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Perception of Inclusion Among Minority Civilian Personnel Within the Military Departments and Defense Agencies of the Department of Defense

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Perception of Inclusion Among Minority Civilian Personnel Within the Military
Departments and Defense Agencies of the Department of Defense

by

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A Thesis Quality Research Paper

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ACRONYMS GLOSSARY

- DCPAS: Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service
- DI: Diversity Index
- DoD: U.S. Department of Defense
- D&I: Diversity and Inclusion
- DoD D&I Strategic Plan: U.S. Department of Defense Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2012-2017
- EEOC: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- ERG: Employee Resource Groups
- FEORP: Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program
- FEVS: Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
- New IQ: New Inclusion Quotient
- MLDC: Military Leadership Diversity Commission
- OPM: U.S. Office Of Personnel Management
- VA: Department of Veteran Affairs

BACKGROUND

As the racial and ethnic composition of the United States' population becomes increasingly diverse, government agencies must adhere to the theory of representative bureaucracy and promote a workforce reflective of the diverse American population (Mosher, 1968). Scholars reason that public administrators must be diligent in developing systems and structures to ensure that the public administration workforce appropriately embodies the communities they support (Pitts & Wise, 2010). Organizations have adopted diversity management practices to establish a mechanism that promotes diversity within their workforce. Researchers argue that organizations must accompany diversity management with a culture of inclusion to build an environment that cultivates and supports a diverse workforce and achieves representative bureaucracy (Pless & Maak, 2004). As a result of understanding the intertwined relations between diversity and inclusion, the public sector has implemented diversity management practices to foster an environment and organizational climate that enhances a sense of inclusion among the staff (Bae et al., 2017).

The development of representative bureaucracy is critical to the Department of Defense. As America's largest government agency, the Department of Defense (DoD) holds the responsibility to "provide the military forces needed to deter war and ensure our nation's security" (*U.S. Department of Defense About*, n.d.). In efforts to ensure diversity, the Department of Defense has enacted a joint diversity management practice and inclusion strategy for its civilian workforce to ensure that the agency can adapt to support the needs of the military forces to confront evolving global threats. This program evaluation aims to understand the effectiveness of the Department of Defense (DoD) Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategic Plan 2012-2017

(2012) in impacting the work culture of the civilian workforce and the DoD's ability to shift the agency's culture to go beyond accepting diversity to creating an inclusive work environment.

This investigation proposes the following research question - What impact has the Department of Defense (DoD) Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategic Plan (2012) had on the perception of inclusion among civilian minority personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies? This study is intentionally positioned to investigate the perception of inclusion within ethnic/racial and gender minorities because of the ongoing underrepresentation of these groups across all sectors of American society (Brown & Kellough, 2020; Hunt et al., 2020; Kellough, 1990). By understanding the impact of the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, the investigation aspires to contribute to the limited scholarship of civilian ethnic minority employees' experiences of inclusion within the DoD.

Department of Defense

Established in 1947, the Department of Defense (DoD) serves as an executive branch providing the president with the military strength vital to prevent and safeguard the security of the nation (*U.S. Department of Defense About*, n.d.). As the largest government agency, the DoD has a \$752.9 billion national defense budget, employs 2.91 million service members and civilians, and has 4,800 sites in over 160 countries (*U.S. Department of Defense About*, n.d.). The DoD includes five primary institutions that work collectively under the guidance of the Secretary of Defense to achieve the agency's mission. The five DoD institutions include: the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Joint Staff, the Military Departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force), the Unified Combatant Commands, and the Defense Agencies (McInnis, 2021). As a cooperative system, each DoD institution provides strategic,

rapid, and a full spectrum of military operations to ensure that the country is equipped to handle internal and external threats.

Referred to as part of the “Total Military Force,” the DoD military departments and defense agencies include active duty, reserve, guard forces, and DoD civilian personnel (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.-e). The total military force illustrates the strength of the DoD and the range of personnel required for the DoD to achieve its organizational mission and goals. According to the *2020 Demographics Profile of the Military Community* (n.d.), the total military force consisted of 3,494,518 members, including 38.2% DoD Active Duty, 29.2% Ready Reserve, 25.7% DoD Civilian Personnel, 5.5% Retired Reserve, and 0.2% Standby Reserve. Appointed to federal civil service, Department of Defense civilian personnel are critical to the mission of the military departments and defense agencies, their contributions being recorded as far back as the American Revolution (Francis & Diaz, 2019). According to the 2020 Department of Defense Profile of the Military Community, 898,581 DoD civilian personnel serve in the military departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force) and defense agencies.

Table 1 provides an overview of the Department of Defense civilian personnel population for the years of interest. Although the total DoD civilian personnel workforce has fluctuated throughout the years, it continues to be a unique and necessary workforce. DoD civilian personnel hold a range of roles and responsibilities within the DoD military departments and defense agencies, including engineering, supply management, information technology, cybersecurity, intelligence, financial management, law, logistics, cybersecurity, and combat readiness Francis & Diaz (2019). Compared to other federal employee groups, the DoD civilian personnel population is not widely studied, particularly as it pertains to the perception of inclusion among minority employees (Chordiya, 2020; Lee, 2020; Liggans et al., 2019; Nelson

& Piatak, 2021; Resh et al., 2021; Vanderschuere & Birdsall, 2019). Therefore, this program evaluation intends to contribute to the gap in scholarship focused solely on the DoD civilian population.

Table 1

Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Populations

	2010 ^a	2011 ^b	2018 ^c	2019 ^d	2020 ^e
DoD Civilian Personnel Population Appropriated Funds (APF)	783,008	788,289	760,710	778,708	790,584
DoD Civilian Personnel Population Non-Appropriated Funds (NAF)	136,246	133,100	122,688	117,452	107,997
DoD Civilian Personnel Total Population	919,254	921,389	883,398	896,160	898,581

Note. DoD civilian personnel population includes the military departments (Army, Navy, Airforce) and the Defense Agencies. DoD Civilian Personnel Appropriated Funds (APF) are “civilian employees are funded by congressional appropriations,” while Civilian Personnel Population Non-Appropriated Funds (NAF) are civilian employees “funded by revenue generating activities.” (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.-e, p. 5)

^a2010 *Demographics Profile of the Military Community*, n.d. ^b2011 *Demographics Profile of the Military Community*, n.d. ^c2018 *Demographics Profile of the Military Community*, n.d.

^d2019 *Demographics Profile of the Military Community*, n.d. ^e 2020 *Demographics Profile of the Military Community*, n.d.

Diversity in Public Administration

Formally, scholars defined diversity as groups based on social attributes (e.g., race, gender, age, ethnicity, mental/physical abilities, and sexual orientation) and values, expectations, and experiences (e.g., education, religion, socioeconomic status, languages, and cultural practices) (Adams, 2013; Hubbard, 2004; Rice, 2004). Due to the lack of available data and research, this investigation will focus on race, ethnicity, and gender diversity within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. America has undergone a shift in its population and workforce in the last several decades. According to U.S. Census Bureau (2021), between 2010 and 2020, America's Diversity Index (DI), which measures "the probability that two people chosen at random will be from different race and ethnicity groups," increased from 54.9% to 61.1%. When disaggregated, there are significant shifts in the three largest racial or ethnic groups in the country—White alone, not Hispanic or Latino decreased from 63.7% to 57.8%; Hispanic or Latino increased from 16.3% to 18.7%; and Black or African American alone, not Hispanic or Latino decreased from 12.2% to 12.1%. From the workforce perspective, the country identifies similar trends; between 1979 to 2019, White employees have decreased from 88.3% to 77.7%, Non-White employees have increased from 11.7% to 22.3%, and Hispanic or Latino employees have increased from 4.8% to 17.6% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Furthermore, between 1980 and 2020, the gender characteristics of the nation's population have changed from 110.5 million men and 116.49 million women to 162.26 million men and 167.23 women (*U.S. Population by Sex 2019*, n.d.). Women's representation increased to 47% of the U.S. labor force in 2018 compared to 30% in 1950 (Geiger & Parker, 2018).

America's population and workforce have become increasingly diverse, consisting of individuals with different backgrounds, mindsets, cultures, and experiences. In response to

America's evolving population and workforce composition, the concept of diversity has been at the forefront of American public administration scholarship and practice (Carrizales & Gaynor, 2013; Pitts & Wise, 2010; Sabharwal et al., 2018). Blessett et al. (2013) emphasize that diversity is critical for public administration practice from two perspectives—governance and management. In the context of governance, diversity is the core principle of the theory of representative bureaucracy, which puts forward the urgency for the composition of public organizations to reflect the populations that they serve and encourage a greater degree of civic engagement (Bradbury & Kellough, 2011; Riccucci et al., 2016). In addition, Rosenbloom et al. (2015) express the importance of representation through the political approach of public administration, emphasizing how representation supports the responsiveness of public administrators.

From a management perspective, Hewins-Maroney & Williams (2013) explore the global challenges stemming from a diverse workforce, identifying the necessity for management practices that can adapt and support the needs of an evolving workforce. To accompany diversity, scholars introduce the need for organizations to adopt inclusion to support and enhance the experience of diverse employees. For the purposes of this project, inclusion is defined as "a practice—an interacting set of structures, values, norms, group and organizational climates, and individual and collective behaviors, all connected with inclusion experiences in a mutually reinforcing and dynamic system." (Ferdman & Deane, 2014, p. 68).

By purposefully integrating diversity and inclusion, American public administration strives to uphold one of its core pillars—social equity—and ensure that it continues to attain bureaucratic representation in its practice (Frederickson, 1990). Social equity is significant as the country's population and workforce composition continue to evolve. Due to the

multidimensional nature of diversity and inclusion (D&I), public administration has adopted mechanisms to combine workforce diversity with organizational structures to build an environment conducive to minority employees (Kellough & Naff, 2004; Pitts, 2006; Sabharwal, 2014).

Drivers Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

Throughout history, many drivers have promoted the importance and value of diversity within all aspects of society. Guided by the mission to protect and serve the American people, the U.S. military is one of the first institutions to integrate the core values to promote diversity and inclusion within its ranks. A pivotal moment in building inclusion within the U.S. military was adopting President Truman's Executive Order 9981. Through Exec. Order No. 9981 (1948), President Truman called for the U.S. Armed Forces' desegregation and accountability to ensure that the U.S. military achieves its goals of equal treatment and opportunity for service members. An equally important step towards diversity and inclusion was executing the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act established the foundation for the nation to strive toward creating an equitable society through equal voting rights, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or gender, and the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (Civil Rights Act, 1964). The EEOC enforced the Civil Rights Act within the federal government to institute a "respectful and inclusive workplace with equal employment for all" (*U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Overview*, n.d.).

Since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the United States has authorized a series of executive orders that continue to increase diversity across all sectors of the U.S federal government. Such as Exec. Order No. 13171 (2000), designed to increase Hispanic employment in the federal government; Exec. Order No. 13548 (2010) aimed to increase federal employment of individuals

with disabilities; and Exec. Order No. 13583 (2011) intended to promote diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity within the federal government. In particular, President Obama's Exec. Order No. 13583 (2011) mandated that the Department of Defense consider how the organization recruits, hires, develops, promotes, and retains its workforce. Furthermore, President Obama's directive emphasized that the DoD take concerted measures to ensure that it "creates a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to participate to their full potential" (p. 52847).

The United States recognizes that diversity, inclusion, and equity are imperative for the nation's success and that intentional efforts are implemented to strive for bureaucratic representation. The country continues to authorize directives that promote the federal government to be inclusive and dismantle structural barriers that create inequity within the agency. Examples of these directives include advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government (Exec. Order No. 13985, 2021), preventing and combating discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation (Exec. Order No. 13988, 2021), and the establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council (Exec. Order No. 14020, 2021). In the last decades, the concepts of diversity and inclusion have continuously surfaced as a priority. Motivated by several drivers, the federal government remains cognizant of the necessary effort to guarantee that the U.S. government can attract and retain diverse talent and advance its position as a world leader.

Diversity in U.S. Federal Government

As the human resource agency and workforce policy manager of the federal government, the U.S. Office Of Personnel Management (OPM) established the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), which is responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the federal government

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) initiatives. Under Title 5, United States Code § 7201 (1966), the OPM provides the annual Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program Report (FEORP) to Congress, providing demographic information on the federal workforce. The FEORP reports serve as a mechanism of accountability to ensure that the U.S. federal government recruits, develops, and retains diverse talent. According to OPM, the minority civilian workforce representation within the U.S. federal workforce increased by 6.9%, from 30.8% in 2001 to 37.7% in 2018 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2001, 2020). Women's representation in the U.S. federal workforce has decreased by .6%, from 44% in 2001 to 43.4% in 2018. In 2018, minority representation within the labor force was 22%, while women's representation was 57% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018a, 2018b). Although the federal government has more race and gender diversity than the labor force, existing literature states that minorities and women continue to be underrepresented at higher levels of leadership (Choi, 2011). In addition, research finds that the lack of diversity in leadership impacts the culture of an agency and its ability to deliver services and devalues inclusion, resulting in inequitable outcomes (Baekgaard & George, 2018; Feeney & Camarena, 2021).

To address the lack of diversity, President Obama's directive for the federal government to create a comprehensive approach to diversity and inclusion initiatives prompted the OPM to publish the Federal Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2011 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2011). The strategic plan consists of two significant outcomes that directly benefit the federal government and the DoD in recruiting, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce. First, the OPM Strategic Plan formalized the definition of diversity and inclusion. Diversity is defined "as a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively" (p. 5). While OPM defined inclusion

as a “culture that connects each employee to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential” (p. 5). The introduction and adoption of both diversity and inclusion were critical in the federal government’s action toward diversifying its workforce. Most importantly, the OPM further defined diversity to include “characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structures” (p.5). By intentionally listing the wide range of characteristics contributing to diversity, OPM strategically set forth a holistic understanding of diversity and its interpretation.

The second outcome of the OPM Strategic Plan was the introduction of three overarching goals that served as the pillars for diversity management practices across the federal government. The three overarching goals include:

1. Workforce Diversity. Recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society.
2. Workplace Inclusion. Cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential and further retention.
3. Sustainability. Develop structures and strategies to equip leaders with the ability to manage diversity, be accountable, measure results, refine approaches on the basis of such data, and institutionalize a culture of inclusion. (p.5)

Through the Federal Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2011), the government introduced a series of actions critical for the successful recruitment of diverse talent to “cultivate high performing organizations for the 21st century (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2011, p. 3). In addition to paving the pathway for diversity and inclusion at the federal level, the strategic plan played a vital role in developing the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2012. Derived from OPM’s Strategic Plan, the DoD D&I Strategic Plan established definitions for diversity and inclusion while identifying goals aligned with OPM’s strategy.

DoD Minority Workforce Representation

As of 2020, the DoD military departments and defense agencies’ civilian workforce composition comprises 32% of individuals who self-identify as a minority, 67% non-minority, and .3% unspecified (*U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Workforce Data Dashboard*, n.d.). Since 2017, the civilian minority population within the DoD’s military departments and defense agencies has remained consistent at 32% despite the nation’s overall population growth, as shown in Table 2. In response to the persistent underrepresentation of minority civilian personnel within the military departments and defense agencies, the DoD has undertaken a series of actions to assist the agency in increasing its diversity to strengthen its military and civilian forces. Enacted in 2009, the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act mandated the creation of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC). The MLDC was charged to “conduct a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of policies that provide opportunities for the promotion and advancement of minority members of the Armed Forces, including minority members who are senior officers” (p.122). As an independent

commission, the MLDC worked across the DoD to assess instructional barriers contributing to the lack of minority representation.

In partnership with active, reserve, and civilian DoD members, the commission released a final report introducing 16 tasks for the department to achieve diversity and inclusion across its personnel (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2011). The MLDC final report was integral in prompting the DoD to adopt and promote diversity management practices. Calling for the DoD's immediate action, the report set the foundation for the agency to address its diversity and inclusion through three significant outcomes. First, the MLDC introduced the case for the DoD to direct resources to increase minority representation and inclusion, emphasizing that both objectives were "critical to the new approach and practices needed for a successful fighting force" (p.13). Second, the MLDC defined diversity as "all the different characteristics and attributes of individuals that are consistent with the Department of Defense core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the Nation we serve" (p.12). Finally, the report served as a guiding document for the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Plan (2012 – 2017), which contained the steps the department would undertake to achieve a diverse workforce and create an inclusive work environment.

Table 2*Department of Defense Military Departments and Defense Agencies Civilian**Personnel Demographics*

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Minority	230,965	238,408	245,563	249,301
Non-Minority	500,075	503,500	512,795	516,748
Unspecified	60	47	940	2,258
Total	731,100	741,955	759,298	768,307

Note. Minority include American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, More Than One Race, Hispanic or Latino. Non-Minority includes White. Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Workforce Data Dashboard, n.d

Department of Defense Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2012 – 2017)

Established in 2012, the Department of Defense (DoD) Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategic Plan (2012 -2017) was a direct result of President Obama's Executive Order 13583 to establish a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote the Federal workplace as a model of equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. Guided by the OPM Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for civilian personnel (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2011) and the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) report (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2011), the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2012 – 2017) set forth a comprehensive framework to promote diversity and inclusion within its workforce. The DoD D&I Strategic Plan contained three overarching goals, eight objectives, 13 actions, and 37 initiatives that collectively are suppose to implement structures that foster diversity and inclusion in the DoD's workforce and achieve Executive Order 13583. Through an integrated diversity management approach, the DoD's D&I Strategic Plan recognizes the need for strategic and intentional leadership engagement to pivot the agency's climate to be inclusive of a diverse workforce. The strategy's intent applies across the DoD's total force, including active, reserve, and civilian personnel. The investigation will only focus on the DoD civilian personnel workforce for this study.

The impact of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan is three-fold. First, the strategy introduced three objectives that target diversity and inclusion within the context of the department. The strategic plan objectives include: 1) Ensure leadership commitment to an accountable and sustained diversity effort; 2) Employ an aligned strategic outreach effort to identify, attract, and recruit from a broad talent pool reflective of the best of the nation we serve; 3) Develop, mentor, and retain top talent from across the total force. As illustrated in Appendix A, each objective is

supported by a series of initiatives that collectively assist the DoD in increasing its workforce diversity and shifting its organizational culture to be inclusive of the diversity it attracts. Second, the strategic plan introduced an enhanced definition of diversity, building on the definition of its precursor—the MLDC final report. The DoD D&I Strategic Plan defines diversity as “All the different characteristics and attributes of the DoD’s Total Force, which are consistent with our core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the best of the Nation we serve” (p.3). In addition to defining diversity, the strategic plan formalizes the definition of inclusion, which is defined as “Valuing integrating each individual’s differences into the way an organization functions and makes decisions” (p.12). Finally, the strategic plan aligns with the larger strategy mandated by President Obama’s Executive Order 13583 to increase workforce diversity and inclusion within all facets of the federal government while ensuring the sustainability of diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Ultimately, the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2012) established a structure for the department to strategically align policies and practices to ensure diversity and inclusion within its five institutions. By defining diversity and inclusion, the agency integrated systems that ensure it developed the competencies to promote equal opportunity for all members, including civilian personnel. For this program evaluation, the interest remains solely on the impact of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan on minority civilian personnel within the military departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force) and defense agencies. The strategic plan recognized and emphasized the commitment required for the DoD to achieve equity through its diversity and inclusion initiatives. The goal of the investigation is to determine the extent to which the strategic plan impacted the perception of inclusion among minority civilian personnel within certain departments of the DoD. This research is of interest mainly because the President and

Congress have enacted mandates that acknowledge the immediate need for the DoD to adopt diversity and inclusion activities to safeguard the nation against present and future threats. The DoD must build an environment where all members, regardless of their background, feel included, valued, and respected.

DoD Diversity and Inclusion Activities

Since adopting the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2012, the agency has undertaken several initiatives that align with the strategic plan. Due to the nature of the Department of Defense and limited information on internal actions conducted by the agency, this investigation assumes that the diversity and inclusion activities provided in this investigation support the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. Although there is no direct mention of the implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan in existing search and scholarship, the following activities were implemented during the strategy's target years —2012 to 2017—therefore contributing to the agency's overall D&I efforts and culture.

In 2019, the DoD's personnel policies and human resources office—Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS)—released the Department of Defense Managerial and Supervisory Learning and Evaluation Framework (2019). The learning and evaluation framework is a mandated requirement for new military or civilian supervisors that oversee DoD civilian personnel. The updated framework consists of several topics that support D&I efforts. For example, the supervisory skills sub-framework includes topics focused on “fairness, respect, equal opportunity, quality of work,” which have an outcome of training supervisors to “foster a work environment characterized by fairness, respect, equal opportunity, and attention to the quality of the work of employee” (p.7). In addition to D&I focused learning opportunities, the DoD has also expanded its leader development competency for DoD civilian personnel. In the

DoD Civilian Leader Development Framework Competency Descriptions (2021), the competencies include a “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility” component, which are described as:

Encourages, embraces, and leverages varied ideas, opinions, insights, and identities, respecting the values and perceptions of others. Identifies and examines biases and seeks insights to avoid stereotypical responses and behavior. Fosters the fair treatment, access, advancement, and equal opportunity for all. Ensures all employees feel they are valued members of the team to achieve the vision of the organization. (p.4)

In alignment with the third goal of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan to “Develop, mentor, and retain top talent from across the total force,” the DoD launched a pilot “mentoring teams” within Employee Resource Groups (ERG) (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2016b). The program was designed to establish a mentoring culture between senior, mid-career, and junior employees to enable networking and transfer of institutional and professional information. A secondary mentoring program that launched during the strategic plan was MyVector. Launched by the Department of the Air Force, MyVector is a dynamic and development platform that enables all Airmen (military and civilian) to match with or serve as a mentor (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2019). In addition to developing mentorship opportunities for DoD civilian personnel, the Department of the Air Force launched a series of D&I initiatives intended to help advance the DoD’s D&I goals (James et al., 2016). The Department of the Air Force’s D&I initiatives included: 1) Encouraging civilian personnel to participate in a professional development program to increase the agency’s leaders and supervisor pipeline, 2) Providing unconscious bias training prior to civilian hiring panels, and 3) Establishing an Airforce Diversity and Inclusion Recognition Program for the entire agency.

In addition to developing learning frameworks that incorporated D&I topics and mentoring opportunities, the DoD devised several training opportunities for the military departments and defense agencies (DoDSTEM, 2016). First, the DoD implemented implicit bias training to promote the development of civilian personnel to enhance their D&I outreach efforts. Second, the DoD expanded its internal outreach efforts to increase awareness of civilian personnel's education, training, and leadership opportunities. Lastly, the DoD served an integral role in launching OPM's Game Changers Course and The New Inclusion Quotient training, which focused on training trainers within the agency to encourage D&I initiatives. The Game Changers Course involved "an intense two-week course that certifies participants to facilitate and implement the New IQ techniques and learning within their respective agencies and conducts diversity and inclusion training" (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2016b, p. 91). Since the adoption of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan, it is evident that the DoD, along with the military departments and defense agencies, have taken action to create a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment.

New Inclusion Quotient

In 2013, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), along with the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), developed the New Inclusion Quotient (IQ) framework to understand and measure inclusion within the context of the federal government (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2016a). By conducting a factor analysis that identifies clusters of variables (Field, 2018), OPM discovered 20 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) items "that were positively related/correlated to creating and sustaining an inclusive environment" (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2016a, p. 2). Based on the analysis, the 20 FEVS items were categorized into five behaviors that fostered inclusiveness (fairness, openness, cooperativeness,

supportiveness, and empowerment) and coined them as “The Five Habits of Inclusion” (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2016a). Furthermore, “The Five Habits of Inclusion” served as a data-driven approach, shifting OPM’s focus toward building an inclusive organizational culture. The New IQ is “built on the concept that individual behavior, repeated over time, form the habits that create the essential building blocks of an inclusive environment” (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2014, p. 10).

The habits serve as critical components of OPM’s strategy to build an inclusive work environment by integrating the New IQ framework into the agency’s training model. For example, OPM conducted specific professional development to “foster an inclusive climate that improves organizational performance, such as speed, efficiency, creativity, innovation, motivation, and corporate climate” (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2016a, p. 3). By scaffolding inclusiveness through specific training and skill-building activities, the New IQ enabled a structure that supports managers and supervisors to practice behaviors that foster inclusion and therefore shift the organizational culture (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2015b). OPM introduced the New IQ to the FEVS in 2014 to assess the impact of the New IQ framework in building an inclusive work environment (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2014). Since then, OPM has continuously assessed the overall New IQ score to measure employees’ perception of inclusion. This evaluation investigates the impact of the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2012) on the perception of inclusion among civilian minority personnel within the DoD’s military departments and defense agencies. The study contributes to the literature by extending the understanding of the impact of diversity management practices on the perception of inclusion of minority groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the 1940's public administration scholarship has explored different aspects and factors impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of governments, profit/non-profit organizations, and higher education, advancing the disciplines' practices and literature (Ni et al., 2017). In response to a changing demographic composition of American society and the workforce, diversity, inclusion, and social equity have become critical factors for the success of public administration (Gooden & Portillo, 2011; Miller, 1998; Pitts & Wise, 2010; Roberson, 2006; Sabharwal et al., 2018). Traditionally, diversity management practices have prompted organizations to adopt policies and procedures that improve organizational performance and service (Broadnax, 2010). However, scholars advocate for organizations to think beyond diversity management practices and focus on fostering inclusion (B. M. Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Sabharwal et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011).

The research question focuses on the impact of a diversity management strategy on the perception of inclusion of minority employees within the military departments and defense agencies of the Department of Defense. This literature review examines the scholarship on adopting diversity management practices and the essential role inclusive practices have on the American public administration and U.S. federal government sectors. For public administration practice to continue abiding by its core values of efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and social equity (Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013; Rosenbloom et al., 2015), this research aims to identify the success of or challenges impeding, the Department of Defense achievement of inclusion through its Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2012).

Diversity Management

In efforts to expand the work established by affirmative action, diversity management set a precedent for organizations to develop proactive strategies to build and manage diversity (Thomas, 1990). Furthermore, Thomas (1990) explored the impact of diversity on organizational outcomes, emphasizing the need to manage diversity to increase employees' success. Inspired by the direction set forth by Thomas (1990), diversity management is broadly defined as "the commitment on the part of organizations to recruit, retain, reward, and promote a heterogeneous mix of productive, motivated, and committed workers, including people of color, whites, females, and the physically challenged." (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000, p. 77).

Kellough & Naff (2004) and Pitts (2006) provide two common diversity management models illustrating the comprehensive approach required to build diversity in an organization. In the first model, Kellough & Naff (2004) introduced seven core program components for diversity management to impact organizational performance. The core program components include ensuring management accountability, examining the organizational structure, culture, and management systems, paying attention to group representation, providing training, developing mentoring programs, establishing internal identity/advocacy groups, and showcasing shared values in all stakeholders. Similarly, Pitts (2006) introduced three central diversity management pillars—recruitment & outreach, building awareness, and pragmatic management policy enabling increased heterogeneity, cultural synergy, and job satisfaction. The two diversity management frameworks illustrate the multifaceted approach to building and managing diversity within public administration and the areas of existing scholarship.

The paradigm shift to fight discrimination beyond equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies and practices has increased the adoption of diversity management

across different sectors, including public administration (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Williams et al., 2014; Wyatt-Nichol & Antwi-Boasiako, 2012). Existing literature explores the integration of diversity management within public administration and has expanded the understanding of how diversity impacts organizational performance (Cho et al., 2017; Moon & Christensen, 2020), job satisfaction (Choi & Rainey, 2014; Stazyk et al., 2021), and employee empowerment (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Overall, diversity management scholarship validates the importance of racial and gender diversity in positively influencing an organization's competitive advantage (Herring, 2017; Richard, 2000).

The majority of existing scholarship investigating the impact of diversity management in the U.S. federal government tends to focus on the current representation of race/ethnicity, the result of diversity management on U.S. federal government employees, and organizational outcomes. Scholarship regarding the diverse representation of employees within the U.S. federal government finds a direct impact of diversity management practices on federal employees, including job satisfaction (Choi, 2009), performance (Pitts, 2009), turnover intention (Moon, 2018), and perception of fairness (Kim & Park, 2017). Similar to applying diversity management to the public sector, there is evidence that diversity management positively impacts federal government organizational outcomes. For example, Choi and Rainey (2010) found that effective diversity management practices positively affect organizational performance, primarily when the techniques reform internal policies and team processes.

Inclusion

The extensive literature illustrates that diversity management provides a framework for organizations to manage and recruit diverse employees to achieve organizational objectives (Kellough & Naff, 2004; Pitts, 2006). Diversity management practices do not necessarily address

the need for individuals of diverse backgrounds to be included and have agency within an organization (Groeneveld & Verbeek, 2012; Prasad, 2001). Scholars challenge the current trend of diversity management, calling for scholarship and organizational practices to expand their focus from managing diversity to building and integrating inclusion into the work environment (Sabharwal, 2014; Sabharwal et al., 2018). Mor Barak and Cherin (1998, p. 48) defined inclusion as "the degree to which individuals feel part of critical organizational process" where "people with multiple backgrounds, mindsets, and ways of thinking to work effectively together and to perform to their highest potential in order to achieve organizational objectives based on sound principles." (Pless & Maak, 2004, p. 130).

Existing literature explores the intersection between diversity (the core driver of diversity management) and inclusion, concluding that they are codependent. Organizations need to apply diversity policies and a commitment to inclusion to support the benefits of a diverse workforce (Oswick & Noon, 2014). Although both concepts overlap, the focus of diversity management is to manage demographic composition; it fails to acknowledge the importance of building an inclusive workplace in which employees can bring their authentic and multiple identities to achieve organizational goals (Ferdman et al., 2010; Pless & Maak, 2004). Conversely, inclusion aims to foster a "climate of inclusion is one in which policies, procedures, and actions of organizational agents are consistent with fair treatment of all social groups, with particular attention to groups that have had fewer opportunities historically and that are stigmatized in the societies in which they live." (Shore et al., 2011, p. 1277). To achieve an inclusive environment, organizations must take intentional action and make conscious decisions to establish a culture that values and promotes the success of their workforce regardless of their differences.

Dimensions of Inclusion

Due to the multidimensional nature of inclusion, existing scholarship explores the application and impact of inclusion concerning individual experience, workgroups, leadership, perceived organizational inclusion, organizational practices, and inclusion climate. Each inclusion construct is introduced to illustrate the variety of literature and facets of inclusion.

As the foundation for inclusion, individual experiences provide the context of how individuals perceive and experience inclusion. At the individual level, inclusion provides a feeling of being "valued, respected, recognized, trusted, and that one is making a difference" (Ferdman & Davidson, 2002, p.81). The individual experience of inclusion contributes to a deeper connection and commitment to an organization, to the extent that "If one feels included, one perceives oneself as psychologically linked to the organization, experiencing the successes and failures of the organization as one's own" (Davidson, 2008, p. 172). Based on Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) (Brewer, 1991), workgroup inclusion literature explores the intersection between belongingness and uniqueness as critical elements of workgroup inclusion impacting work relationships, job performance, and organizational commitment (Shore et al., 2011).

Leader inclusion investigates the connection between inclusive leadership and its role in cultivating inclusiveness within the organization and teams (Ashikali et al., 2021). Specifically, Cottrill et al. (2014) and Avolio & Gardner (2005) emphasize the essential role of authentic leadership, self-awareness, and internalized moral perspective leadership in building an inclusive environment. Perceived organizational inclusion literature focuses on the "degree of acceptance one has by other members of the work system" (Pelled et al., 1999, p. 1014). Scholars Mor Barak and Cherin (1998) introduced an inclusion-exclusion measure that continues to serve as the

foundation for perceived organizational inclusion. In their model, Mor Barak Cherin (1998) illustrates the relationship between inclusion, exclusion, workgroup, participation in the decision-making, access to information, and resources. Furthermore, Mor Barak (2000) expanded the inclusion-exclusion model to incorporate diversity and organizational culture as measures contributing to perceived inclusion and impact on organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Shore et al. (2018) promote the need for organizational inclusion practices and an inclusive climate to create an organization that upholds the values of inclusion. Organizational inclusion practices set the foundation for organizations to promote inclusion through specific practices and policies. For example, Ferdman and Deane (2014) explore the role organizational leadership has in enhancing inclusion behavior, including developing a pipeline of diverse talent, combating subtle discrimination, and bolstering diversity to increase business outcomes. The construct of organizational inclusion practices investigates leadership's influence in building and complementing an environment where employees can be authentic, treated fairly, and with respect, regardless of their identity (Shore et al., 2018). Acknowledging the critical role that the environment has in building inclusiveness, inclusion climate literature considers the perception that employees possess a collective expectation to behave in a particular manner while acknowledging their different identities (Nishii, 2013). Furthermore, an inclusive climate emphasizes the mutual commitment to incorporate the employees' diverse cultural identities as a source of skill and insight (Thomas & Ely, 2001). Generally, inclusive climate scholarship underscores the need to create and enhance an organizational climate that proactively seeks ways to enact practices that promote inclusion.

Measuring Inclusion

In their systematic review, O’Keefe et al. (2020) identified eleven individual measures, models, and frameworks to assess organizational inclusion. One of the predominant frameworks is the inclusion-exclusion scale. Composed of 15 items, the inclusion-exclusion scale developed by Mor Barak (2017) and Mor Barak & Cherin (1998) (see Appendix B) evaluates an individual’s sense of inclusion based on three dimensions – 1) The decision-making process, 2) Information networks, and 3) Level of participation/involvement. Based on the three dimensions, individuals rate their level of inclusion within the following systems - workgroup, organization, supervisor, higher management, and social/informal system. The scale provides a score interpreted as the level of inclusion perceived by the individual using a 6-point Likert scale (Mor Barak, 2017). Using the inclusion-exclusion scale, Brimhall et al. (2017) found that a perceived sense of inclusion amongst child welfare workers resulted in higher job satisfaction, lowered intention to leave, and positive leader-member exchange. Similarly, Acquavita et al. (2009) and Cho & Mor Barak (2008) discovered that inclusion was associated with job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment.

This program evaluation will apply the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ). Designed by the United States Office of Personnel Management, the New IQ scale was incorporated into the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) to measure federal employees’ perception of inclusion (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2016a). Composed of 20 items (see Appendix C), the New IQ measures observable behaviors of organizational inclusion through five major dimensions - fair, open, cooperative, supportive, and empowering (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2015a). Each dimension of the New IQ aligns with critical components of inclusion that literature has developed across different applications (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008;

Jansen et al., 2014; Pelled et al., 1999; Pless & Maak, 2004; Sabharwal, 2014; Shore et al., 2011, 2018). For example, Shore et al. (2011) introduce the importance of a fairness system to create an inclusive climate. At the same time, Pless & Maak (2004) have identified that encouraging open communication and showing appreciation are vital inclusion competencies.

Regarding the application of the New IQ, several scholars have applied the inclusion scale to understand the influence of inclusion on U.S. federal employees. Liggins et al. (2019) used the New IQ items from the 2015 FEVS to evaluate the relationship between inclusion, human resource practices, trust in leadership, and organizational commitment among military veterans/nonveterans in the federal government. In their research, Liggins et al. (2019) found that organizational inclusion substantially impacts trust in leadership. Using the same 2015 FEVS New IQ items, Sabharwal et al. (2019) assessed the turnover intentions of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) federal government employees. The scholars found that LGBT employees who had a higher level of perceived inclusion had lower levels of intent to turnover. Nelson & Piatak (2021) employed the 2014 FEVS New IQ to understand the inclusion amongst women in leadership roles, concluding that women in the federal government were less likely to be supervisors and feel less included. All of the authors mentioned utilized the New IQ scale to investigate the relationship between perception of inclusion, turnover intention, and trust.

Several studies have examined the impact of inclusion on organizational performance, emphasizing how inclusion practices assist in the removal of barriers to increase employee performance (Miller, 1998). Furthermore, scholars find that inclusion positively impacts job commitment and productivity (Findler et al., 2007; Sabharwal, 2014). Other studies have found the impact inclusion has on building trust (Downey et al., 2015), promoting creativity (Chung et

al., 2020), and reducing conflict (Nishii, 2013). Within the military context, limited existing research illustrates that inclusion indirectly affects the intention to leave (Merlini et al., 2019). There is a gap in existing scholarship examining the perception of minorities within the federal government. Existing literature investigates the overall impact of inclusion within certain agencies but does not focus on the experience of minority groups. An exemption to this is the work conducted by Nelson & Piatak (2021) which investigated the inclusion among racially underrepresented women in the federal government. Unfortunately, the scholarship investigating the perceived inclusion of minority civilian employees within the Department of Defense has yet to catch up with the depth of study of other sectors.

An increase in workforce diversity emphasizes the importance of an organization moving beyond diversity management and implementing practices that promote inclusion. Despite the importance of inclusive practices and the growing literature, there is limited scholarship investigating the perception of inclusion on minority groups. The existing inclusion scholarship serves as evidence of public administration practices strengthening its commitment to achieving social equity across the public sector. The research question derived from the literature review is, what impact has the Department of Defense (DoD) Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2012) had on the perception of inclusion among civilian minority personnel within the military departments and defense agencies of the DoD? This question attempts to address a gap in the literature by investigating if a shift in a culture caused by the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy impacts the perception of inclusion on minority federal employees.

METHODOLOGY

Data Source

Corresponding to the pre-and post-implementation of the intervention in question, the dataset in this study was extracted from the 2010, 2011, 2018, and 2019 Federal Employment Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) managed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) (*Public Data File*, n.d.). Administered to permanently employed, non-political, non-seasonal, full- and part-time federal civilian employees, the OPM FEVS serves as “an organizational climate survey and assesses how employees jointly experience the policies, practices, and procedures characteristic of their agency and its leadership” (*OPM FEVS About*, n.d.). In order to assess the impact of the DoD Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Strategic plan 2012 – 2017 on the perception of inclusion among minority military personnel, this study adopted the application of using the FEVS to understand the experiences of federal employees. A series of public administration scholars have used FEVS similarly, which supports the approach undertaken in this investigation (Resh et al., 2021). This study explicitly used the New Quotient (New IQ) embedded in the FEVS, consisting of 20 survey items (see Appendix C), to conduct a program evaluation on the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. As shown in the literature review, the New IQ has traditionally served as an aid to scholars in understanding certain perceptions among federal employees, including inclusion (Chordiya, 2020; Liggans et al., 2019; Nelson & Piatak, 2021; Resh et al., 2021; Sabharwal et al., 2019).

For this investigation, the FEVS samples were drawn strictly from civilian personnel within the Department of Defense military departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force) and defense agencies. Based on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Governmentwide Management Report (2010, 2011, 2018, and 2019), the Department of Defense FEVS response

rates were as follows: 2010 – Not Available, 2011 – 36.1 %, 2018 – 30%, and 2019 – 33.1%. As a point of comparison, the governmentwide FEVS response rate (including the DoD) were as follows: 2010 – 52%, 2011- 49.3%, 2018 – 40.6%, and 2019 – 42.6%. On average, between 2011, 2018, and 2019, the DoD FEVS response rate was 33.1%, providing insight into the self-reported perception of civilian personnel within the Department of Defense.

The dataset was reviewed for completeness to ensure that each survey response for DoD civilian personnel had complete responses for the 20 survey items under the New IQ (dependent variable) and the independent variables. Incomplete entries were removed from the dataset and not incorporated into the analysis. Table 3 reports the results of the complete FEVS included in the final dataset, along with the breakdown of responses based on minority status.

Table 3

Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Count.

Category	2010	2011	2018	2019
Surveyed	-	-	607,027	603,075
Responded	51,132	48,945	182,115	199,723
Complete Responses	35,514	33,274	112,203	120,807
Minority Responses	9,875	9,314	32,642	36,778
Nonminority Responses	25,639	23,960	79,561	84,029

Note. The DoD Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey data was collected from *Public Data File*

(n.d.) by the U.S Office of Personnel Management.

Identification of Random Sub-Samples

Following statistical power analysis (Cohen, 1992), this study implemented measures to control for the probability of Type I and Type II errors. This analysis is based on random sub-samples determined by the Qualtrics sample size calculator, which accounted for 1) 95% confidence level, 2) the average population size pre- and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan, and 3) 5% margin of error (*Qualtrics Sample Size Calculator & Complete Guide in 2022*, 2020). To support the accuracy and validity of the study, the Qualtrics sample size calculator allowed for equal distribution of both sample populations (minority and nonminority) taking into account the large discrepancy between minority and nonminority survey responses. The study calculated the DoD civilian personnel average for both pre-and post-implementation periods, which resulted in an average DoD civilian personnel population of 919,254 (pre-implementation, 2010 and 2011) and 921,389 (post-implementation, 2018 and 2019). Table 1 illustrates the total civilian personnel population for 2010, 2011, 2018, 2019, and 2020. The pre- and post-implementation averages were used as the average population in the Qualtrics sample calculator. Based on the average population, Qualtrics determined that a sample size of 384 for both periods of interest would result in a sample size representative of the target population with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. This approach prevented the analysis from falsely detecting insignificant effects based on the large population or a false-positive result (Cohen, 1977). Furthermore, it also prevented the sub-sample size from being too small that it may inaccurately identify a false negative result (Cohen, 1977).

The dataset was stratified into two strata or smaller groups—minority and nonminority to ensure that the analysis used an equal sample size for both groups, creating the ideal sub-sample size. Stratified random sampling allows for “a sample that is highly representative of the

population being studied...allowing us to make generalizations (i.e., statistical inferences) from the sample to the population” (Gaganpreet, 2017, p. 750). Once placed into their respective strata, Microsoft Excel was used to assign random identification numbers to retrieve each sub-sample composed of 384 minority and 384 nonminority civilian personnel within the DoD ($n = 768$ per year of interest). The steps taken to collect and identify the random sub-samples in this analysis were intended to produce accurate and meaningful results for the proposed program evaluation. A summary of the sub-samples for this analysis is provided in Table 4.

In addition to the general characteristic of the random sub-samples, this investigation disaggregated the independent variables of interest by minority status for the years of interest. Table 5 summarizes the minority composition of each independent variable providing context to the racial/ethnic makeup of the variables included in the analysis. Of the four variables of interest, only gender and supervisory status had fluctuations in their minority status composition. For example, the supervisory status variable indicated the composition of those in a supervisor, manager, senior leader, or executive role was nonminority pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. In this case, the composition included: 50% nonminority and 42% minority (Pre-implementation) and 23% nonminority and 13% minority (post-implementation).

Table 4*Random Sub-sample Characteristics.*

Category		Pre-Implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan				Post-Implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan			
		2010		2011		2018		2019	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Minority	NonMinority	384	50%	384	50%	384	50%	384	50%
Status	Minority	384	50%	384	50%	384	50%	384	50%
Gender	Male	491	64%	524	68%	493	64%	504	66%
	Female	277	36%	244	32%	275	36%	264	34%
Supervisory Status	Supervisor/ Manager/ Senior Leader/ Executive	383	50%	320	42%	137	18%	140	18%
	Non-Supervisor/ Team Leader	385	50%	448	58%	631	82%	628	82%
Federal Tenure	Ten Years or Less	272	35%	368	48%	373	49%	393	51%
	Between Ten Years or More	496	65%	400	52%	395	51%	375	49%
Intention of Leaving	Yes	257	33%	268	35%	279	36%	301	39%
	No	511	67%	500	65%	489	64%	467	61%

Note. The total random sub-sample size per independent variable is 768, including 384 minority and 384 nonminority DoD civilian personnel surveys. Minority include American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, More Than One Race, Hispanic or Latino. Non-Minority includes White. The sample size for gender, supervisory status, federal tenure, and intention of leaving are based on the random sample.

Table 5*Random Sub-sample Minority Status Demographic Breakdown for Independent Variables.*

		Pre-Implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan				Post-Implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan			
		Minority		Nonminority		Minority		Nonminority	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	467	61%	548	71%	466	61%	531	69%
	Female	301	39%	220	29%	302	39%	237	31%
Supervisory Status	Supervisor/ Manager/ Senior Leader/ Executive	319	42%	384	50%	102	13%	175	23%
	Non-Supervisor/Team Leader	449	58%	384	50%	666	87%	593	77%
Federal Tenure	Ten Years or Less	321	42%	319	42%	390	51%	376	49%
	Between Ten Years or More	447	58%	449	58%	378	49%	392	51%
Intention of Leaving	Yes	269	35%	256	33%	318	41%	262	34%
	No	499	65%	512	67%	450	59%	506	66%

Note. The total random sub-sample size per independent variable is 768. Pre-implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan includes 2010 and 2011 samples. Post-implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan includes 2018 and 2019 samples.

Data Analysis Method and Measures

This study applied two methods – an independent sample t-test and an Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis to determine if there is a change in perception of inclusion among minority civilian personnel within the military departments and defense agencies of the DoD. As a parametric test, the independent t-test compared the means of two independent groups (pre and post-implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan) to determine any statistical evidence that the two means are significantly different (Field, 2018). This investigation used the mean of perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion (fair, open, cooperative, supportive, and empowering) for minority civilian personnel within the Department of Defense in pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan.

The research design of this study followed a non-experimental correlational approach using an Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis using SPSS. The benefits of this analysis were two-fold – it measures the strength of multiple variables through a linear relationship and supports the prediction of an outcomes variable based on predictor variable(s) (Field, 2018). Since the research question intended to predict a value for a continuous dependent variable based on a series of dummy and continuous independent variables, the application of an OLS regression analysis was ideal. The regression analysis incorporated the dependent variable (perception of inclusion) and the independent variable of interest (minority status). Concurrently, the analysis controlled for other independent variables (gender, supervisory status, federal tenure, and intent to leave). The linear regression allowed the interpretation of the relationship between the outcome and predictor variable. For this study, six models are presented to identify the impact of the DoD Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan: Model 1-Inclusion, Model 2-Fair, Model 3-Open, Model 4-Cooperative, Model 5-Supportive, and Model 6-Empowering.

Dependent Variable

Unlike the traditional form of investigating the impact of diversity management practices (Kellough & Naff, 2004; Naff & Kellough, 2003), recent scholarship has shifted their methodology to incorporate perceptions to measure the impact of diversity management practices (Choi, 2009, 2013; Choi & Rainey, 2010, 2014; Chordiya, 2020; Nelson & Piatak, 2021; Pitts, 2009; Vanderschuere & Birdsall, 2019). The dependent variable perception of inclusion was measured using an aggregate scale of the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ) as previously performed by Nelson & Piatak (2021). In their study, Nelson & Piatak (2021) used the 2014 FEVS to measure the perception of inclusion among underrepresented women in the federal government. To confirm the scale for the perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion, Nelson & Piatak (2021) conducted a series of Cronbach's alpha measurements to validate their proposed scale to ensure it had "high internal consistency to measure the concept of inclusion." (p. 302). Nelson & Piatak (2021) reported the following Cronbach's alpha for the perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion: Perception of Inclusion ($\alpha = .903$), Fair ($\alpha = .881$), Open ($\alpha = .825$), Cooperative ($\alpha = .930$), Supportive ($\alpha = .912$), and Empowering ($\alpha = .851$). To determine the perception of inclusion scale, the researchers combined the sub-scores for all five habits of inclusion.

Based on the Cronbach's alpha results, this investigation adopted the same scales to measure the perception of inclusion among minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. The high levels of internal consistency validated that each sub-scale for the five habits of inclusion provided insight into the different behaviors that collectively contribute to an inclusive work environment. As described by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (2014), the sub-scale for inclusion include: 1) Fair – Are all employees

treated equitably?, 2) Open – Does management support diversity in all ways?, 3) Cooperative – Does management encourage communication and collaboration?, 4) Supportive – Do supervisors value employees?, and 5) Empowering – Do employees have the resources and support needed to excel? Appendix C provides the complete set of the New IQ survey items per each habit of inclusion, assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Based on the Likert scale, the aggregated score for the perception of inclusion scale ranges from 20 to 100; Table 6 summarizes this variable for pre-and post-implementation of the DoD Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Independent Variables

This study conducted its analysis using the following independent dichotomous variables: minority status, gender, supervisory status, federal tenure, and intent to leave, which is consistent with existing literature (Choi & Rainey, 2014; Nelson & Piatak, 2021; Vanderschuere & Birdsall, 2019) and leveraged the available information provided by the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The primary independent variable of interest is minority status (minority and nonminority) among DoD civilian personnel. As an aggregated variable compiled by the Office of Personnel Management, minority status is coded as “0” for nonminority personnel and “1” for minority personnel. Table 6 provides descriptive information on the independent variable of interest. Minority include American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, More Than One Race, Hispanic or Latino. Non-Minority includes White.

The gender variable was recorded as a “0” for male respondents and as “1” for female respondents. Supervisory status is based on the FEVS demographic question—“What is your supervisory status?” Responses were classified into two types, “0” for DoD minority civilian

personnel in a supervisor/manager/senior leader/executive role and “1” for DoD minority civilian personnel in a non-supervisory or team leader role. Federal tenure was compiled based on the FEVS question, “How long have you been with the Federal Government (excluding military service)?” Responses to the federal tenure question were separated into “0” for DoD minority civilian personnel with ten years or less and “1” for DoD minority civilian personnel with a tenure of between 10 years or more. Intent to leave is constructed from the FEVS question, “Are you considering leaving your organization within the next year, and if so, why?” DoD civilian personnel who indicated “Yes” were coded as “0” and consisted of responses that included “to retire, to take another job within the Federal Government, to take a job outside the Federal Government, and other.” Those who indicated that they were not considering leaving the organization were coded as “1”. By including variables for gender, supervisory status, federal tenure, and intent to leave in our analysis, the study aims to understand the effect that the independent variables have on the perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion.

Table 6*Descriptive Statistics of Randomized Sub-Sample of DoD Minority Civilian Military Employees.*

	<i>n</i>	2010				2011			
		Min.	Max.	M	SD	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Inclusion	384	22	100	73.25	15.52	20	100	71.79	16.99
Fair	384	5	25	16.79	4.70	5	25	16.36	4.98
Open	384	4	20	14.46	3.33	4	20	14.19	3.79
Cooperative	384	2	10	7.15	2.01	2	10	7.20	2.09
Supportive	384	5	25	19.85	4.44	5	25	19.36	4.80
Empowering	384	4	20	15.00	3.25	4	20	14.67	3.48
Gender	384	0	1	0.38	0.49	0	1	0.40	0.49
Minority Status	384	1	1	1.00	0.00	1	1	1.00	0.00
Supervisory Status	384	0	1	0.59	0.49	0	1	0.58	0.50
Federal Tenure	384	0	1	0.62	0.49	0	1	0.54	0.50
Intention of Leaving	384	0	1	0.67	0.47	0	1	0.63	0.48
		2018				2019			
	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.	M	SD	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Inclusion	384	20	100	73.60	17.60	20	100	73.12	17.35
Fair	384	5	25	16.55	5.15	5	25	16.48	4.98
Open	384	4	20	14.52	3.88	4	20	14.48	3.72
Cooperative	384	2	10	7.28	2.29	2	10	7.30	2.18
Supportive	384	5	25	20.31	4.75	5	25	20.37	4.80
Empowering	384	4	20	14.93	3.80	4	20	14.49	3.93
Gender	384	0	1	0.39	0.49	0	1	0.39	0.49
Minority Status	384	1	1	1.00	0.00	1	1	1.00	0.00
Supervisory Status	384	0	1	0.88	0.33	0	1	0.86	0.35
Federal Tenure	384	0	1	0.53	0.50	0	1	0.45	0.50
Intention of Leaving	384	0	1	0.61	0.49	0	1	0.57	0.50

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Exclusion

This study met the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review exclusion criteria as the analysis is based on non-identifiable existing data provided by the Office of Personnel Management. As a public secondary data source, the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey provides coded, de-identified, and individual data for full/part-time, permanent, non-seasonal civilian employees from the military departments and defense agencies within the Department of Defense.

FINDINGS

General Statistics

Table 7 represents the initial step in the independent sample *t*-test analysis, providing an overview of the mean and standard deviation for the perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. Specifically, the table provides information on the following three groups within the DoD military departments and defense agencies: 1) Minority civilian personnel ($n = 768$), 2) Nonminority civilian personnel ($n = 768$), and 3) Minority and nonminority civilian personnel combined ($n = 1,536$). The latter two groups are included in the analysis as a point of reference to understand the impact of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan between the nonminority and the overall DoD Military Department population (combined group).

As Table 7 illustrates, there were changes in the mean between pre-and post-implementation of the strategic plan for the group of interest. For minority civilian personnel within the DoD Military Departments, the mean for the perception of inclusion increased by .84 from 72.52 to 73.36 (based on a scale between 20 and 100). In other cases, there is evidence of a decrease in the mean. For example, the habit of empowering within the same group decreased by 0.13 from 14.84 to 14.71 (based on a scale between 20 and 100). Similar observations are discovered in the means of the nonminority and combined groups. Although there were changes in means for perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion, the program evaluation conducted an independent sample *t*-test to infer whether the observed changes are statistically significant and therefore provide evidence on the effectiveness of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan.

Table 7

Group Statistics for Perception of Inclusion and the Five Habits of Inclusion for DoD Military Departments and Defense Agencies Minority, Non-Minority, and Both Groups Combined.

Inclusion and Five Habits of Inclusion	Implementation of the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan	Minority Mean Score Trend	Minority Civilian Personnel Only			NonMinority Civilian Personnel Only		Minority and NonMinority Civilian Personnel		
			<i>n</i>	M	SD	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Inclusion	Post	↑	768	73.36	17.464	75.39	15.116	1536	74.37	16.359
	Pre		768	72.52	16.273	73.70	15.17	1536	73.11	15.737
Fair	Post	↓	768	16.52	5.058	17.28	4.453	1536	16.9	4.779
	Pre		768	16.57	4.845	17.21	4.555	1536	16.89	4.712
Open	Post	↑	768	14.5	3.797	15.19	3.183	1536	14.84	3.519
	Pre		768	14.33	3.567	14.78	3.101	1536	14.55	3.348
Cooperative	Post	↑	768	7.29	2.235	7.20	2.139	1536	7.24	2.187
	Pre		768	7.18	2.048	7.20	2.056	1536	7.19	2.052
Supportive	Post	↑	768	20.34	4.768	20.79	4.188	1536	20.56	4.491
	Pre		768	19.60	4.623	19.71	4.308	1536	19.66	4.467
Empowering	Post	↓	768	14.71	3.868	14.93	3.504	1536	14.82	3.691
	Pre		768	14.84	3.367	14.81	3.338	1536	14.82	3.351

Note. DoD D&I Strategic Plan includes; Pre = 2010 and 2011, Post = 2018 and 2019. Minority mean score trend illustrates overall increase or decrease for the perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion for minority civilian personnel within the military departments and defense agencies.

Independent Sample t-Test

Table 8 presents the findings of the independent sample *t*-test investigating the statistical difference in mean pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. Amongst minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies, the *t*-test investigates the presence of any differences in perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion (fair, open, cooperative, supportive, and empowering). The results indicated that there was no significant difference in the score for perception of inclusion pre-implementation ($M = 72.52$, $SD = 16.273$) and post-implementation ($M = 73.36$, $SD = 17.464$) of DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions: $t(1534) = 0.977$, $p = 0.329$. Furthermore, in the review of the independent sample *t*-test for the five habits of inclusion, the results indicated no significant difference in the score for the fair, open, cooperative, and empowering habits of inclusion between pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan.

In comparing the score for the five habits of inclusion, the independent sample *t*-test implies that there was a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in the score for the supportive habit pre-implementation ($M = 19.60$, $SD = 4.623$) and post-implementation ($M = 20.34$, $SD = 4.768$) of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions: $t(1534) = 3.081$, $p = 0.002$. The findings indicated that the model is 95% confident that the mean score for the supportive habit is between 0.268 and 1.208 for post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. The statistical significance of the supportive habits implied that minority civilian personnel with the DoD Military Departments have a higher sense of feeling valued due to the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. This model suggests that the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan did not affect the perception of inclusion but did affect the extent to which minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies feel supported.

Examining the statistical difference in the mean pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic plan for nonminority civilian personnel with the DoD military departments and defense agencies discloses different results than the minority group. The independent sample *t*-test concluded that there was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the perception of inclusion score among nonminority civilian personnel pre-implementation ($M = 73.70$, $SD = 15.17$) and post-implementation ($M = 75.39$, $SD = 15.116$) of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions: $t(1534) = 2.18$, $p = 0.029$. This result indicated that the scores for all five habits of inclusion were collectively higher for the nonminority group. In addition to the perception of inclusion, the independent sample *t*-test found that inclusion's open and supportive behaviors were statistically significant. The scores for the open behavior of inclusion pre ($M = 14.78$, $SD = 3.101$) and post ($M = 15.19$, $SD = 3.183$) implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), $t(1534) = 2.534$, $p = 0.011$. As a result of the DoD D&I, nonminority employees had a higher perception of feeling that management supports diversity in all ways. Similarly, the scores for the supportive behavior of inclusion were significantly different ($p < 0.001$) with a pre ($M = 19.71$, $SD = 4.308$) and post ($M = 20.79$, $SD = 4.188$) implementation of strategic plan conditions: $t(1534) = 4.967$, $p = <.001$. The independent sample *t*-test identified a statistically significant increase in the supportive habit of inclusion under the pre- and post-implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions. The investigation assumes that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan had some role in the observed increase in the perception of feeling supported among minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies.

In the final group, which combined both minority and nonminority civilian personnel within the DoD, the findings illustrated a similar trend as observed in the nonminority group.

Based on the randomized sub-sample, the combined group indicated a statistical significance in the score for the perception of inclusion and inclusion's open and supportive habits. For inclusion, there was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the score for pre ($M = 73.11$, $SD = 15.737$) and post ($M = 74.37$, $SD = 16.359$) implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions: $t(3070) = 2.181$, $p = 0.029$. This finding suggests that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan positively affected the perception of inclusion when both minority and nonminority groups were combined. Concerning the five habits of inclusion, this model depicts that inclusion's open and supportive behavior were also statistically significant. The combined group displays a higher degree of the open behavior of inclusion post-implementation ($M = 14.84$, $SD = 3.519$) of the D&I Strategic Plan, as opposed to the pre-implementation ($M = 14.55$, $SD = 3.348$) condition: $t(3070) = 2.337$, $p = 0.019$. Lastly, There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the scores for the supportive behavior of inclusion, pre ($M = 19.66$, $SD = 4.467$) and post ($M = 20.56$, $SD = 4.491$) implementation of the strategic plan conditions: $t(3070) = 5.615$, $p = <.001$. These results suggest that when evaluating the impact of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan on minority and nonminority samples, the strategic plan may have played a role in affecting the perception of inclusion among employees.

Table 8

Results of Independent Samples t-Test

Model 1: Minority Civilian Personnel DoD Military Department Only ($n=1,536$)							
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Inclusion	0.977	1534	0.329	0.841	0.861	-0.848	2.531
Fair	-0.232	1534	0.817	-0.059	0.253	-0.554	0.437
Open	0.921	1534	0.357	0.173	0.188	-0.196	0.542
Cooperative	1.024	1534	0.306	0.112	0.109	-0.103	0.327
Supportive	3.081	1534	0.002**	0.738	0.24	0.268	1.208
Empowering	-0.668	1505.5	0.504	-0.124	0.185	-0.487	0.239
Model 2: Non-Minority Civilian Personnel DoD Military Department Only ($n=1,536$)							
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Inclusion	2.18	1534	0.029*	1.685	0.773	0.169	3.201
Fair	0.329	1534	0.743	0.076	0.23	-0.375	0.526
Open	2.534	1534	0.011*	0.406	0.16	0.092	0.721
Cooperative	0.012	1534	0.99	0.001	0.107	-0.209	0.211
Supportive	4.967	1534	<.001***	1.077	0.217	0.652	1.502
Empowering	0.716	1534	0.474	0.125	0.175	-0.218	0.468
Model 3: Minority and Non-Minority Civilian Personnel DoD Military Department ($n=3,072$)							
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Inclusion	2.181	3070	0.029*	1.263	0.579	0.127	2.399
Fair	0.049	3070	0.961	0.008	0.171	-0.327	0.344
Open	2.337	3070	0.019*	0.29	0.124	0.047	0.533
Cooperative	0.74	3057.5	0.459	0.057	0.077	-0.093	0.207
Supportive	5.615	3070	<.001***	0.908	0.162	0.591	1.224
Empowering	0.005	3041.9	0.996	0.001	0.127	-0.249	0.25

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression Analysis

An OLS linear regression analysis determined the relationship between the dependent variable - perception of inclusion and the independent variables—minority status, gender, supervisory status, federal tenure, and intent to leave the organization. Model 1 in Table 9 depicts a linear regression pre and post-implementation of the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to investigate how the strategy influenced the perception of inclusion among minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. The model coefficient of determination (R^2) of .142 (pre) and .182 (post) indicated that the explanatory variables can explain 14.2% of the variance in perception of inclusion pre-implementation and 18% post-implementation. Based on the linear regression results, the study found that minority status was not statistically significant in predicting the level of perceived inclusion among the civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies during both periods. The lack of statistical significance was also the case for gender and federal tenure (pre-implementation) variables.

In assessing supervisory status, the regression found that supervisory status was statistically significant pre [$B = -4.228$, 95% CI (-5.733, -2.722), $p < .001$] and post [$B = -5.077$, 95% CI (-7.07, -3.084), $p < .001$] implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. This finding indicates that civilian employees who did not have a supervisory or team leader role indicated lower perceived inclusion pre-and post-implementation of the strategic plan. Most importantly, these individuals had a lower level of perceived inclusion post-implementation. As presented in Table 5, most nonsupervisory or non-team leader personnel were predominantly minority civilian personnel. This finding indicates that, to some extent, minority civilian personnel had lower levels of perceived inclusion post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan.

Interestingly, federal tenure trended negatively and was significant only in the post-implementation timeframe [$B = -1.520$, 95% CI (-3.034, -0.006), $p < .05$). Although the significant value was not as strong as the others in the model, it provides insight into the perception of inclusion among those between 10 and more years with the DoD military departments and defense agencies. As it relates to this variable, DoD civilian personnel who had a longer tenure indicated a lower inclusion level than their counterpart. The third predictor variable that was statistically significant in Model 1 was the intention to leave the organization within the next year. In this case, those who did not plan to leave the organization had a higher perception of inclusion pre [$B = 11.500$, 95% CI (9.958, 13.043), $p < .001$] and post [$B = 13.519$, 95% CI (11.983, 15.055), $p < .001$] implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. In this scenario, for every one-unit increase in perceived perception, the intent to leave the organization changes by 13.519 units post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. Overall, the results from Model 1 indicate that from all the predictor variables of interest, only supervisory status and intent to stay with the organization, supported the prediction of perception of inclusion among DoD civilian personnel within the military departments and defense agencies.

Model 2 in Table 9 examined how the predictor variables (minority status, gender, supervisor status, federal tenure, and intent to leave) impacted the perception of fairness. Fairness measures how employees feel equally treated in the DoD military departments and defense agencies. This habit's pre-and post-implementation model suggests that the independent variables can explain 15.2% (pre) and 15.6% (post) of the variance in perception of fairness. As such, Model 2 concludes that of the five variables of interest, only three of them had a degree of impact on fairness. First, gender was statistically significant at both intervals—pre-implementation [$B = -0.564$, 95% CI (-1.036, -0.092), $p < .05$] and post-implementation [$B = -$

0.605, 95% CI (-1.071, -0.139), $p < .01$]. These results indicate that women within the DoD military departments and defense agencies had a lower level of perceived fairness. For example, post-implementation of the strategy, women in the DoD military departments and defense agencies scored fairness -.605 points lower than men. Second, similar to Model 1 in Table 9, supervisor status was also statistically significant pre and post-intervention. As it relates to this variable, pre-implementation [B = -1.761, 95% CI (-2.209, -1.313), $p < .001$] and post-implementation [B = -2.104, 95% CI (-2.696, -1.512), $p < .001$] results validate that that DoD civilian personnel had lower levels of perception of fairness as compared to those in a supervisory/manager role. The final statistical variable in Model 2 was the intent to leave the organization with both pre [B = 3.284, 95% CI (2.825, 3.743), $p < .001$] and post [B = 3.336, 95% CI (2.88, 3.792), $p < .001$] implementation intervals showed signs of statistical significance. Those who intend to stay with the agency had a higher perception of fairness.

Model 3 in Table 9 provides insight into the perception of openness within civilian personnel of the DoD military departments and defense agencies. Specifically, this model investigated the degree to which DoD civilian personnel experience programs and policies that emphasize the role of management in promoting an organizational culture conducive to the different dimensions of diversity. Based on the model R^2 , this regression analysis indicates that 12.7% (pre-implementation) and 14.8% (post-implementation) of the variance of the outcome variable (open habit of inclusion) was explained by the model's predictor variables (minority status, gender, supervisory status, federal tenure, and intent to leave). As it relates to the minority independent variable of interest, the model found that there was a statistical difference in the perception of openness among minority DoD civilian personnel post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan condition; [B = -0.399, 95% CI (-0.729, -0.069), $p < .05$]. These results

signify that minority personnel within the agency had a lower openness level than nonminority personnel during the DoD D&I Strategic Plan post-implementation stage. In this case, minority personnel had a lower openness score, fluctuating between -0.729 to -0.069 .

Unlike the first two models, Model 3 revealed that Federal tenure was negatively associated with the open behavior of inclusion. In this instance, pre [B = -0.334 , 95% CI (-0.66 , -0.007), $p < .05$] and post [B = -0.431 , 95% CI (-0.764 , -0.099), $p < .01$] implementation conditions determined that those who were with the DoD military departments and defense agencies between 10 years and more had a lower level of openness. Compared to their counterpart-civilian personnel under ten years of experience, this regression predicts that those with a longer tenure had a generally lower mean score for the open behavior of inclusion. Lastly, in addition to establishing the negative relationship between minority status, federal tenure, and the open habit of inclusion, the Model 3 regression analysis highlights that supervisory status and intention to leave the organization were highly statistically significant. In the case of supervisory status, both pre [B = -0.902 , 95% CI (-1.225 , -0.579), $p < .001$] and post [B = -0.952 , 95% CI (-1.39 , -0.514), $p < .001$] implementation conditions result in a lower level of openness among nonsupervisory DoD civilian personnel. Whereas the mean score for the open behavior of inclusion increased for those anticipating to stay with the DoD from pre [B = 2.232 , 95% CI (1.901 , 2.563), $p < .001$] to post [B = 2.546 , 95% CI (2.208 , 2.883), $p < .001$] implementation conditions of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan.

To measure the magnitude to which DoD management supported communication and collaboration among DoD civilian personnel, the cooperative habit of inclusion aimed to understand the perception of cooperation between units and organizational ranks. Model 4 in Table 9 provides the regression results for cooperation, which accounts for 8% (pre) and 13%

(post) of the variance in perception of cooperation explained by the independent variables. This regression model does identify several independent variables that influence the perception of cooperation—minority status, supervisory status, and intention of leaving. In terms of minority status, the regression results suggest that minority DoD personnel had a higher cooperative perception in the post DoD D&I implementation condition; [B = 0.258, 95% CI (0.051, 0.465), $p < .05$]. This is a similar positive trend among the DoD civilian personnel who do not intend to leave the agency. In this situation, the results indicate that the cooperative behavior increases between the pre [B = 1.127, 95% CI (0.919, 1.335), $p < .001$] and post [B = 1.568, 95% CI (1.357, 1.78), $p < .001$] implementation conditions. Contrary to the minority status and intent to leave variables, supervisory status indicated a negative trend resulting in nonsupervisory DoD civilian employees perceiving less levels of the cooperative habit; pre [B = -0.46, 95% CI (-0.663, -0.257), $p < .001$] and post [B = -0.514, 95% CI (-0.789, -0.24), $p < .001$] implementation conditions.

As the fifth habit of inclusion, supportiveness measured how employees feel valued by their supervisors. This habit encapsulates employees' perception of being treated with respect, acknowledged, and given constructive feedback to improve performance. Model 5 in Table 9 illustrates that supervisory status, federal tenure, and intention of leaving were statistically significant. Based on the model summary, the independent variables explain a certain extent of significant variance in perception of supportiveness as determined by the regressions R^2 of 9% pre-implementation and 11.4% post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. In the post-implementation regression analysis, the results detected the supervisory status variable was statistically significant (B = -0.607, 95% CI (-1.176, -0.037), $p < .05$), resulting in nonsupervisory DoD civilian personnel scoring lower for the supportive habit. The regression

discovered significant trends for federal tenure and intention to leave the agency. DoD civilian personnel who have tenure of between 10 years and over demonstrated to have a decrease in their perception of supportiveness pre ($B = -0.565$, 95% CI (-1.01, -0.121), $p < .001$) and post ($B = -0.691$, 95% CI (-1.124, -0.258), $p < .001$) implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic plan. In contrast, DoD civilian personnel within the military departments and defense agencies that intended to stay with the agency depicted a positive trend in their perception of supportiveness. In this situation, the pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan condition increased the score of the supportive habit. The results indicated that DoD civilian personnel not intending to leave displayed a higher score for the perception of supportiveness when compared to those intending to leave the agency within the year.

Lastly, the empowering habit of inclusion focuses on an employee's perception of having access to resources and support to promote their success. This habit considered an employee's perception of feeling encouraged to contribute to the agency and a sense of personal empowerment. The Model 6 regression results in Table 9 yield a strong statistical significance for the supervisory status and intention to leave independent variables, demonstrating that the predictive variables have a linear relationship with the empowering habit of inclusion. The model accounts for the independent variables by explaining 10% (pre) and 17% (post) of the variance in the score for the empowerment habit of inclusion. For supervisory status, the regression results indicated a decrease in the perception of empowerment. This is evident based on the pre ($B = -0.677$, 95% (-1.005, -0.349), $p < .001$) and post ($B = -0.900$, 95% CI (-1.351, -0.449), $p < .001$) implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions. Based on the model, DoD civilian personnel who had a nonsupervisory or non-team leader role had lower levels of perceived empowerment within the agency. Considering the demographic composition of nonsupervisory

or non-team leader role personnel being predominantly minority, see Table 5. The finding from this model aligns with the ongoing trend indicating that minority civilian personnel tend to have a lower perception of inclusion and the five habits of inclusion. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that this group had a lower score after implementing the strategic plan. This trend differs from the intention to leave variable, which showed a positive perception of empowerment for DoD civilian personnel not intending to leave the agency. In this instance, the results indicate that pre ($B = 2.104$, 95% CI (1.768, 2.441), $p < .001$) and post ($B = 3.108$, 95% CI (2.761, 3.456), $p < .001$) implementation of DoD D&I Strategic Plan conditions increased perception of empowerment.

Table 9

Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression Analysis for Perception of Inclusion and the Five Habits of Inclusion.

	Model 1: Perception of Inclusion							
	Pre-Implementation				Post-Implementation			
	B	SE	95% CI		B	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL			LL	UL
Minority Status ^a	- 0.500	0.752	- 1.975	0.975	- 0.482	0.766	- 1.985	1.02
Gender ^b	-1.281	0.809	- 2.868	0.305	- 1.247	0.8	- 2.817	0.322
Supervisory Status ^c	- 4.228***	0.768	- 5.733	-2.722	- 5.077***	1.016	- 7.07	- 3.084
Federal Tenure ^d	- 1.145	0.776	- 2.667	0.377	- 1.520*	0.772	- 3.034	-0.006
Intention of Leaving ^e	11.500***	0.786	9.958	13.043	13.519***	0.783	11.983	15.055
R ²	0.142				0.182			
	Model 2: Fair							
	Pre-Implementation				Post-Implementation			
	B	SE	95% CI		B	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL			LL	UL
Minority Status ^a	- 0.369	0.224	- 0.808	0.07	- 0.276	0.227	- 0.722	0.17
Gender ^b	- 0.564*	0.241	- 1.036	-0.092	- 0.605**	0.238	- 1.071	- 0.139
Supervisory Status ^c	- 1.761***	0.228	- 2.209	-1.313	- 2.104***	0.302	- 2.696	- 1.512
Federal Tenure ^d	- 0.082	0.231	- 0.535	0.371	- 0.183	0.229	- 0.633	0.266
Intention of Leaving ^e	3.284***	0.234	2.825	3.743	3.336***	0.232	2.88	3.792
R ²	0.152				0.156			

Table 9 (continued)

	Model 3: Open							
	Pre-Implementation				Post-Implementation			
	B	SE	95% CI		B	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL			LL	UL
Minority Status ^a	- 0.308	0.161	- 0.625	0.008	- 0.399*	0.168	- 0.729	- 0.069
Gender ^b	- 0.313	0.174	- 0.653	0.028	- 0.240	0.176	- 0.585	0.105
Supervisory Status ^c	- 0.902***	0.165	- 1.225	-0.579	-0.952***	0.223	- 1.39	- 0.514
Federal Tenure ^d	- 0.334*	0.167	- 0.66	-0.007	- 0.431**	0.17	- 0.764	- 0.099
Intention of Leaving ^e	2.232***	0.169	1.901	2.563	2.546***	0.172	2.208	2.883
R ²	0.127				0.148			

	Model 4: Cooperative							
	Pre-Implementation				Post-Implementation			
	B	SE	95% CI		B	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL			LL	UL
Minority Status ^a	0.056	0.101	- 0.142	0.255	0.258*	0.106	0.051	0.465
Gender ^b	- 0.173	0.109	- 0.387	0.041	- 0.070	0.11	- 0.286	0.147
Supervisory Status ^c	- 0.46***	0.103	- 0.663	-0.257	-0.514***	0.14	- 0.789	- 0.24
Federal Tenure ^d	- 0.104	0.105	- 0.309	0.101	- 0.114	0.106	- 0.323	0.095
Intention of Leaving ^e	1.127***	0.106	0.919	1.335	1.568***	0.108	1.357	1.78
R ²	0.083				0.130			

Table 9 (continued)

	Model 5: Supportive							
	Pre-Implementation				Post-Implementation			
	B	SE	95% CI		B	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL			LL	UL
Minority Status ^a	- 0.024	0.22	- 0.455	0.407	- 0.168	0.219	- 0.597	0.262
Gender ^b	- 0.004	0.236	- 0.467	0.46	- 0.181	0.229	- 0.63	0.267
Supervisory Status ^c	- 0.428	0.224	- 0.868	0.012	- 0.607*	0.29	- 1.176	- 0.037
Federal Tenure ^d	- 0.565**	0.227	- 1.01	- 0.121	- 0.691**	0.221	- 1.124	- 0.258
Intention of Leaving ^e	2.752***	0.23	2.302	3.203	2.961***	0.224	2.522	3.4
R ²	0.091				0.114			

	Model 6: Empowering							
	Pre-Implementation				Post-Implementation			
	B	SE	95% CI		B	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL			LL	UL
Minority Status ^a	0.144	0.164	- 0.178	0.466	0.102	0.173	- 0.238	0.442
Gender ^b	- 0.228	0.176	- 0.574	0.118	-0.151	0.181	- 0.507	0.204
Supervisory Status ^c	-0.677***	0.167	- 1.005	- 0.349	-0.900***	0.23	- 1.351	- 0.449
Federal Tenure ^d	- 0.06	0.169	- 0.392	0.272	-0.101	0.175	- 0.444	0.241
Intention of Leaving ^e	2.104***	0.172	1.768	2.441	3.108***	0.177	2.761	3.456
R ²	0.100				0.177			

Note. Total $N = 1,536$. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

^a Non-Minority = 0, Minority = 1. ^b Male = 0, Female = 1. ^c Supervisor/Manager/Senior

Leader/Executive Role = 0, Non-supervisory/non-Team leader Role = 1. ^d Ten Years or Less = 0,

Between 10 years or more = 1. ^e Yes = 0, No = 1.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

ANALYSIS

In 2012, the Department of Defense adopted the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, emphasizing the importance of incorporating diversity and inclusion initiatives to strengthen the agency's ability to protect the nation. The goal of the framework consisted of three pillars: 1) Ensure leadership commitment to an accountable and sustained diversity effort; 2) Employ an align strategic outreach effort to identify, attract, and recruit from a broad talent pool reflective of the best of the nation we serve; and 3) Develop, mentor, and retain top talent from across the total force. Collectively, the DoD aimed to identify and dismantle barriers preventing the growth of a diverse civilian workforce and the development of an inclusive environment. Using the New Inclusion Quotient, this program evaluation examined the impact of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan on the perception of inclusion among minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. Based on the independent sample *t*-test and the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis, this program evaluation concludes that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan did not affect the perception of inclusion among minority personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. The investigation determines that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan had an overall negative effect on the five habits of inclusion among minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. This investigation explores potential factors impacting the intent of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan to validate the findings.

DoD Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan

Strategic plans have been widely adopted across public and private organizations, dating back to the early 1990s, as a symbol of an organization's deliberate and strategic approach to addressing a significant issue or challenge (Bryson, 2018; Wolf & Floyd, 2017). Driven by

President Obama's Executive Order 13583 to establish a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the federal government, the DoD developed and implemented the DoD D&I Strategic Plan to bolster diversity and inclusion across its five institutions. Despite the intent to implement a multi-faceted strategy, existing research and documentation express concerns that might have hindered the DoD D&I strategy to create an inclusive environment for minority civilian personnel. According to the U.S. Department of Defense Board on Diversity and Inclusion (2020), although the DoD D&I Strategic Plan set forth a diversity management approach, the strategy "did not outline recruitment, retention, or promotion targets of historically underrepresented demographic groups" (p.20). The vague goals introduced in the strategic plan could have resulted in the lack of implementation, impacting the overall strategy's success (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Bryson, 2018). In addition, the lack of goals specificity indicating the intentional recruitment, retention, and promotion of the historically underrepresented demographic groups implies that the DoD perhaps was superficially attempting to recruit a diverse workforce; and can be interpreted as colorful window dressing (Marques, 2010).

Sponsored by the Office of Personnel and Readiness in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the RAND Corporation published research investigating the feasibility of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. In their findings, Lim et al. (2013) emphasized that although the DoD D&I Strategic Plan consisted of broad goals and specific initiatives, the strategic plan lacked structure and prioritization among the proposed goals, objectives, and initiatives. Lim et al. (2013) introduced two recommendations that would support the implementation of the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Plan: 1) Develop the accountability structure for diversity and inclusion based on compliance, communication, and coordination; 2) "Establish a clear timeline

of implementation milestones and publish annual status of progress toward these milestones for greatest transparency and accountability for progress” (p. 57-58). The lack of accountability and timelines are critical components of a strategic plan, contributing to the failure to implement the strategic plan (Bryson, 2018). However, scholars warn that “pressure for accountability and measurable results may shift the focus towards short-term outputs that can be measured rather than longer-term outputs that be less easy to measure” (Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). While there might be conflicting research on the value of accountability, especially within the context of a government agency, the lack of transparency of milestones and progress can deter the momentum that the strategy needed to have an impact. Research validates the recommendation for greater transparency by Lim et al. (2013), especially regarding utilizing transparency to eradicate bias and increase diversity and inclusion (Galinsky et al., 2015).

A secondary component influencing the impact of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan is its decentralized implementation model. Although decentralized systems are common within the government, the research emphasizes implementing communication mechanisms to coordinate the implementation of objectives and access to information and resources (Bryson, 2018; Sandfort & Moulton, 2015). Since its initiation, the strategic plan relied on the military departments and defense agencies to implement individual components of the strategy plan (DoDSTEM, 2016). For example, as part of the third objective of the strategy—to promote diversity and inclusion through training, development, and employee engagement programs, the strategy implemented “ad hoc stand-alone sessions that incorporate various D&I topics into supervisory and senior leader mandatory trainings” (DoDSTEM, 2016). The impact of this decentralized implementation approach further minimized the effects of the DoD D&I Strategic plan two-fold: 1) It limited the amount of information and resource sharing between different

DoD departments (Bryson, 2018) and 2) It eliminated the opportunity for the DoD to implement D&I training that extended over a prolonged period and complement other diversity initiatives which have a more significant impact on participants (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Although the DoD Diversity and Inclusion presented a series of goals, objectives, and initiatives, the recommendations proposed by Lim et al. (2013) validate the findings of this investigation. As Lim et al. cautioned in their research, the DoD did not achieve the level of success due to the lack of accountability, communication, and transparency.

Perception of Inclusion

As the independent variable of interest, perception of inclusion is characterized as “valuing integrating each individual’s differences into how an organization functions and makes decisions” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2012, p. 12). The independent sample *t*-test and the Ordinary Least Square regression analysis did not identify any statistical significance in the overall perception of inclusion pre-and post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan among minority civilian personnel. Based on these findings, this program evaluation determines that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan was ineffective in increasing the perception of inclusion among civilian personnel within the military departments and defense agencies. Apart from the development and implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan introduced above, several factors contribute to the lack perception of inclusion of minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies.

First, existing scholarship calls for the intentional and conscious adoption of inclusion efforts, emphasizing the need for organizations to go beyond mandated requirements to influence inclusion successfully (Sabharwal, 2014). Extensive research emphasizes the importance of strong and dedicated leadership to shape an inclusive environment at all levels of the

organization (Miller, 1998; Pless & Maak, 2004; Sabharwal, 2014; Shore et al., 2011). Although the DoD D&I Strategic Plan included a goal to ensure accountability from leadership, the strategy's implementation mechanism did not accommodate the intentional accountability and delegation of DoD leadership to implement the strategy. Second, Andrews & Ashworth (2015) suggest that public organizations that a workforce representative of the population they serve are perceived to be more inclusive by their workforce. In the case of the DoD, as table 2 illustrates, minority representation within the DoD military departments and defense agencies has remained consistent at 32% since 2017. Finally, the lack of perception of inclusion among civilian personnel can potentially be explained by the time required to implement a strategic plan within the DoD. According to U.S. Government Accountability Office (2011), "it can take 5 to 7 years to fully implement major change initiatives in large public and private sector organizations and to transform related cultures in a sustainable manner" (p. 27). Perhaps the investigation timeframe is outside the desired parameters to capture the true impact of the DoD Strategic Plan regarding the perception of inclusion.

In analyzing the explanatory variables (gender, supervisory status, federal tenure, and intention of leaving), the findings suggest that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan negatively impacted the perception of inclusion within each explanatory variable. As the first independent variable to demonstrate statistical significance, DoD civilian personnel who were not in a supervisory or team leader role demonstrated a lower level of inclusion after implementing the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. A lower level of perception of inclusion can be based on the fact that only DoD civilian supervisors and managers received access to D&I training. For example, the Game Changer program provided DoD managers with intensive training on promoting D&I initiatives and creating an inclusive work environment. As a result, DoD civilian personnel in a

nonsupervisory role did not have direct exposure to the mechanism used by the agency to promote diversity and inclusion but rather were depended on their supervisor's implementation of the training. Equally important is how the military departments' and defense agencies' organizational and power structures affect group interactions. Literature explores the impact of influence and empowerment in the workforce, concluding that positions with higher influence and power lead to higher levels of job performance and satisfaction (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2011; Sabharwal, 2015). The results from the regression analysis confirm that DoD civilian personnel with more influence and power tend to have a higher perception of inclusion.

The federal tenure independent variable highlights the impact of the DoD D&I Strategy Plan among DoD civilian employees with a tenure of 10 or more years, indicating that this group had a lower perception of inclusion as opposed to their counterparts. Considering the general demographic population of the DoD military departments and defense agencies accompanied by the ethnic and racial makeup of the organization. The decline in the perception of inclusion among those with a tenure of 10 years can be speculated that the nonminority group feels less included due to the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. Diversity management scholarship explores the impact and resistance of diversity management practices among nonminority's, implying that D&I initiatives create a sense of seclusion among nonminority's (Jansen et al., 2015; Stevens et al., 2008). Furthermore, Butitova (2019) found a negative relationship between tenure and perception of fairness, stating, "state government employees' perceptions of organizational justice decrease with more years of public service and are at their lowest level among employees in the middle of their public service career." Whether attributed to resistance or a general decline in organizational fairness, this study shows a relationship between the tenure of DoD civilian employee and their perception of inclusion.

Unlike the other explanatory variables for the perception of inclusion, the intention of leaving the agency demonstrates a minor upward trend. DoD civilian employees who did not intend to leave the organization had a higher perception of inclusion than those intending to leave within the year. Research on this topic concludes that federal employees tend to consider leaving an organization based on their job satisfaction, enjoyment of tasks, career state/advancement, and age (Lee, 2020; Pitts et al., 2011). Considering the slight increase in perception of inclusion, DoD civilian employees intending to stay within the DoD military departments and defense agencies perceived the work environment to be inclusive to a certain extent.

Five Habits of Inclusion

The five habits of inclusion collectively provide insight into the different dimensions that contribute to the perception of inclusion among DoD civilian personnel within the military departments and defense agencies. The five habits of inclusion include (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2014): 1) Fair – Are all employees treated equitably?, 2) Open – Does management support diversity in all ways?, 3) Cooperative – Does management encourage communication and collaboration?, 4) Supportive – Do supervisors value employees?, and 5) Empowering – Do employees have the resources and support needed to excel? Individually, each habit of inclusion offers a glimpse into the multi-faceted aspects of inclusion, enabling an understanding of how each habit impacts the overall perception of inclusion among DoD minority civilian personnel. Based on the regression analysis, the investigation identified a statistical relationship between minority status and inclusion's open and cooperative habits.

The inclusion habit of openness captures the perceived receptiveness of diversity from supervisors and managers, including acceptance of diversity initiatives, commitment to a diverse

workforce, and comradery between supervisors and diverse employees. Based on Model 3 in Table 9, DoD minority civilian personnel had lower levels of openness post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. Soldan & Nankervis (2014) confirm that the lack of implementation of D&I initiatives among supervisors and managers can be attributed to 1) Lack of training to equip managers with the knowledge to fulfill D&I requests, 2) Lack of involvement in the creation of D&I initiatives, and 3) Lack of accountability to apply policies and regulations that promote D&I in the workplace. In addition, the research explores the codependent relationship between openness and inclusion, resulting in the need for employees to experience inclusion to feel valued and open to expressing their ideas (Sabharwal, 2014). This study considers that perhaps the lower perception of openness among minority civilian personnel is caused by a lack of an inclusive environment within the DoD military departments and defense agencies.

The inclusion habit of cooperation measures how DoD civilian personnel perceive communication channels between teams and units. According to the findings, DoD minority civilian personnel indicated slightly higher perception of cooperation post-implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan. The indication that minority DoD civilian personnel felt slightly higher perceptions of cooperation is substantiated by existing research. In a study investigating the impact of cultural differences on cooperative behavior, Cox et al. (1991) discovered that increasing the team's diversity increased cooperative behaviors, while teams that lack diversity had lower levels of cooperation. Although it is challenging to determine if the DoD D&I Strategic Plan caused the increase in perception, a supplemental explanation for the increase in perception of cooperation can be due to the minority group feeling like part of the "in-group" based on their pledge to serve and protect the nation. As explained by Joshi & Jackson (2008),

“In-group members are assumed to have shared interests and goals, and cooperative behavior follows because it is consistent with one’s self-interest” (p. 208).

Regarding gender diversity, there is statistical evidence that gender predicts a degree of variance in the fairness habit of inclusion. The findings from this evaluation demonstrate that women DoD civilian employees had a lower perception of fairness than male employees. This finding is consistent with research investigating the perception of inclusion among women federal government employees. For example, Nelson & Piatak (2021) found that racially underrepresented groups, particularly women, exhibited lower levels of fairness and openness. Furthermore, Hoang et al. (2022) found that to increase the perception of fairness among women, organizations must surpass the call for gender representation at all levels of an agency and focus on developing inclusive leaders that can work with employees from different backgrounds. Based on the design and implementation of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan, the lack of specificity prompting the agency to take action in building inclusive leaders has impacted the perception of fairness among women DoD civilian personnel.

The five habits of inclusion demonstrate the relationship between each factor and the perception of inclusion. This investigation provides insight into how the open, cooperative, and fair habits of inclusion collectively impact how minority and women DoD civilian personnel perceive inclusion within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. The finding in this evaluation can assist the DoD in developing strategic and specific outcomes that target the perception of openness, cooperation, and fairness to promote inclusion among minority civilian personnel. For example, the DoD can purposefully create initiatives that promote management to openly support diversity initiatives through cultural humility training. This type of training enables leaders to be self-aware of their privilege and power, open to new ideas, and understand

their position within the larger context (Morris et al., 2005). Research demonstrates that leadership humility enables a workforce to develop psychological safety resulting in a greater degree of accepting change (Baer & Frese, 2003; Frostenson, 2016; Jeung & Yoon, 2016). By implementing specific and targeted initiatives, such as cultural humility training for DoD management, the DoD military departments and defense agencies can increase management in supporting diversity and ultimately impact the perception of openness among minority civilian personnel (Jin et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

As the United States continues to become increasingly diverse, the Department of Defense understands the importance of representative bureaucracy in maintaining a global advantage against threats to the nation. Established in 2012, the DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan served as a diversity management practice combined with an inclusion strategy designed to support the DoD in shifting its culture to be more inclusive and attract diverse talent to the agency. Designed to establish accountability, recruit and retain broad talent, the DoD D&I Strategic Plan served as the foundation for the DoD to be strategic in increasing diversity through the development of an inclusive work environment. This program evaluation examined the impact of the Department of Defense Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2012 – 2017) on the perception of inclusion among minority civilian personnel within the DoD military departments and defense agencies. The findings from this investigation demonstrate that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan failed to create an inclusive work environment for DoD minority civilian personnel during the periods under investigation. As more data is added every year, the indicators from the New IQ should be assessed for evidence of changes in that trend.

To ensure that the public administration sector can serve a diverse population, public agencies must continue to implement strategies that promote diversity and inclusion across federal, state, and local agencies. For example, President Biden signed Exec. Order No. 14035 (2021) introduced a series of orders to ensure that the federal government strengthens its infrastructure to promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility within its workforce. The findings from this investigation can be applied to the broader public administration sector as organizations continue to adopt diversity and inclusion strategic plans to achieve a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment. Based on the design and implementation of the DoD

D&I Strategic Plan, this investigation demonstrated the importance of adopting strategies that promote accountability through compliance, communication, and coordination (Lim et al., 2013). Equally important, strategic plans must contain components that establish transparency by determining realistic timelines and channels of communication to provide updates on the execution of the strategic plan. Lastly, it is critical that strategic plans contain specific goals and explicitly identify the type of diversity they aspire to recruit, retain, and develop. Although the DoD D&I Strategic Plan served as an initial step for the agency to achieve a diverse workforce and inclusive environment, this investigation assumes that the DoD D&I Strategic Plan lacked several vital components, ultimately limiting its impact. This investigation's findings and analysis can guide the best practices that public agencies can adopt to develop and implement successful D&I strategic plans that truly promote a diverse workforce and build an inclusive environment.

The benefits of this program evaluation are two-fold. First, this investigation enhances the understanding of the role of the DoD D&I Strategic Plan in the advancement of the perception of inclusion among minority civilian personnel. Second, this program evaluation contributes to public administration scholarship by providing insight into the effects of diversity management practices among civilian personnel within a large federal government agency. As the DoD continues to strive for diversity and equity through the adoption of future strategic plans, it is evident that the agency must take a holistic approach to create a strategy that incorporates an assessment of its climate for diversity and inclusion, relevant goals, thoughtful implementation, and feedback (Mor Barak, 2017). For the DoD to achieve its mission of protecting the country, it must take immediate action to ensure it can recruit a diverse workforce and establish an environment conducive to that diversity.

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Appendix A. Department of Defense (DoD) Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Strategic Plan

2012 - 2017

Goal 1: Ensure Leadership Commitment to an Accountable and Sustained Diversity

Effort.

Objective 1.1: Reinforce strategic direction to make leadership aligned, committed, and accountable to diversity and inclusion.

Strategic actions	Initiatives
<p>1. Develop and update policies and procedures to ensure diversity and inclusion is an institutional priority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership issues diversity policy statements, roadmaps, and/or strategic plans • Resource and institute clear, consistent, and robust diversity management policies and directives that ensure decisions are merit-based • Assess and modify, as necessary, DoD policies as they relate to diversity.
<p>2. Establish and implement an accountability review construct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and leverage forums, including a senior level body to oversee and monitor key diversity and inclusion initiatives • Identify key diversity and inclusion indicators (e.g., career fields and key assignments leading to senior ranks) • Develop the comprehensive enterprise-wide capability to monitor the scope and impact of DoD diversity efforts • Conduct barrier and trend analysis on key diversity indicators for military (MEO) and civilian (EEO) that provides guidance to aid leaders in making informed diversity decisions.

 Objective 1.2: Employ compelling and consistent strategic communications

Strategic actions	Initiatives
1. Inform internal and external audiences about DoD diversity efforts in support of recruiting, development, and retention goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage relationships with non-DoD entities and maximize the use of social media to expand the diversity message internally and externally to target markets • Create, assess, and execute a diversity and inclusion strategic communications plan.

Goal 2: Employ an Aligned Strategic Outreach Effort to Identify, Attract, and Recruit from a Broad Talent Pool Reflective of the Best of the Nation We Serve.

 Objective 2.1: Design and perform strategic outreach and recruitment to reach all segments of society.

Strategic actions	Initiatives
1. Ensure current recruitment practices are effectively reaching all segments of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the effectiveness of current branding and recruitment practices for all demographics/ markets to ascertain actionable steps to increase access and positioning • Establish a baseline for the purpose of identifying merit-based barriers and improving diversity in applicant pools by 2013 • Establish framework to collect, review, and analyze applicant flow data and recruiting trends to relevant civilian labor force (RCLF) data and eligible applicant pool to identify gaps • Expand and exercise the use of Schedule A, Veteran, and special hiring authorities as part of the strategy to recruit a diverse workforce

2. Synchronize outreach and recruitment activities across DoD. Ensure that outreach and recruitment strategies are designed to draw from all segments of society.
- Establish a framework to review and identify both outreach and recruitment activities
 - Identify and integrate areas of overlap if practical
 - Employ Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Managers to work towards attracting, recruiting, and retaining a diverse workforce
3. Establish/expand strategic relationships with internal and external key stakeholders at diverse colleges and universities, trade schools, apprentice programs, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiative programs, and affinity organizations.
- Assess and leverage relationships with DoD and non-DoD entities to enhance outreach and recruitment strategies to ensure that they effectively reach all segments of society
 - Review and ensure that internship, fellowship, and scholarship programs have diverse pipelines to draw candidates from all segments of society
 - Review and ensure a flow of applicants from diverse backgrounds to the Service Academies and other officer accession sources

Objective 2.2: Ensure policies and programs support the efforts to identify, attract and recruit from a broad, diverse talent pool.

Strategic actions	Initiatives
1. Create and assess implementation policies to support diversity strategic outreach and recruitment practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and modify policies as necessary to ensure a diverse, merit-based leadership pool for the 21st Century • Leverage SEP assets to develop and inform implementation plans

Goal 3: Develop, Mentor, and Retain Top Talent from Across the Total Force

Objective 3.1: Promote diversity and inclusion through training, development, and employee engagement programs.

Strategic actions	Initiatives
1. Infuse diversity and inclusion messaging throughout the on-boarding and leadership development and training continuum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and integrate diversity principles, practices, and competencies into professional development training, education, and performance management programs Develop a framework to oversee and monitor diversity and inclusion principles and practices for all professional development programs Establish and assess diversity and inclusion competencies for leadership to lead a diverse workforce
2. Leverage opportunities presented by employee groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support participation in employee affinity and resource groups consistent with the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), DoD 5500.07-R.

Objective 3.2: Promote practices that retain top talent capable of meeting the department's readiness needs for the 21st century.

Strategic actions	Initiatives
1. Enhance retention initiatives to retain a broad diverse pool of top talent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and assess flexible workplace programs (e.g., telework, wellness programs, off-ramps/on-ramps, and other work-life flexibilities) Evaluate the effectiveness of DoD's retention initiatives. Analyze workforce data and policies to ensure full access to key developmental assignment opportunities
2. Promote an inclusive environment that empowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a framework to oversee and monitor organizational climate

- employees to perform at their maximum potential.
- Ensure senior leader involvement in climate assessments
 - Develop survey instruments or equivalents to support leaders in managing a diverse force

Objective 3.3: Ensure policies and programs support the efforts to develop and mentor a broad, diverse talent pool

Strategic actions	Initiatives
1. Review training and development programs to ensure they draw from all segments of the work- force and identify barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze applicant pool and selection data and ensure full access to all development programs • Ensure senior leader visibility to development and training selections process
2. Create, implement, and assess policies to support the development, mentorship, and retention of a broad, diverse talent pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and modify policies to ensure broad access to mentoring approaches for all personnel • Review existing mentorship models and assess effectiveness • Create flexible mentoring models, informal and formal (e.g., one on one, mentor teams, command based, peer to peer, and social networking applications) • Develop a DoD framework for mentorship

Note. Adapted from *Department of Defense Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2012-2017* (2012).

Appendix B. The Climate for Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (MBIE)

Source: Mor Barak (2017)

Assessed on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*)

Work Group

- Q 1: I have influence in decisions taken by my work group regarding our tasks.
- Q 2: My coworkers openly share work-related information with me.
- Q 3: I am typically involved and invited to actively participate in work-related activities of my workgroup.

Organization

- Q 4: I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization.
- Q 5: I am usually among the last to know about important changes in the organization.
(Reverse Scored)
- Q 6: I am usually invited to important meetings in my organization.

Supervisor

- Q 7: My supervisor asks for my opinion before make important decisions.
- Q 8: My supervisor does not share information with me. (Reverse Scored)
- Q 9: I am invited to actively participate in review and evaluation meetings with my supervisor.

Higher Management

- Q 10: I am often invited to contribute my opinion in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor.
- Q 11: I frequently receive communication from management higher than my immediate supervisor.

Q 12: I am often invited to participate in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor.

Social/Informal

Q 13: I am often asked to contribute in planning social activities not directly related to my job function.

Q 14: I am always informed about informal social activities and company social events.

Q 15: I am rarely invited to join my coworkers when they go for lunch or drinks after work. (Reverse Scored)

Appendix C. New Inclusion Quotient (IQ) - Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management (2015a)

Assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*)

1. Fair: Are all employees treated equally?

Q 23: In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.

Q 24: In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.

Q 25: Awards in my work unit depend on how well employees perform their jobs.

Q 37: Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated.

Q 38: Prohibited Personnel Practices (for example, illegally discriminating for or against any employee/applicant, obstructing a person 's right to compete for employment, knowingly violating veterans ' preference requirements) are not tolerated.

2. Open: Does management support diversity in all ways?

Q 32: Creativity and innovation are rewarded.

Q 34: Policies and programs promote diversity in the work- place (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring).

Q 45: My supervisor is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.

Q 55: Supervisors work well with employees of different backgrounds.

3. Cooperative: Does management encourage communication and collaboration?

Q 58: Managers promote communication among different work units (for example, about projects, goals, needed resources).

Q 59: Managers support collaboration across work units to accomplish work objectives.

4. Supportive: Do supervisors value employees?

Q 42: My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.

Q 46: My supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.

Q 48: My supervisor listens to what I have to say.

Q 49: My supervisor treats me with respect.

Q 50: In the last 6 months, my supervisor has talked with me about my performance.

5. Empowering: Do employees have the resources and support needed to excel?

Q 2: I have enough information to do my job well.

Q 3: I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.

Q 11: My talents are used well in the workplace.

Q 30: Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes.