

18th Equality, Diversity and Inclusion International Conference

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Alba Graduate Business School, Deree, The American College of Greece

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Conference theme:

**AI and diversity in a datafied world of work:
Will the future of work be inclusive?**

Stream Proposed Title : AI as a tool to support organisations in advancing EDI interventions and make workplaces more inclusive: Opportunities and caveats

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EDI interventions in workplaces are at a crucial crossroads. An unprecedented backlash driven by the U.S. political agenda and a growing global anti-gender movement, coupled with a neoliberal, new managerial climate where budget cuts are becoming the norm, has further reinforced the limited or nonexistent availability of resources dedicated to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This is compounded by the increasing reliance on AI tools in management processes, such as staff training and hiring practices.

EDI work in organisations that aims to lead in transformative structural and cultural change requires iterative, dynamic and highly contextualised processes and tools (Fitzsimmons et al. 2023; Umeh et al. 2023) that can be resource-demanding in terms of time, budget and personnel. Organisations often invest in self-assessing and auditing their organisational landscape, collecting and analysing data to identify challenges and priorities to make their workplace more inclusive. This stage often feeds into the design and implementation of initiatives and interventions in the organisation which should be periodically reviewed and

evaluated to understand the potential outcomes and impact of the EDI activities. This evaluation will inform whether and how the organisation has progressed towards its goals and priorities and how it should proceed further starting a new cycle of self-assessing, designing and implementing and evaluating new actions. This is a time consuming and highly resource intensive process. With EDI efforts being under continuous pressure, could there be a role or opportunity for AI to be used beneficially to assist and support EDI processes and activities. AI has the power to support capturing and analysing data, supporting EDI practitioners across all stages of EDI processes, in communicating EDI messages and outcomes in a tailored and smart way to different stakeholders and many others. However, there could be caveats and dangers of using AI due to inherent biases that it might entail (Rigotti & Fosch-Villarong, 2024; Rigotti et al. 2023) leading to unfair treatment and perpetuation of societal stereotypes. Ozbilgin et al (2024,p.15) recommend nurturing interdisciplinary collaboration that can bring together the 'quantitative rigour of AI research with the qualitative insights of EDI scholarship'.

In this stream we invite contributions from academics and practitioners that work on EDI in organisations across sectors to discuss the advantages, disadvantages and potential (un)intended consequences that AI tools can have in making our workplaces more inclusive.

An indicative but not exhaustive list of questions that could be addressed by this stream:

- What EDI interventions and processes can be supported or enriched by AI and how?
- How can AI become a tool, an opportunity to support EDI efforts and processes in order to make more inclusive workplaces?
- What are the caveats or dangers of using AI to support EDI initiatives and interventions?
- What could be the unintended consequences of using AI for EDI purposes?
- How can we proactively leverage and/or reconfigure AI to advance the EDI agenda? What theoretical frameworks and/or methodologies can help us in this reconfiguration?
- Bringing together AI and EDI literatures and methodologies, what new theoretical, conceptual and methodological insights emerge?
- To what extent AI reinforces neoliberal ideas and systems and how can we democratise it to advance EDI?
- What metrics and evaluation frameworks can be developed where we can integrate EDI and AI to advance EDI?
- What are the long-term effects and implications of AI on organisational structures and inequalities? How can we develop more ethical and EDI informed AI to lead us to transformative organisational change?

References

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