



# ADVANCING DIVERSITY IN ACCOUNTING FIRMS: BOOSTING BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

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**Abstract:** It is widely recognized that the public accounting profession lacks diversity, equity and inclusion, particularly in terms of the progress and success of people of color. Despite efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, people of color still face barriers to professional development and career advancement within public accounting firms. The study will focus on the racial diversification issues in the accounting industry. With a special focus on the experiences of people of color, we will conduct an in-depth literature analysis on diversity and inclusion in the accounting sector. This research study offers extensive data that demonstrate in order to be more successful and helpful to the community, accounting firms should consider promoting diversity. The research shows that firms can be more efficient and successful when there is an effort to increase diversity.

**Keywords:** Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accounting Profession, Business Success, People of Color

## INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that the public accounting profession lacks diversity and inclusion, particularly in terms of the progress and success of people of color. An accounting firm needs a diverse culture because it develops a range of ideas, experiences, and abilities that enhance creativity, client relationships,

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and overall business performance. Mor Barak *et al.* (1998, p.83) define diversity climate as ‘employee actions and attitudes that are grounded in perceptions of the organizational setting relating to women and minorities. Despite efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, people of color still face barriers to professional development and career advancement within public accounting firms. When their superiors were different, it was claimed that African American subordinates suffer from lower levels of supervisory support, fewer opportunities for professional progress, inferior procedural fairness, lower levels of integration, and higher levels of bias.

The purpose of this study is to better understand how public accounting firms can help people of color succeed in their careers and what impact that might have on the general profitability of the organizations. With a special focus on the experiences of people of color, we will conduct an in-depth literature analysis on diversity and inclusion in the accounting sector. This study is designed to address this issue in two parts, which include exploring existing research and analyzing the most effective way to help people of color make decisions that are targeted at their advancement in public accounting firms and the impact of such moves on the positive results of these firms. This research aims to investigate the trend of the big accounting firms explicitly advocating diversity and tolerance not merely as a yearly occasion but instead as a deeper concept of a business that eventually allows it to achieve success by embracing all its employees instead of implying that only some of its staff are beneficial due to their race or ethnic origin.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The accounting profession is facing a rising concern about the non-representation of diverse people and their viewpoints. People of color are marginalized in many areas of the profession, across entry-level jobs and senior positions, which is in contradiction to the diverse, supported, and inclusive mindset that the profession holds. With an emphasis on the experiences of people of color, this section analyzes the literature on diversity and equality within the accounting industry.

Given that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) awareness has significantly gained popularity for the past years, leaders of accounting firms have shown a stronger commitment to the cause (Tysiac, 2021). A 2019 KPMG study shows there has been incremental growth in the number of CPA who are people of color, which was significantly different from that of like 10

years ago. However, this group is still a minority in senior-level positions. This study holds the view that people of color face extra problems, which include unconscious biases, no sponsors and mentors support, and no opportunities for advancement. Chief executive officers have become aware that board diversity should be taken seriously (Buttner *et al.*, 2012).

The results of the 2018 survey by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) indicate that although the industry has made reasonable progress concerning the promotion of diversity and inclusion, to move forward there should be a more transparent and systematic approach to addressing this issue. Unconscious bias, shallow relationships with peers, professional networks, and the absence of opportunities for career advancement and training are seen as the main reasons for racial minorities' employment or promotion.

Furthermore, studies that focus on the role of corporate cultures reveal the extent to which these cultures affect policies and programs aimed at encouraging inclusivity and diversity. Public accounting firms' culture might be one of the most dominant factors shaping the experience of national ethnic minority workforce based on the research by Lounsbury *et al.* (2018). Buttner *et al.* (2012) concluded that organizations that advocate diversity and inclusion policy deliver a performance that is superior in terms of recruitment of a diverse workforce as well as employee retention among people of color. However, implementing diversity in business is another story.

Evidence-based studies have proven that there are many approaches to promoting diversity and inclusivity in the accounting profession (AICPA, 2018; KPMG, 2019). A few examples are targeted hiring campaigns to draw in a diverse pool of candidates, mentoring and sponsorship programs to encourage the professional advancement of people of color, and training programs to advance cultural competence and fight unconscious bias.

Minority workers continue to fall short in the diversity pool. Compared to their white counterparts, minority workers tend to be unemployed and receive fewer promotions to executive or senior-level positions (Goldberg *et al.*, 2019). People of color may have unique needs that should be addressed to keep them at pace with other diverse community members. For example, minorities may not have well-defined career paths. The obscurity can promote a perception of unnoticed experiences. However, sponsorship is critical to assisting minorities with awareness of opportunities (Goldberg *et al.* 2019). Mentoring programs for minority employees allow management to become diversity champions and facilitate more opportunities for mentees (Goldberg *et al.*, 2019).

Further, the impact of racial and ethnic diversity at the senior management level is evidenced by an increase in earnings before interest and taxes (Goldberg *et al.*, 2019). Lewis (2021) suggests that until there is an accurate understanding of racism in the profession founded on the accounting of the profitable exploitation of black people, there will be limited sustainable growth for people of color in accounting. Lewis (2021) also advocates a Critical Race Theory of Accounting (CRTA) to seek possible change.

Viator *et al.* (2012) examine in more detail the mentor protégé relationship related to minority accounting employees. It does appear that experienced non-color professionals with strong leadership skills can provide guidance through creative assignments that contribute to a successful career path for minority junior colleagues. However, these same non-color senior-level professional mentors may not be well suited to provide the social support required for minorities to thrive. Viator *et al.* (2012) further suggest that accounting firms offer opportunities for ethnic-minority community groups and spur participation.

Minorities face two fundamental issues: barriers to the profession and obstacles to sustaining a career in the profession (Goldberg *et al.*, 2019, Lewis, 2021, Kunz and Ludwig, 2022). Goldberg *et al.* (2019) suggest that providing more minority champions during the recruiting and evaluation process could address an entrance barrier. Minorities are even plagued by names that do not sound white and are not invited to continue in the recruitment process. Those minorities who are hired by accounting firms may feel prohibited from expressing their identity. This suppression of their culture and perhaps pressure to mimic the majority's culture may lead to estrangement and poor performance (Goldberg *et al.*, 2019). While some minority employees may display poor performance, Goldberg *et al.* (2019) report that when evaluating minorities in their performance reviews, evaluators are inclined to rate minority employees with lower scores.

Overall, body of evidences indicates that both individuals and organizations must be willing to put more efforts that are more structural than just pondering with the ways and in which diversity and inclusion in accounting profession can be improved. To build diversity and promote inclusion in public accounting firms, the research highlights the significance of company culture, specific hiring campaigns, mentorship and sponsorship efforts, in addition to targeted recruiting strategies.

Similarly as accounting industry has been coping with the concerns of diversity and equality for several years, as well as other industries. We will give

a detailed review of the literature on cultural diversity and inclusion in the accountancy industry where this work has been included, thereby focusing on the black experience in the industry in particular.

Quite interestingly, one of the first things one can notice is that the accounting industry does not have diversity at the top levels. The results of a survey by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), 2019, show the Black population is 2% of auditing partners, while this is only 1% of accounting partners. This may require taking on the issue since diversity comes in handy as it can make the job hard to deliver satisfactory services to the clients and in most cases the ideas generated will mostly be recycled.

Several effects, like cultural dynamics of accounting firms, infancy of representation of minority groups in the leadership, implicit biases are among the elements that educate people of color on the perception of accounting as a career. One of the primary factors that contribute to extreme working conditions that the firms of public accounting are characterized by is the race of an individual. A research study undertaken by Lounsbury et al (2018) revealed that the life of black people at public accounting firms has a major impact on the lives of people of color. The participants of the survey indicated that the task of networking was difficult as they believed that they were not socially successful and were not invited to nonwork related events and networking events.

An AICPA study in 2020 has revealed that people of color are prone to expect discrimination and microaggressions more than the others. Apart from the purposeful direct action, there is a micro-actions that come in a 'subtle, unintentional' form known as microaggressions which lead to someone to be stigmatized or excluded. Another microaggression that is very common is for all ethnic groups and racial communities to speak on their entire membership's behalf and also being judged to be unqualified when standing with your white colleagues during discussions.

Research on the challenges, people of color and other underrepresented groups in accounting, such as LGBTQ+ individuals and people with disabilities is not adequate. As the research in this field is very limited, it is difficult to understand the problems which they go through and creating less discriminatory workplace environments is hard to achieve.

Many programs have been developed to help expand the accounting profession's ethnicity as well as solidarity. One of the most interesting programs is to create more opportunities for women in this field. For instance, the AICPA

is launching a range of projects to enhance the number of individuals of color employed in the area of accounting, such as the Accounting Scholars Leadership Workshop and the National Community on Diversity and Inclusion. Not only does discrimination against minorities create the absence of diversity, but also through the establishment of diversity goals and diversity training, accounting firms have succeeded in developing diversity. The research review indicates that there are few citizens of the minority group in top management or entry-level positions in auditing and accounting professions. The United States of America has a 44% proportion of the population composed of the minority group. Contrary to the perception, the survey by the AICPA in the year 2019 proved that only the people of color comprised of 16 percent of accounting workers. There are several, as in the culture of accounting firms, absent women in top positions and unconscious biases that revolve around the accounting profession, which in turn influence the perceptions of people of color. Lounsbury et. Al., (2018) point out that the way public accounting organizations influence the being of people of color significantly can be considered as a key area in the society. Their survey respondents disclosed they expended a lot of effort in trying to make new contacts and struggling to be successful owing to the lack of the communication and social interactions.

According to the data presented by the AICPA in 2020, a mutual link between ethnicity and micro aggression at work. For instance, the unconscious microaggressions, such as unsure, unintentional behaviors can change an individual's perception at in the workplace. For instance, the unconscious microaggression, such as unsure, unintentional behaviors can change an individual's perception at in the workplace. Ethnic minorities are more likely to experience microaggressions in the workplace. Unintentional, subtle behaviors known as microaggressions can lead someone to feel stigmatized or excluded. Being expected to speak on behalf of their entire racial or ethnic community and being thought to be less qualified than their white coworkers are two examples of microaggressions in the accounting business. People of color can have their vocational difficulties linked to personal satisfaction, general well-being, and mental health in addition to the motivation to pursue a career.

As revealed by Dixon-Fowler *et. al.*, (2020), loneliness and lack of sponsorship may be one of the main factors that cause color disadvantaged people to be underrepresented in leadership roles. Without these opportunities, people of color to advance in their careers and take on positions of leadership.

The accounting profession has put many initiatives to push diversity and inclusivity that include having access to new markets, cultures, and talents to help solve these issues. The AICPA has been committed to improving the numbers of persons of color in accounting through both, the National Commission on Diversity and Inclusion and the Accounting Scholars Leadership Workshop, respectively. The provision of diversity goals staffed by inclusion of diversity training is an effective way of accounting companies accelerating towards diversity. (Cox, 1994) employs a three part framework concerning the individual, intergroup, and organizational components to be used as a background of a diverse climate. The human doziness (lack of engagement) of Cox's model of the diversity-climate can be noticed by the link which is formed between the individual and the organizational environment in which the individual is integrated.

The existing literature about diversity and inclusion in accounting give numerous examples of people who are colored. They are underrepresented. They face microaggression and they are not considered for opportunities for networking that they deserve. There is a lack of mentors and sponsors for the minorities in the field. Even though businesses slowly started producing more inclusive languages, there is still work to be done to meet all the demands. Many efforts need to be ratified in order for people who are newcomers to accounting to feel like they too are a part of this career. The complexity of the goals pursued by the private sector accountants and programs of the AICPA suggest a favorable direction of development.

However, there have been inclusivity and diversity matters, too, and there are some financial obstacles still preventing black communities from entering and succeeding in the accounting profession based on a study. However, research conducted by Dillard et. al., (2021) showed that Black and Hispanic/Latinx persons are still experiencing lagging behind in the accountancy field particularly in management position even though the improvement has been present in the field in terms of inclusion and diversity effort. There are also studies pointing out that as a result of cultural difficulties and unintentional stereotypes individuals possessing a minority racial background who work in the accounting profession face special problems.

Black accounting professionals frequently are segregated and isolated because they must prepare like to mix in with mostly white colleagues, according to the study by Ayemang et. al., (2018). Their research asserts that instead of the Black professionals having an equal opportunity with their

White counterparts for success, they have to put in more extra effort for their careers to be more rewarding than their White colleagues. Besides, they are less likely to have access to mentorship or sponsorship opportunities compared to the Whites.

According to the existing literature, diverse teams, such as the ones consisting of people from different backgrounds, are very innovative and creative. They contribute to innovation, creativity, and high performance inside accounting firms. Women and people of color bring with them their unique outlooks, narratives, and understanding(s) to the table that improve problem-solving, decision- and new idea generation (Trust, 2019). By that, companies can respond to the difficult and recurrent changes in the stages of the market process in a more flexible way and with more efficiency.

Enhanced client relationships and market reach: Imagine a group of accountants who all do not follow the rules, but they do bring in different ideas and experiences to the teamwork. Such kinds of diversity are irreplaceable to any accounting firm! Get the work done in time. Studies suggest that existing clientele especially those from different ethnicity, display trust and believe in attorneys who look like real people (PWC, 2017). When client connections are intimate, it becomes easier to contribute to satisfaction by understanding your clients, establishing trust, and exceeding their expectations. The happy two or three of your clients stay with you for longer, act as a reliable source of new prospects over time, and consequently, contribute to the growth of your company.

Continuing studies on unconscious bias reveal a striking connection between the unfair techniques of hiring and promotion employed by accounting firms based on the publication “Bias and Behavior in Professional Work Practices: An Investigation of Instructional Techniques of Accounting Firms” by Wright et. al., (2021). It is about the possibility of the scanty black people holding up executive rolls. The survey reveals that unconscious bias training had the power to combat discriminatory habits, however, such methods should be done in combination with others, such as goal setting and leading by self-commitment.

Studies indicate that beyond the existing problems that people of color account for in the accounting career, diversity, and inclusiveness a term the benefit. This is prudently illustrated in an article by Effah and O’Hara, in 2019, where the author demonstrated that highly diversified teams in accounting firms were found capable of serving a wide variety of clients and innovative in solving their problems.



The accounting industry tries to sustain its efforts in reducing the challenges that colored people have through many processes of inclusion and diversity programs. Let us use the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) as an example, this organization has been financing mentorship programs and other endeavors to boost the number of Black accounting professionals. Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA)'s strategic aim number two is getting the Latinos/Hispanics into the accounts' focusing roles.

The accountability research of diversity and inclusion creates a situation where people of color continue to face numerous issues that involve underrepresentation, unconscious bias, and cultural discouragement. It is also reported that diversity and inclusiveness can strongly add to accounting firms' customers, as was shown by research. Even though the NABA, ALPFA and similar organizations have done some great job in promoting the concept of diverse environment and inclusion, much is still expected so that the profession can be viewed as truly diverse and different.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used a comprehensive review of the existing research on diversity and inclusion in the accounting profession, where the participants were especially minority people since they faced multi-folded challenges and discrimination. The research started with a literature review conducted using the three primary academic databases: Google Scholar, Proquest, and JSTOR. During the process, we used search terms such as "diversity and inclusion into accounting," "career advancement in accounting for people of color," and "professional development in accounting for people of color." The initial results were assessed based on the article titles and abstracts to ensure they were related to the study context. By excluding studies that do not directly address diversity and inclusion in accounting, but relate to racial discrimination, the information becomes more focused on how people of color are affected.

Next, the focus of the study turned to finding out the most adequate career progression strategies for people of color working for accounting firms. It was done via the examination of full texts of the research articles with that perspective. This analytical research has concentrated on gaining knowledge about the skills and programs that result in diversity and inclusion. Besides, under this part, the outcomes, challenges, and drawbacks of such initiatives will be clear. In summary, the research approach was through a systematic literature review on diversity and inclusion in accounting, particularly on individual

encounters from those of the racial minority. This was in conjunction with analytics such as data extraction, synthesizing, and evaluating to produce findings that were tied to the most effective practices as well as forecasting the potential impact of these campaigns.

## RESULTS

The paper review yielded a large amount of literature illustrating diverse staff practices at accounting firms could have far-reaching impacts such as betterment of business success, and this inclusiveness is particularly expected for colored people. Several key findings emerged from the reviewed studies.

**Increased innovation and creativity:** According to the existing literature, diverse teams, consisting of people from different backgrounds, are very innovative and creative. They contribute to innovation, creativity, and high performance inside accounting firms. Women and people of color bring with them their unique outlooks, narratives, and understanding(s) to the table that improve problem-solving, decision- and new idea generation (Trust, 2019). By that, companies can respond to the difficult and recurrent changes in the stages of the market process in a more flexible way and with more efficiency.

**Enhanced client relationships and market reach:** Imagine a group of accountants who all do not duly follow the rules, but they do bring in different ideas and experiences to the teamwork. Such kinds of diversity are irreplaceable to any accounting firm. Get the work done in time. Studies suggest that existing clientele and especially those from different ethnicity display trust and believe attorneys who look like real people (PWC, 2017). When client connections are intimate, it becomes easier to contribute to satisfaction by understanding your clients, establishing trust, and exceeding their expectations. The happy two or three of your clients stay with you for longer, act as a reliable source of new prospects over time and consequently, contribute to the growth of your company.

**Talent attraction and retention:** Imagine an accountancy firm where everyone is respected, cherished, and treated as human, regardless of the differences in origin. It is more concisely stated, the power of diversity and inclusion! Past research has established that such organizations become a base for well-qualified intelligent employees of color who aim to work in a safe and professional environment (PWC, 2017). By offering such chances people get interested in your organization and stick around instead of leaving. They see opportunities to grow, mentors who can guide them, and a chance to reach a

higher-up lead. Therefore, employee retention, well-being, and very likely the most talented experts in this field will be positively included in the company leadership group.

**Reputation and brand enhancement:** Most accounting firms are focusing on diversity. Laws and industry standards are making it more important. Diversity is a main topic these days, with new laws and expectations from the industry (Healey *et al.*, 2010). Firms that prioritize diversity are following the rules and doing the right thing, which helps them avoid problems and build a good reputation.

**Compliance with regulatory requirements and industry standards:** Prior research shows that accounting firms are paying an increasing attention to diversity and inclusivity, with regulations and industry standards playing a big role. Discussions related to diversity are increasing in legal, political, and corporate governance areas (Healey *et al.*, 2010). Many firms are implementing regulations and standards that promote diversity and inclusion practices. Accounting firms that emphasize diversity efforts are not only following these rules, but also acting ethically and responsibly. These practices help them avoid legal issues and protect their reputation.

Literature strongly emphasizes the fact that fostering diversity and inclusion in accounting firms is positively linked to improved performance, especially for people of color. The findings suggest that embracing inclusivity leads to increased innovation, stronger client relationships, improved skill development, increased retention, enhanced reputation, and compliance with regulatory requirements. Accounting firms that prioritize diversity are expected to thrive in an increasingly diverse and competitive business environment.

## DISCUSSION

The literature research provides valuable insights regarding the promotion of diversity at accounting firms, which, in turn, affects people of color. The findings show that such undertakings enhance the importance of diversifying to level the ground for organizations. Below are the central messages and key lessons from the literature selected by us.

**Overcoming systemic barriers:** Accounting firm diversification could be the primary means of creating equality in the industry as the people of color face structural barriers, per the literature. Businesses should promote an inclusive workplace and establish policies to employ people of different ages, races, genders or even disabilities, thus having a more diversified workforce in

the accounting industry. Accounting forms should eliminate biases and give equal opportunities for professional development and career advancement. This might lead to a more diverse and representative workforce in the accounting industry. Diversity in all its kinds gets more attention from management: it can be the difference between ethnicity and generation (gender, generation, range of ability, a set of different skills, background, and experience) of the corporate success of an organization, as PWC (2017) demonstrates.

**Innovation and adaptability:** There is a strong emphasis on the connection between increased diversity and innovation in accounting firms in the literature on this topic. Employing a diverse range of people brings new perspectives and innovative ways to address our issues within an organization (PWC, 2017). Lastly, these innovations contribute to adapting more effectively to complex and changing business environments, helping them to be ahead of competitors. The two critical components of teams that are practical for innovation (inclusivity and diversity) are vital in fostering creativity (Trust, 2019). Trust (2019) states that diversity also favors creativity as it leads to breaking the norms, embracing new and fresh ideas, and the identification of new approaches.

**Client-centric approach:** The evidence reveals that accounting companies boast of diverse teams which mirror the clients they serve. This makes them more capable of creating better relationships with clients and opening new markets. Clients, particularly those from different racial or ethnic backgrounds, seek satisfying relations they can develop with firms that will understand their unique needs and give them personalized, customized solutions. Thus, diversity, not only shows an organization's mission for diversity but fairly gives it a chance to bond with a multitude of clients, and it delivers the option to meet those clients' requirements accordingly.

**Talent attraction and retention:** Literature offers enough evidence that it is of utmost importance to encourage diversity in accounting firms because it helps find and keep the best workers, especially among people of color. Organizations that consider diversity campaigns as an essential element of culture generation have staff at all levels who are welcome to rest assured, that they are supported, receive equal rights, and are free to express their talents and potential at any time. It serves as a strong platform to build up a positive organizational culture, and creates a work environment that increases employee satisfaction, and, in a way, it drives the rate of employee retention and the organization's capacity to attract the right talents.

**Reputation and brand image:** The reviewed research had been reiterating the effect of diversity encouragement on the name and image of accounting organizations. Organizations that show the willingness to accommodate diversity become socially responsible and innovative and thus, get their reputation lifted by the inward and outward stakeholders. Not only may it attract clients but also it will be a solid foundation for a firm to make as an employer of choice as well as help in forming partnerships and collaborations with other industry players.

**Compliance and ethical considerations:** The literature highlights the importance of promoting inclusivity and diversity in accounting firms to adhere to legal requirements and relevant industry standards. As diversity and inclusion are gaining more importance globally, firms that highlight these practices show their commitment to ethical conduct, fairness, and compliance with legal regulations. By positioning with societal expectations, organizations can reduce legal and reputation risks, protecting sustainability.

However, not merely a comprehension of diversity, but also its celebration and implementation in the very business operations of the firms regarding people of color are needed for that success. These results suggest the advantages in innovation processes, better-quality client relations, talent hire and retain, enhanced status of the company and its compliance. Companies in accounting industry can have a bright future by just feeling humanity and equality. They can develop an environment where people of color can feel proud, innovation can be fostered, and the company will be considered as the leader in the industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research study offers extensive data that demonstrate in order to be more successful and helpful to the community, accounting firms should consider promoting diversity. Firms may achieve much in terms of advocating equality and diversity, including unlimited creativity, relationship improvement between businesses and clients, people hiring and keeping, building a reputation and compliance with government.

This study highlights the importance of addressing numerous barriers faced by people of color in the accounting industry. By creating fair rules and procedures for everyone, accounting firms can ensure an equitable environment for professional growth and career development. This approach, which considers different perspectives and backgrounds (like a transdisciplinary

approach), fosters an environment of continuous improvement. When everyone feels valued for their unique experiences, teams become stronger and more innovative.

Also, enhancing diversity in accounting brings an advantage in terms of both the relationships with the clients and the expansion of the market. Clients are certainly the major beneficiaries of professionalization, just as there are groups of the society that are of diverse background. They find it more convenient to deal with businesses that can appreciate their special needs and offer specialized solutions. Accounting defenders may grow the satisfaction level of customers and the efficiency of business processes via representing the diversity of their customer base and building the reason for the trust, strong connections, and the market presence.

Adding to the above, among the factors that aid to attract and retain talents, diversity is not the last one. Trending companies adhering to diversity principles are those where all employees participate and like the fact that they are recognized, supported and successful. Building a diverse and inclusive team environment not only attracts top talent from various backgrounds, but also reduces employee turnover and strengthens the firm's reputation as a desirable employer. Research supports this connection, highlighting the link between organizational commitment, a positive diversity climate, and a decreased desire to leave. McKay et. al., (2007) revealed that organizational commitment play a mediating role in the interrelationship between the perception of the diversity, environment, and turnover.

The reviewed studies, in fact, construct a consistent picture of the economic benefits of diversity, whereby reputation and brand image strength of accounting companies vastly improves. Instruct area enrolls the diversity, it is seen as socially responsible and progressive, and get a public recognition from clients, employees, investors, and public. The fact that the company has earned a good reputation leads it to new business ventures, contracts, and relationships with other companies.

Accounting firms should consider the most pressing diversity issue that affects the fulfillment of regulatory requirements and ethical considerations. Financial service providers will be able to prevent legal and reputational risks by complying with the diversity goals, and also respecting the industry standards, thus, showing their ethical credential. While it is important to develop a pedagogy towards diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI,) new accountants and the students still need to know what DEI is all about, maybe they start

with race as it is a common topic in the accounting profession and academia (Booker *et. al.*, 2023).

To conclude, the literature overwhelmingly suggests that to achieve a success story in accounting businesses, then the path to diversity is very much open. Companies that aim at fostering inclusive and equal spheres not only stimulate innovations, but also may assist in better customer service, attracting and motivating the best professionals, improving their reputation, and providing assurance of compliance. As such, these discoveries would push organizations to consider diversity programs as a critical engagement and have them identify inclusiveness as a necessary component in the path towards a promising world for employees and the accounting sector at large.

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