

Improving diversity and inclusion in higher education: Vision and practical strategies

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ABSTRACT

Diversity and inclusion have received attention in most higher education institutions in recent times. The purpose of this triangular qualitative case study was to explore the experiences and challenges of minority students in a four-year degree program of a faith-based university. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards, institutional review board approval and participant's consents. The theory of choice was the organizational change theory. The study explored how, over time, the institution had handled the issues of diversity, and what the employees perceived as best practices. The instruments used were interviews, focus group methods and historical document review. Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method. Based on the findings of the research, the results indicate that the administration is trending toward positive inclusive practices, but the pace is slow, with no sense of urgency. Identifying information were concealed and coded.

INTRODUCTION

As a follow up to George Floyd's death, many institutions of higher education have been compelled to seriously reexamine how their institutions are dealing with diversity, inclusion and the question of institutional racism. Institutional racism is defined as racism perpetrated by social and political institutions, such as schools, courts, or the military (Nittle, 2020). Although there has been discussions around discrimination, diversity, inclusion and racism around college and university campuses, Brooks and Arnold (2013) note that there is a deafening silence around the issue of race with no sense of urgency.

The situation warrants the need to take some time to briefly reflect on the question of diversity and inclusion in higher education. George Floyd's death has generated sparks as schools have made decisive decisions with regards to the issues of diversity and inclusion. Schools in the states of Texas, Illinois, and California in the United States are amongst those tackling systemic racism after the issues surrounding the death of George Floyd (Kholi, 2020). As noted in US newspapers, college students seek action on racism not 'lip service' (Kolodner, 2020). Higher educational institutions have served as a place of learning and community. On the other hand, they are also considered an arena for negative ethnic and racial relations (Paredes-Collins, 2013).

Neoliberalism is known to focus on the application of market economic analysis to all public policy

issues, including education. According to Hardin (2014), neoliberalism is a form of governance that operates in two co-constitutive but analytically distinguishable modes: theoretical and practical application. Waller et.al, (2015) noted that owing to neoliberalism there is now a broad disparity between the haves and the have nots, and a shift in governmental rhetoric and policies on the role of government in increasing access to education. There is a shift in public attitude towards access to education by prioritizing private access, in the sense that education under neoliberalism becomes a market commodity to be purchased by those who can afford it.

A campus environment consists of a neighborhood sharing a common interest with the goal of supporting all students in their academic and other school experiences (Youatt et al., 2014). College campuses are not only larger, they are much more diverse than ever before. Irrespective of how large or small a campus environment may be, it should be able to accommodate a diverse student population. This research discussed diversity and inclusion issues, and relevant suggested strategies to encourage a welcoming environment for everyone.

Methodology

This qualitative case study was executed using descriptive and historical data collection strategies. In one phase of the case study, interview method was used and historical documents were reviewed as they relate to minority students and their encounters.

Faculty and staff of the institution were also included in the sources of data. Historical records were reviewed to identify the context of diversity and inclusion as evidenced by history. In terms of classification and characterization, the study was an instrumental case study (Creswell, 2010).

The study aimed to enable institutions to better understand the challenges of minority students and how to support their adaptations and experiences. The sampling method used was purposeful sampling, where the researcher selected faculty and staff participants based on their levels of interactions with the students, and their work departments. Student participants were selected to represent characteristics such as culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and academic year in school. Historical documents were reviewed for the purpose of understanding enrollment patterns of minority students, demographics, leadership trends, diversity issues that existed, and what the leadership did to maintain an inclusive environment over time. This study explored historical records for any policy change and practice that accompanied efforts to maintain inclusiveness and improved school experiences for the students.

RESULTS

Perceptions of diversity

Diversity was perceived in slightly different ways by different participants. Some described diversity as “all of the ways humans differ and or are similar”. Although all people were created, they differ in terms of color, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, socio-economic status, body size, sexual orientation or intellectual capability. Participant F1 defined diversity as a “socio-historical fact of all the ways humans differ and or are similar.” Participant S3 described diversity as “a broad term to identify any individual group outside of the normative white heterosexual groups of individuals.” Participant F3’s view of diversity was that it is a “relatively generic term which can be subjective depending on who is using it”. F3 supported the line of thought with participant F1 by adding that diversity is “broad-based and may represent culture, sexual orientation, gender, religion, race, or color.” As noted by participant S1, people differ in areas that may include race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Other participants perceived diversity as strength, and a resource in the classrooms, and workplaces. Participant S7 tied it to theology by stating “God

created many manifestations and when we are in a very small place where we do not encounter a lot of people who are different from us, we are starving ourselves from tasting more of the greatness of God.” S7 further stated that, “diversity is anything that gives more flavor or aspect to things, and can be a place of in-group and out-group exclusion.”

Another vital concept of diversity as described by participant S2, is that it pertains to “multiple kinds of people, ideas, or culture, and all together, not just one culture dominating the others and others being diverse.” S2 added that there is tension in the term diversity, as it is used to refer to minority groups. S7 described diversity at the institution with the concept of “Tokenism.” When this researcher asked for clarification, S7 responded saying, “like you represent a certain group is just by numbers.” If you have 100 people for example, and 1% are minority, no matter how interculturally relevant you might be, just by the numbers, those people in the minority group are just going to be a “token”.

The responses from the interviews showed the understanding of diversity or diversification as the attempt to bring all people of different cultures together for maximum productivity and effective outcome. The responses showed that different lenses could be used to interpret the meaning of diversity, and that the word diversity for example, sometimes may lead to an uneasiness depending on who and how it was used.

Perceptions of inclusion

Interview participants perceived inclusion differently. S7 viewed inclusion as “having minorities on campus as the first step toward inclusion, but how the institution continues to cultivate in their sense of belonging is more important.” S7 further noted that inclusion means, “what you are bringing, who you are, and not just about your race.” People may ignore someone because of who they are or exclude them because of their race. In addition, S7 argued that inclusion takes a great effort to understand one another, because we are different in so many ways and coming together should be a strength and not a weakness.

S6 described inclusion as more of a verb and practice, rather than just an existence or appearance of differences in a community. It is intentionally cultivating a framework of structures in an institution, so that everyone has a place and not just a place belonging to the majority group, and others

feeling as if they are borrowing the space. F1 stated that “inclusion takes the facts of diversity and use them as “cherished assets.” From a historical viewpoint, in a letter to the editor of a Newspaper Mr. E. E wrote:

“Besides getting an education, the main reason I came here was to provide some companionship to a friend of mine, as I have now discovered that if it was not for my decision to come to this state, my friend might still be suffering through the nightmare he went through last year. It is unfair that people have to feel like they are outsiders at a place where they should be accepted as brothers.”

F1 buttressed this point by adding that inclusion begins to get into the territory of “who gets to be invited, who gets to be a part of us, why, or why not?” F1 described inclusion in a faith-based higher education institution as “these are my beliefs, and there is no condition that I’m going to treat you as anything other than someone that is created in the image of God and whom God cherishes.” F1 added that inclusion means that we should be able to treat each other with same respect and love that God wants us to. This calls to mind the principle of the golden rule, which is to treat others as you would want them to treat you (F1).

Further, F2 noted that before 2008, a student could complete his or her degree in a department without reading any written work by Latin American, African, or Asian writers. Intentionally bringing in voices of men and women from other parts of the world and outside the Western world was helpful, because non-Western writers are equally very good (F2). Participant S3 supported this idea by adding that inclusion is “the intent to or the importance of including individuals who are outside of a normative group to be able to draw them in and to pay particular attention to that group.” In summary, most of the participants saw inclusion as an action word. Inclusion to some of the participants meant that individuals should be able to at least treat each other with mutual respect and love,

Perception of minority by minorities and non-minorities alike

Minorities are also known as multicultural or persons of color. For the sake of this research, these words were used interchangeably. Participants in this research described minority in different ways. S5 described minority as anyone who can identify with the group that is historically disadvantaged. S6

stated that the term “minority is dependent on the power that the group holds or does not hold in an institution.” According to participant S8, minorities are groups who are oppressed or marginalized. F1 added that groups that are historically devalued and not included in the society are often referred to as minorities. Most participants associated minority with poverty and inferiority. Many of the participants used concepts such as lack of value, marginalization, and oppression to describe minorities.

In F1’s understanding, “minorities are not born, minorities are made.” The idea that minorities are made through attitudes that are translated into policies featured prominent in F1’s description. This participant submitted that law by law, court case by court case, treaties by treaties, in states like California and Texas for example, people groups were reduced to minorities. It is obvious that the category of minorities is broad, and minorities as groups do not speak with one voice (F1). There are internal divisions among them, as there are internal divisions among minority students in the institution. Depending on their background, there are brilliant minority students, who can stand out, and are highly respected (F1). They are confident, and can handle themselves, caring less about anyone who thinks they are inferior. However, other minorities focus on complaining and feeling excluded. In conclusion, different participants described minority in different ways. One thing that is common in all their responses is that minority signifies devaluation and marginalization.

Act six program

In an effort to continue to support and encourage diversity and inclusion, the Act Six program, which is an ongoing commitment and collaboration with a community organization was formed. This program was inspired by chapter six of the book of Acts of the Apostles in the Bible, designed to develop homegrown leaders who are committed to building a community that is vibrant and dynamic. Research indicates that through such collaboration, African Americans and other minorities have gained more access into institutions of higher learning that previously would have denied them access based on affordability, socio-economic status, race, or color (Reaves, 2013).

The Act six program is a kind of an affirmative action program (Reaves, 2013). Some participants

in this study argued that this program is not an affirmative action policy (S8).

Affirmative action gives preferences to underrepresented minorities, broadening the scope of opportunities for blacks and other minorities seeking admissions into universities and employments (Reaves, 2013). Affirmative action in higher education began in the 1960s and racial preferences were the center of political debate at the time (White, 2014).

Affirmative action as defined by White (2014), is the act of taking positive actions to increase the likelihood of equality for individuals of different groups. This came about as a complex system of government policies was employed to address a history of racial discrimination in employment, housing and education. Some participants acknowledged that they are recipients of the Act Six program and are grateful, because, it gave them the opportunity that they otherwise would not have access to. Participants noted that this special program was geared towards many disadvantaged minorities. S9 saw the Act Six program as an intentional effort to recruit and enroll students of color and an intentional effort to provide financial aid to those students. During focus group discussion, one participant identified as a beneficiary of the Act Six program, and expressed gratitude for the opportunity. Participants S1, F3, S6, S7 and FG 1:3 noted that the Act six program is “good, encouraging, and a way to foster diversity.” From the history of the institution, it was noted that the founder of the institution responded to one of his first students, who refused to relocate to another state for study for fear of the lack of funds. The founder said to the student “come, God will provide,” and God did provide (Saari, 2002). Participant S9 pointed out that the creation of the Act Six program is a turning point, to foster diversity and inclusion, based on the vision and practice of the founding father of the institution.

Chief diversity Officer’s office creation

Another strategy the institution had embarked on to foster diversity and inclusion was the creation of the office of the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). The relevance of the chief diversity officer’s position was widely recognized and applauded by almost all the participants, including some of the focus groups participants. The chief diversity officer, most participants said “appears to be a distinctive and

intentional step toward inclusion and diversity in the institution.” Participants S3 and S4 submitted that the creation of the position of the chief diversity officer was a turning point, and a concerted attempt to create a welcoming and inclusive environment of learning for the students. F3 in his own words stated, “so the fact that the institution has a diversity officer for several years now is a distinctive positive step.”

Part of the responsibilities of the chief diversity officer included organizing and guiding the diversity agendas of the members of the school community (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). S5 applauded the institution for creating a chief diversity officer’s position, and making it to report directly to the president. S5 added, “If we are going to have someone in that role, it is important that the role be given credibility.” Some focus group participants recognized that the chief diversity officer and its office represents one of the ways the institution was pursuing toward recognizing the need for a diverse and inclusive community.

Title Nine (Title IX)

As part of the institution’s commitment to inclusion and provision of a safe and conducive environment for students and employees, the sexual misconduct and Title IX policy was made to be complied by all members of the institution’s community. Some participants reiterated the importance of the Title IX policy and practice. Participant S7 stated that the Title IX office is committed to following up with investigations and bringing in a quick end and resolution to issues that arise. None of the focus groups participants had anything to say regarding Title IX, but some staff and faculty participants had something to say. Some staff and faculty participants believed that Title IX gave them the privilege that otherwise may have been denied.

The U. C (Club)

Two students were instrumental in starting the club. These students at the time received support from few faculty and staff members. One of the students grew up with 14 siblings on the Chicago South side, but her family moved to the Midwest in the 1980s. When it was time to go to college, she had two choices, to either go to Tennessee and play basketball, or to this institution of study and deepen her relationship with God. The student chose to stay in the Midwest. During her time in the midwest, few students of color began to meet, and later met

with the institution's leadership and asked to form a club. The group started and became the U.C of the Student Body. At the anniversary of the club, the student narrated to the group of about 35 students, faculty and staff that although her family never supported her choice of the institution, 35 family members attended her graduation. She sits on the institution's board of trustees and sees first-hand the leadership's desire to increase campus diversity, so that the institution "looks more like heaven" (McInroy, 2015).

During the interviews and focus groups meetings, many of the participants identified the existence of the club as an important step and practice towards inclusion. To buttress this point, participants S7 and S8 stated that the club is a good diversity and inclusive practice. The two students' time at the institution culminated in the formation of the club. This club supported culturally diverse students to engage in a cultural understanding of their fellow students" (McInroy, 2015). The club is a platform where multicultural students celebrated their heritages, by showcasing their culture and creating awareness of their culture on campus (FG 1, 2, 3). Focus group participants pointed to the club as an avenue to which diverse cultures in the institution showcased who they are, and what their cultures represents.

Interfaith dialogue

In 2016, several students and employees of the institution attended "Responding to Islamophobia," an event organized by the newly formed "Better Together Students Group." Three Muslims were invited to campus to share their stories and discuss their experiences as Muslims living in the city where the university is located. The purpose of the event was to discuss the issues of diversity with regards to Muslims and their representation in the institution. Many Muslim men and women are within the city where the university is located, but very few are represented in the institution.

The institution requires students to sign a "covenant" (faith screen for admission). This "covenant is a relationship involving lots of people. The covenant includes a promise, a relationship, and a celebration. The faith screening is not to control people in the campus community or discipline students. The "Better Together" Group at the institution had helped to organize events that brought people of different faiths together on campus to share their stories and discuss their

experiences. The events do not focus on discussing religion, rather to think about how to respond to other religions in a Christ-like manner. Participant S3 intimated that the president's commission on inter-faith dialogue was "helpful," to encourage diversity and inclusion.

In summary, the institution cares about and has many practices and strategies as identified above to help foster an atmosphere that is welcoming and inclusive. However, participant F1 argued that just because you care about diversity does not mean that you know how to make it flourish. F1 added that diversity will always be a problem in the institution, because the institution is a place of "cycles" where people come, get educated, and learn about other cultures briefly and then they leave, and another batch comes in, and the cycle continues. This necessitates the need for a constant cultural training and creation of cultural awareness and competencies for all faculty, staff and students.

Environment and Experiences for Minorities

Participant F1 advised that the "university needed to build institutional capacity so that they would begin to translate caring about diversity and inclusion into action." F1 further noted that the initial stages of anything are always problematic, and "Just because an institution is growing demographically diverse, does not mean that everyone is going to go along well." Participant F1 further intimated that the issue of diversity and inclusion cannot be totally eradicated anytime soon, not just in one institution of higher learning, but in several others.

F2 and S3 agreed that the lack of multicultural contribution in curriculum is a challenge. F1 and S3 suggested that there is the need to diversify the curriculum across the board, so that not only students of color, but Caucasian students will receive the benefits of reading works other than those written by European Americans, and they will learn to consider the excellence of individuals from around the world, not just those from Europe, but from Africa, Asia, and Central America. Further clarification by a participant was that it is problematic to use only the geographical location or skin color of a writer to judge, because a writer can be an Asian or African but very Eurocentric in ideas and writing. On the other hand, some writers may be Caucasian European or American and write from the perspective or voice of Africans.

Apart from the geographical origin of an author, there are also some ethical and moral compass informing the perspective he or she uses to write. While regional or geographical origin is important, it should not be made the only criteria for input in the curriculum of the school. Participant F2 pointed out that the quick fix method of approach of dealing with diversity and inclusion issues continues to be a challenge. F2 suggested that creating lasting practices and strategies to deal with issues of diversity in a systemic way, and making it become “a part of the institutions DNA and consciousness is of great importance.” One participant in focus group suggested that the institution should allow its policies to influence everyone, irrespective of who you are, instead of picking and choosing who gets spared and who gets to be punished.

Turning point

Several turning points related to the issues of diversity and inclusion in the historical evolution and development of the institution emerged. Turning points in the context of the research are incidences and or issues that happened and brought about either change in ideas, communication, practices, policies and or actions. Some of the identified turning points by participants included, the “Mr. University B. F” incident, the paint incidences, Black Lives Matter, and micro aggression incidents.

People working in organizations and those studying in higher educational institutions are bound to interact and relate with others who are different from them. These differences, if well managed, can boost organizational or higher educational success. However, if ill managed, the differences may also become a setback for the institution (Turner, 2015).

Peer empowerment program (PEP)

A pre-welcome week program for students of color, is part of the institution’s intercultural programs. This program does not exist to devalue or disrespect others; rather it exists to honor the cultural realities of diverse students, while encouraging them to welcome the institution, the community, and its members. A participant in one of the focus groups did not find this program useful, rather stated, “it does not change the way people feel about you, or how they have been stereotyped to relate with you.” Other participants who mentioned the PEP said that only one particular race favors the program, and the

exhibition does not change how one student group feel about the other students group.

DISCUSSION

Diversity and inclusion: Visions and aspirations

Individuals perceive differences as a set of characteristics and processes resulting in patterns of behaviors that account for how similarities and differences interact in institutions (Maltbia & Power, 2009). An important instance in which issues of school experience and inclusion converged is the argument that no one can overestimate how hard it is to manage a learning environment with different individuals, having their own learning needs and expected learning experiences (Westwood, 2013). Like most fundamental issues concerning inclusion and student’s experience, Cuyjet, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper (2011) insist that multiculturalism and exclusion of groups marginalized by identity, is a prominent issue on college and university campuses.

Today’s educators are no longer just “behind the scenes” teachers and leaders; rather, they assume high sensitive roles as they deal with sensitive issues that have impact on higher education, such as those related to students’ experience and inclusion. Educators need to be individuals with cultural skills for successful teaching and learning (Mack, 2012). Moore et al. (2010) supports this argument by stating that as America becomes more culturally diverse, faculty and teachers’ circles have emerged across university and college campuses to exchange ideas on practices that have enhanced an inclusive learning environment over the last decade. The intention of having students on college and university campuses is to educate, nurture, and provide a meaningful learning environment and experience to all.

Challenges and constraints

Although there is a vision and aspiration for diversity and inclusion in higher education, it has not effectively worked because of numerous factors. Faculty, students and staff need much support and guidance in moving toward inclusive practices, which are best provided by the school (Westwood, 2013). There seems to be a general agreement (Harper & Quaye, 2007; Saunders & Kardia, 2014) that an inclusive learning environment is where instructors, staff, and students need to work together to create an environment that everyone

feels safe, supported, and encouraged, regardless of their social class, ethnic background, gender, and national origin, or other differences. Lee (2012) presented the principles for racial and ethnic dialogue into an art education course, an epistemological stance that encouraged students to connect meaningfully to an unfamiliar topic and visual thinking. The study concludes that educational leaders play an important role on how students understand what it means to respect, understand, and value diverse cultures.

Further, faculty and educators need to be individuals with cultural skills for successful teaching and learning (Mack, 2012). The instructions and directions given by faculty can positively or negatively affect the teaching and learning that takes place in a higher educational environment, including inside and outside the classroom. To this effect, Moore et al. (2010) concludes that faculty development regarding the experience and inclusion of diverse cultural teaching and learning is required to address difficult themes such as socio-economic, ethnic, gender and national differences. In addition, faculty training further develops cultural competencies that enhance cultural proficiencies for faculty, staff and their students for the benefit of higher education. School inclusive experiences not only influence the individual, but also impact institutions.

Looking at differential access and failures to inclusion as noted by Stewart and Valian (2018), higher education is not equally available to everyone who could benefit from it. The authors noted that differential access, differential benefits, differential inclusion and “not belonging” have been documented for both students and faculty despite best intentions.

Practical strategies and effort

Challenges and constraints to inclusion exist in higher education. However, certain reports have been given both in the United States of America, and in other parts of the world on practical strategies and efforts towards inclusion and diversity. These efforts made practical differences in the realization of the vision of diversity and inclusion in higher education. Azorin and Ainscow (2020) described inclusion as a major driving force for educational reform and a central goal of some political agenda. Their study describes how a group of schools in one region of Spain trialed a newly developed review

instrument, named ‘Themis’, with the aim of guiding their efforts to promote greater inclusion.

In so doing, the paper focuses on how schools can be helped to review progress on their journey to becoming more inclusive. A strong theme that permeates the analysis presented in the paper is the importance of developing review instruments that relate to particular contexts and take account of the varied ideas of those involved. The authors argued that it is necessary to assume a reflective stance about inclusion, and actions that would propel policies and practices in a clear and concise inclusive direction.

A typology of six ways on how to think about inclusion were suggested as follows: “(a) (1) inclusion as a concern with disabled students and others categorized as ‘having special educational needs’, (2) inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion, (3) inclusion in relation to all groups seen as being vulnerable to exclusion, (4) inclusion as developing the school for all, (5) inclusion as ‘Education for All’, and (6) inclusion as a principled approach to education and society. The sixth perspective, which is the one adopted in the paper, involves learning how to live with difference and learning how to learn from difference” (Azorin & Ainscow, 2020).

In 1989, Terry Cross, executive director of the national Indian child welfare association in Portland, Oregon published a monograph that changed lives towards a culturally competent system of care and provides several tools for addressing the responses to diversity encountered in organizations. His work has been the basis of a major shift in how organizations across the country respond to differences (Lindsey et.al, 2018).

Practices and strategies

Numerous strategies and practices that foster inclusive environment and experience for minorities were uncovered. They included the establishment and functions of the Cultural Center, the Act six program, Title IX, office of the Chief Diversity Officer, Shalom Seminar, Peer Empowerment Program, the institution experience, Intercultural Development Inventory, staff and faculty development workshops, faculty retreats on students of color and their experiences, and the Presidential Commission on Interfaith Dialogue and Reconciliation Task Force.

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Table 1 An interactional model of the impact of diversity on individual career outcome

Diversity climate	Individual career outcomes	Organizational effectiveness
Individual level factors	Affective Outcomes	First level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity structures • Prejudice • Stereotyping • Personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Satisfaction • Institutional prestige 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment • Turnover • Retention • Graduation • Recruiting success • Creativity/Innovation • Problem Solving • Workgroup Cohesiveness and Communication
Group/Intergroup Factors	Achievement Outcomes	Second Level
<i>Cultural differences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Performance • Rating • Graduation rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Share • Profitability • Achievement of Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnocentrism • Intergroup Conflict 		
Organizational-Level Factors		
<i>Culture and Acculturation process</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural integration • Informal integration 		
<i>Institutional Bias in Human Resource System</i>		

Retrieved from: Cultural Diversity in organizations: Theory, Research and Practice (Cox, 1994)

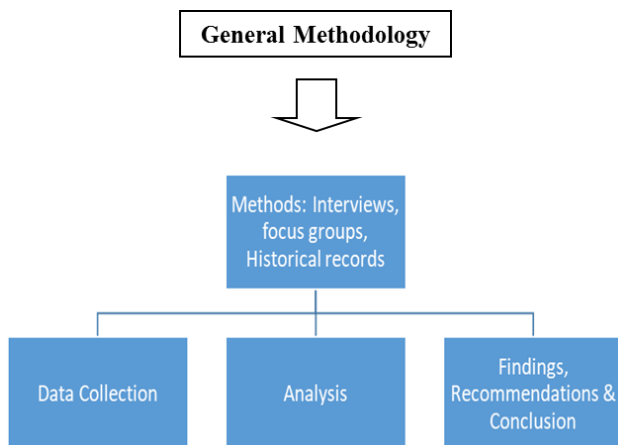


Figure 1: Research design strategy in relation to the topic

CONCLUSION

Diversity and inclusion have received attention in most higher education institutions in recent times. It is necessary to celebrate one another’s culture, as

this has the tendency to reduce the problems associated with diversity, discrimination and inclusion. The move towards diversity and creation of an inclusive environment and experience is in the right direction, although the pace is slow.

Some parents who send their children to school are not interested in diversity. The significance of the need to address the issue of diversity and inclusion in the United States can be highlighted by closely examining the rate of fertility among the different cultural subgroups in the country.

Since minorities will be trained in the United States colleges and universities, it is pertinent to address how the inclusion of such minorities is dealt with in higher education. The pool of students is shrinking and the quest to enroll Caucasian students is highly competitive. Institutions are striving to enroll more minority students not because they want the diversity to flourish, rather at a deeper level it is due to shrinking overall students’ enrollment.

To end with serious contemporary critical observation, the implications and impact of neoliberalism on higher education needs to be highlighted. Neoliberalism emphasizes the privatization of most or all public services for the sake of efficiency and profit. They perceive government services as inefficient by and large because they are presumably not disciplined by market forces.

In the first place, American neoliberalism originated as a reaction to the federal government's involvement in the public policies that address segregation, inequity in education, and poverty (Hardin, 2014). In the United States, neoliberalism is more of a system of moral and ethical 'thinking' than just an approach to public policy and economics as it philosophically promotes an undermining and lack of appreciation for the common good. Its primary unit of analysis is the individual and not the community.

Often in this situation, it is the minority students that will find it extremely difficult to get access to higher education, especially faith-based private institutions of higher learning that are comparatively more expensive. Under neoliberalism, the market disciplines organizations.

Yet, the market in and of itself has no any special value or commitment to diversity as an intentional goal and a priority. Thus, one of the major obstacles to increased emphasis on diversity and inclusion in higher education in general is the ideology and practice of Neoliberalism.

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