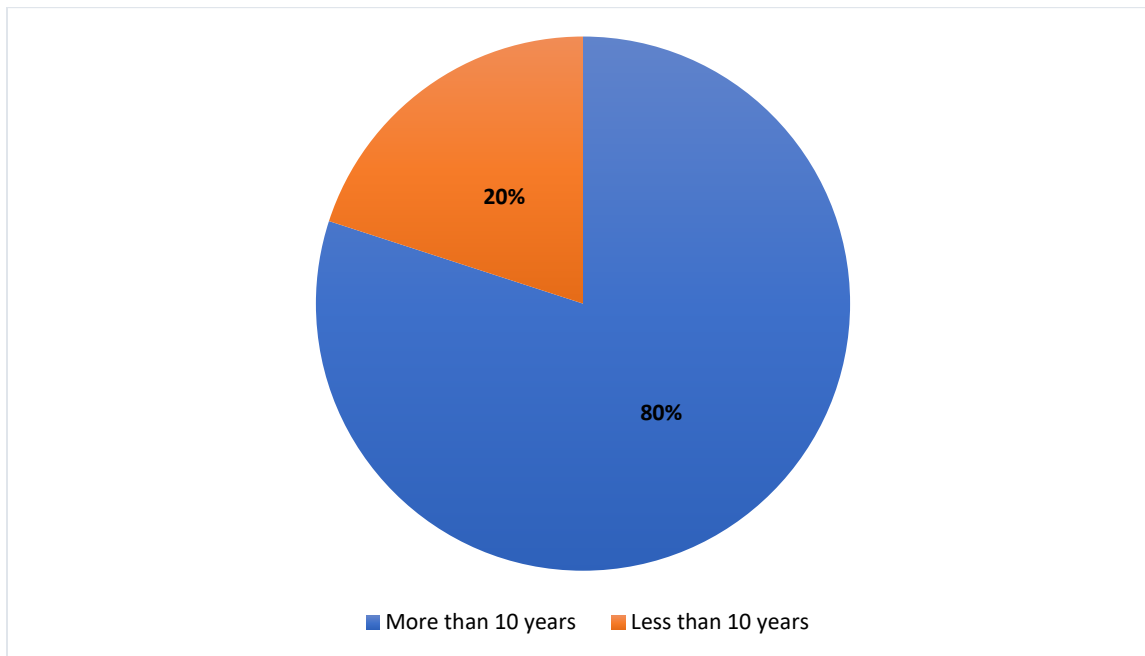
#### *Participants' Gender*



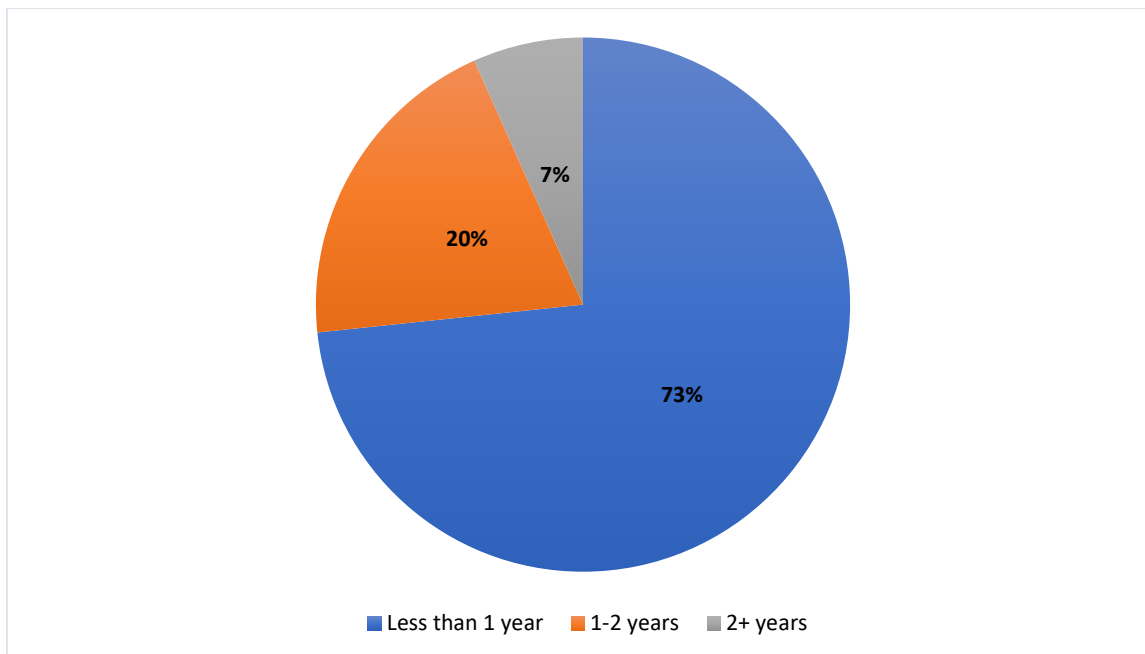


**Figure 5**

*Participants by Number of Years Living in the United States*

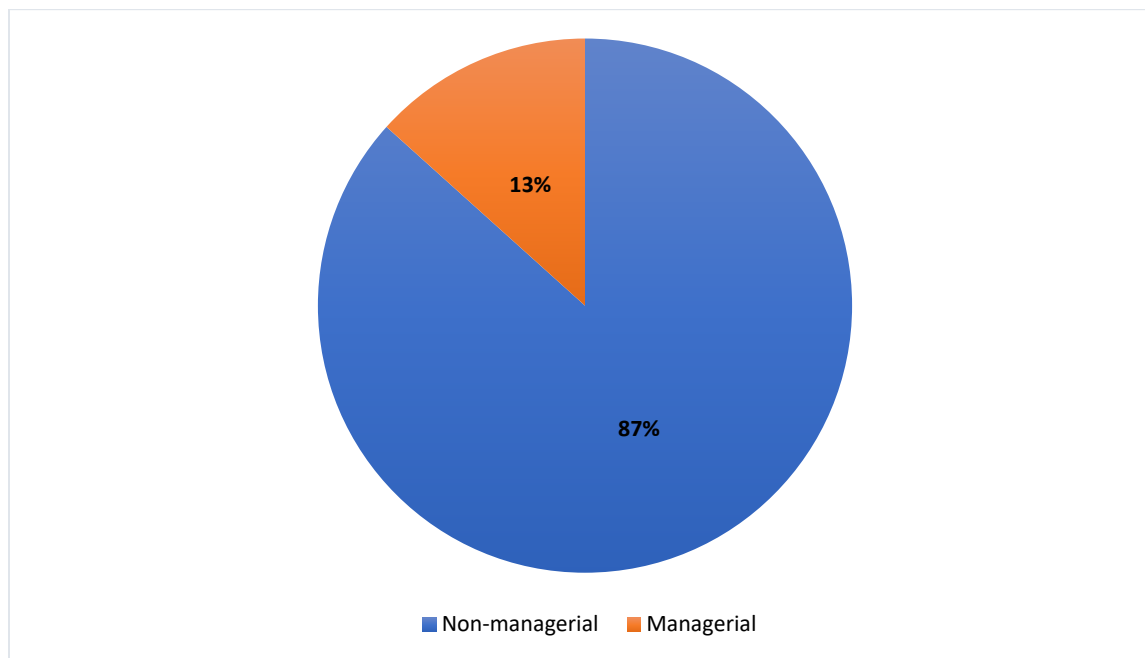
**Figure 6**

*Participants by Company Tenure*

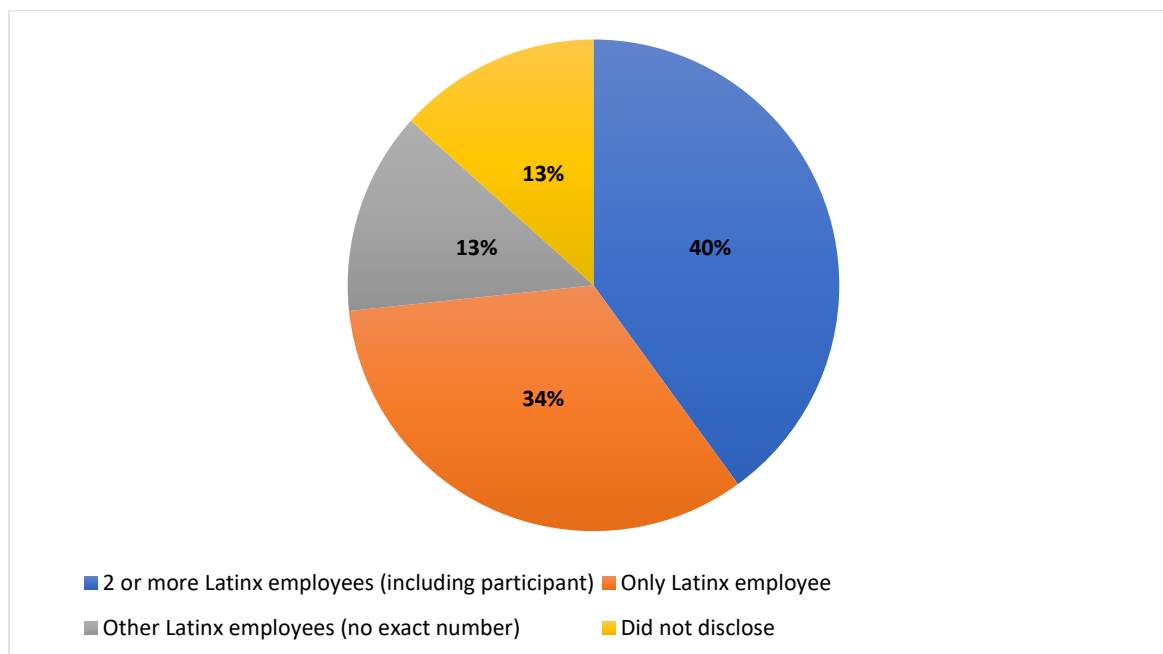


**Figure 7**

*Participants by Organizational Hierarchy*

**Figure 8**

*Participants by Latinx Representation in Immediate Team*



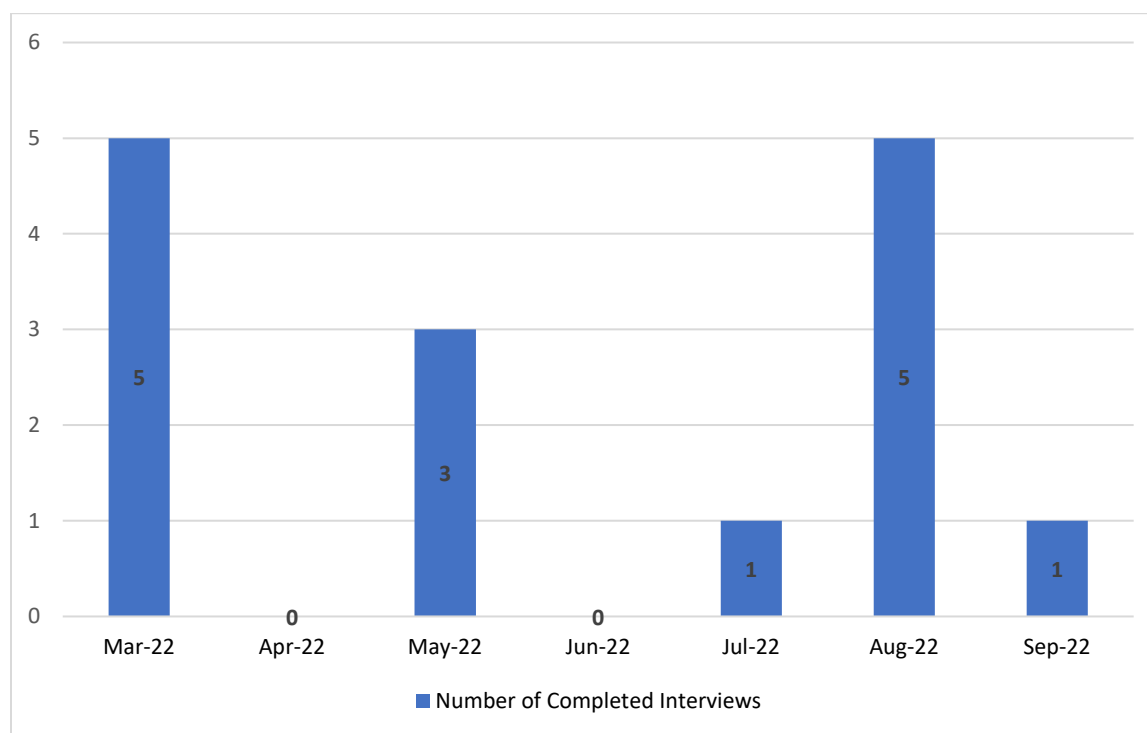
## Data Collection

Before, during, and after the data collection process, the researcher implemented two bracketing methods, writing memos, and maintaining a reflexive journal. As described in Chapter 3, this step was completed as a way to acknowledge the researcher's reasons for undertaking the study, current involvement in corporate DIB initiatives, personal value system, and emotions related to the research topic and the entire research process. Additionally, in an effort to minimize the influence of biases, the researcher actively engaged in continuous self-reflection regarding her own experiences as a Latinx immigrant professional. The researcher diligently documented these reflections in the research journal, recognizing the potential for her own background and experiences to inadvertently shape the narratives provided by the interviewees.

Research data was collected from the 15 participants through a semi structured virtual interview using the Zoom platform. Each participant submitted their signed consent form to the researcher via email before their scheduled interview. After submitting the consent form, each participant received a meeting invitation via email from the researcher containing the Zoom link for the interview. Before starting each interview, the researcher read the consent form out loud to each participant and asked if they had any questions about the form. None of the participants expressed they had questions about the form before starting the interview; however, the researcher reiterated they could ask questions related to the form and/or the study throughout the interview or after completing it. All interviews were completed between March 2022 and September 2022 (see Figure 9). All interviews were conducted in English, and there was no need for translation.

**Figure 9**

*Interviews Completed by the Researcher from March 2022 to September 2022*



All interviews were recorded by the researcher using the record feature embedded in Zoom and they lasted approximately 60-75 minutes. After each interview, the recording was transferred to a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. To generate the transcript for each interview, the researcher used the transcribe feature available in Microsoft Word. The researcher uploaded the interview file in Microsoft Word and then reviewed the transcript generated within Microsoft Word to ensure the entire interview was transcribed. Each transcript was reviewed multiple times and then saved in the password protected folder together with the interview recordings. Additionally, the researcher created an interview memo for each interview session to document impressions on the information shared by each participant. After completing each interview, the researcher reviewed each memo and edited information as needed to generate

a more comprehensive summary encapsulating both impressions and important highlights of the information shared. Edits were made exclusively to interview memos, not interview transcripts.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process relied on the existential phenomenology model described by Pollio et al. (1997). First, the researcher implemented bracketing methods to avoid overshadowing the essence of the data with personal biases. Next, the interview transcripts and video recordings were reviewed multiple times to increase familiarity with the data before starting the first cycle of coding. Simultaneously, interview memos were updated with additional reactions and observations about the data. Additionally, the researcher maintained a research journal to record thoughts and decisions made throughout the entire research process.

To move forward into the coding phase, all interview transcripts were uploaded to the NVivo 14 software which was used as the central repository for data organization. All interview transcripts were uploaded to the NVivo 14 software without the participants' names to ensure the participants' privacy and confidentiality. Participants' names were replaced by pseudonyms using the letter P and a number (i.e., P1, P2). The NVivo 14 software was not used to generate coding, instead it was used for its organizational features that facilitate manual coding and to corroborate theme communalities later described in this chapter.

The initial cycle of coding involved the use of values coding. While descriptive coding was initially considered for this phase, the researcher later opted for values coding as it became evident that participants disclosed substantial content about their feelings and values when recounting their interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences at the workplace. This adjustment was deemed more appropriate in capturing the content disclosed by the participants. As defined by Saldaña (1995), values coding is the application of codes to qualitative data that reflect a

participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs. A value (V) is the importance a person attributes to oneself, another person, thing, or idea. An attitude (A) is the way a person thinks and feels about themselves, another person, thing, or idea. A belief (B) is part of a system that includes values and attitudes, plus personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world.

Following the completion of the first cycle of coding employing Saldaña's method for values coding, the research continued with an inductive coding process. Categories were developed to mirror what was coming out of the data. A total of 68 codes were analyzed and then clustered into categories. The following four categories were created:

- Perceptions of the technology industry.
- Positive experiences and perceptions of current work environment.
- Negative experiences and perceptions of current work environment.
- Ideal work environment.

The following quotes from participants illustrate the coded content that informed the creation of the categories listed above.

P10 said "Overall, I think specifically the tech industry is not very diverse at all, it leans into mostly White and Asian. I think mostly from India, China, Singapore. We have a large, obviously White population of employees as well...I think in general, tech has a pipeline problem..." (P10). This quote was assigned to the code titled "Technology industry is not very diverse".

P11 said "During onboarding, the first thing that they let you know is that diversity is one of the values and they immediately prove it by saying here are our ERG's, here are the people you can connect with, so they make it really easy to find resources...It makes it really easy to ask

anyone and the information is available out there...” (P11). This quote was assigned to the code titled “Company is moving forward with DIB efforts”.

P1 said “I definitely have some values that I hold on from my upbringing but at the same time I don’t want to talk about those things. I don’t want to be targeted for saying the wrong thing, you know? You don’t want to piss off the wrong person. Sometimes it feels like you’re walking on eggshells. There’s a lot of sensitivity in the air...like everyone should be able to express how they feel and how they think...” (P1). This quote was assigned to the code titled “Conservative opinions are not well received”.

P6 said “I will tell you that authenticity is essential for anything of this nature to be really successful, you can have many initiatives of as you want if you don't have people driving those initiatives that are authentic, that really care and if you don't do it truly and openly and fully, they don't work...doesn’t matter how much you do, it doesn’t really work or at least it takes so long to work...” (P6). This quote was assigned to the code titled “Leadership needs to be transparent for DIB efforts to work”.

P14 said “Being fully candid, it's frustrating because we can scream at the top of the mountain and say we need diverse candidates and each year you set these goals and metrics. We need to see all of this data and research and then we don't really do anything with it. We might hire a female executive, that's a win in the win column, right? but one of the other aspects in all of this discussion, which is at least the frustration, is retention because we are not retaining people, especially at the executive layer...” (P14). This quote was assigned to the code titled “Companies need to equally invest efforts in hiring and retaining employees”.

P2 said “In my team, I feel people are at least very warm with us, when we share like Hispanic Heritage month and we share these things, they're always very nice like I'm so happy I learned about your culture and they're very sweet and very inclusive. So, I think that's very great...(P2). This quote was assigned to the code titled “Latinx-related events are well received”.

Afterwards, the researcher initiated the process of thematic analysis, grouping the identified categories into distinct phenomenological themes. A total of four major themes emerged from the analysis of the data and each major theme was linked to one of the central research questions. The phenomenological themes were compared against the interview transcripts, the research journal notes, and the interview recordings with the intent of achieving a high degree of reliability and validity in the interpretation of the data. The table below (Table 1) includes the major themes that emerged from the data analysis, the number of participants who commented on each major theme, and the number of unique comments associated to each major theme.

**Table 1**

*Themes, Participant References, and Comments*

Themes	Number of Participants	Number of Comments
Lack of Leadership Encouragement for Conflict Resolution	8	24
Current Landscape of Latinx Professionals in the Technology Industry	13	45
Positive Perceptions of Organizational Culture	14	59
Inclusive Practices in the Workplace	10	27

Furthermore, each of the major themes was compared using the classifications listed below. These same classifications were listed in the research proposal except company tenure and Latinx representation in immediate team. These two new classifications were incorporated



since participants shared this data in an organic way during their interviews and the classifications seem to be interesting variables for potential insights.

- Gender of Participant (Female, Male, or Nonbinary).
- Time Residing in the United States (10 years or less, 11 years or more).
- Organizational Hierarchy (Managerial, Non-managerial).
- Company Tenure (2 years or more, 1-2 years, less than 1 year).
- Latinx Representation in Immediate Team (2 or more Latinx colleagues, Other Latinx colleagues – no exact number, Only Latinx employee, Did not disclose).

The two comparison classifications listed below were removed from original list of classifications included in the research proposal. This decision was made since not all participants disclosed their race, and their current employers are not considered either a solely product-based or service-based company. Instead, their current employers are characterized as a combination of both.

- Race (White, Black, Other).
- Type of IT company (product-based or service-based).

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

In an effort to maintain the highest ethical standards throughout the entire research study, all steps described in Chapter 3 were followed as originally proposed. A designated project email address and phone number were used to communicate with the participants, and all participants signed the informed consent form before joining their respective interview. Additionally, the consent form was read out loud to each participant before starting each interview and the researcher verbally asked participants if they had questions at different points throughout the

interview. Participants were informed how their data was going to be stored and anonymized for public reports. All participants affirmed understanding the data storage and publication process.

To safeguard the credibility of the study, the IRB approval for the study was obtained and the researcher adhered to the approved proposal meticulously. In addition, uninterrupted observation was maintained throughout the interviews to accurately gather the information being shared. The set of five questions outlined in Chapter 3 was consistently employed in all interviews. Additional follow-up questions were integrated during the interviews with the intent of gathering comprehensive descriptions from participants. The researcher was mindful to frame each question as inquisitive rather than presenting it as a leading statement.

To enhance the validity of the findings, the researcher employed a strategy called member checking, which involves the researcher informally confirming the accuracy of the findings with the study participants (Coleman, 2021). The themes and sub-themes were shared with a subset of participants, allowing them with the opportunity to review and validate the emerging themes and interpretations. This step aimed to establish trustworthiness in the study and determine that the findings resonated with the participants' lived experiences. Interestingly, when completing this step, participants expressed agreement with the identified themes and seemed to be pleasantly surprised to discover they had shared perspectives with other participants. Lastly, the confirmability of the research results can be sustained through the volume of responses and direct quotes from the participants.

## **Results**

A total of 165 pages of interview transcripts were reviewed and analyzed multiple times to generate the insights described in this section. The following four major themes emerged from the data analysis process, a) lack of leadership encouragement for conflict resolution, b) current

landscape of Latinx professionals in the technology industry, c) positive perceptions of organizational culture, and d) inclusive practices in the workplace. Furthermore, two sub-themes were identified per theme as shown below in Table 2. These themes and sub-themes capture and describe the perspectives of Latinx immigrant professionals regarding the impact of DIB efforts in the workplace, their encounters with conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts, and the meaning of these experiences for them. Participant quotes and significant insights are incorporated within the explanation of each major theme.

**Table 2**

*Themes and Sub-themes*

Themes	Sub-Themes
Lack of Leadership Encouragement for Conflict Resolution	Lack of Guidance Lack of Transparency
Current Landscape of Latinx Professionals in the Technology Industry	Lack of Representation and Career Development Support Negative Influence of Latinx Background
Positive Perceptions of Organizational Culture	Welcoming Work Environment Commitment to DIB Efforts
Inclusive Practices in the Workplace	Outreach and Retention Practices Leadership Commitment

**Theme 1: Lack of Leadership Encouragement for Conflict Resolution**

This theme addresses the first research question, “How are conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts experienced by Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry?”. This theme encompasses conflict situations and challenges experienced by participants while working in a technology company. When sharing about conflict experiences, participants emphasized how their leaders have not facilitated effective conflict resolution strategies, instead they have encouraged teams to avoid certain discussions. This lack of emphasis on conflict resolution strategies seems to be a shared concern among the study participants. Additionally, participants expressed skepticism regarding statements from their

colleagues claiming there are no conflicts in the workplace, perceiving them as lacking transparency and potentially masking issues. The two sub-themes of this theme are lack of guidance and lack of transparency.

***Lack of Guidance.***

Participants expressed there have been situations where their leaders have not provided effective guidance on conflict resolution, instead they have asked employees to avoid discussing specific topics that can potentially lead to conflict. Below are comments from two different participants describing this type of situation. In both instances, participants recognized the complexity of these situations but argued the need for leaders to seek solutions that can educate all employees on how to effectively manage workplace conflict instead of avoiding it.

P1 said:

One of the C-level leaders once said: Let's not discuss religion. Let's not discuss politics. Let's not discuss all this because it just leads to conflict. And although I do get it, then there's the other side of we can't really have those conversations then. Are we just robots who can't, like, express, feel? No, we're not... (P1).

P6 said:

I remember having a conversation about that and telling my manager, you know, if we're not going to be okay having these conversations, there's not going to be any authentic inclusion because if you are not willing to look at the pain points, if you're not okay hearing about people discomfort, this is not going to work... We need to try to put that on the table. If we don't do that, we will never hear about it... (P6)

I replied to this comment by asking the participant the following question: What was your manager's response to that? and P6 replied “she eventually decided to be cautious with those discussions, to try to not have them often, avoid them.”

Furthermore, when completing a gender comparison of all participant comments within this theme, it was found that males placed more emphasis than females on the lack of leadership guidance on conflict resolution by making a greater number of comments on this specific sub-theme. This insight was corroborated by using the crosstab query feature available in the NVivo 14 software. Results from this crosstab query are illustrated below in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Gender Comparison for Theme 1*

Theme	Gender	
Lack of Leadership Encouragement for Conflict Resolution	Male	Female
Lack of Guidance Comments – Percentage	80%	20%

***Lack of Transparency.***

Participants described they have perceived a lack of transparency from their colleagues when it comes to acknowledging a conflict or disagreeing with the existing status quo.

Participants believe this lack of transparency is based on the notion that colleagues prefer to avoid situations where they can be perceived as difficult or share an opinion that can provoke a workplace conflict with their colleagues. Even though participants currently work at companies that have launched DIB efforts, participants seem to believe that openly disclosing conflicting opinions is not widely accepted or embraced as part of the organizational culture, leading to an environment where avoidance of conflict discussions is favored over transparency and open dialogue. Below are different participant comments that illustrate this situation.

P11 said:

I think everyone is very aware of the values the company has, so a lot of tough conversations that might need to be had aren't necessarily had. I'm not trying to be mean, but I think a lot of people sort of hide their initial thoughts because they don't want to get in trouble because of how progressive the company sort of appears to be. I've felt like tension...so it kind of feels like there is lack of transparency, like they're not really showing their true self... (P11)

P2 said:

I just ask for like transparency...everybody is like, yeah, everything's fine. Everything is perfect and it's not, and they don't say it. Nobody says it aloud. I have struggled with that multiple times. Most of the times, I've been in an awkward exchange...there have been cultural things like that. I feel it's like a code to learn... (P2)

P1 said:

If you are from them right and you think differently and you bring that up, you have a diverse opinion, you're not seen really well. It's not well received, unfortunately. So, you do see those kinds of conflicts arise. I have a very concrete example of that, so a good friend of mine, very, very talented individual, one of those multi-talented people that you meet. He was from Peruvian descent. He did not share the same views as everybody in terms of how the majority of the company thinks when it comes to gender pronouns. He had his very, very specific view, right? He comes from a very conservative upbringing and the fact that he had different views was seen as...well you can't speak your mind, so it was contradicting in a way, because, yes, you have freedom of speech, you can speak

your mind, but he felt like he couldn't because everyone would just you feel attacked, essentially... (P1)

## **Theme 2: Current Landscape of Latinx Professionals in the Technology Industry**

This theme addresses the first research question, “How are conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts experienced by Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry?” This theme describes what participants perceive as intrapersonal conflicts related the participation of Latinx professional in the technology industry and the influence of their Latinx background on their career development. The two sub-themes of this theme are lack of representation and career development support and negative influence of Latinx background.

### ***Lack of Representation and Career Development Support.***

Participants expressed their discontent with the low representation of Latinx professionals in the technology field and in their respective workplaces. They were very open in sharing how this situation has provoked some conflicting feelings towards their respective employers and the company’s commitment to growing Latinx talent. Even though participants acknowledge their employers’ efforts to foster the success of DIB initiatives, they still experience disappointment and dissatisfaction regarding Latinx representation within their workplace. Moreover, participants believe their employers should channel more substantial resources and efforts into supporting the professional growth and advancement of Latinx talent. Participants also highlighted how a stronger commitment from their employers can help enhance the professional prospects for the Latinx community to ascend to leadership roles instead of limiting them to entry-level roles. This insight is expanded in Chapter 5 when describing its connection to previous literature. Below are various participant comments that exemplify ideas related to this sub-theme.

P12 said:

I don't see other Hispanics in leadership roles...something that I feel as a Hispanic is that I'm intentionally guided to stay in roles that are customer facing because I speak Spanish... I think they are wanting to be proactive in having a minimum number of bilingual staff to help the incoming Spanish speaking customers that will be acquired by their marketing efforts. I think their efforts is let's just cover our bases, but I don't see that it's in their plans to have career paths for us...(P12)

P10 said:

I think, in general, the tech industry is very heavily skewed to White and Asian. I don't see myself represented how I should as it relates to the company and as it relates to tech...I come from a company where I worked with only Latinos every day, and then it was a very aggressive transition for me to jump into a tech company where most of the time, I'm the only Latino in the room. Unless it's like a conversation with other Latino with the Latino group, it's hard to find the community and you know, people that look and sound like you and they have the same lived experiences that you without actually going to the actual Hispanics ERG conversations or events that they create... (P10)

P7 said:

I mean, it does feel a little awkward being the only person of color in the office. I don't take it personally. I just think it's not something that they invest their money in and something that they don't invest their time in. Maybe, if I saw people in positions of power, like Latinx, that would be like an inspiration because you look at the board, you look at the people up top, they're white, you don't really feel like you can relate to them at that level. It's hard for a person like me to make it up the ranks... (P7)



P2 said:

I think my company struggles with, which is what happens to most of the tech companies. They're increasing their numbers, they're doing all that but only in the lower levels. The upper you go, the more white and more male it gets. I think that's not that great... the Latinx committee, we wanted to do like a networking thing for Latinos, so we were like let's find managers or people in higher roles that we can bring so they are like the bigger anchors on each of the breakout rooms and that would bring more people. That was like the theory, and we started looking for them. We have one sponsor, she's a VP on customer success, she's actually also from Chile, but that was it. Then everybody was like a lead or maybe a senior something, but nobody else was in any big role... (P2)

When analyzing the comments related to this sub-theme, it was found that participants with two or more Latinx colleagues in their immediate team and participants without Latinx colleagues in their immediate team felt equally disappointment about the lack of Latinx representation and career development support for Latinx employees. This finding was validated by using the crosstab query feature available in the NVivo 14 software. Results from this crosstab query are illustrated below in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Latinx Representation Comparison for Theme 2*

Theme	Latinx Representation in Immediate Team	
	2 or more Latinx	Only Latinx
Current Landscape of Latinx Professionals in the Technology Industry		
Lack of Representation and Career Development Support Comments - Percentage	37.5%	37.5%

### ***Negative Influence of Latinx Background.***

Although participants expressed a profound sense of pride in their Latinx heritage and background, they also shared how certain deeply ingrained beliefs within the Latinx culture can act as stressors for internal conflicts in themselves or other Latinx professionals seeking to advance in their careers. The majority of participants displayed strong sentiments when expressing their views on how the belief of being humble can serve as a constraining factor on career advancement. They talked about how they had to unlearn these cultural beliefs in order to put themselves in a better position for professional growth. Below are various participant comments related to this sub-theme.

P11 said:

It's one of those things I've slowly learned in the professional world. You actually have to ask and be very open about what you want. I was raised to be, you know, just work hard, be humble, try not to make any problems and you move forward, but in reality, the world is very much different and you just to have to be a lot bolder... (P11)

P3 said:

Starting from to the back, when I came to this country, I started as an international student, so I was not allowed to work. Then I moved permanently, and I was able to start working but I was working as a nanny, so my network was nannies, and I was like I came here not just to be a nanny, I want something for my future, so I started growing...three weeks ago I had to travel for a meeting with some clients and I was sitting on that chair, and I was like, wow, I can't believe I am sitting here with all these important people from really high positions. Sometimes, Latinx people are afraid of going too fast or they just devalue themselves without any reason... (P3)

P1 said:

There is research behind why Latinos and everything that we've gone through from colonization affects our mind. There's something about that you know instead of stepping up and going for that promotion, we say, I'm gonna be humble and I'm gonna let somebody else take it, right? There are all these things that go through our mind that we fight with just because of where we come from. Essentially our community and our society has some influences. So yeah, you could totally see that even in a small ERG group you can see those dynamics as well... (P1)

P8 said:

I would just say if I had known that this was a possibility for someone like me sooner, I would have taken it. If I would have known that I could bring so much to the table, to such a big table. We don't grow up thinking that's an option because your parents were never in a Google, or your parents never worked for Microsoft. You don't know any software engineers, so you don't think it's an option... even getting to college is already half the battle because so many of us drop off just after high school like your family, like your parents... (P8)

When analyzing the comments pertaining to this sub-theme, it was found that participants who currently hold a non-managerial role made a greater number of comments about the negative impact of their Latinx background on their career advancement compared to those participants who currently hold a managerial role. This finding was validated by using the crosstab query feature available in the NVivo 14 software. Results from this crosstab query are illustrated below in Table 5.

**Table 5***Organizational Hierarchy Comparison for Theme 2*

Theme	Organizational Hierarchy	
	Managerial	Non-Managerial
Current Landscape of Latinx Professionals in the Technology Industry		
Negative Influence of Latinx Background Comments - Percentage	16.67%	83.33%

Furthermore, when doing a gender comparison, it was found that more males than females emphasized the negative influence of their Latinx background by making a greater number of comments on this topic. This finding was validated by using the crosstab query feature available in the NVivo 14 software. Results from this crosstab query are illustrated below in Table 6.

**Table 6***Gender Comparison for Theme 2*

Theme	Gender	
	Male	Female
Current Landscape of Latinx Professionals in the Technology Industry		
Negative Influence of Latinx Background Comments - Percentage	66.67%	33.33%

**Theme 3: Positive Perceptions of Organizational Culture**

This theme addresses the second research question, “What impact, if any, do DIB efforts have on the meaning of an inclusive work environment for Latinx immigrants?”. This theme encapsulates the perspective of participants regarding the positive impact of DIB initiatives within their workplace. Participants expressed this impact has significantly enriched the culture of their work environment, manifesting in both tangible and intangible ways. Despite expressing dissatisfaction and concerns regarding the issues discussed in previous themes (Theme 1 and

theme 2), absence of leadership encouragement for conflict resolution, lack of Latinx representation, and limited career development support for Latinx employees, participants also acknowledged and appeared to value their employers' broader commitment to DIB initiatives. This recognition seemed to instill a sense of hope among participants for the potential development of robust DIB initiatives specifically geared towards the advancement of Latinx employees. Further exploration of this finding will be provided in Chapter 5, where the implications of these insights will be discussed in detail. As illustrated in Table 1, this is the theme with the greatest number of comments from all participants. The two sub-themes of this theme are welcoming work environment and commitment to DIB efforts.

### ***Welcoming Work Environment.***

Participants shared several positive experiences and emotions when describing how the DIB efforts within their respective workplaces have cultivated a work environment that is both welcoming and inclusive for every employee. Participants expressed that DIB efforts have played an instrumental role in constructing a workplace culture where they feel accepted and included, highlighting the impact of various activities such as employee resource groups, unconscious bias training sessions, networking events, and cultural celebrations. These initiatives, participants believe, have significantly contributed to fostering a work environment characterized by kindness, respect, and opportunities to build connections with colleagues, ultimately enhancing their overall sense of belonging within their organization. Below are various participant comments related to this sub-theme.

P12 said:

The feeling has gotten better and better as far as feeling like part of the team. At the beginning, I must admit it wasn't an easy transition for me because the majority of my

coworkers were white, and then even my supervisor, everybody. So, we would have team meetings or even like a happy hour on Friday and it was a little hard because I didn't relate to like the topic of conversation... I do remember feeling a lot more different once I got my first customer who was bilingual. The reason I got hired is because I do speak Spanish and I have different skills that could come in handy in this position... So, I think that helped me to where I am today... I do feel like I'm part of the team. Everybody is very welcoming... I think it also helps that the company has been working on for years after years on culture itself, focusing on kindness and collaboration... Now that these diversity groups are on my local teams that I can see comments or whatever, I haven't seen any negative or felt any negative bias. It's just part of the culture. (P12)

P5 said:

People are really intelligent, really respectful, they try to be educated about how to treat others and they understand we come from different backgrounds. It has been a very refreshing take on that aspect. To see that they don't judge. We work with different type of people, people from India, people from the US... every year they have like a big DEI month, so they refresh those concepts, so people don't forget, and they remember why it's so important to have that... So, things like that for me were really interesting to hear and understand. Why do we need to put labels to people regarding their sexual orientation or whatever? Why do we need to judge people by their gender? Those are the things that sometimes I say wow, yeah, that was something new that I didn't consider. So, those are the things that I get from this type of trainings and initiatives; they are kind of refreshing... (P5)

P6 said:

There is a lot of things going on. And if you want to get involved, they give you a lot of opportunities to do that and to connect with other people that share your interests with, like an internal social network type of thing where you can engage and there is support within the company for all of that. Yeah, at least I feel empowered to share, contribute with my diversity as a value... They use different mediums...there are also like meeting spaces like teams and I guess that's limited to this remote hybrid situation, but I can tell that by interacting with people that they are used to meet in person and actually I have heard that the different teams organize things like picnics where they can connect in a more personal level...(P6)

P3 said:

I have been really lucky to find a team that is so welcoming, and especially as a Latin American person feeling welcomed in that way is really important...that makes me feel like I'm not less...two weeks ago, they did a newbie party social, they ask you for fun facts and in the afternoon, they invited me for lunch, everybody says hi to you. It was a nice way to break the ice for the new people in the office. Also, they asked me for a picture of me and to write what I was thinking. It's not like a simple presentation, it was more like familiar, more friendly...these activities are great to catch up and meet new people. I think this company puts a lot of effort to make sure everybody is connected...(P3)

Upon completing the evaluation of comments related to this sub-theme, the researcher found that participants who currently hold non-managerial roles were notably more vocal in expressing their experiences of a welcoming work environment, characterized by openness and

approachability, compared to participants who currently hold managerial roles. This finding was validated by using the crosstab query feature available in the NVivo 14 software. Results from this crosstab query are illustrated below in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Organizational Hierarchy Comparison for Theme 3 – Welcoming Work Environment*

Theme	Organizational Hierarchy	
	Managerial	Non-Managerial
Positive Perceptions of Organizational Culture		
Welcoming Work Environment	9.09%	90.91%
Comments - Percentage		

***Commitment to DIB Efforts.***

Although participants expressed disappointment regarding their employer's commitment towards the representation and advancement of Latinx employees, a palpable sense of pride was voiced by the participants when describing their employer's broader commitment to DIB initiatives and their interest in building an inclusive workplace. Participants shared that witnessing the dedication of their employers in launching and sustaining DIB efforts has evoked a sense of pride and appreciation, even while expecting a higher effort towards supporting Latinx employees. Below are various participant comments related to this sub-theme.

P4 said:

I really appreciate that my employer puts diversity at the forefront of how we operate, so an example is that quarterly, we review exactly how many people are hired... So, we know how many African Americans got hired, how many Hispanics, Latinos, Caucasians and all the others...our company prioritizes diversity as part of our recruitment strategy as well. So, that is very important to us...(P4)



P11 said:

It is a purely special place, and it's not just because they're paying my check, I promise...one of their core values that they have is diversity and inclusion...they were very particular about putting their money where their mouth is; giving us the opportunities to do a lot of diversity and inclusion. They do make these efforts, they acknowledge their errors, and they take the input of employees important, they take it to heart...(P11)

P6 said:

It has been awesome...for example, you will hear the very CEO of the company being in the opening keynote and talking about the disability divide. When you hear the highest leader in the company supporting the cause, you are more open to at least consider because it then becomes the company voice. Even if you're reluctant to work with that, you know clearly that sends a signal that that's where the company is going... (P6)

P10 said:

The company I think has positioned well for the next few years. I think they have already invested the right resources into prioritizing DIB, but I think just overall the company creates a lot of programs, a lot of internal campaigns, conversations, panels, etc....Broadly, the company is doing a lot more. Like I said, we're investing a lot more into kind of creating awareness and to driving strategic initiatives in order to really understand how each person feels about the company's efforts and I think they also take very proactive steps in gathering feedback and insight into our experience...there's

definitely a lot of effort. A lot of work to be done. I think they're definitely heading in the right direction...(P10)

Upon completing the evaluation of comments related to this sub-theme, it was found that participants in non-managerial roles shared a higher volume of comments regarding their employer's commitment to DIB efforts compared to participants in managerial roles. This finding was validated by using the crosstab query feature available in the NVivo 14 software. Results from this crosstab query are illustrated below in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Organizational Hierarchy Comparison for Theme 3 – Commitment to DIB Efforts*

Theme	Organizational Hierarchy	
	Managerial	Non-Managerial
Positive Perceptions of Organizational Culture		
Commitment to DIB Efforts Comments - Percentage	10%	90%

#### **Theme 4: Inclusive Practices in the Workplace**

This last theme, divided into two sub-themes, addresses the second research question, “What impact, if any, do DIB efforts have on the meaning of an inclusive work environment for Latinx immigrants?”. This theme summarizes the participants' perspective concerning the need to further enhance and refine DIB initiatives within the workplace. In essence, the impact of existing DIB efforts in their workplaces has led them to believe that further efforts are needed to maintain a genuinely inclusive work environment, particularly in sustaining inclusive human resources practices and executive commitment. The two sub-themes of this theme are outreach and retention practices and leadership commitment.

### ***Outreach and Retention Practices.***

Participants acknowledged and appreciated the positive impact of DIB efforts in fostering a welcoming and inclusive work environment. However, alongside their appreciation, participants also expressed a desire to witness greater inclusivity in human resources practices, particularly those related to talent outreach and employee retention. Participants consider there is opportunity to enhance these practices in a variety of ways, including launching early outreach initiatives in Latinx communities to raise awareness of career opportunities in the technology field, nurturing the growth of Latinx talent through career development programs such as internships, and implementing effective retention strategies tailored to the Latinx workforce. Below are participant comments related to this sub-theme.

P10 said:

It's a two-fold problem, we're not hiring, we are not looking hard enough for talent that is Black and Latinx but then at the same time, there's not enough talent out there that has the skills and the education and the training in STEM or in tech to be able to transition and thrive in the tech industry...It's not just about hiring Latinx people, but it's about literally investing in and communicating with the community... there's just a big gap where my employer can really elevate its presence by partnering with Latino organizations, Latino media, like Univision or Telemundo...(P10)

P14 said:

From a recruiting perspective, the way to solve the problems that we have today is starting them early on...it's starting early with people's careers, through internships, through programs and getting them excited about a career in technology. So, I think that's also a big part, and the only way to do that is by giving back. By having my employer go

to schools and universities and presenting, especially in the not so affluent areas, your inner cities and basically taking what we typically might take to university and saying, let's take this to smaller schools or middle schools. They may not necessarily have the funds to do these kinds of things of volunteering or time and so forth, so it definitely goes back to my earlier comment. It takes a village. It takes all kinds of sponsorship and involvement... (P14)

P13 said:

I think companies focus so much on getting diverse talent into the company, but they also need to put the same effort and same energy into keeping them and keeping them happy and retaining them with a good culture once they're in... (P13)

### ***Leadership Commitment.***

Participants emphasized the importance of unwavering and strong leadership commitment for the efficacy of DIB efforts within the workplace. According to participants, consistent leadership support is not only essential for launching DIB initiatives but also vital for sustained success in fostering an inclusive work environment over the long term. Participants argued that leadership commitment must be an intrinsic part of the organizational culture, serving as a foundational pillar for DIB efforts. Below are participant comments related to this sub-theme, illustrating their viewpoints.

P1 said:

If the leaders don't believe it's a real issue, then other things will take the priority. Of course, there's a lot of things that a company does, but if that is not prioritized then it will just go to the backlog and other things will take over. There needs to be a push from

leadership in order for the rest of the company to follow...there has to be intentionality behind all these decisions...(P1)

P14 said:

So there's a lot of intentionality, we're not perfect at it. There's still a lot for us to grow and improve upon but I think the discussions are there. But I think the biggest thing is that it's getting to where we have executive sponsorship. A lot of this has to start from the top bottom. A lot of times historically our teams and our organizations have relied on the shoulders of recruiting, and that's one component but it takes a village. I presented that question yesterday with quite a few of our leaders specifically around we really have to have executive sponsorship. We have to invest in the areas that require us to really go out and identify people in the market, but more importantly, we need the messaging to come from our leadership and saying, this is why it's important to us... (P14)

P6 said:

You really need executive support. I think one of the things that has been successful here, it is top down, meaning there is real leadership support and there are resources dedicated to that and there is a whole effort...I think that's one of the things that I think failed in my previous job and that's why I'm kind of telling you about because that to me was a big differentiator to hear actual leaders in the company taking part... I guess if one is in a hostile environment and there is a group of people that are really committed and they want to try it, of course one should try and one should do as much as one can but as long as it doesn't get leadership support, I think, the chances are low... (P16)

Upon completing the evaluation of comments related to this sub-theme, it was found that participants who have been living in the United States for less than 10 years made no comments

regarding leadership commitment to DIB efforts. Instead, all comments related to this sub-theme were made by participants who have resided in the United States for over 10 years. This finding was validated by using the crosstab query feature available in the NVivo 14 software. Results from this crosstab query are illustrated below in Table 9.

**Table 9**

*Years in the United States Comparison for Theme 4*

Theme	Years in the United States	
	Less than 10 years	More than 10 years
Inclusive Practices in the Workplace		
Leadership Commitment	0%	100%
Comments - Percentage		

### Summary

The research findings presented in this chapter summarize the data gathered from 15 participants in response to the research questions. Study findings were categorized into four major themes: 1) lack of leadership encouragement for conflict resolution, 2) current landscape of Latinx professionals in the technology industry, 3) positive perceptions of organizational culture, and 4) inclusive practices in the workplace. Collectively, these phenomenological themes and their respective sub-themes provide a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry regarding the impact of DIB efforts within their workplace environments, their encounters with conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts, and the meaning of these experiences for them. The perceptions and lived experiences of these immigrant professionals span various aspects, including workplace conflict, career development of Latinx professionals in the technology sector, and their collective aspirations for an inclusive and equitable work environment.

Interpretations of these findings will be discussed in Chapter 5 together with recommendations and potential implications for fostering positive social change.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to expand the understanding of the employee experience of Latinx immigrants employed in the technology industry, particularly in relation to the impacts of DIB initiatives in the workplace, their experiences with conflicts related to the implementation of DIB initiatives, and the meaning of these experiences for them. Even though Latinx immigrants represent 47.5% of the foreign-born labor force employed in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021), immigrants have often been neglected by organizational researchers (Valenzuela et al., 2020) reflecting a failure in prioritizing the study of immigrant experiences in professional settings. Employing a phenomenological approach, this study explored the perspectives and lived experiences of 15 immigrant professionals currently working in technology companies in the United States.

The study was structured around two central research questions aimed at providing insights that can assist technology companies in understanding the perspective of Latinx immigrant employees. Furthermore, the study results can potentially inform DIB strategies focused on enhancing both inclusivity and proficiency in conflict resolution within the workplace. The results of this study indicate discernible patterns that affirm, refute, or extend knowledge outlined in existing literature related to the employee experience of immigrants. This chapter discusses the interpretations of the research findings when compared to existing literature, limitations of the study, implications for theory, practice, and positive social change, recommendations for future research, and study's conclusions.

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

As described in Chapter 2, previous research has indicated a deficiency in understanding the employee experience of immigrants. There is an evident need to delve deeper into the lived



experiences and perspectives of immigrants (Binggeli et al., 2013). The findings of this research reveal further insights into the employee experience of immigrants summarized in four major themes. The findings within each theme confirm, disconfirm, or expand knowledge in existing literature.

### **Theme 1: Lack of Leadership Encouragement for Conflict Resolution**

The first theme, lack of leadership encouragement for conflict resolution, addresses the first research question, “How are conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts experienced by Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry?”. Participants shared they have experienced conflict situations where their leaders have failed to offer effective guidance on conflict resolution. Instead, leaders advised employees to refrain from discussing topics that could potentially create conflicts such as politics and religion. Even though participants revealed their employers have attempted to or are presently leading DIB efforts embracing the value of diversity among work teams, participants have not felt motivated or guided to openly express diverse perspectives including contradicting opinions. Participants have noticed a lack of leadership emphasis on developing constructive conflict resolution strategies during challenging situations. This finding contradicts the concept emphasized by Ely and Thomas (2001) who argue that when a work group views workforce diversity as a valuable resource for learning, employees have the opportunity to experience and engage in constructive intergroup conflict.

Furthermore, when interpreting this finding from a systems theory perspective, this finding affirms the notion that bounded rationality can serve as a determining factor for leaders who decide to avoid conflict or fail to support conflict resolution practices. According to Meadows (2008), the concept of bounded rationality in systems theory speaks to the notion that the logic employed for decision-making or to engage in actions within one segment of the system

may not necessarily be considered reasonable for the broader system. Bounded rationality further suggests that there is limited information available in any single part of a system; hence, each actor in a system may or may not make decisions that are conducive to the overall benefit of the entire system. Drawing from the concept of bounded rationality, one can argue that leaders within the participants' organizations have made decisions with limited information, possibly failing to include the perspectives of employees. Consequently, these decisions have not been perceived as entirely reasonable by the participants, indicating a potential gap in communication, and understanding between leadership and employees.

Additionally, participants communicated that they have noticed a lack of transparency among their colleagues when it comes to acknowledging conflicts or voicing disagreement with the existing status quo. Participants attribute this lack of transparency to the belief that colleagues prefer to avoid situations where they may be perceived as difficult or where expressing an opinion could potentially lead to conflicts with their peers. When analyzing this finding through a systems theory lens, one can conclude that a pattern has been developed among employees. As described by Meadows (2008), a system is a dynamic set of interconnected elements operating coherently in a way that produces a pattern of behavior over time. The prevalent preference among employees to refrain from expressing disagreement or acknowledging conflicts in the workplace can be considered an existing pattern within the organization.

## **Theme 2: Current Landscape of Latinx Professionals in the Technology Industry**

The second major theme, current landscape of Latinx professionals in the technology industry, also delves into the first research question, "How are conflict situations related to the implementation of DIB efforts experienced by Latinx immigrants working in the technology

industry?” Participants described experiencing internal conflicts associated with the underrepresentation of Latinx professionals in the technology sector and a lack of targeted career development support for Latinx immigrants. Participants expressed feelings of disappointment and dissatisfaction toward their current employers regarding the progress achieved on these specific matters. Despite recognizing their employers have made progress on the implementation of other DIB initiatives such as employee resource groups and cultural celebrations; the positive feelings evoked by this progress are countered by the desire to see increased representation of Latinx professionals in leadership positions. Participants stated they would like to see their employers enhance efforts in supporting upward mobility for Latinx professionals. This finding confirms the idea presented by Ortlieb and Sieben (2014), which suggests that immigrants with university degrees frequently encounter a lack of clear pathways that could support upward mobility within an organization.

Moreover, some participants revealed they also had experienced internal conflicts associated with the Latinx cultural value of humility and their aspiration for professional development, indicating a tension between cultural norms and career aspirations. They acknowledged the need to unlearn the idea of being humble, which is typically reinforced by the Latinx culture. Participants shared they had to become more comfortable with certain behaviors such as openly sharing individual accomplishments at work in order to advance in their professional careers. One can argue this behavioral change points to cultural differences between collectivist cultures, which prioritize the needs and goals of the group over the individual, and individualistic cultures, which emphasize individual achievement and personal success. Collectivist cultures often value harmony, cooperation, and maintaining social relationships within the group, while individualistic cultures prioritize independence, self-expression, and

personal goals (Gelfand et al., 1996). These cultural distinctions emphasize how each type of culture can impact professional career advancement differently, influencing individuals' attitudes toward self-promotion and humility. The concept of demonstrating humility by emphasizing modesty and downplaying individual achievements was not deemed effective by participants, instead they consider self-promotion is a more effective dynamic for professional advancement in the U.S. workforce.

No past peer-reviewed literature was found that directly addresses this behavioral change among Latinx immigrants working in technology companies in the United States; however, when analyzing this finding from a social identity theory perspective, one can argue that the behavioral change in participants may have been triggered by one of their social identities. Hogg et al. (1995) explain that individuals perceive themselves members of multiple identity categories and each category is represented in the mind of individuals as a social identity that both defines and guides their attributes; yet a specific social identity becomes prominent depending on the given context. Examples and reflections conveyed by the participants illustrate the notion that participants connected the attribute of humbleness with their Latinx identity. Upon recognizing that this attribute was not advantageous for career advancement, another social identity, potentially that of a U.S. worker, became more salient in the workplace. This other identity can be presumed to encompass assertive self-promotion as a notable component, prompting participants to adopt a behavioral change in the workplace.

Furthermore, this behavioral change among Latinx employees could also be attributed to the concept of code switching, wherein individuals change their behavior to fit different cultural contexts (Santiago et al., 2021). Code switching allows Latinx employees to navigate between their cultural norms and the expectations of the dominant workplace culture. In environments

where individualistic values predominate, Latinx professionals may find it necessary to modify their behaviors and assertiveness levels to align with the prevailing cultural norms of self-promotion and assertiveness. This adaptation exposes the negotiation of cultural identities that Latinx employees undergo as they navigate professional spaces, balancing their cultural heritage with the demands of the workplace environment.

### **Theme 3: Positive Perceptions of Organizational Culture**

The third major theme, positive perceptions of organizational culture, addresses the second research question, “What impact, if any, do DIB efforts have on the meaning of an inclusive work environment for Latinx immigrants?”. Participants highlighted how various DIB efforts have made a difference in the cultivation of a work environment that is not only welcoming but also inclusive. Participants, while referencing multiple DIB activities such as cultural celebrations, employee resource groups, unconscious bias training, and networking events as important contributors to a positive work culture, they also highlighted how these kinds of activities have nurtured kindness, respect, and connection among colleagues. The two most common activities among all participants were the cultural celebrations and the unconscious bias training. They recalled engaging in the cultural celebrations at different months throughout the year and completing the unconscious bias training either at their onboarding period or at specific intervals on an annual basis (i.e. every six months). Participants’ active engagement in cultural celebrations while experiencing a positive work environment affirms the viewpoint presented by Hays-Thomas (2015), advocating that sharing historical and cultural factors relevant to the various ethnicities represented in the workforce increases the likeliness of positive interactions in the workplace. Likewise, participants’ involvement in the unconscious bias training sessions in conjunction with experiencing a positive work environment, supports the perspective presented

by Enoksen (2016), emphasizing that offering opportunities for employees to increase their awareness of discriminatory behaviors in the workplace is a crucial step toward creating an inclusive work environment.

Furthermore, participants indicated that their positive perceptions of the current work culture were also shaped by witnessing their employer's dedication to launching and maintaining DIB efforts. Despite expressing disappointment with their employer's commitment specifically towards the representation and advancement of Latinx employees, participants voiced a sense of pride when describing their employer's broader commitment to DIB initiatives and their attentiveness to foster inclusivity in the workplace. Participants' reflections projected a sense of hope on the future development of solid DIB efforts exclusively focused on Latinx employees. When analyzing this finding from an equity theory lens, one can argue that participants seem to balance their sense of disappointment on Latinx-related efforts, with a sense of pride in the broader commitment to DIB initiatives. This balancing act seems to be subjective to the perception that the organization is moving in the right direction, even if improvements are still needed to address the needs of Latinx employees. Equity theory suggests that individuals are motivated to maintain a balance in all areas of their life (Virtanen & Elovainio, 2018) and their judgments of situations as under-rewarded or over-rewarded will predict their future behaviors (O'Neill & Mone, 1998). When applying this notion to the finding described above, one can argue that even though participants perceive a sense of inequity, represented as an under-rewarded situation (lack of Latinx-related efforts), their optimism might stem from the belief that the organization's commitment to DIB efforts will pave the way for the future development of Latinx-related efforts that would resolve current inequities. Nonetheless, if the gap between expectations and reality continues to widen, participants might engage in certain withdrawal

behaviors to restore equity. As Blakely et al. (2005) state, some of these withdrawal behaviors could be represented in different ways such as lower performance (Cowherd & Levine, 1992), or deviant behaviors (Skarlicki et al., 1999) among others.

#### **Theme 4: Inclusive Practices in the Workplace**

Lastly, the fourth major theme, inclusive practices in the workplace, also addresses the second research question, “What impact, if any, do DIB efforts have on the meaning of an inclusive work environment for Latinx immigrants?” When sharing their perspective on the impact of DIB efforts in their workplace, participants conveyed that the advancements made in certain DIB efforts have prompted them to believe that additional efforts are needed to maintain an inclusive work environment for Latinx employees. Despite acknowledging the positive impact of current DIB efforts, participants believe that further enhancements in human resources practices, particularly those related to talent outreach and employee retention, can make a significant difference in the inclusion of Latinx talent across all organizational levels.

Participants consider there is room to further elevate these practices in various ways such as implementing early outreach initiatives in Latinx communities, preparing future Latinx talent through career development programs, and adopting effective retention practices for Latinx employees. There is a scarcity of peer-reviewed literature exploring the viewpoints of Latinx employees in the technology field; nevertheless, when interpreting this finding through the lens of systems theory, it could be asserted that participants’ perspective aligns with two key principles of systems theory, feedback loops and emergence of needs. Meadows (2008) affirms that information carried within the feedback loop produces an impact on the behavior of a system. The participants’ observations can be seen as a form of feedback loop within the system; hence, their perceptions may guide future actions and decisions in their respective organizations.

Additionally, the participants' expression of the need for additional efforts aligns with the systems theory concept that needs and challenges can emerge within a system (Meadows, 2008). The identification of the needs for further enhancements in human resources practices can be considered a reflection of the nature of the system responding to its internal environment.

The second sub-theme within this theme, leadership commitment, reflects participants' perspective regarding the crucial role of solid and continuous leadership commitment in the success of DIB efforts in the workplace. Participants believe that consistent leadership support is not merely vital for initiation DIB initiatives but is equally critical for ensuring long-term success in preserving an inclusive work environment. Participants consider that a deficiency in leadership commitment hinders the establishment of a truly inclusive work environment. Conversely, when there is robust leadership commitment, it can manifest in a variety of ways including intentional development of DIB efforts, comprehensive support for inclusive activities across the organization, and a clear vision that integrates inclusive standards into the social fabric of the organization. This finding confirms the notion expressed by Sabharwal (2014) stating that commitment from top leaderships to foster inclusion is one of the key behaviors of organizational inclusion. Likewise, this insight affirms findings drawn by Shore et al. (2018), emphasizing the necessity for organizations to embody a solid leadership commitment to inclusion efforts through concrete strategies and demonstrable actions. Lastly, this finding also aligns with research findings reported by Nishii and Mayer (2009) stating that consistent positive relations between a leader and their diverse teams is critical for organizational success.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this qualitative research employed multiple strategies to ensure the validity of the research findings, the following limitations exist within the study. First, the limited research



examining the employee experience of immigrants as it relates to the implementation of DIB initiatives in the workplace represents a significant limitation. Although there is ample literature exploring various dimensions associated with the impact of DIB efforts in the workplace, there is a noticeable absence of research centered on immigrant employees working in the technology sector. This scarcity of research extends to the exploration of conflicts encountered by immigrants in the context of DIB efforts, and their understanding of what constitutes an inclusive work environment. This gap in the existing literature posed a limit on the contextualization of the research findings within the broader research landscape. Another limit is the study's reliance on a sample size of 15 participants. While these individuals provided valuable insights, their experiences may not fully represent the diverse array of perspectives present within the larger Latinx immigrant population working in the technology industry. Lastly, the study's timeframe presents another constraint, as it limits the exploration of dynamic changes in participants' experiences over an extended period. Longitudinal studies could offer a deeper understanding of the evolving employee experience among Latinx immigrants, capturing developments that may not be evident within a shorter research timeframe.

### **Implications and Contributions to the Field**

This research contributes to the study of conflict by providing insights into understanding and addressing conflict within diverse workplaces. The four major themes identified in this study embody the perspectives of Latinx immigrants currently working in the technology industry. The first two identified themes, lack of leadership encouragement for conflict resolution and current landscape of Latinx professionals in the technology industry, help to raise awareness about interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts experienced by Latinx immigrants in the workplace. Reflections shared by participants indicate a need to develop leadership practices that prioritize

conflict resolution guidance, cultural competency, career development support, and transparency in the workplace. Moreover, the last two identified themes, positive perceptions of organizational culture and inclusive practices in the workplace, shed light on the impact of DIB efforts in the workplace and practices that can potentially elevate levels of inclusion in an organization from the perspective of Latinx immigrants. The findings of this research can help conflict resolution practitioners in amplifying their awareness of conflicts that may arise during the implementation of inclusive workplace policies and practices in organizations.

Furthermore, this research responds to the call from Binggeli et al. (2013) asking researchers to further investigate the employee experience of immigrants. This study contributes insights into the sentiments and perceptions of Latinx immigrants regarding their work environment and their views of what constitutes an inclusive workplace. This information holds the potential to benefit organizational and management researchers seeking to further explore elements required for the development of successful DIB strategies aimed at enhancing the inclusion of Latinx immigrants. Additionally, study findings can help technology companies seeking to launch or enhance DIB efforts, specifically tailored to address the needs and aspirations of Latinx professionals.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The existing gap in literature regarding the employee experience of Latinx immigrants in the technology industry presents a promising opportunity for researchers. Future studies could be centered on amplifying the understanding of this topic as it relates to the impact of DIB efforts in the workplace and conflicts associated to it. The first recommendation is for future research to explore the effectiveness of conflict resolution training programs tailored for leaders within technology companies. This type of research could assess the impact of such programs on

cultivating work environments where conflicts are recognized and addressed. Additionally, studying the role of transparent communication within diverse teams in the technology sector could generate interesting findings to understand its influence on conflict resolution, team dynamics, and overall organizational culture. Another direction for future research is to investigate the effectiveness of early outreach programs targeted at Latinx communities and retention strategies benefiting the career growth of Latinx talent. Moreover, researchers can investigate the impact of mentoring programs for Latinx immigrant professionals in the technology industry, examining their efficiency in generating career development support and job advancement opportunities.

Furthermore, future researchers can delve into exploring the impact of cultural competency training for organizational leaders, aiming to better understand the unique challenges faced by Latinx employees within technology companies. Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to delve deeper into exploring the interplay between covert and overt dynamics within diverse work environments, particularly concerning Latinx immigrant professionals. Investigating how these dynamics influence behaviors and interactions among employees could provide valuable insights into the complexities of group dynamics in such settings. Also, examining the impact of these dynamics on organizational culture, employee well-being, and productivity can offer actionable recommendations for fostering more inclusive and supportive work environments. Conferences such as the Tavistock Institute facilitated by Dr. Neil Katz at Nova Southeastern University can provide a platform for this type of exploration. Finally, it is recommended that future research includes longitudinal studies with a larger sample size. This approach allows for a more in-depth exploration of trends, enhancing the generalizability and robustness of findings and allowing for a more comprehensive exploration

of diverse perspectives, ultimately informing strategies for creating more inclusive, healthy, and supportive work environments for Latinx immigrants.

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation delved into several dynamics surrounding the experiences of Latinx immigrant professionals in the technology industry, shedding light on their challenges, opportunities, and the broader landscape of DIB initiatives within organizational settings. Firstly, the exploration of conflicts in diverse teams revealed the pivotal role leaders play in fostering constructive conflict resolution mechanisms. By championing transparent communication, empathy, and fairness, leaders can mitigate tensions and promote collaboration among diverse teams, ultimately enhancing organizational effectiveness. Moreover, findings affirmed the notion that while Latinx professionals contribute significantly to the growth and innovation of the technology sector, systemic inequities and limited representation underscore the urgent need for proactive and effective DIB initiatives. Within this context, it appears that there is a structural component influencing the upward mobility of Latinx employees, suggesting that without targeted structural changes, Latinx employees will likely remain in lower positions, perpetuating feelings of discontent and disenfranchisement among them.

Furthermore, findings highlighted the profound impact of inclusive workplace environments on employee well-being and performance. Cultivating cultures of belonging, respect, and appreciation can nurture diverse talents, drive innovation, and foster a sense of collective purpose within organizations. Additionally, study results emphasized the importance of proactive measures to address systemic biases and promote equitable opportunities for all employees. Embracing DIB efforts not only enriches organizational perspectives but also amplifies creativity, resilience, and adaptability in today's rapidly evolving business landscape.

In terms of implications and contributions to the field, this dissertation underscores the imperative for organizations to prioritize DIB efforts as strategic imperatives rather than mere compliance measures. By embracing inclusive leadership practices, implementing robust diversity initiatives, and fostering cultures of belonging, organizations can unlock the full potential of their diverse talent pool and drive sustainable growth in an increasingly globalized world. Future research endeavors should further explore the experiences of underrepresented groups, including Latinx immigrant professionals, within specific industries. By leveraging qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and embracing intersectional perspectives, scholars can advance our understanding of diversity and conflict dynamics and inform evidence-based strategies for building more healthy and inclusive workplaces.

In closing, this dissertation serves as a call for collective action towards building cultures of inclusion within organizational ecosystems. Through a comprehensive exploration of how Latinx immigrant employees perceive and navigate the impacts of DIB efforts in the workplace, their encounters with conflict situations related to the implementation of such efforts, and the significance of these experiences for them, study findings shed light on critical avenues for organizational growth and transformation. Embracing diversity as a source of strength and innovation, and prioritizing equity and inclusion as strategic imperatives, can pave the way for a more just, equitable, and prosperous future for all.

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## Appendix A: Consent Form



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**General Informed Consent Form**  
**NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled**

*Elevating Inclusion: Understanding the Employee Experience of Latinx Immigrants in the Technology Industry*

**Who is doing this research study?**

College: Halmos College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Conflict Resolution Studies

Principal Investigator: Angelica Coronel, M.S.

Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair: Ismael Muvingi, Ph.D.

Co-Investigator(s):

Site Information: Virtual Site (via Zoom)

Funding: Unfunded

**What is this study about?**

The purpose of this research study is to expand the understanding of the employee experience of immigrants as it relates to the implementation of diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) efforts in the workplace. More specifically, this research will follow a phenomenological approach to examine how Latinx immigrants working in the technology industry perceive the impact of DIB efforts and the meaning of these experiences for them.

**Why are you asking me to be in this research study?**

You are being asked to be in this research study because you meet the criteria for the population of this study. We are interested in the perspectives of individuals of Latin American descent on this subject. Participants must be over 18 years of age, work full-time in a technology company, hold a bachelor's degree, and reside in the United States.

This study will include about 15 people.

**What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?**

While you are taking part in this research study, you will participate in one (1) virtual interview lasting 60 min – 90 minutes.

Research Study Procedures - as a participant, this is what you will be doing:

- Must meet the criteria of the target population
- Participate in one 60 - 90-minute interview



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**Could I be removed from the study early by the research team?**

N/A

**Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?**

This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life.

**What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?**

You have the right to leave this research study at any time, or not be in it. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to be in the study anymore, you will not get any penalty or lose any services you have a right to get. If you choose to stop being in the study, any information collected about you **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the end of the study but you may request that it not be used.

**What if there is new information learned during the study that may affect my decision to remain in the study?**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to whether you want to remain in this study, this information will be given to you by the investigators. You may be asked to sign a new Informed Consent Form, if the information is given to you after you have joined the study.

**Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?**

There are no direct benefits from being in this research study. We hope the information learned from this study will inform researchers on the impact of diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) efforts on Latinx immigrant employees and the meaning of these experiences from their perspective. Research results can potentially inform the development of successful DIB strategies aimed at enhancing the inclusion of Latinx immigrants and assist in amplifying the awareness of conflicts that may evolve when adopting inclusive work policies and practices.

**Will I be paid or be given compensation for being in the study?**

You will not be given any payments or compensation for being in this research study.

**Will it cost me anything?**

There are no costs to you for being in this research study.

Ask the researchers if you have any questions about what it will cost you to take part in this research study (for example bills, fees, or other costs related to the research).

**How will you keep my information private?**



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Information we learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law and will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. As a participant, your name and demographic information will be safeguarded. This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any regulatory and granting agencies (if applicable). If we publish the results of the study in a scientific journal or book, we will not identify you. All confidential data will be kept securely in a password-protected digital file. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by through an electronic purge of the records. Hand-written interview notes will be shredded and discarded in a secure lockable paper bin.

**Will there be any Audio or Video Recording?**

This research study involves audio and/or video recording. This recording will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any of the people who gave the researcher money to do the study (if applicable). The recording will be kept, stored, and destroyed as stated in the section above. Because what is in the recording could be used to find out that it is you, it is not possible to be sure that the recording will always be kept confidential. The researcher will try to keep anyone not working on the research from listening to or viewing the recording.

**Whom can I contact if I have questions, concerns, comments, or complaints?**

If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have more questions about the research, your research rights, or have a research-related injury, please contact:

Primary contact:

Angelica Coronel, M.S. can be reached at 786-280-1848. Angelica will be readily available during and after normal work hours.

If primary is not available, contact:

Ismael Muvingi, Ph.D. can be reached at 954-262-3023. Dr. Muvingi will be readily available during normal work hours.

**Research Participants Rights**

For questions/concerns regarding your research rights, please contact:

Institutional Review Board  
Nova Southeastern University  
(954) 262-5369 / Toll Free: 1-866-499-0790  
[IRB@nova.edu](mailto:IRB@nova.edu)

You may also visit the NSU IRB website at [www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-research-participants](http://www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-research-participants) for further information regarding your rights as a research participant.

**All space below was intentionally left blank.**



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**Research Consent & Authorization Signature Section**

**Voluntary Participation** - You are not required to participate in this study. In the event you do participate, you may leave this research study at any time. If you leave this research study before it is completed, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

If you agree to participate in this research study, sign this section. You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep. You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this form.

**SIGN THIS FORM ONLY IF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE TRUE:**

- You have read the above information.
- Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction about the research

**Adult Signature Section**

I have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study.

Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent and Authorization	Signature of Person Obtaining Consent & Authorization	Date