

INDIGENOUS VOICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract

This study explores the role of Indigenous employee voice within Canadian higher education institutions, focusing on its facilitation and challenges. Drawing on the literature on employee voice and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), this research identifies gaps in understanding how Indigenous perspectives are integrated into institutional practices. Using a qualitative approach, the study examines how Indigenous employees perceive their organizations' inclusion efforts and their engagement in voice behavior. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with participants across four institutions. Results reveal that while higher education institutions have implemented initiatives aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, systemic barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and inconsistent implementation persist. Indigenous employees expressed a need for safe spaces, meaningful engagement, and culturally appropriate mechanisms for voice. The study offers an integrated theoretical model combining EDI and voice literature with insights from Indigenous perspectives in education. This model highlights the importance of institutional accountability, representation, and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems. By addressing these gaps, the study contributes to advancing reconciliation efforts and fostering inclusive practices that amplify Indigenous voices within higher education.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

To ensure that the recommendations of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation commission can be effectively implemented, particularly in the context of higher education institutions, Indigenous voices must be heard. Currently, this empirical issue has received inadequate attention by either the management literature on Voice or the literature on Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), which have failed to talk to one another. The objectives of this exploratory research study, therefore, are to investigate: first, what does the management literature have to say about promoting diverse voices in higher education organizations? Second, do Canadian higher education institutions' practices and policies provide effective opportunities for voice inclusion for the Indigenous population (and if so, how well?) Third, what objective improvements are needed, if any, to advance both practice and scholarship on Indigenous diversity & inclusion? By examining and integrating the management research on employee voice and EDI, my broad aim is both to advance scholarly knowledge by developing an empirically grounded theoretical model for the voice and EDI literatures. Moreover, the theoretical contributions will help scholars discern how well mainstream management theories (e.g. employee voice and EDI) are applicable for reconciliation with Indigenous populations. Secondly, making a practical contribution by promoting understanding about what EDI practices and voice mechanisms work best for inclusion of Indigenous employees in higher education. This will help managers and institutions better understand how to amplify the voices of diverse employees within educational institutions, in order to contribute to Indigenous reconciliation.

1.2 Statement of Problem & Research Questions

The effects of colonialism and injustices endured by Indigenous people continue to permeate Canadian society, with substantial socio-political and infrastructural hardships

remaining today. For example, First Nations children are more than four times as likely to live in poverty than non-Indigenous children (Macarthur, 2020). To further this point, Indigenous people on average have higher unemployment rates, lower education levels, lower socio-economic status and disproportionate levels of incarceration compared to non-Indigenous people (OECD, 2018).

The Canadian government and the people of Canada are now learning about the damaging effects of colonialism. In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established in response to systemic damage of colonialism and to start the process of reconciliation between Indigenous people and Canada. In 2015, the TRC released its final report which included 94 Calls to Action. The calls encouraged all levels of Government (territorial and Indigenous) to work together and change policies as a step towards reconciliation (TRC, 2015). Along with the TRC Calls to Action, in 2016 Canada committed to supporting the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP).

Education plays a crucial role in perpetuating cognitive imperialism, also known as cultural racism. This occurs when one worldview is imposed on a group that holds a different perspective, implying that the dominant worldview is superior (Battiste, 2011). Cognitive imperialism strips individuals of their language and cultural identity by prioritizing and legitimizing only one language, culture, and way of thinking (Battiste, 2011). While the majority of Canadians have confidence in their education system, it serves not only as a place to acquire academic and vocational skills but also as a tool for passing down cultural and social norms. Supported by the government and broader society, the education system is a cornerstone of Canadian cultural transmission. However, for individuals whose languages and cultures fall outside mainstream norms, this system becomes a vehicle for cognitive imperialism (Battiste,

2011). Therefore, the TRC recommendations indicate that education plays a vital role toward reconciliation. In particular, the education-related Calls to Action 7-12, 16, 24, 28, and 62-65 focus on ensuring that Indigenous peoples receive the same quality of education (at all levels) as non-Indigenous peoples, so as to improve educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples. This includes checking for funding gaps, income gaps, improving on-reserve education, and providing greater access to post secondary education (MacLaine, 2019). Moreover, the calls involve developing culturally appropriate curriculum and providing funding to train post-secondary teachers how to integrate Indigenous knowledge into the classrooms. Table 1 below displays the Calls to Action relevant for higher education institutions in Canada.

Table 1

Educational Calls to Action Relevant for Post Secondary

Call to Action	Description
7	We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
8	We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
9	We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
10	We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation. ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates. iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula. iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses. v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems. vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.

	vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.
11	We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
12	We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.
16	We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.
24	We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
28	We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and antiracism.
62	We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to Grade Twelve students. ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms. iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms. iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
63	We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools. ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history. iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.
64	We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious

	studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.
65	We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

In light of the above, the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in university has become apparent. As of 2021, only 12.9% of the Indigenous population had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33.8% of the general population (Statistics Canada, 2023). Universities can play an important role in bridging this gap and working towards reconciliation. Therefore, many higher education institutions have established Indigenous Resource Centres (i.e., offices with Indigenous specific positions that support Indigenous students and deal with Indigenous initiatives of all kinds, such as recruitment and retention, with the intention of advancing reconciliation).

Employee voice may be pertinent to reconciliation because it involves participation in decision making, expression of constructive opinions about work-related issues and the ability to express opinions freely without repercussions (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020; The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services, 2015; Liang et al., 2012). Furthermore, voice is also important because it is connected to participation, it is a vehicle for influence on an organization and can help facilitate bottom-up participatory planning (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020; Wilkinson & Barry, 2016; Glew et al., 1995).

However, what we don't know is whether, or to what extent, the voices of Indigenous employees within these offices are heard in higher education institutions. More specifically, how

do education institutions facilitate or hinder diverse employee voices? Do Indigenous employees in these institutions have the appropriate channels to engage in voice behaviour? How do Indigenous employees perceive their organizations' voice inclusion efforts? Do they feel they are being included in decision making relating to the Indigenous population, and then heard when they express their views in those decision-making arenas? How are Indigenous employees inclined to engage in voice behaviour in such educational contexts, if at all? Gaining a better understanding to these questions will ultimately show how universities are performing in regard to their reconciliation efforts for the Indigenous population.

When we turn to the management literature for guidance on Indigenous employee voice, empirically grounded theoretical prescriptions are lacking. Most literature on voice is conducted in a western context and limited research has addressed the impact of cultural values on voice systems (Wilkinson et al., 2021; Kwon & Farndale, 2020; Morrison, 2014; Freeman et al., 2007). The voice literature has only recently begun to acknowledge the need for research on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and 'missing' voices (Wilkinson et al., 2018; 2021; Um-E-Rubbab, & Mehdi Raza Naqvi, 2020; Syed, 2014). Diversity management has not yet been integrated into the literature on voice (Syed, 2014). As Syed (2014) notes, a diversity management paradigm of voice could focus on anti-discrimination, positive action, and performance, and involve mechanisms such as intra-organization diversity networks and equality promotion councils. Thus, despite the above calls for research, it remains unclear precisely how voice should be applied to promote equity, diversity and inclusion for the Indigenous people.

Similarly, the equity, diversity and inclusion literature has discussed the importance of communication for inclusion, however, it has not specifically focused on what channels and mechanisms of voice work best for minorities (Shore et al., 2011; 2018; Tang et al., 2015).

Tamtik & Guenter (2019) conducted a policy analysis on EDI efforts of Canadian universities. They state that the behavioural climate on campus is hard to evaluate through policy analysis as the language used in the texts is typically vague, allowing for wide interpretations and not always reflecting the perceptions or experiences of the targeted groups. Therefore, they conclude that this topic requires more empirical data to get a better understanding of how these policies have been designed, received, and experienced.

This is where the current study has aimed to make an impact. Research on employee voice can help scholars, managers and institutions to better understand the role of diverse employees, specifically Indigenous peoples, in their interaction with educational institutions, and inform how the institutions may need to respond structurally and procedurally. Therefore, considering these theoretical gaps, the research questions for this study were as follows:

- How do education institutions facilitate or hinder Indigenous employee voices?
- How do Indigenous employees perceive their organizations' inclusion efforts?
- How do Indigenous employees engage in voice behaviour, if at all?

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

With the above objectives and research questions in mind, the remainder of this paper has been structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides the literature review, offering a detailed review of the voice literature, highlighting its neglect of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) issues. It also delves into the literature on equity, diversity, and inclusion, highlighting areas where “voice behaviour” is relevant. Furthermore, this section will include the pertinence of Indigenous voice from the education literature. We conclude the literature review section by offering a new model of voice for EDI, which integrates the voice, EDI and education literatures, to ultimately guide our exploratory investigation. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to address our research

questions. The results of the study then follow in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 ends the study with the discussion of the theoretical and practical implications, and avenues for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 What is Employee Voice?

The voice concept was first introduced by Hirschman (1970) in his exit/voice/loyalty model. Hirschman (1970) defined voice as any attempt to change, rather than escape from, an unpleasant situation. In this model, Hirschman (1970) theorized that voice attempts arise when customers recognize some source of dissatisfaction or opportunity for improving their own and/or the organization's well-being. Thus, voice according to this early model was developed from an economic viewpoint and originally was associated to *customers* rather than *employees* (Allen, 2014). Nevertheless, the essential aspects of the *employee* voice concept are similar: They involve participation in decision making, expression of constructive opinions about work related issues, and the ability to express opinions freely without repercussions (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020; The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services, 2015; Liang et al., 2012). It is important for employee empowerment and helps to facilitate bottom-up participatory planning. Thus, voice is fundamentally connected to participation and seen as a vehicle for an individual to have influence on some element of the organization (Wilkinson & Barry, 2016; Glew et al., 1995).

2.2 Multi-Disciplinary Perspective of Voice

Since its early conception, the voice literature has grown and been studied in various fields. However, as Kaufman (2015) observes, the trend towards academic specialization both across and within fields has fragmented research literature on employee voice into self-contained and self-referential silos. The voice concept is now spread across management subdisciplines

(organizational behaviour (OB), human resource management (HRM) and industrial relations (IR)) and the education literature. Each discipline has applied different conceptual lenses and holds different assumptions about the meaning and purpose of voice. Starting with the management field, the OB definition of voice, as stated by Morrison (2011) is, “the discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning” (p. 375). Morrison lists three specific features of the OB lens on employee voice: constructive intent, verbal expression, and individual choice. Essentially, this views employee voice as discretionary, pro-social individual behaviour. However, although the main goal of the OB lens on employee voice is meant to be improvement to organizational functioning, the OB literature does not prescribe organizational actions in response to voice, effectively leaving that to managerial discretion (Wilkinson et al., 2018).

The HRM definition of employee voice is similarly defined as an opportunity to have a say (Mowbray et al., 2015) and is also concerned with how voice can aid organizational functioning. However, the HRM literature examines the process by which this is achieved from a systems-level perspective rather than an individual, behavioural perspective. In other words, it focuses on the HRM process mechanisms that can enable employees to express voice and manage employee participation in decision making (Mowbray et al., 2015). For example, Pyman et al. (2006) define employee voice as the mechanisms by which employees’ express concerns or interests to contribute to (participate in) workplace decision making and solve problems. This HRM perspective assumes that it is a fundamental democratic right for workers to have an opportunity to express their voice and, ultimately, to have a certain degree of control over managerial decision making within the organization (Wilkinson et al., 2018; Kaufman, 2015). It

also presumes that a shortage of opportunities to express voice will have adverse consequences to both the employee and organization (Wilkinson et al., 2018).

The IR perspective views voice through an even more critical lens. It is a much more radical and power-oriented view of voice, but the focus is still with employee working lives within the organization. IR Scholars have a very broad view of voice and see voice not only as a vehicle for employee self-determination, aligned with concepts such as participation and involvement, but also as a tool for industrial democracy (Wilkinson et al., 2013, 2010). In this sense, it can offer individuals an opportunity not only to influence some element of the organization, but even to challenge management and the status quo (Wilkinson & Barry, 2016). This brings the IR view of voice closer to that of a political process in which voice can be seen as an expression of worker rights (Wilkinson & Barry, 2016), because the assumption is that, without voice, there can be no genuine enactment of participation (Wilkinson & Barry, 2016; Glew et al., 1995).

Table 2 below summarizes the main perspectives of each sub-discipline. It is evident that each discipline has failed to accept and appreciate what the other disciplines have to offer, or to consider other ways of understanding voice. However, one commonality shared among the management sub-disciplines is that most studies look at voice at the organizational level, not the societal level. Thus, the broader societal concern about how to promote Indigenous employee voice is still lacking. This issue is touched on by the education literature in section 2.14.

Table 2*Summary of Voice in Different Disciplines*

	Organizational Behaviour	Human Resources	Industrial Relations
Purpose	Discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning.	Express concerns or interests, solve problems and contribute to and participate in workplace decision making	A means to challenge management or as a vehicle for employee self-determination.
Features	Verbal expression, individual choice, constructive intent	Viewed from a systems perspective rather than a behaviour perspective	View voice as an expression of worker rights
Focus	Voice seen as a discretionary, pro-social behaviour, with the main goal being improvement to organizational functioning	Ensuring mechanisms are in place to manage employee participation in decision making.	Workers being able to have a say over their working lives.

Recently, researchers have begun to re-integrate the various management sub-disciplines to find more common ground amidst their respective granular conceptualization of voice (Mowbray et al., 2015). According to this integrative perspective, all perspectives of voice (OB, HRM, and IR) are relevant, because a multi-level lens is needed to fully understand the implications of voice. Thus, to fully explore voice and its implications at different levels, including micro (employee), meso (group) and macro (organizational), Wilkinson et al.'s (2020) integrative definition of employee voice has been adapted and is as follows: *The ways and means through which employees attempt to have a say, formally and/or informally, collectively and/or individually, in order to exert agentic influence on organizational affairs relating to issues that affect their work, their interests, as well as the interests of managers and owners.*

This integrative lens has both practical value (because it focuses on outcomes and employees being able to have a say as the deciding criterion which provides inclusiveness) and theoretical value (as it allows for the bridging/integration of disciplines with respect to all organizational levels) (Wilkinson et al., 2021). With this definition, voice can be examined at multiple levels: At the macro level, it includes regulatory frameworks and wider societal and policy implications. At the meso level, it considers voice systems and opportunities that exist in organizations, including looking at the policy actors who can collectively influence voice efficacy as highlighted in collective labour and employment studies. Finally at the micro level, it enables us to consider motivators and inhibitors behind the utilization of voice, which can be positioned in individual and team level dispositions, attitudes, perceptions, emotions and beliefs (Wilkinson et al., 2021).

2.3 Types of Voice

When engaging in voice behaviour, an individual can express one of two types of voice: promotive or prohibitive. The motive behind promotive voice is to improve the organization (Liang et al., 2012). In contrast, the motive behind prohibitive voice is to express concerns/complaints about possibly troublesome policies, practices, and work behaviours.

Both types of voice are vital for organizational success. Prohibitive voice brings into light undetected problems. (Liang et al., 2012; Morrison, 2011). For example, whistleblowing is indicative of voice failure, which has adverse organizational consequences. It occurs when voice is constrained by internal structures and norms, and the climate is not appropriate to engage in prohibitive voice (Wilkinson et al., 2021; Van-dekerckhove & Phillips, 2019; Liang et al., 2012). Yet, despite the importance of both types of voice, most of the existing literature focuses on

promotive voice (Um-E-Rubbab & Mehdi Raza Naqvi, 2020; Weiss & Morrison, 2019; Farh & Chen, 2014; Burris, 2012; MacKenzie et al., 2011).

2.4 Antecedents of Voice Behaviour

For individuals to engage in voice, there needs to be a climate that encourages and supports voice. Research suggests that a climate that supports expression of voice must include multi-level factors at the individual, job, and organizational levels (e.g., context and culture). Each of these will be reviewed below.

Individual factors that influence and can predict voice include employee attitudes and dispositions. Individuals who are more positive about their organization and job are more inclined to voice, this can be in part due to employee perceptions of psychological safety. A psychologically safe environment allows individuals to express themselves without the fear of consequences. Moreover, the big 5 personality dimensions play a role in voice expression, as individuals high on conscientiousness and extraversion engage in more frequent voice behaviour, whereas individuals high on neuroticism and agreeableness engage in less voice behaviour (Burris et al., 2008; Detert & Burris, 2007).

Diversity plays a role here: Individual differences in gender and ethnicity have been shown to have an impact on voice behaviour (Wilkinson et al., 2018; Syed 2014; Bell et al., 2011; Miceli et al., 2008; Detert & Burris, 2007). With respect to gender, however, research has shown mixed results: Some studies have found women to engage in voice more often than men and vice versa (Detert & Burris, 2007; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Young, 1978). Regarding ethnicity, research suggests that ethnic minorities in North America might engage in less voice behaviour (Miceli et al., 2008; Detert & Burris, 2007; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998).

Various job factors also have influence on voice behaviour. Individuals are more likely to engage in voice behaviour when they have autonomy over their work (Alang et al. 2020; Lam & Mayer, 2014; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008); when they have opportunities for participation in decision making and advancement (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Kwon et al., 2016; Harley, 2014); when they receive feedback from management and there is the sharing of information (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Lee et al., 2014); when they experience broader organizational support (Morrison, 2014; Liang & Gong, 2013) and perceive the organization as being just (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2014). Additional job factors that have a positive influence on voice include job satisfaction and security (Wilkinson et al., 2018; Morrison, 2014; Mares 2003); identifying with the work group and organization (Morrison, 2014); and engaging in meaningful work, which suggests having a good fit between work requirements and one's personal beliefs (Barry et al., 2018).

Organizational factors also help an individual to decide whether their work context/culture is favorable for speaking up (Morrison, 2011). Glauser (1984) emphasized that upward communication is facilitated not just by physical proximity but also by structures low in bureaucracy and by formal mechanisms designed to encourage upward employee communication (including the option to engage in a variety of upward communication channels). Conversely, when voice is stifled by hierarchy, individuals are hesitant to express negative information to individuals in higher status positions (Morrison 2011; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). A favourable climate for voice is one in which there is willingness of management to listen to voice and there is not a fear of repercussion but instead an environment of psychological safety.

Relatedly, the literature has shown that top leadership and direct supervisory manager style also exert a significant influence in creating a climate that supports voice behaviour.

Leaders who are approachable, who use explicit communication, who listen to others' input and act on these ideas will have more employees willing to engage in voice behaviour for organizational improvement (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 2003). These qualities demonstrate managerial openness, which refers to employees' perceptions that their manager listens to them, is interested in their input, considers the input and ideas presented, and acts to address the matters raised (Detert & Burris, 2007). Furthermore, transformational, ethical and inclusive leadership styles have been shown to promote employee voice expression (Detert & Burris, 2007; Zeng & Xu, 2020; Jiang et al., 2020). These leadership styles and qualities provide little risk to employees for speaking up; they enhance perceived psychological safety (Detert & Burris, 2007), which allows employees to speak up without the fear of repercussions, while also building trust in the relationship. Employees who have high leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships with their managers will have more positive perceptions of voice efficacy and safety; thus, are more likely to engage in voice behaviour (Morrison, 2011; Van Dyne et al., 2008).

2.5 Voice Channels & Mechanisms: Formality and Directness

Employee voice can be expressed through various voice *channels*, each of which have their own *mechanisms* for operating. That is, voice channels refer to the medium through which voice is expressed (Kwon & Farndale, 2020), whereas voice mechanisms refer to the method (precise organizational structure/process) used to engage in voice within any specific channel (Kwon & Farndale, 2020).

There is a distinction to be made between formal and informal voice channels. Formal voice is defined as voice using codified, pre-arranged, and regular structures that foster consistent implementation and that reduce the discretionary powers of voice managers

(Marchington & Suter, 2013; Harlos, 2001). In other words, formal voice is captured using pre-existing management and communication structures. Examples of mechanisms used in formal channels include staff meetings, work councils and grievance processes. In contrast, informal voice channels refer to channels outside structured processes, which involve undetermined interactions between management and staff or between coworkers. Although there are no explicit voice mechanisms for informal channels, informal voice mechanisms can include informal discussions, such as in a lunchroom during break, email and open-door policies. Employees can therefore engage in and express informal voice at any time, and not necessarily as a response to a management led query (Klaas et al., 2012; Marchington & Suter, 2013). To date, the literature has shown that informal voice channels are being used primarily for individual concerns and for work processes and systems, unless they are related more to the collective, in which case the voice channels became more formalized (Wilkinson et al., 2013).

In addition to their degree of formality, voice channels can also be categorized as direct or indirect (Kwon & Farndale, 2020; Mowbray et al., 2015). Direct voice refers to mechanisms that allow for individual employee involvement (e.g., task-based participation), and typically involve an employer-employee interaction. Indirect voice typically refers to voice expressed via the representatives of a collective group (e.g., representative unions or councils).

The simultaneous presence of direct and indirect channels of voice had stronger positive effects on the perceived quality of workplace relationships, rather than each form separately (Wilkinson et al., 2018). The presence of both direct and indirect voice channels is seen as more responsive to the voice needs of a modern workplace across a wide-ranging spectrum of workplace issues (Holland et al., 2011). Employees prefer multiple channels of voice because they offer more opportunities to be involved in decision making and can better fulfill employees'

desire to be informed and consulted by management (McDonnell et al., 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2007).

Nechanska et al. (2020), have stated that combining all four (formal/informal and direct/indirect) channels may generate a deeper conceptualization of voice, its motives and outcomes. A combination may increase the probability of employees engaging in voice and helping the organizations to manage voice (Mowbary et al., 2015). However, it is known that individuals will opt for certain voice channels and mechanisms (formal/informal and/or direct/indirect) depending on the antecedent climate for voice (e.g., opportunities in place to express voice, including factors such as the underlying motive for engaging in voice and the HR practices and policies surrounding those communication opportunities). Individual choice will also depend on the perceived utility (consequences) of using each channel: Due to their varying extent of formality/informality and directness/indirectness, each channel and mechanism used to express voice may influence different consequences for the individual (i.e., psychological impact) and/or for tangibly changing the organizations practices and policies. Despite initial work along these lines, empirical research is still needed to thoroughly understand the full implications of the simultaneous presence of diverse (formal/informal and direct/indirect) voice channels.

2.6 Consequences of Voice Behaviour

Employee voice offers beneficial multi-level outcomes (i.e., for both employee and organizations). At the individual/employee level, Budd (2004) argues that voice provides a means of employee self-determination, which then influences employees' psychological experiences. Voice has shown to enhance work satisfaction (Detert & Burris, 2016; Dundon & Rollinson, 2004; Abulgalimov, 2020), exert a positive impact on mental health (Avey et al.,

2012; Frone et al., 1997; Hakanen et al., 2008; Abdulgalimov, 2020), and enhance employee feelings of control (which, in turn, has shown to increase satisfaction and motivation, and decrease stress) (Greenberger & Strasser, 1986; Parker, 1993; Morrison, 2011). Drawbacks of voice at the individual level include being viewed negatively by others because of engaging in prohibitive voice, which can include receiving negative performance reviews and damage social capital (Morrison, 2011).

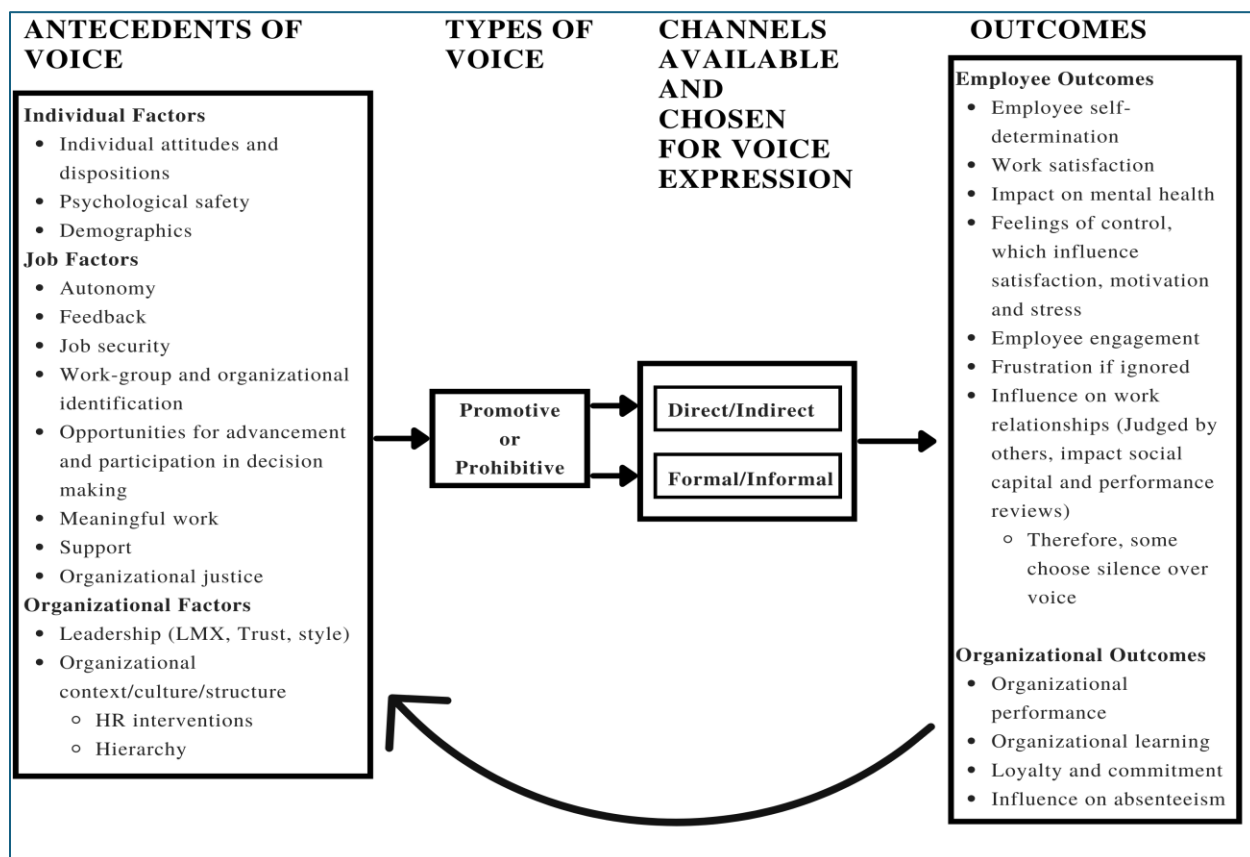
At the job level, when an employee is satisfied with opportunities for expressing voice, specifically, providing upward feedback, they will be more engaged with their work and organization (Ruck et al., 2017). Specifically, research has shown a positive relationship between satisfaction and voicing to supervisors and a negative relationship between psychological detachment from one's work and voice behaviours (Burriss et al., 2008; Detert & Burriss, 2007).

Voice contributes to organizational-level performance by utilizing employee skills and knowledge which add economic value and a sustainable competitive advantage. Moreover, employee voice can help with decision making by gaining knowledge of possible solutions to the organization's problems (Wilkinson & Barry, 2016). In addition, researchers have found that managers identified several benefits to the organization by enabling voice, such as increased employee loyalty and commitment, and decreased absenteeism (Wilkinson et al., 2004). An engaged employee is also important for overall organizational effectiveness in that it represents a factor for achieving innovation and staying competitive (Ruck et al., 2017). One possible drawback of voice at the organizational level is it can sometimes overload the decision-making process and make it difficult to reach consensus and act (Morrison, 2011).

2.7 Model of Voice

To summarize the information discussed about voice in the previous sections, which reflect what we know about employee voice, we deduce a theoretical model of voice that integrates the different theoretical paradigms (illustrated below in Figure 1). This model shows an integrated view of all three management sub-disciplines at all levels of analysis, and the key processes that need to happen for good voice outcomes. The model starts with the antecedents of voice which are conjectured to influence an individual to engage in a particular type of voice (promotive or prohibitive). These include variables related to the structure of the organization. Once an individual chooses a channel to express voice (formal/informal and direct/indirect), we conjecture that they will then experience employee outcomes and yield organizational outcomes. Finally, we propose a feedback loop from the consequences back to the individual, to understand whether voice behaviour is beneficial or detrimental for them, thereby influencing future voice behaviour.

Figure 1

Theoretical Model of Employee Voice**2.8 Gaps in the Literature on Voice**

However, as this model illustrates the literature currently leaves several questions unanswered about employee voice. For example, according to Morrison (2011), the reasons for the gender and ethnic differential in voice behaviour remain open to speculation. However, Morrison neglected to note that the studies being conducted in North America do not currently take into consideration cultural dimensions that may play a role in voicing behaviour such as individualism/collectivism. In western cultures the focus is on the self, and they prize strength and independence. Whereas in Indigenous cultures, the focus is on the community and collaboration, and they prize humbleness and interdependence. Cultural dimensions play a part in

creating a favourable climate for voice expression. Understanding cultural differences and implementing favourable practices and policies will create a climate safe for voice expression for Indigenous employees. Apart from demographics at the individual level, there is no attention to culture and how it might influence this process. To date, there is limited research on Indigenous cultural values in the context of voice at the organizational level. Diversity management has not yet been thoroughly integrated into the management literature on voice (Syed, 2014). The management voice literature has only recently begun to acknowledge the need for research on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and ‘missing’ voices (Wilkinson et al., 2018; 2021; Um-E-Rubbab, & Mehdi Raza Naqvi, 2020; Syed, 2014). Voice is often treated as ‘a universal concept’ and applied in the same ways to all workers (Bell et al. 2011; Wilkinson et al. 2018) and because most literature on voice is conducted in a western context, limited research has addressed the impact of cultural values on voice systems (Wilkinson et al., 2021; Kwon & Farndale, 2020; Morrison, 2014; Freeman et al., 2007). As such, voice from minority groups has often gone unheard and minority employees are excluded from decision-making processes (Alang et al., 2020; Shore et al. 2018). Moreover, the Indigenous perspective on voice outcomes has not been covered at all. This study will try to gain a better understanding on how higher education institutions are creating favourable voice expression climates for Indigenous employees and also examine the perception of Indigenous employees on the institutional efforts for inclusion.

Nevertheless, the literature on voice antecedents is still lacking clarity when it comes to understanding which antecedents are linked to which type of voice expression: promotive or prohibitive (Chamberlin, et al., 2017; Morrison, 2014; Liang et al., 2014). Morrison (2014), conjectures that the antecedent factors that motivate or inhibit employees to express promotive or prohibitive voice may (or may not) be the same. For example, conscientiousness and personal

initiative may encourage both types of voice, because both types of voice hinge on proactivity and willingness to go beyond role requirements and put forth effort on behalf of the organization. Likewise, when individuals feel a sense of autonomy and perceive control over their work, they may offer innovative ideas and make others aware of problems (Lam & Mayer, 2014). In contrast, Liang et al. (2012), found felt obligation strongly related more to promotive than prohibitive voice, and that psychological safety was more strongly related to prohibitive than promotive voice. In summary, there are reasons to believe that promotive and prohibitive voice are influenced by the same set of antecedents, but future research would benefit by following up on suggestions that antecedents of both types of voice could vary (Chamberlin et al., 2017). Despite the myriad bodies of literature proposing relationships involving voice, there remains a lack of integrated research on it, and, in particular, a lack of knowledge about the influence of participant diversity on voice expression. As mentioned previously, fragmented research has led to a siloed understanding to the voice concept, which ultimately leads to a lack of research in other areas of voice: the impact of cultural values/norms on voice, diversity/minority voice, and in particular Indigenous cultural values on voice systems has not been studied. Given that these omissions largely pertain to aspects of diversity, we also review the EDI literature below, with a view to understanding how EDI issues may be integrated into voice processes.

2.9 Overview of the EDI Literature

The Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) literature focuses on ensuring that people of all backgrounds can have more equitable opportunities to succeed. It underscores the importance of practices that enable marginalized identity groups to have equal access to the information and resources necessary to participate in decision-making processes, including the mechanisms required for the communication of voice (Shore et al., 2011).

More specifically, *equity* calls for the redressing of systemic and structural injustices; it is a process that begins by acknowledging the unequal starting place and the need to consider a set of practices that may be applied to correct and address the imbalance (Bernstein et al., 2020; Wong, 2019). *Diversity* practices focus on bringing more marginalized groups (e.g., women, people of colour, and others) into the workplace by hiring them in proportion to their representation in the pertinent qualified labour force (Shore et al., 2018). A diverse workforce provides potential opportunities for greater innovation internally, and greater access to new segments of the marketplace, both of which contribute to enhanced productivity and increased employee morale (Syed, 2014). However, to reap that potential, *Inclusion* practices are needed (Offerman & Basford, 2014; Winters, 2014). Inclusion pertains to how an organization defines and treats the diversity, with a focus on creating equal access to decision making, resources, and upward mobility opportunities for all individuals who are in the workplace (Garcia & Martin, 2010; Shore et al., 2018). To be sustainable, inclusion practices should support equal opportunity for participation by members of both socially marginalized *and* non-marginalized groups of employees at all levels of an organization (Shore et al., 2018). As will be elaborated below, perceived inclusion is also quite important as, independent of objective inclusion, perceptions may influence an employees' sense of belongingness and attachment to the organization (which is ultimately beneficial for individual and organizational effectiveness) (Um-E-Rubbab & Naqvi, 2020).

2.10 The role of Management in setting EDI Practices & Policies

The EDI literature highlights the role of top management in establishing an inclusive environment. Broadly speaking, organizational leaders can encourage diverse employees from all backgrounds to feel comfortable in expressing their own authenticity by emphasizing the

importance of treating one another equally and respectfully (Shore et al., 2018). However, this ‘talk’ must be accompanied by the ‘walk’ of addressing discrimination issues in a way that tangibly supports the talent development of all employees, including members of marginalized social groups (Shore et al., 2018). More specifically, inclusive practices can include recruitment and retention strategies for diversity (Offerman & Basford, 2014), mitigating discrimination via cultural awareness and inclusion training (Offerman & Basford, 2014; Rowe, 1990; Sue, 2010; Shore et al., 2018), and demonstrating how leveraging workforce diversity can increase organizational performance (Offerman & Basford, 2014). Additional practices may also entail, creating and utilizing employee resource groups and giving such groups access to information and resources which facilitate opportunities to participate in group discussions and decision making (Shore et al., 2011; 2018; Tang et al., 2015). Thus, we can see the EDI literature is lacking because it views voice from a high level and hasn’t considered, at a granular level, what channels and mechanisms of voice work best for minorities (i.e. in this case, for the objective of reconciliation with Indigenous people).

2.11 EDI Outcomes

Research indicates that these EDI practices and policies have been associated with positive individual, group, and organizational outcomes. Each of these levels of outcomes will be reviewed in turn:

Individual outcomes include increased psychological safety, perceptions of organizational inclusion (Barak, 2015; Findler et al., 2007; Barak & Levin, 2002), and greater employee involvement in creative work (Hirak et al., 2012; Carmeli et al., 2010). When individuals feel safe, included, and able to express themselves creatively, it leads to increased leader-management exchange (LMX), overall job satisfaction, and, ultimately, greater well-being and

decreased stress and turnover (Brimhall et al., 2017; Hwang & Hopkins, 2012; Findler et al., 2007; Mor Barak et al., 2006). At the group level, an EDI practices help to establish an inclusive climate, which allows for greater work group inclusion and greater team information sharing. At the organizational level, outcomes from EDI practices and policies include improved diversity management, the development of quality relationships, and greater organizational commitment and trust. All of these enhance organizational performance (Shore et al., 2018; Sabharwal, 2014).

2.12 Limitations of the EDI literature: Neglect of Voice (& Indigenous Voice in particular)

Although a key issue in the EDI literature is to develop practices that create experiences of inclusion (Shore et al., 2018), the EDI literature has neglected to adequately include cultural differences. Yet, cultures differ. Without empirical inclusion of cultural diversity, it is difficult to know whether EDI practices that scholars have been found to be effective for inclusion and organizational effectiveness are, in fact, universally inclusive or effective. Mainstream management approaches to EDI often fail to address the unique challenges and contributions of Indigenous peoples. Such EDI initiatives often emphasize treating everyone the same (formal equality), which overlooks the historical and cultural contexts that shape the experiences of Indigenous peoples (Klemm Verbos & Humphries, 2012). A "one-size-fits-all" approach can lead to the marginalization of Indigenous voices and knowledge systems (Klemm Verbos & Humphries, 2012).

Compared with Canadian culture, Indigenous culture can also be considered much more collectivistic, resulting in a society that is more tightly knit and in which individuals can depend on their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede et al., 2005). The employee-employer relationship in a collectivistic culture is like a family relationship with strong emotional and moral ties (Hofstede et al., 2005). Indigenous

organizations often take a wholistic perspective when accounting for their employees. In Indigenous cultures, the focus is on the community and collaboration, and they prize humility and interdependence. Indigenous organizations' communication with Indigenous employees might be characterized by regular check-ins, open dialogue, and a team based, non-hierarchical approach (Hunt, 2021).

This contrasts with the individualistic or market view of the employment contract as simply an economic transaction between the buyers and sellers of labour (Redpath & Nielsen, 1997) as seen in Canadian culture. In non-Indigenous culture, as a linear, analytical approach to thinking and respect for assertiveness, competitiveness, and individual achievement are more highly regarded (Dumont, 1993). Most non-Indigenous-led organizations are characterized by a profit over people and a hierarchical approach. In western cultures the focus is on the individual self, and they prize strength and independence (Hunt, 2021; Bear, 2000). For example, higher education institutions have a workplace culture deeply rooted in the western Eurocentric way of knowing through implementing colonial policies, programs, and procedures.

In addition, with regard to Trompenaars (1996) cultural value dimension known as relationship to nature, the Indigenous tendency leans toward harmony. The spiritual core of Indigenous values entails a vision of wholeness, where all things are interconnected and interrelated. From this premise stems a respect for all forms of life and a sense of trust, sharing, kindness, humility, and harmony in relationships with others (Dumont, 1993; Redpath & Nielsen, 1997). By contrast, the very fact that the industrial revolution represents the baseline against which climate change is compared indicates that developed economies possess a more dominant orientation with respect to nature.

Despite these evident differences, few peer-reviewed EDI studies to date have addressed organizational practices and policies pertinent to the Indigenous population in organizations. The few studies that have done so have largely come from the public sector (Alang et al., 2020) or come from the educational literature. Nevertheless, literature has highlighted the need for greater collaboration between organizations and Indigenous communities, in the form of meaningful engagement in relationship building (Conference Board of Canada, 2019; Pidgeon, 2016; Sonn et al., 2000; Bunda & Brennan, 2012). While acknowledging that this type of collaboration can be helpful insofar as it enables organizations to understand community needs and their available skill set, these studies also underscore that successful collaboration requires meaningful dialogue, shared leadership and bottom-up decision-making processes so that organizational alignment with community priorities are bidirectional in nature; it is this sort of respectful responsiveness that can best assist Indigenous recruitment and retention (Stefanelli et al., 2019; Walker & Devone-Wright, 2008).

Additional practices for inclusive collaboration in training, the literature suggests that cohort programs and mentorship relationships hold much promise for enabling Indigenous people to build confidence and various skills, while also becoming empowered (MacLaine et al., 2019). In cohort programs, organizations can hire/recruit a group of Indigenous people at the same time and offer culturally supportive group training that may improve the collective lack of employability and/or life/essential skills (MacLaine et al., 2019). Mentorship programs offer role models in the context of more informal, situated learning. As stated by interviewees, role models in the workplace help individuals visualize themselves in higher roles and show them what it takes to get there (MacLaine et al., 2019).

One study conducted by Alang et al. (2020), focused on Indigenous employee voice in Vietnamese public sector. They go on to state in the global context, while there is increasing diversity within organisations, voice strategies for minority groups remain relatively unexplored (Wilkinson et al. 2018). Their findings show that, while government policies have led to increased Indigenous workforce participation, there remain a range of barriers at the organisational level that limit and undermine workplace participation. These include, first, inconsistencies in the interpretation and implementation of these policies at the organisational level due to the reliance on the discretion of individual managers (rather than enforcement of consistency via leadership audits). Second, the lack of awareness and commitment or even underlying discrimination of non-Indigenous managers (which is not unrelated to leadership enforcement matter). Likewise, even when not intentionally racist managers and supervisors can inadvertently limit or undermine the implementation and successful use of voice mechanisms due to their lack of emotional and cultural competencies and communication skills. This is particularly important in managing minorities because without emotional and cultural competencies and communication skills, voice practices can become meaningless. Hence this suggests the importance of organizational practices such as cross-cultural training. Without such purposeful formal cultural training to motivate the use of inclusive voice mechanisms the study shows that informal channels were only used with leaders who promoted Indigenous voice and inclusion. These leaders were described as ‘open minded’. Overall, the study found that despite government mandated employee voice policies, in the absence of organizational leadership and accountability audits in this regard, Indigenous people still felt isolated and excluded in the workplace.

In addition, the sparse literature in this area suggests that it is vital for organizations to cultivate cultural awareness and inclusion training for all employees. An interesting finding from the survey conducted by The Conference Board of Canada report (2019) reveals that over 50% of employer respondents did not think that biases/cultural insensitivity of current staff and biases in recruitment/hiring tests and assessments posed significant barriers to Indigenous recruitment. However, in the same report, the third most common reason Indigenous employees leave their organizations was due to current employees' lack of awareness of Indigenous culture. Clearly, when organizations neglected to develop their cultural awareness (including the need to implement practices and policies that are culturally pertinent for the collaboration and inclusion of Indigenous people), it presented challenges for Indigenous people in the workplace.

Additional challenges that the study identified as barriers to Indigenous inclusion in higher education included the absence of childcare services, housing, and transportation, which were all substantial barriers for Indigenous people in living in rural areas. It is therefore vital for organizational inclusion efforts to take these underlying challenges into consideration, and to provide support that may improve these issues (MacLaine et al., 2019).

In summary, many Indigenous people have had to adhere to the social norms and to adapt to the ways of being, knowing, and doing in western organizations to be successful. This has undermined key aspects of Indigenous peoples' cultural identity (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Julien et al, 2017). Research suggests that the link between cultural values and institutional and managerial approaches becomes crucial for organizational success (Alang et al., 2020). Hence, to be more inclusive, and ultimately more effective, management practices must be flexible, adaptable, and less ethnocentric when collaborating with Indigenous peoples (Redpath &

Nielsen, 1997). Greater inclusion via cultural accommodations may help create trust and a safe environment.

2.13 Summary of Gaps in the Management EDI and Voice literatures: An integrated model of inclusive voice

As noted earlier, employee voice studies have tended to focus on mainstream employees, while neglecting minority groups (Wilkinson et al. 2018). Limited research has focused on what channels and mechanisms of voice work best for minorities (Alang et al., 2020; Shore et al., 2011; 2018; Tang et al., 2015). Although scholars on employee voice are starting to understand the need for research on EDI to address ‘missing’ voices (Syed, 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2018; 2021;; Um-E-Rubbab, & Mehdi Raza Naqvi, 2020), most literature on voice continues to be conducted in with western cultural populations (Morrison, 2014; Freeman et al., 2007; Wilkinson et al., 2021; Kwon & Farndale, 2020). Thus, voice strategies for Canadian Indigenous employees in higher education remains relatively unexplored. Evidence suggests that, to capture diverse voices, organizations need to develop participation and engagement practices targeting minority employees (Alang et al., 2020; Farndale et al. 2015). Yet, the EDI literature has considered a variety of forms of diversity, albeit without explicit reference to the theoretical concepts found in the voice literature. The EDI literature has also devoted negligible attention to key cultural communities, such as Indigenous cultures, who differ on important cultural dimensions such as collectivism and relationship to nature. In short, one of the consequences of colonialism has been Indigenous distrust in the government and private organizations. Failing to enable Indigenous peoples voice to be heard and acted upon will perpetuate this societal mistrust and impede the collaboration needed for more hiring/recruiting and retaining of Indigenous employees. If Indigenous people are not taken into greater consideration, particularly in organizations such as higher educational institutions, it can also be legitimately seen as not following the TRC report

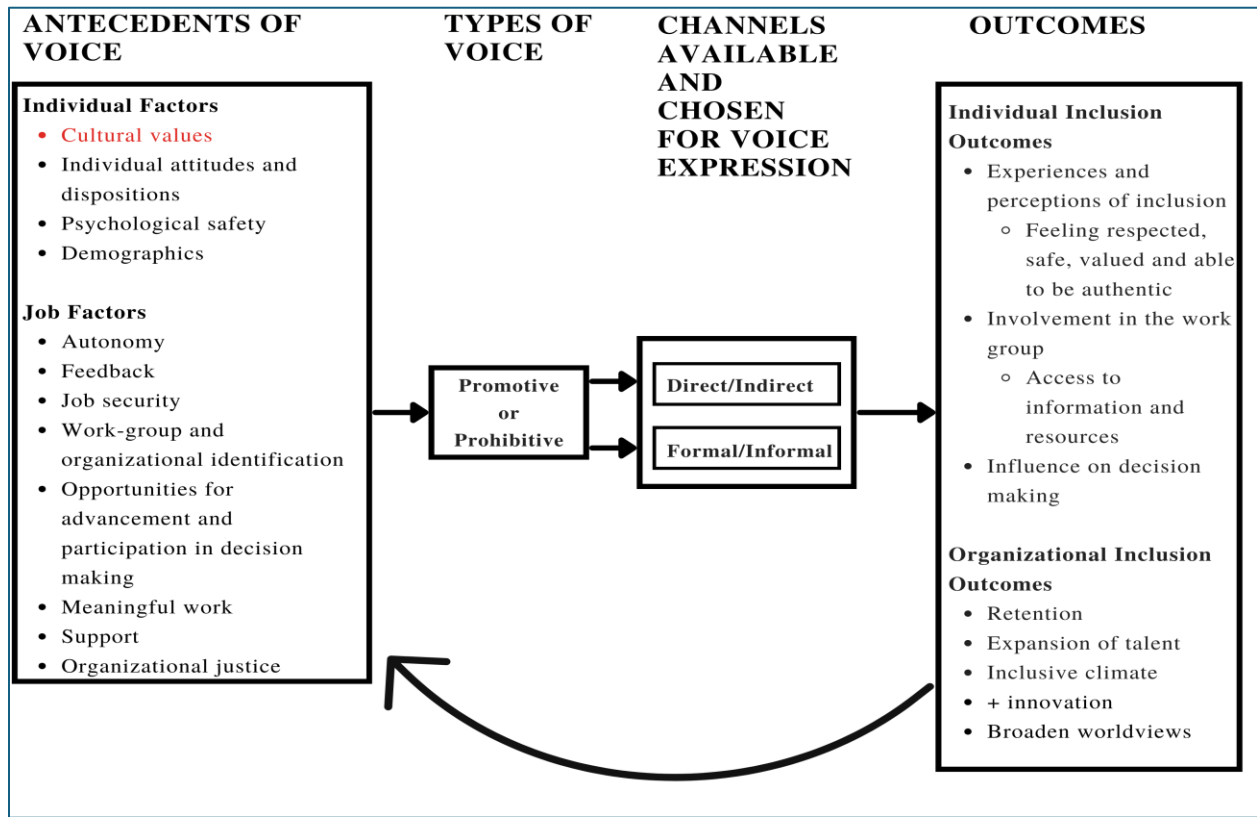
and not taking their concerns and issues seriously. With cultural diversity within organizations increasing, communication strategies that promote both integration and equality within the workplace are essential (Allen, 2017). Integrating Indigenous perspectives into the voice literature can create a better understanding of different perspectives and establish trust (Wilkinson et al., 2018). Advancing knowledge about inclusive cultural accommodations of Indigenous employees is thus not only relevant to the scholarly literatures on both EDI and voice, but also, on a meaningful practical level, it is relevant to promoting Indigenous inclusion by potentially facilitating their voice expression and impact. As stated previously, Tamtik & Guenter (2020) call for a more in-depth analysis of EDI efforts of Canadian higher education institutions to get more insight from the implementation side of things to get a better understanding of how those policies have been designed, received and experienced.

Accordingly, Figure 2 below combines the above findings from the EDI and voice literatures into the earlier model (which summarized current knowledge on employee voice), in order to propose a more integrated theoretical model from the management literature. In so doing, it becomes apparent that outcomes from the EDI literature are very similar to the outcomes listed in the voice literature. The antecedent practices, however, are more nuanced and granular about differences than the voice literature. Moreover, as previously stated above, there has been some attention on proving mechanism for voice in the EDI literature but is much less granular than the voice literature. The EDI literature has not considered what channels and mechanisms of voice work best for Indigenous people (Shore et al., 2011; 2018; Tang et al., 2015). As this model indicates, individual and job factor antecedents are relatively the same as in Figure 1. Yet, the model also reveals that organizational factor antecedents differ: Whereas the

voice literature has largely neglected EDI issues, this integrated model now includes several EDI practices and policies (highlighted in red).

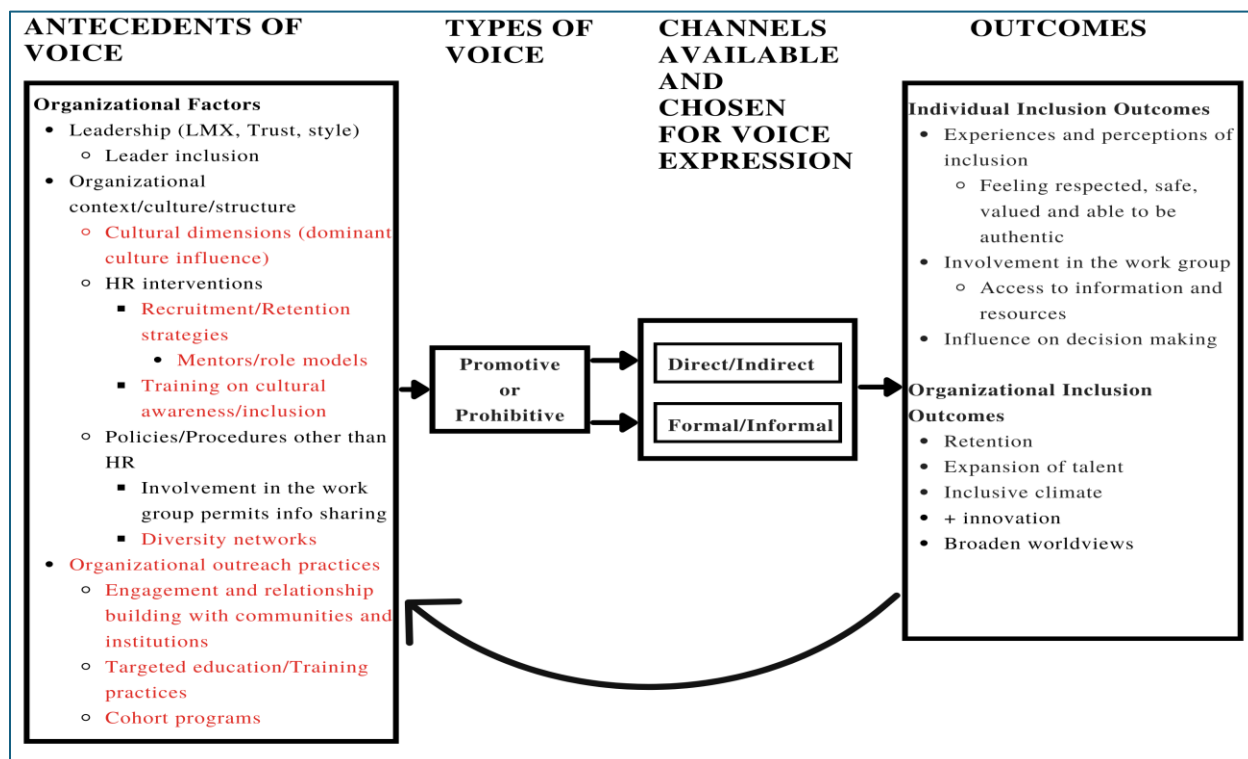
Figure 2

Theoretical Model from Management Literature (Voice and EDI)



*Note: Red text are EDI practices and policies.

Figure 2 Continued



*Note: Red text are EDI practices and policies.

2.14 Voice in the Education Literature

Voice in the educational literature takes a much deeper look at the societal level of analysis than any of the management sub-disciplines do. The education literature tackles the issue at a more fundamental, radical level of change: It says that the very institutional logic is what needs to change for real decolonization. Therefore, voice is used to fundamentally change the terms of reference for how things are understood and done. Ultimately, the goal is to decolonize knowledge through transforming learning content by privileging traditional knowledge (resisting outside theories) and incorporating traditional values (cultural awareness in policy) in higher education institutions (Pidgeon, 2016; Battiste, 2011; Gilmore & Smith, 2005). This is feasible through metaliteracy (Gilmore & Smith, 2005), a tool for fostering critical thinking and agency in students, especially those from marginalized communities. It goes beyond

traditional literacy to include digital, visual, and other forms of literacy, enabling students to engage with knowledge in a more holistic and inclusive manner. Therefore, the focal point of Indigenous voice in the educational literature is articulate new paradigms of power in academic discourse (Bunda et al., 2012; Gilmore & Smith, 2005; Battiste, 2000). Specifically, this involves the implementation of Indigenous Terms of Reference (ATR, 1995; Gilmore & Smith, 2005; Sonn et al., 2000), which incorporate specific and implicit cultural values, beliefs and priorities from which Indigenous standards are derived, validated and practiced. This can involve the 4Rs (Respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility) which is a guide for educators and institutions to engage with diverse learners in a meaningful way (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) and Indigenous representation and meaningful inclusion throughout the institutions (Pidgeon, 2016).

A few studies have focused on Indigenous voice at a societal macro level, in the context of higher education. Voice in these articles is referred to as a means to challenging established academic hierarchies and promoting a more inclusive approach through learning, for example by using metaliterary approaches (Gilmore & Smith, 2005). Moreover, Indigenous voice in higher education has been studied by voice referring to participants lived experiences in data collection (Amundsen, 2019; Bunda & Brennan, 2012; Durmush et al., 2021) These, studies bring into light the challenges Indigenous people face in higher education and ways to mitigate them for genuine inclusion. For example, discrimination, cultural alienation, minority tax, lateral violence, lack of cultural understanding, 'walking in two worlds', and a lack of support systems in higher education are challenges and barriers for Indigenous well-being and inclusion. On the other hand, culture, family and kinship and autonomy enable well-being in higher education.

Societal culture affects individual beliefs, shapes of organizations' structures and processes, and the selection of managers, all of which have influence on voice and voice opportunities (Kwon and Farndale, 2020; Tsui, Nifadkar and Ou, 2007). Attempts to understand potential cultural differences in voice tendencies and opportunities need to consider that these differences (or similarities) may be the result of several factors, some of which have their roots in the societal culture; others in legislation, traditional norms and the socio-economic situation in which employees work, and organizations operate (Wilkinson, 2021). This creates the prevailing institutional logic in higher education which goes against Indigenous worldviews (Verbos & Humphries, 2012) This corporate culture normalizes and institutionalizes the competitive individualism that underlies neo-liberal market capitalism. This logic reinforces persistent colonizing mentalities that promote elitism, gender discrimination, discrimination, and assimilation (Adler et al., 2007; Delbridge and Keenoy, 2010; Goeman, 2009; Suzack et al., 2010). Organizational factors have failed to consider the need for institutional logics to change to address diversity concerns.

A few studies from the educational literature (Pidgeon, 2016; Sonn et al., 2000; Bunda & Brennan, 2012) offer tangible approaches for improving inclusion and voice of Indigenous peoples in higher education. The approaches consist of creating Indigenous representation (e.g. advisory committees, having Indigenous people in leadership positions, developing Indigenous offices that are not only safe spaces but provide a link between community and the institution). This representation should not be tokenism but rather fully enabled to incorporate Aboriginal Terms of Reference, which are derived from Indigenous people's worldviews and establish Aboriginal strategic plans and policies, including teaching related policies (e.g. incorporating Indigenous knowledge in teaching and learning). These suggested voice mechanisms are

potentially powerful in pushing towards more equitable and Indigenous inclusive institutions; however, they fail to address existing voice theory at the organizational level, which has referenced established voice channels and mechanisms. This is important because the two literatures (mainstream management voice and EDI literatures, and education literature on Indigenous voice) are not talking to one another and hence are fragmented. By integrating these two literatures, we may learn how and if Indigenous policy recommendations are being implemented for successful inclusion. Table 3 below summarizes Indigenous voice in the education literature.

Table 3

Summary of Indigenous voice in the Educational Literature

Education Literature (Key principles)	Indigenous Voice in the Education Literature
Purpose (Prioritization of Indigenous concerns)	<p>Decolonizing knowledge (Transformed learning <u>content</u>) (Pidgeon, 2016; Battiste, 2011; Gilmore & Smith, 2005)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privileging traditional <u>knowledge</u> (resisting outside theories) • Incorporating traditional <u>values</u> (Cultural awareness in policy)
Features	<p>Metaliteracy (Transformed learning <u>methods</u>) (Gilmore & Smith, 2005)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Inclusive Learning Methods</u> It goes beyond traditional literacy to include digital, visual, and other forms of literacy, enabling individuals to engage with knowledge in a more holistic and inclusive manner. • <u>Empowering Learning Methods</u> fostering critical thinking and agency in students, especially those from marginalized communities.
Focus	<p>Articulate new paradigms of <u>power</u> in academic discourse to change the power dynamics (Pidgeon, 2016; Bunda et al., 2012; Gilmore & Smith, 2005; Battiste, 2000; Sonn et al., 2000; ATR, 1995; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of <u>Indigenous terms of reference</u> (culturally appropriate rules for Indigenous peoples' participation in an academic discourse). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Four Rs</i> – Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility (<u>collegial reconciliation</u>) => Institutional Change/Paradigm Shift • Cultural training • <u>Indigenous Representation: Meaningful Inclusion</u> (Token Checklist vs Meaningful Practice) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Councils • Leadership Positions • Indigenous Offices

From the education literature perspective on Indigenous voice, the purpose is to better understand how EDI and employee voice policies and practices help in decolonizing knowledge and implementing Indigenous terms of reference to ultimately limit cognitive imperialism and

encourage new paradigms of power not only in academic discourse but in broader society. In light of the above reasons, below is Figure 3, which has better integrated the fragmented management subdisciplines and EDI together with the education literature, to get a clearer picture of what we actually know, and don't know, about how Indigenous voice might be expressed in higher educational institutions. In the figure, red text represents policies and practices from the EDI literature, and blue text represents the influence from the education literature.

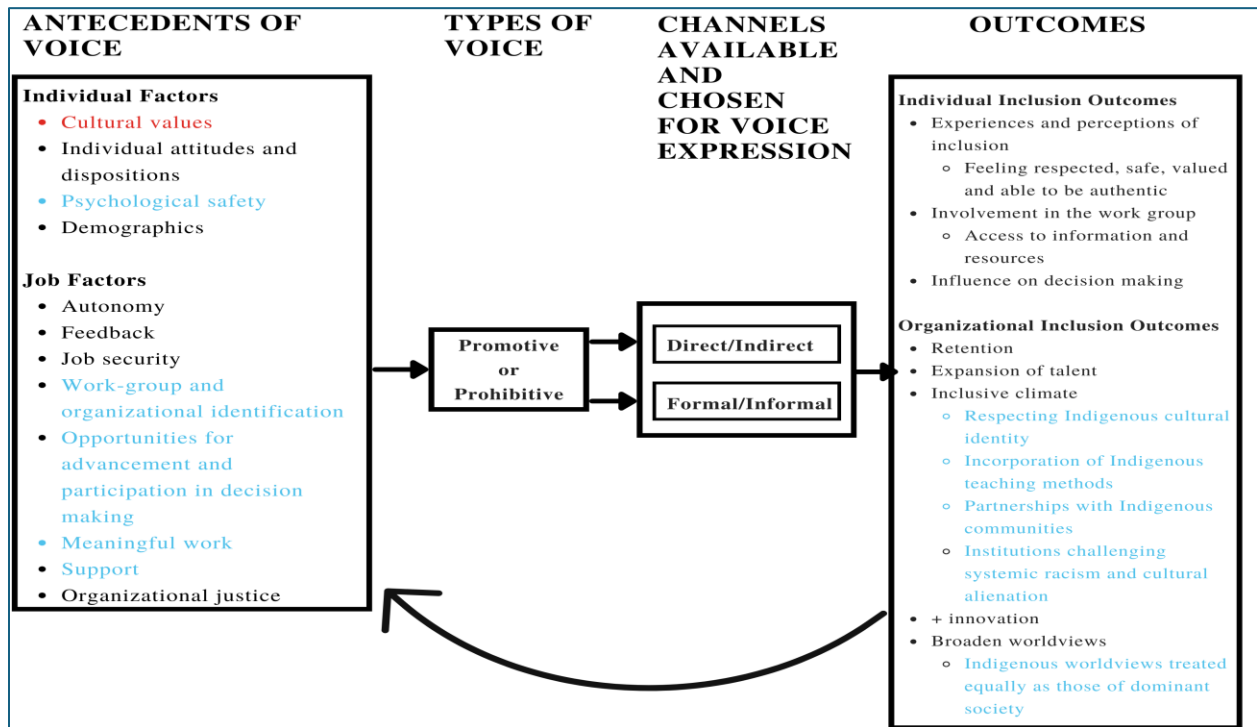
The education literature has influence on all three antecedent levels and organization inclusion outcomes. The antecedent factors fail to consider the need for how the fundamental institutional logic needs to change to address diversity concerns. There has been neglect of the societal level of analysis as an antecedent, which has led to the key tenets of the educational literature (Indigenous terms of reference, metaliteracy) not being acknowledged by the mainstream management literature. This oversight has an effect on all the other levels of antecedents:

Starting with psychological safety at the individual antecedent level, education literature urges in knowing what constitutes as safe spaces for Indigenous voice. At the job antecedent level, work group and organizational identification along with meaningful work signify reconciliation and decolonization must be a part of the job. Moreover, opportunities for advancement and participation in decision making are critical for the purpose of voice in the education literature. At the organizational antecedent level, many of the EDI and education literature policies are similar, however, the education literature goes into much more detail about specific policies relating to Indigenous population. For example, incorporating Indigenous knowledge in recruitment and retention strategies. In terms of outcomes, the education literature

puts emphasis on respecting Indigenous cultural identity, incorporation of Indigenous teaching methods, having partnerships with Indigenous communities, challenging systemic racism and having Indigenous worldviews treated equally as those of the dominant society. Given the importance of considering the cross-cultural differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees, the model requires empirical investigation/testing to confirm how these various practices promote Indigenous voice and inclusion.

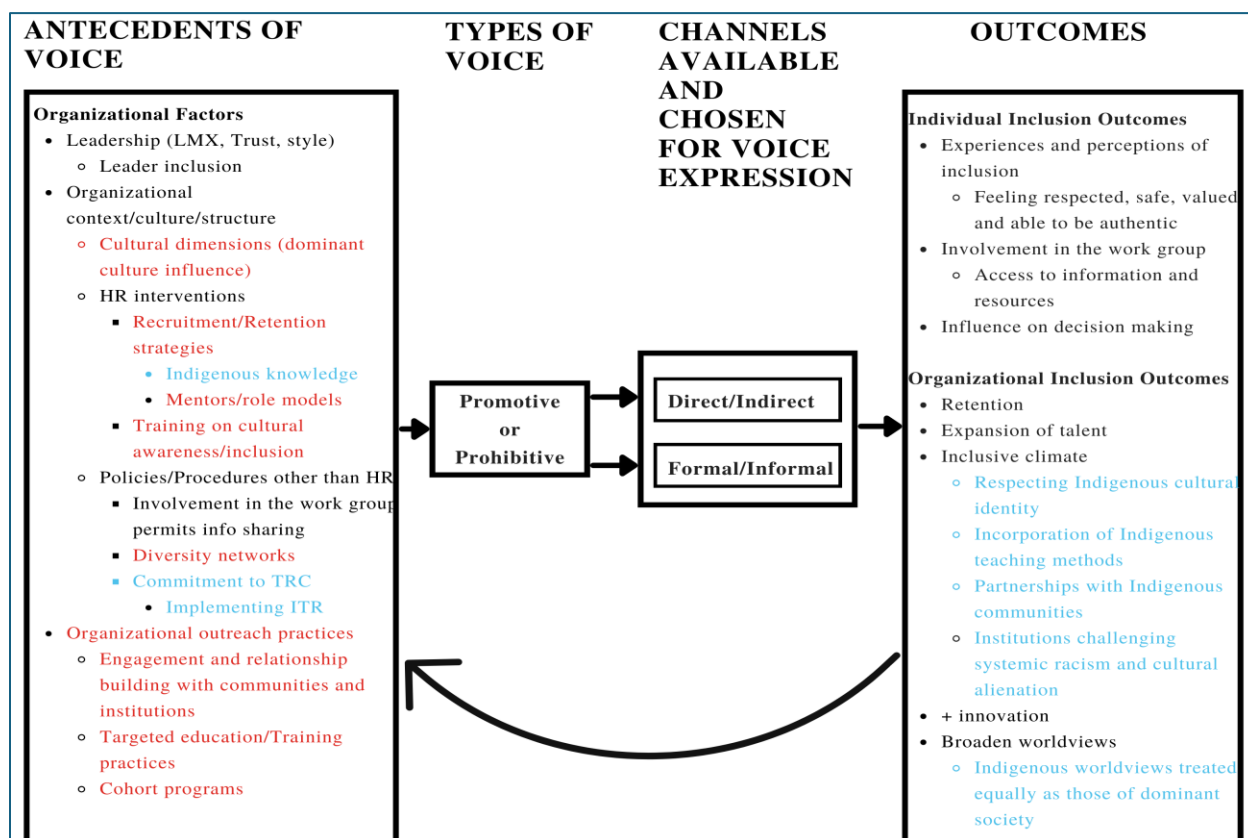
Figure 3

Fully Integrated Model (Management & Education)



*Note: Red text are EDI practices and policies. Blue text is from the education literature.

Figure 3 Continued



*Note: Red text are EDI practices and policies. Blue text is from the education literature.

2.15 Research Questions & Context: Indigenous Inclusion in Higher Education

The above-mentioned limitations within the voice and EDI literatures point to the need to better understand (1) how voice systems can enable the implementation of EDI, and (2) how EDI practices can help strengthen the voice of marginalized employees. Accordingly, this is where the exploratory nature of this study is ultimately intended to contribute; namely, to advance knowledge about whether, and how, these EDI practices and policies encourage Indigenous voice expression and whether/ how voice mechanisms contribute to inclusion for Indigenous employees.

The specific context that this study focuses on is Indigenous employee voice in higher education institutions. As mentioned earlier, the Canadian government has committed to

supporting the TRC Calls to Action, in which education is an important aspect. This study examines how higher education institutions are supporting the Calls to Action and taking steps towards reconciliation. This is of vital importance because colonialism has led to socio-political and infrastructural hardships for the Indigenous population.

Thus, this study aimed to shed light to college and university EDI and voice practices/policies that promote recruitment, retention and inclusion of Indigenous employees. A greater understanding along these lines will help to advance Indigenous learning and employment outcomes. In addition to these practical objectives, the theoretical focus of this study is to deepen knowledge of the role of diversity in the utilization of voice channels, as well as the role of voice mechanisms in the recruitment, integration, and retention of Indigenous population. Below are the research questions:

- How do Canadian education institutions formally facilitate or hinder Indigenous employee voices?
- How do Indigenous employees perceive in Canada their organizations' inclusion efforts?
- How do Indigenous employees in Canada engage in voice behaviour, if at all?

Overall, by studying voice in a new context (e.g., Indigenous people, higher education) and integrating it with EDI literature we will gain a greater understanding of minority voice. The research method, described in the next section, uses a mixed deductive and inductive approach to better understand which EDI and voice policies encourage Indigenous experiences of institutional inclusion and voice impact.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Rationale for Qualitative Approach

Creswell and Poth (2018) define qualitative research as a process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. They go on to state that qualitative research is appropriate to conduct when a problem or issue needs to be explored, as is the case for exploratory questions asking “how” and “why”. More specifically, they state this exploration is needed when variables cannot easily be measured (or to hear silenced voices).

3.2 Design Approach

This study adopted a phenomenological approach to examining Indigenous employee voice in higher education institutions. This involved gathering multiple perspectives from individuals who have experience with phenomena of Indigenous reconciliation in Canadian higher education institutions. An interpretive approach to interviewing helps to reveal participant meaning (Morrow & Smith, 2000) regarding the main factors contributing to the situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This allows participants to speak about their experiences, which helps to better understand their perspective on expressing their Indigenous voices in higher education institutions.

3.3 Participants & Sampling

Recruitment for this study sought employees at Indigenous resource centres (IRCs) in Canadian higher education institutions, as these employees are directly involved in Indigenous initiatives of all kinds. For example, supporting Indigenous students, organizing events, dealing with recruitment and retention, and creating Indigenization policies and practices. In addition, Indigenous employees in other staff positions and employees who are involved in EDI efforts at

the same institutions (Indigenous employees or not) were also sought after to capture their perspectives on reconciliation and inclusion efforts. This is important because The Conference Board of Canada report (2019) underscored the relevance of collecting data from both the organizers and targets of a culturally inclusive intervention, in order to uncover labour market obstacles and then use that data to inform employers. Therefore, along the same line, it was important to examine the voices of these diverse employees to see whether/how they are being included and heard in decision making related to the Indigenous population in their respective higher education institution.

Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) took place, as the study looked for these specific participants. After initial contact with participants from the institutions, the snowball technique was used to gain access to the specific participants needed. Refer to Appendix 1 for the recruitment letter. A total of 14 interviews were obtained. All participants and their institutions will remain anonymous due to the delicate nature of the study as sensitive information was shared which could harm them and/or the institutions. Below is table 3 with detail about each participant.

Table 4*Participant Details*

Participant ID (Institution #, Interviewee #)	Participant Category <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I for IRC employee or any Indigenous specific position • E for EDI related position (not necessarily Indigenous) 	Job Title	Indigenous Identity	Year started working in position
1.1	I	Supervisor of IRC and Indigenous Initiatives	No (Ethnic Minority)	2022
1.2	I	Member of Faculty; Interim Manager of IRC	First Nations	2020;2023
1.3	I	Indigenous Recruiter	First Nations	2021
1.1	E	Associate Vice President of EDI	No (Ethnic Minority)	2022
1.2	E	EDI Specialist	No (Ethnic Minority)	2022
2.1	I	Curriculum Developer – Indigenous & Reconciliation	Metis	2022
2.2	I	Aboriginal Student Navigator	Metis	2022
2.3	I	Executive Director – Aboriginal Education; IRC Manager	First Nations	2013
2.4	I	Aboriginal Advisor Liaison	Metis	2020
2.1	E	EDI Initiatives	Metis	2022
2.2	E	EDI Committee member	First Nation	2023
3.1	I	Indigenous Recruitment Liaison Coordinator	First Nations	2023
3.2	I	Indigenous Initiatives and Instruction Librarian	Metis	2020
4.1	I	Indigenous Relations Coordinator	Metis	2021

3.4 Data Collection

A total of 14 interviews were conducted of employees from four higher education institutions in British Columbia. The primary data was collected from the participants through semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and was recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis purposes. The interviews lasted anywhere from 30-90 minutes in an online format using Microsoft teams. Depending on the participant's position they were either interviewed using the IRC interview protocol or the EDI interview protocol. Three participants were interviewed with both the IRC interview protocol and EDI interview protocol as they were part of both the IRC and the EDI department at their institutions. Refer to Appendix 2 for both the interview protocols. The interview protocols were deductively developed from the theoretical model described in the previous section. The IRC interview protocol included questions in the form of the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954). "The critical incident technique is a qualitative interview procedure which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes, or issues) identified by the respondent, the way they are managed, and the outcomes in terms of perceived effects. The objective is to gain understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual, taking into account cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements" (Gremmler 2004, p.66). It was originally developed as a method for the evaluation of critical job requirements for the US military by psychologist John Clemens Flanagan (Flanagan, 1954). Using this technique allowed the researcher to gain a greater understanding of participant voices and how voice expression is perceived. In addition, the IRC interview protocol contained quantitative Likert-scale measures mainly for purposes of obtaining descriptive data to help group the qualitative responses. Furthermore, secondary data was collected in the form of institutional policies and documents relating to EDI policies and voice. This was done to compare participant experiences of inclusion with related policies and

procedures. Appendix 3 contains the consent form for the interviews and Appendix 4 is the ethics approval.

3.5 Data Analysis – A mixed deductive/inductive approach

Due to the interviews being semi-structured, participant comments were somewhat deductively directed. However, the comments were then analyzed in an inductive manner to determine whether participants' views actually corresponded to the themes of the questions and/or to reveal novel themes that might not have been apparent in the existing literature. Therefore, after each interview was conducted it was recorded and transcribed; subsequently, descriptive coding followed. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), coding is analysis because of the deep reflection of the data's meaning, which in turn helped to interpret and understand the data. The first level coding employed the descriptive approach (Miles et al., 2014) assigning labels with a short phrase to the data segments.

After completing first level coding, came second level coding which identifies patterns from the first set of codes. Pattern codes are explanatory and identify themes in the data (Miles et al., 2014). As suggested by Miles et al., (2014), similar first level codes were clustered together and examined to see what they had in common. In addition, importance was placed on the frequency of the first level codes, they were then examined to understand the significance of the reoccurrence. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), looking at the number of data segments associated with each code can be an indicator of the participants' interest in the code. This implies that the code could be a significant topic of interest that could reflect a recurring theme or pattern of that interview. When developing pattern codes, patterns for each interview transcript were developed and then compared across the other interview transcripts to integrate any similarities or differences.

Additionally, the Gioia method (Gioia et al., 2013) was used to illustrate the data structure (i.e., the transition from first level to higher level codes). The quantitative results were analyzed to compare participant and institutional scores, thus, better understanding the climate for voice and inclusion. Finally, institutional documents were examined to understand how effective EDI policies and procedures are in relation to participant experiences.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Rigour

Qualitative researchers utilize various validation strategies to make their studies credible and rigorous (Creswell & Miler, 2000). One of those strategies is to be transparent about the researchers position with regard to the study. In undertaking this research, it is imperative to acknowledge and transparently address the researcher's positionality. As the investigator, my background, experiences, and identity play a crucial role in shaping the lens through which this study was conducted. I am a Sikh individual, born to immigrant parents, and raised in northern British Columbia. My family and community have personally faced instances of discrimination, leading to a heightened awareness and commitment to addressing broader issues of injustice. This has naturally fostered a deep concern for the well-being of marginalized communities.

My engagement with Indigenous communities is multifaceted and spans various roles. Growing up, I formed meaningful connections with Indigenous friends, and my professional experiences as a youth worker in a care home predominantly serving Indigenous children and as a behavior consultant have further deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by Indigenous communities. The pervasive effects of colonialism, coupled with the historical injustices perpetrated against Indigenous populations in Canada, are issues that I am acutely aware of and deeply committed to addressing. These experiences have fueled my commitment to amplifying Indigenous voices and fostering equitable opportunities in higher education.

It is crucial to recognize that my positionality may influence the research process, from the framing of research questions to the interpretation of findings. Despite these influences, I am committed to maintaining an ethical and reflexive stance throughout the research process. I approached this study with humility, openness, and a dedication to amplifying Indigenous voices rather than imposing external perspectives. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on Indigenous education by providing a deeper understanding of Indigenous voices in higher education. While my personal experiences inform my commitment to this research, I am dedicated to conducting this study with the utmost respect for Indigenous perspectives. I aim to enhance the rigor and ethical considerations of this research, ensuring that the voices and experiences of Indigenous individuals are authentically represented.

Credibility of this study was further achieved by utilizing Indigenous involvement and approval of methodology by Indigenous members of another IRC from an institution not used to provide data. This approval led to a more refined and culturally appropriate methodology, specifically, involving the interview protocols which are the basis for data collection.

In addition, the validation strategies of member checking, ensuring a rich thick description of participants, themes and detail of the methodology, and triangulation were used (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After qualitative data analysis was complete, member checking took place, which involved providing participants with their transcripts so they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the data, and suggest corrections as needed. Rich thick description will be provided in the results sections to enable readers to make decisions regarding generalizability. Finally, the data was triangulated with various forms of data collection outlined above. With respect to the quantitative data, as noted earlier it is being used for descriptive purposes not for quantitative analysis.

Chapter 4. Results

4.1 Overview

Over the course of data collection, it was clear that participants did not have difficulty addressing question #1 (i.e., *How do education institutions formally facilitate or hinder Indigenous employee voices?*). However, upon asking question #2 (*How do Indigenous employees perceive their organizations' inclusion efforts?*) it became apparent that the participants consistently experienced things differently at the individual and cultural group levels of analysis. They generally experienced their organizations' inclusion efforts positively when it was in regard to themselves as Indigenous individuals but were more critical about their organizations' efforts on behalf of their cultural community. Likewise, in regard to question #3 (*How do Indigenous employees engage in voice behaviour, if at all?*), their engagement was closely tied to their experiences at the different levels of analysis. Hence, these recurring findings made it evident that these original two research questions (i.e., #2 and #3, which had originally been deduced from the literature) would inaccurately represent their multi-level perceptions about their experience. Accordingly, although the same research questions have been asked, they have been slightly reorganized here for the purposes of presentation, to more respectfully reflect participant experiences and perceptions of the issues:

- Question 1 remains as, *How do Canadian education institutions formally facilitate or hinder Indigenous employee voices?*
- Question 2 is being rephrased here as, *How do Indigenous employees in Canada perceive their organizations' inclusion of themselves as Indigenous individuals, (and includes references to their engagement in voice behaviour)?*

- Question 3 is being rephrased here as, *How do Indigenous employees in Canada perceive their organizations' inclusion of their voice behaviour on behalf of their Indigenous community (if at all)?*

Given that a large proportion of research from the education literature references Indigenous people from New Zealand and Australia, the results section will first, address the education literature framework by descriptively examining whether the Canadian Indigenous participants' expectations truly reflect what the education literature said they wanted. The remainder of this results section is organized according to the adjusted research questions. Within the discussion of each research question, emergent themes are addressed and a data structure for each theme is presented along with pertinent quotes. The data structures for each question aid the reader to see the logical progression from the raw data to the themes. After each quote is the participant ID. The first number represents the institution ID (1,2,3 or 4), second number represents the first, second, third, etc., participant from each institution, and the third item represents if the participant is from the IRC department (or other Indigenous related positions) or from the EDI department – labelled I or E respectively.

Following the analysis of all the research questions, a more complete, empirically validated model is presented, which reveals how Indigenous employees perceive their educational institutions' actions regarding inclusion (at both the individual and cultural group level). The model identifies the factors that facilitate and hinder their perceptions of safety for their voice expression. The discussion of the overarching theme (of perceptions of safety) is accompanied by both qualitative findings and descriptive results from the quantitative (Likert-scale) questions of the IRC interview protocol. As this final part of the analysis will indicate, the quantitative responses support the qualitative findings.

4.2 Mirroring the Education Literature

Table 4 below summarizes the educational literature findings. As mentioned earlier, the objective was to descriptively see, did the expectations of the participants from the study mirror what the education literature (mostly from Australia and New Zealand) said they wanted. The green text in the table signifies correspondence, so whatever the education literature said they were looking for, my participants were looking for that too. The red text signifies a contrast, the participant expectations were not met. This contrast will be examined in detail in the findings that correspond with the research questions. For the most part, participants expectations mirrored the education literature in terms of what they were looking for. Starting with the first row, participants expected decolonization of knowledge, and this expectation was met through institutions implementing land-based knowledge and Indigenous programs. Moreover, institutional value change was sought, however, it was slow to change because of conflicting worldviews. The next row of metaliteracy, the participant expectations were met by having culturally relevant teaching methods incorporated in the institutions through elders, circles, and storytelling, which were empowering for Indigenous voice and helped to transform the learning content. Finally, the last row, of articulating new paradigms of power in academic discourse, participant expectations were somewhat met through policy and practice. For example, policy changes to Indigenous funding and having cultural days off were positive. Along with, practice in the form of meaningful inclusion through advisory councils, both external (community outreach) and internal (formal channels) and having Indigenous influence in the creation of the institution strategic plans. However, cultural training was still very inconsistent and Indigenous voice was still being ignored at higher levels of the institution (senate, decolonization committees) when trying to create systemic change. Moreover, there was still a very tokenistic

approach to Indigenous inclusion, leading to Indigenous offices lacking resources and collaboration with other departments.

Table 4

Participant Expectations from the Education Literature

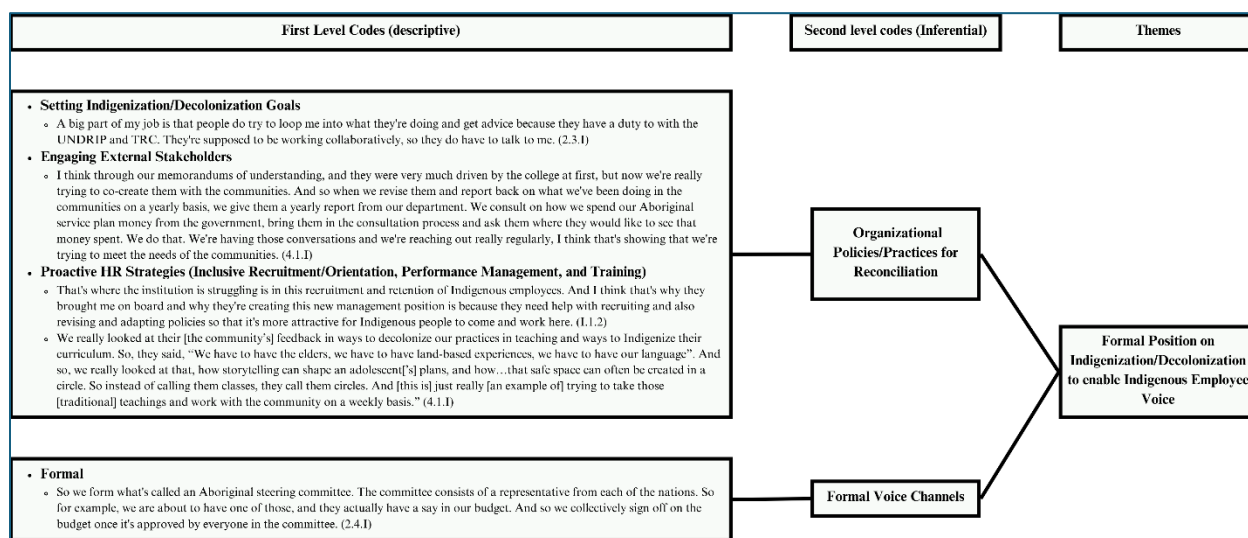
Education Literature	Participant Expectations
<p>Decolonizing knowledge (transformed learning content)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privileging traditional <u>knowledge</u> (resisting outside theories) • Incorporating traditional <u>values</u> (Cultural awareness in policy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land-based knowledge, Indigenous programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaving grad program • Institutional value change sought <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slow to change (because of conflicting worldviews)
<p>Metaliteracy (Transformed learning methods)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Inclusive Learning Methods</u> It goes beyond traditional literacy to include digital, visual, and other forms of literacy, enabling students to engage with knowledge in a more holistic and inclusive manner. • <u>Empowering Learning Methods</u> fostering critical thinking and agency in students, especially those from marginalized communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally relevant teaching methods (Elders, circles, storytelling) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above methods viewed as empowering
<p>Articulate new paradigms of power in academic discourse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Changing Power Dynamics</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: Implementation of <i>Indigenous terms of reference</i> (culturally appropriate rules for Indigenous peoples' participation in an academic discourse). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Four Rs</i> – Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility (<u>collegial reconciliation</u>) => Institutional Change/Paradigm Shift • Cultural training imperative • Practice: Indigenous Representation (Meaningful Inclusion - Token Checklist vs Meaningful Practice) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Councils • Leadership Positions • Indigenous Offices 	<p>Policy (4Rs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy (funding changes, cultural days off) • Cultural training expected – but inconsistent <p>Practice (Meaningful Representation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Advisory councils</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External: community outreach for co-creation of Indigenous programs • Internal: Formal channels – Sharing circles, committees • <u>Leadership Positions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous influence in strategic plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling cut off • Resistance faced when trying to create systemic change and voices ignored at higher level (senate, decolonization committees). • Indigenous representation in decision making (tokenism rather than critical mass). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need better recruitment (recruitment still a colonial process) • <u>Indigenous Offices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRCs exist & are safe spaces that promote Indigenous culture • but have limited resources and collaboration with other departments

4.3 Research Question 1: How do Canadian education institutions formally facilitate or hinder Indigenous employee voices?

The theme of the educational institutions' formal position on Indigenization/decolonization to enable Indigenous employee voice, emerged from two second-level codes: (a) Organizational policies/practices for Reconciliation, and (b) Formal Voice Channels (which existed independently of Indigenous reconciliation policies – but were available to be used toward those purposes). Figure 3 (below) displays the data structure for this theme.

Figure 3

Data Structure for the Theme: Formal Position on Indigenization & Decolonization to enable Indigenous Employee Voice



Organizational Policies & Practices for Reconciliation

Regarding organizational-level practices to achieve institutional Indigenization and decolonization, three broad approaches were used, including: Setting Indigenization/Decolonization goals (i.e., to align with TRC mandates), Engaging External Stakeholders (i.e., Reaching out to Indigenous Communities), and Proactive HR strategies (i.e., Inclusive Recruitment/ Orientation, Inclusive Training & Development, and Performance Management).

Each of these practices were considered by the participants to reflect the institution's readiness for change and is discussed below.

Setting Indigenization/Decolonization Goals. The duty of the educational institutions is to follow the TRC and UNDRIP. As one Indigenous participant stated, this required ensuring Indigenous involvement in TRC-related change at their institution:

“A big part of my job is that people do try to loop me into what they're doing and get advice because they have a duty to with the UNDRIP and TRC. They're supposed to be working collaboratively, so they do have to talk to me.” [2.3.1]

However, many interviewees conveyed that their understanding of the goals for Indigenization and decolonization in higher education went deeper than simply conformity to the broad TRC report “Calls to Action”. In their view, it also required the institutions to embody diverse ways of knowing and being and shift their colonialist paradigm to see things from a different set of ‘eyes’. Moreover, participants wanted to advance efforts towards EDI by attracting/retaining more Indigenous students into STEM education to build Indigenous community capacity.

Engaging External Stakeholders. In pursuit of their goals, all institutions in this study were involved in outreach efforts with external Indigenous communities. The Indigenous participants felt that their institutions were indeed genuinely trying to improve relationships with Indigenous communities. As one interviewee mentioned, consultation with communities - to establish memorandums of understanding that meet their community needs - has become more prevalent:

“ Our memorandums of understanding...were very much driven by the college at first, but now we're really trying to co-create them with the [Indigenous] communities. And so,

when we revise them [our MOUs] ...we [do not merely] give them [the communities] a yearly report from our department. We consult on how we spend our Aboriginal service plan money from the government, bring them [the community members] in[to] the consultation process and ask them where they would like to see that money spent. We do that. We're having those conversations and we're reaching out really regularly. I think that's showing that we're trying to meet the needs of the communities.” [4.1.I]

Proactive HR Strategy (Inclusive Recruitment & Orientation). The institutions also sought to advance progress towards reconciliation by hiring Indigenous employees. The idea was that, by proactively hiring Indigenous individuals, these individuals could then further create change and work towards reconciliation. One Indigenous participant, who was hired into a recruitment position for precisely this reason, stated:

“Where the institution is struggling, is in this [their] recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees. And I think that's why they brought me on board, and why they're creating this new management position. [It] is because they need help with recruiting, and also revising and adapting policies, so that it's more attractive for Indigenous people to come and work here.” [1.2.I]

Another Indigenous participant, who was also offered a management role to help with recruitment, expressed gratitude for finding a position so well suited to their cultural values:

“When the role came up, I just thought, wow, this just fits this particular pocket that I can fit in. Because my educational background is quite unique, and I couldn't do a standard colonial job. I just can't, I'm not a colonial being, I can walk in the colonial footsteps in the world, but [only while] knowing that I'm not a colonial being.” [2.1.I]

Participants also acknowledged efforts to institutionalize a practice of proactive orientation (i.e., on-boarding) for newly recruited Indigenous employees, to ensure that they had all the resources needed, and understood how to utilize those resources, so that they would be empowered to perform their Indigenization tasks effectively (and thereby maximize the likelihood of their retention). As one interviewee stated:

“I think what we want is for the college to allocate resources to this [issue of proactive recruitment]. And so, they actually do have a consultant working on it right now... to kind of review what we're doing, the current processes, and then to recommend, this is what you need to do, and this is how it needs to be resourced. We don't want to just ... create a position, hire somebody and put them in an office and let them figure it out. It [the orientation/onboarding process] needs to be informed and thoughtful, right, because it is important.” [2.2.E]

However, these orientation efforts needed further improvement in terms of preparing newcomers for how to circumvent potential discrimination, as some participants observed poor retention because of it. As one interviewee noted:

“We're not doing a good job of that [Indigenous specific retention and integration strategies]. They [newly hired Indigenous employees] tend to leave right away because they don't feel safe, there's concern for being disrespected. We need to create those safe spaces before we try to recruit. Why recruit them into a place where they feel they're discriminated against?” [2.2.E]

Proactive HR Strategy (Inclusive Training & Development). Formal policies for anti-discrimination training included cultural considerations for employees involved in the

recruitment process. Specifically, recruiters were trained how to approach recruitment in a manner that does not automatically reflect an implicitly colonial outlook:

“I think that our whole ... interview process and recruitment process is very colonial... Breaking that down and revamping it to be more inclusive is critical. So, ... valuing Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous community (like, the collective knowledge). I know [that] from an academic standpoint, it is all about like the research that you've done and that type of thing, but it's [come at the expense of] devaluing community knowledge and so [we need to] really [be] bringing that piece in ... to be valued at higher level. [In addition...] when it comes to people from marginalized communities, people feel that they got those jobs only because they're marginalized...that's a rhetoric that is obviously very harmful and really like dehumanizing and belittling...So... we have gone through some trainings that we've developed for recruitment processes...making it more equitable and more inclusive.” [1.2.E]

Engagement with Indigenous community stakeholders provided further insight into opportunities for inclusive training that, once implemented, could advance the institutions' Indigenization objectives of recruiting more Indigenous students. Namely, via community engagement, the institutions discovered opportunities to develop new educational programs with culturally relevant content. As one such example, an Indigenous diploma program was created:

“We've had a couple of curriculum initiatives. Two of them that come from a First Nation community, they really wanted to develop some base courses that would help strengthen the knowledge base of their land guardians and so, they had hired a private curriculum develop[er]. It's an Indigenous company that works in consulting for First Nations in many different areas. And so, we heard about that initiative, and we saw the work that

they had done building resources, and they were building this curriculum. The idea was to teach it at the high school on reserve, but we saw an opportunity. And so, we released one of our instructors on a part-time basis to help guide that curriculum development with the instructor and to help shape it so it would go through the [Ministry of] education council easier. And when he [instructor] saw all that material, he really clarified that ...what they actually had was instead of six credits... it was actually about 30 credits. And so, we responded to develop a certificate of Indigenous studies that's going forward and that's going to be delivered in September 2024. That'll lead to a diploma and transferable credits into degree.” [4.1.I]

Yet another participant gave an example of a graduate program in weaving that is now available. *“She did her masters, she got a MBA here and she did her master’s capstone in Coast Salish weaving.” [3.1.I].*

In addition to the new training content for the recruiters, and for culturally relevant content that could attract more Indigenous students, community engagement also enabled the institutions to discover culturally relevant methods for delivering their learning – such as by using more familiar Indigenous terminology:

“We really looked at their [the community’s] feedback in ways to decolonize our practices in teaching and ways to Indigenize their curriculum. So, they said, “We have to have the elders, we have to have land-based experiences, we have to have our language”. And so, we really looked at that, how storytelling can shape an adolescent[’s] plans, and how...that safe space can often be created in a circle. So instead of calling them classes, they call them circles. And [this is] just really [an example of] trying to take those [traditional] teachings and work with the community on a weekly basis.” [4.1.I]

Finally, whereas training focuses on preparation for one's current work tasks, development focuses on grooming an employee to eventually advance into higher positions of authority in their career. In this regard, formal developmental activities by some of the institutions included mentoring for some of the Indigenous participants, and this was welcomed. As one participant mentions,

"I was choosing between...two jobs, but then my relationship with my supervisor [who is the president] started to grow... The recruiter was like, the president wants to mentor you. He wants to establish your career...So it's hard to have [access to] mentors, right...Mentors are kind of like..." oh, she's going to do great work for me, but like, I know this is not her last step". And so, yeah, I really believed in the president for that."
 [1.1.1]

Implementing HR Strategy (Performance Management). When asked how their institutions monitor and confirm that they were meeting their Indigenous inclusion goals, participants noted that their department and institution are ultimately held accountable by the Ministry of Education. Accordingly, all the participating institutions relied heavily on student feedback (collected through focus groups, anonymous suggestion boxes, and through informal questioning and observation). As one interviewee explained:

"We are required by the Ministry of Education to do our annual reporting. And it's actually really good for us, because it holds us accountable. It holds us accountable to have to explain how we are providing direct student support and student engagement to promote cultural awareness.... [They] want to know...the outcome of every event and activity and how it benefited the students...to hold us accountable." [2.4.1]

As one example of an institutional performance improvement, participants acknowledged that their institutions' annual reports indicated greater cultural awareness (e.g., evidenced by the institution's increased openness to including Indigenous ceremonial traditions). As one participant observed, non-Indigenous employees made efforts to include an Indigenous ceremony alongside their graduation ceremony:

"I have seen like more initiative of non-Indigenous peoples trying to like, be more inclusive or have ideas that they want to run past me. [For example], thinking that perhaps we can do our own... Indigenous graduation ceremony to compliment the few Indigenous peoples that did [graduate], and then [hold this ceremony] alongside the regular, traditional graduation ceremonies. So, things like that, I feel are like big strides." [2.2.1]

Another participant mentioned that their institution's new agreement with their union now grants cultural days off for cultural events. *"Our new union agreement has allowed us to have a couple of cultural days in there to take time off for cultural events. It's only two days but that's a recognition and a support for us" [4.1.1].*

Nevertheless, while these performance improvements were appreciated, one participant felt that their institution still had considerable room for improvement. Specifically, in regard to formally giving due credit to Indigenous employees/communities who have contributed to these cultural innovation initiatives, one participant noted:

"I have been here for a long time.... I started out working in the student service area providing holistic support services to First Nations students. And so that was advising, sometimes just listening, helping them set up their funding sponsorship, sometimes

referring [them] to counseling and so on, just problem solving, getting them used to the post-secondary system and being here for them so they [could] be successful in their studies. [But] back then, it was...[mostly] like “You're here to study”. For example, students wanted this much and it's like, [I would need to say to them], “Well, we're not a religious institution, we're an education system and we don't serve spiritual needs or religious needs”. And so, it was [a] very mainstream colonial institution... whereas with us...we're holistic. [In Indigenous tradition] you can't just focus on intellectual [pursuits] and have success. You have to address the students' spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. So, there was always that tension in trying to meet all the students' needs in that way, and an institution that wasn't set up to do that... that idea of holistic supports... was not done by post-secondary institutions. But now, they talk about “We do need to hire counselors too, because students are stressed out, and we do need to have a gym”. And so, they are getting this more holistic perspective of student needs while they're in college and university. But they don't credit it to the fact that we learned that from First Nations in this institution who were saying that 30 years ago. And now using things like web storytelling. They don't say we're going to adopt this Indigenous storytelling. So, it's kind of like...this is a prime example [of cultural appropriation, in the sense] that you introduced an Indigenous way of knowing into how you do stuff here. The student services, they did a big wellness wheel that talked about the physical needs of students and the emotional system. It's like, yeah, call it what it is right.” [2.3.1]

Formal Voice Channels

The Indigenous participants identified a range of formal channels for voice expression at their educational institutions, but the precise range of formal channels available varied by the

Indigenous employee's position in the organizational hierarchy. More specifically, formal channels for all Indigenous employees included meetings with managers and their departments (weekly and biweekly), whereas Indigenous employees in supervisory or leadership roles also had access to formal meetings with higher level committees at their institution (e.g., senate chamber, education council, and dedicated committees/sharing circles that specifically addressed Indigenization and decolonization). As one participant states, *"We have biweekly face-to-face staff meetings and it gives all of us, everyone in each department an opportunity to share what we're doing."* [2.4.I]. The same (leadership level) Indigenous participant mentions:

"So, we form what's called an Aboriginal steering committee. The committee consists of a representative from each of the nations. So, for example, we are about to have one of those, and they actually have a say in our budget. And so, we collectively sign off on the budget once it's approved by everyone in the committee." [2.4.I]

Additionally, another interviewee mentions having sharing circles on a regular basis, in which their voice is heard: *"On a regular basis we have circles, and I have conversations...I feel I've got a voice to some of the executive members that I can share and have that voice heard."* [4.1.I]

However, despite the availability of these formal channels, there was still room for improvement in terms of providing clarity to Indigenous employees at all levels (i.e., regarding what formal channels were available and how to access them). As one participant mentioned:

I think kind of clarity around channels [needs improvement] Like, "Hey, if you're running into issues or hey, if you need someone to talk to you about this...you know, this is who you would talk to and this is how you reach them, this is how you can book a

meeting with them or whatever”. ...[because] I think sometimes the process can be a little bit convoluted or it's just like unknown.” [1.2.E]

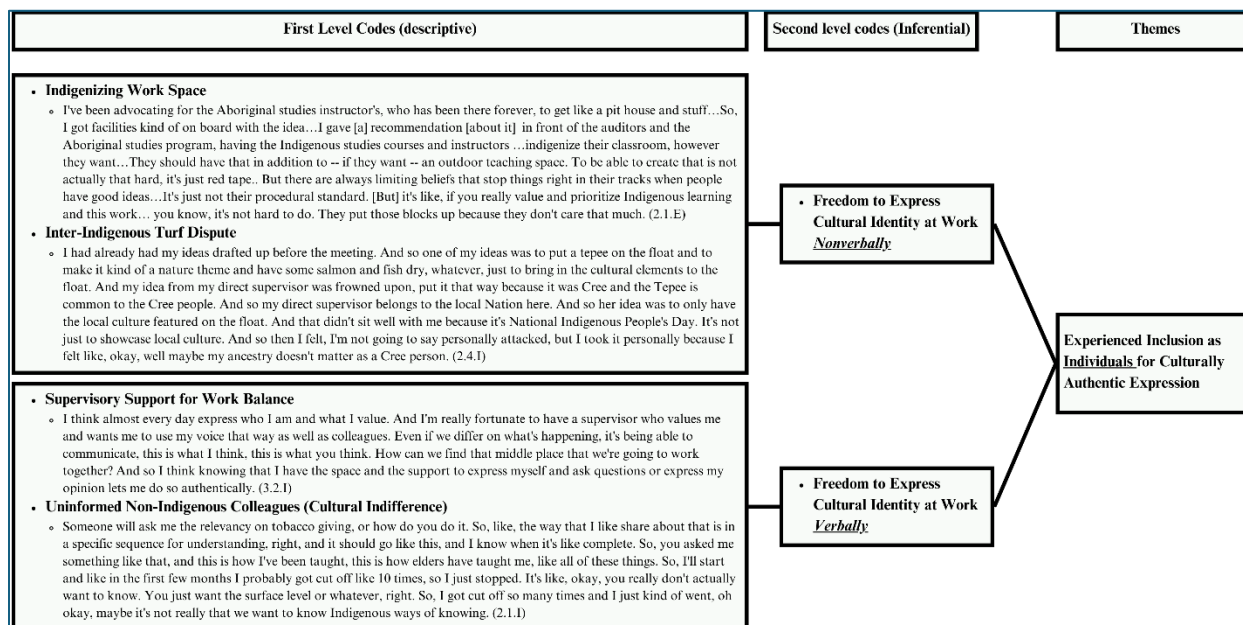
These challenges associated with access to formal voice channels left the Indigenous employees more subject to less formal/more indirect channels, and the associated variable responsiveness on the part of the individuals involved (as will be elaborated in section 4.4 – Research Question 3).

4.4 Research Question 2: How do Indigenous employees in Canada perceive their organizations’ inclusion of themselves as Indigenous individuals (and this includes references to their engagement in voice behaviour)?

Participants distinguished between inclusion of their own *individual* cultural needs versus those of their cultural *community*. In this research question, the focus is on the theme labelled “Experienced Inclusion as Individuals for Culturally Authentic Expression”, which participants expressed in both verbal and non-verbal ways. Therefore, the two second-level codes for this theme were (1) freedom to express cultural identity at work *non-verbally* and (2) freedom to express cultural identity at work *verbally*. Figure 4, below, displays the data structure for this theme.

Figure 4

Data Structure for the Theme: Experienced Inclusion as Individuals for Culturally Authentic Expression



Freedom to Express Cultural Identity at Work Nonverbally

This second level code consists of the freedom participants felt they had to authentically express their personal Indigenous cultural identity nonverbally. It mainly addressed Indigenization of their workspace. Despite some experiences of freedom, in this regard, disputes did arise, as will be elaborated below.

Indigenizing Workspace. One interviewee was internally motivated to express their cultural identity by Indigenizing their cubicle workspace. Despite receiving some initially negative feedback about personally decorating the exterior of their cubicle space, they decided to visibly communicate that it was occupied by an Indigenous person:

“I started decolonizing my space too. I put a poster up. So, we have cubicles here and nobody's supposed to put anything on -well nobody else has put anything on - the outside

of their cubicles. And when I came, I asked should I? Everyone was like, no, nobody does that. And I decided I don't care. I'm putting an Indigenous map on the outside. So, everybody has to walk by and know that there's an Indigenous person in that space.”

[3.1.I]

Although this individual (above) did not report experiencing any subsequent pushback on this particular initiative, the institutions did appear to adhere to an informal upper constraint in regard to what was recognized as ‘personal workspace’ for the purposes of personal expression. For example, an Aboriginal Studies instructor who worked in a specific classroom wished to decorate their classroom in a traditional manner, but was prevented from doing so (even when an Indigenous colleague advocated on their behalf):

I've been advocating for the Aboriginal studies instructor, who has been there forever, to get like a pit house and stuff ...So, I got facilities kind of on board with the idea...I gave [a] recommendation [about it] in front of the auditors and the Aboriginal studies program. [The recommendation was about] having the Indigenous studies courses and instructors ...indigenize their classroom, however they want...They should have that in addition to -- if they want -- an outdoor teaching space. To be able to create that is not actually that hard, it's just red tape... But there are always limiting beliefs that stop things right in their tracks when people have good ideas...It's just not their procedural standard. [But] it's like, if you really value and prioritize Indigenous learning and this work... you know, it's not hard to do. They put those blocks up because they don't care that much.”

[2.1.E]

In this sense, participants did experience constraints on their authentic individual cultural expression. Although they partially attributed it to bureaucratic red tape, they also felt it was perpetuated by a lack of sufficient caring for cultural understanding.

Inter-Indigenous Turf Disputes. In addition to these instances of individual cultural expression, there were occasional inter-Indigenous challenges too (not only Indigenous/non-Indigenous challenges) in nonverbally expressing their culture. One interviewee mentioned a turf dispute over non-verbal symbols between employees from diverse Indigenous communities. This interviewee stated:

“I had already had my ideas drafted up before the meeting...One of my ideas was to put a teepee [tipi] on the float, and to make it kind of a nature theme -- have some salmon and fish dry, whatever, just to bring in the cultural elements to the float...My idea from my direct supervisor was frowned upon, put it that way because it was Cree, and the Tepee is common to the Cree people. And so, my direct supervisor belongs to the local nation here. And so, her idea was to only have the local culture featured on the float. And that didn't sit well with me because it's National Indigenous People's Day. It's not just to showcase local culture. And so, then I felt, I'm not going to say personally attacked, but I took it personally because I felt like, okay, well maybe my ancestry doesn't matter as a Cree person.” [2.4.1]

Thus, in this instance it was an Indigenous leader who resisted this Indigenous employee's cultural expression (which this employee perceived as discriminatory).

Freedom to Express Cultural Identity at Work Verbally

Indigenous participants' experienced freedom to express their culturally driven needs at work *verbally* were even more mixed. On one hand, several reported that their supervisor and colleagues permitted verbal expression of their authentic cultural identity at the personal level ("coded as "*Supervisory Support for Work Balance*"). On the other hand, there were several instances where non-Indigenous colleagues displayed overt disinterest or stereotypical interest (coded as "*Uninformed Non-Indigenous Colleagues*").

Supervisory Support for Work Balance. Because the Indigenous employees' traditional values included a deep appreciation for interpersonal relationships, and for having several children in their families, work life balance initiatives on the part of supervisors were greatly appreciated by the Indigenous employees. As one interviewee suggested, this regard for their well-being was understood an appreciation of their value as human beings with family values, not just as workers:

"My supervisor is open to having conversations about boundaries in terms of making sure that I'm not overloaded and that I don't burn out because she's like, your health is the most important and we want to make sure that you are happy here and keep you here." [3.2.1]

Scheduling flexibility on the part of the supervisor was perceived similarly. Such flexibility was particularly helpful for Indigenous employees with childcare responsibilities:

"My job entitles a bit of flex leave. So essentially if I'm able to, let's say I'm going back to school in September, and I need to take a class here and there. Well during my office hours, what I can do is I can work through a lunch or schedule a bit of extra time on another day to accommodate that hour. But if it's like an emergency or childcare thing all

I have to do is let my manager know and she'll be able to take care of anything like that and without any kind of fuss. It's very understanding.” [2.2.1]

Overall, as another Indigenous participant stated, there was much appreciation for supportive supervisors:

“I think almost every day [I can] express who I am and what I value. And I'm really fortunate to have a supervisor who values me and wants me to use my voice that way as well as colleagues. Even if we differ on what's happening, it's being able to communicate, this is what I think, this is what you think. How can we find that middle place that we're going to work together? And so, I think knowing that I have the space and the support to express myself and ask questions or express my opinion lets me do so authentically.”
[3.2.1]

Likewise, another participant highlighted how staff's apparent improved understanding of EDI gave them the sense of freedom to authentically express themselves in traditional ways (after almost 30 years of working at the institution).

“I was actually just at a meeting about a month ago and afterwards there's one of the administrators who are, I know she understands, and I trust her. And I was saying that that was the first meeting I've ever been to that where I felt safe to say what I wanted to say. And that was something to think about, right, because I've been here so long. I think it was partly just that I know that most of the people are understanding equity, diversity, and inclusion.” [2.3.1]

Uninformed Non-Indigenous Colleagues. On the other hand, several participants also reported experiencing challenges when verbally discussing their culture with non-Indigenous

colleagues. One interviewee reported being repeatedly cut off when providing detail about Indigenous cultural traditions with colleagues, which led them to eventually curtail their sharing:

“Someone will ask me the relevancy on tobacco giving, or how do you do it. So, like, the way that I like share about that is in a specific sequence for understanding, right, and it should go like this, and I know when it's like complete. So, you asked me something like that, and this is how I've been taught, this is how elders have taught me, like all of these things. So, I'll start and like in the first few months I probably got cut off like 10 times, so I just stopped. It's like, okay, you really don't actually want to know. You just want the surface level or whatever, right. So, I got cut off so many times and I just kind of went, oh okay, maybe it's not really that we want to know Indigenous ways of knowing.” [2.1.I]

One Indigenous participant also reported paradoxically experiencing less freedom to be personally authentic due to what they experienced as their institutional colleagues' stereotypical approach to cultural identity inclusion. To explain how this negated their sense of authentic individuality, they stated:

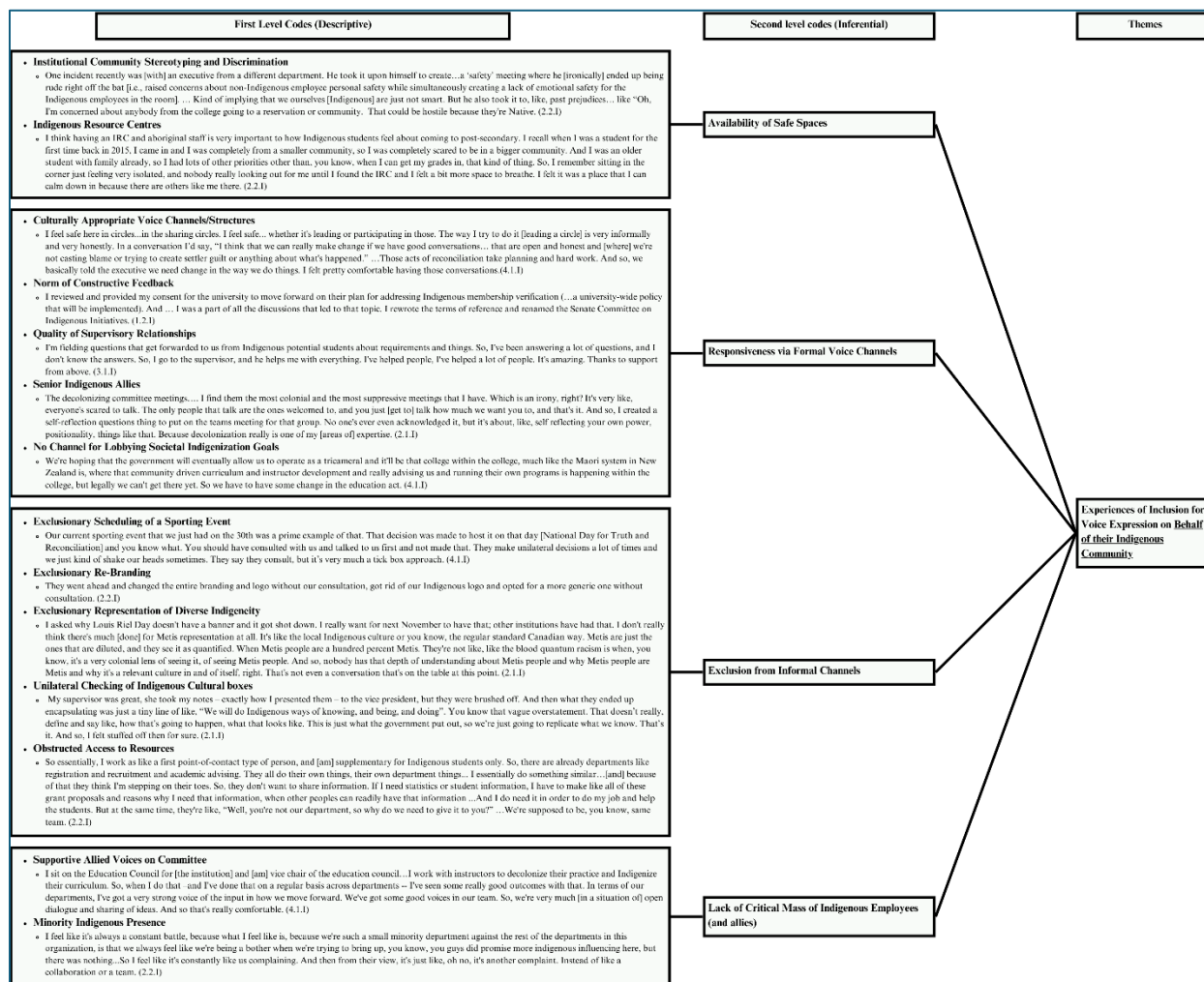
“When I'm the one deciding what I share from my cultural teachings, from my cultural expression, it's [something that I express] through fashion or when I'm teaching in class....[But] when it's a performance expectation...[when] they're just expecting that because I'm an Indigenous person (I'm an Indigenous woman), that I'm supposed to be really good at Indigenous storytelling...[then that feels less than safely authentic]. I am a researcher. I am an academic. [But in that type of situation,] I am the token.” [1.2.I]

4.5 Research Question 3: How do Indigenous employees in Canada perceive their organization's inclusion of their voice behaviour on behalf of their Indigenous community (if at all)?

The theme that emerged in relation to this question describes participants' "Experiences of inclusion for voice expression on behalf of their Indigenous Community"; it addresses the factors that influenced their experiences as they sought to express their voice (both verbally and nonverbally) *on behalf of their community* within their respective institutions. This theme consisted of the following second-level codes: 1) Availability of safe spaces (Institutional community stereotyping/discrimination versus the IRC as a safe space), 2) Responsiveness via formal voice channels (Engagement with Indigenous voice once it has been expressed), 3) Exclusion from Informal channels (i.e., Non-consultation/Marginalization of Indigenous voices, hence zero opportunity for voice recognition, let alone expression), and 4) Lack of critical mass of Indigenous employees (and allies). Figure 5 below displays the data structure for this theme. This section concludes with a summary of Indigenous participants' perspectives on the implications for non-inclusion, and their suggestions for how to remedy it.

Figure 5

Data Structure for the Theme: Experiences of Inclusion for Voice Expression on Behalf of their Indigenous Community



Availability of Safe Spaces: (a) Institutional Community Stereotyping and Discrimination

The participants highlighted several instances of discrimination against the Indigenous community, which raised doubts in their minds about the thoroughness of their institutions' inclination for inclusion. These instances of stereotyping and discrimination occurred at both the individual and societal levels:

For example, one participant discussed the discrimination she faces [in the community] as an individual, due to the intersectionality of being an Indigenous woman.

“Why are we at the bottom of everything when we're talking about intersectionality as an indigenous woman? I'm at the bottom of everything and in terms of respect, badly.”

[3.1.1]

Another shared an incident of an executive at their institution who stereotyped Indigenous communities. They stated:

“One incident recently was [with] an executive from a different department. He took it upon himself to create...a ‘safety’ meeting where he [ironically] ended up being rude right off the bat [i.e., raised concerns about non-Indigenous employee personal safety while simultaneously creating a lack of emotional safety for the Indigenous employees in the room]. ... Kind of implying that we ourselves [Indigenous] are just not smart. But he also took it to, like, past prejudices... like “Oh, I'm concerned about anybody from the college going to a reservation or community. That could be hostile because they're Native.” [2.2.1]

Furthermore, despite institutional efforts at proactive hiring, one participant cited their institution's ongoing discrimination towards recruitment from the Indigenous community:

“We have had a...human rights special program to hire Indigenous employees since 2009, [but] there's still that idea that if the job title has Aboriginal or Indigenous in it -- so if it's Aboriginal advisory advisor, Aboriginal navigator, Aboriginal director -- [only] then they'll look at the First Nations and Metis applicants. But, if it's looking for a

sociology instructor or an advisor in student services, they don't look at the First Nations and Metis applicants. So, they [Indigenous applicants for mainstream employment positions] are still left out. We're still ghettoized and marginalized into those [Indigenous-specific] positions and areas. And in 2008, we did quite a comprehensive round of community focus groups where we went out to communities all over the region and every single focus group brought up ...[that]... we want to walk in the college and see First Nations people working in every department, not just in the Aboriginal Center... They [the Indigenous communities] said, "You train them [the students]. Why don't you hire them too?" [2.3.1]

In addition to such experiences of neglectful exclusion and discrimination, overt harassment occurred as well. During the interview with one participant, s/he became emotional when describing what happened when interacting with a leader at their institution. This participant stated:

"So, under the former president, the former provost actually targeted me directly and cornered me at a public faculty and staff gathering at the Pub on campus... There was a lot of conflict on campus at that time because... the faculty association was going to go on strike and [both] the president and the provost learned that I was supporting the graduate teaching assistant union in setting up office. At that time, I was the president of the Graduate Student Society, and I was going around ruffling feathers, I knew that if I ruffle enough feathers, someone's going to come out of the woodwork [who] actually makes the decisions and has influence. So, I kind of picked a fight. But at the same time, their response to me was way [more] aggressive than I was expecting. I'm a MMIW survivor [MMIW=Missing or Murdered Indigenous Woman]. So, the provost, he

cornered me against a wall in front of faculty and staff and he's a very large person. He is like six foot seven, 280 pounds. He's a big white man and I just went over to say goodbye, thanks for inviting me. I'm going to go now. And that's when he essentially pushed me up against a wall using his physical presence. And the reaction from all the staff and faculty (that he was standing in a circle talking with), every single one of them took a step back and gasped. They were shocked with what he had done to me, but not one of them in the room -- everyone saw what he was doing -- nobody spoke up. And so, I had my reaction, based on my trauma, is that it's [time to] fight... Instead of pushing myself further back into the wall, I stepped forward and I got into his space, and I responded to the questions he was asking me. And he said, in a very loud voice, "I heard you have a shit list of faculty members". Everybody heard it. And I said, "No, I don't have a shit list of faculty. I have grad students who trust me with their experiences, who shared with me unhelpful and unhealthy conversations with their supervisor. I don't have a shit list. Yeah, I have topics that I would like to talk with you about considering your significant responsibility as a leader at this institution. And I have expectations of you to conduct yourself professionally and not try to intimidate me, physically intimidate me in a public setting among colleagues". And I said, "I will remind you right now that I am a student and you are physically intimidating a student right now, a female Indigenous woman". And everyone was silent in the room, and nobody stepped up to defend me. These are all people who are saying, "We support Indigenous women. We will protect you; we'll create safe spaces". And not one of them tried to create a safe space. So, at that point he was dumbfounded because nobody has ever spoken back to him like that before. He's very accustomed to getting his way and [using] his physical presence to intimidate everyone.

And in that moment, it was a snap decision. I was like, I can let him scare me or I can try to push back and if something happens, I'll just resort to physical violence. If he's going to come at me, I'm going to come at him too. I don't care how big he is. He doesn't have the right to try and scare me in my work setting. And so, after that, he realized that he can either work with me or he can fight with me. And I did make him make that decision, you can work with me, or you can fight me... I've been fighting my entire life and I'm not going to just back down because of one white man. [1.2.I]

Notably, a few participants mentioned that intra-Indigenous discrimination occurred as well. As one interviewee stated:

“I felt that lateral violence a little bit, I'm not sure if you're familiar with that term, lateral violence? It's basically a form of bullying between coworkers and it's just a different language, I guess [it would be best] to call it lateral violence. And I've felt that from my direct supervisor [who is also Indigenous] because I'm not local. I'm not Indigenous “from here” So, I feel undervalued for sure. And it makes me feel like my culture is less important.” [2.4.I]

The above examples detracted from the participants' experience of their institution as a safe and welcoming space for expressing their collective cultural identity and needs. Moreover, such issues arose beyond the confines of the institution's own establishment; They arose within the institutions' allied contexts as well:

As one participant explained, despite their institution's professed intent to advance reconciliation, the institution did nothing to intervene when societal stereotypes adversely impacted Indigenous students who needed to function in these allied contexts to obtain and

benefit from their degree. Specifically, impact occurred in relation to the Indigenous students' access to student housing, access to field assignments as part of their institutional curricular requirements, and access to employment post-graduation. They stated:

“Indigenous students who are on practicum with the Health Organization are treated inappropriately there. So, what I'm trying to figure out is how do we make the Health Organization accountable? ...Also, our Indigenous individuals who are getting graduated are not getting jobs based on their credentials. And... Indigenous students who are getting enrolled into our institution, coming from wherever, can't get housing because they're getting stereotyped.” [1.1.E]

An EDI participant highlighted the importance of establishing safe spaces where people can come to express their voice and be offered guidance:

“So, we really have three pillars that we're really focusing on, like our strategic planning, education and awareness, and policies and people. And so based on those... we really want to create ... a sense of community, so that people are aware that we exist, and they can come to us with questions for guidance for a number of different things. Almost like, you know, a safe space for people as well as when it comes to policies. So, like, reviewing policies through an EDI lens, procedures through an EDI lens, and then being more people focused in that you know, creating that sense of belonging and inclusion.” [1.2.E]

Nevertheless, many participants continued to feel unsafe as a result of the discrimination. As one interviewee stated, discrimination created an unsafe environment and therefore, they did not engage in voice as a result:

“Sometimes I didn't feel safe. And a lot of times things aren't brought up because we feel we don't have that safe voice”. [4.1.I]

Thus, it was mainly the Indigenous resource centre to whom the Indigenous participants turned for a sense of safe space, rather than the EDI office, as the next section elaborates.

Availability of Safe Spaces: (B) Indigenous Resource Centres

In contrast to the above, participants viewed the Indigenous Resource Centres (IRCs) as safe spaces for engaging in their cultural activities and described the IRCs as being beneficial for the broader Indigenous community at the institutions. All interviewees mentioned the importance of the IRC as a safe space where Indigenous people can engage in cultural activities and be authentic.

Indeed, one participant mentioned feeling isolated until they found the IRC, where they were able to relax and calm down as new student because there were others like them there:

I think having an IRC and aboriginal staff is very important to how Indigenous students feel about coming to post-secondary. I recall when I was a student for the first time back in 2015, I came in and I was completely from a smaller community, so I was completely scared to be in a bigger community. And I was an older student with family already, so I had lots of other priorities other than, you know, when I can get my grades in, that kind of thing. So, I remember sitting in the corner just feeling very isolated, and nobody really looking out for me until I found the IRC and I felt a bit more space to breathe. I felt it was a place that I can calm down in because there are others like me there. [2.2.I]

As another participant noted,

“I think the IRC is the safe space that they have created. You know, there's the smudge circle, crafts corner. Like everything that they do together they have it, it's their own little community in there.” [2.1.E]

Similarly, another interviewee highlighted the importance of Indigenous events hosted by the IRC because it promoted Indigenous culture and engaged the broader community (both students and the general community):

“I hosted the first Indigenous artisan market. So, we had just transformed the space into a market for the day. And so, I brought in local artisans to come and showcase their talent. And then it provided opportunity for staff and students and community members to come and to see the talent of the Indigenous people, the local artists. And I had such positive feedback from everyone from that. And of course, it promotes the culture and cultural awareness, and it engages the students and the community.” [2.4.I]

Responsiveness via formal voice channels (to Indigenous voice, once expressed)

As previously noted, voice responsiveness involves creating an environment where diverse voices are valued, respected and actively sought out in decision making processes. However, although formal voice channels may exist, it does not necessarily mean they operate in a functional or culturally appropriate manner. Indeed, the data for this was mixed: On several occasions, participants indeed experienced voice receptiveness (which did not necessarily require agreement, just sincere engagement), while on other occasions, neglect of Indigenous voice was more prevalent. The four sub-factors that seemed to influence voice receptiveness the most were: 1) culturally appropriate voice structures; 2) a norm of constructive feedback; 3) a good quality

supervisory relationship;4) Indigenous allies in ‘high places’; and 5) no channel for lobbying Societal Indigenization goals. Examples will be provided below.

Culturally appropriate voice channels/structures. One participant highlighted the significance of culturally appropriate formal structures like sharing circles for feeling comfortable enough to engage in voice:

“I feel safe here in circles...in the sharing circles. I feel safe... whether it's leading or participating in those. The way I try to do it [leading a circle] is very informally and very honestly. In a conversation I'd say, “I think that we can really make change if we have good conversations... that are open and honest and [where] we're not casting blame or trying to create settler guilt or anything about what's happened.” ...Those acts of reconciliation take planning and hard work. And so, we basically told the executive we need change in the way we do things. I felt pretty comfortable having those conversations.” [4.1.1]

Many participants highlighted the cultural responsiveness of such formal structures, which gratifyingly enabled them to make decolonization and reconciliation a priority in their institution’s strategic plans. Many participants even proactively sought to insinuate themselves into (be part of) such formal channels (i.e., committees that worked on this), so that they would have an opportunity to bring a representative Indigenous voice. As one participant said:

“Last year I was part of the strategic planning for the library... I joined that committee. So myself and the other Indigenous initiatives librarian, try to make sure that one of us is always on committees so that Indigenous initiatives are included and that we have a voice there ... We talk together and then we talk to the decolonizing library groups that

we're on, so that with Strat[egic] planning I can say, this is what's coming up in Strat planning, "What would you like me to bring forward? What do you think of this?" And so that one, for me, it was important to be on because it impacts everybody's work, and it helps guide our initiatives forward...every initiative or every professional development needs to be tied back to our strategic planning...It was important for me to be on that committee to make sure that... we ended up with decolonization and reconciliation being included as pillars within the strategic plan." [3.2.1]

Within such formal voice channels, the participants generally felt their voice was heard and acted upon. As one participant stated:

"One example I can think of is we had an indigenous racism training with our entire office, not just student recruitment, but the whole enrollment services department. And as one of the Indigenous employees attending this, I did share some of my personal experience.... when we were giving the introductions and stuff. I let people know that...I am a granddaughter of a residential school survivor and I never felt unsafe sharing those experiences. And same with opinions and stuff like that. As an Indigenous employee on the team, when it comes to certain things, [such as] when we're talking about hosting Indigenous students on campus, I might bring up something that maybe other people have not thought of. Maybe the way that we communicate with Indigenous students as opposed to other students. And I've always felt respected and valued." [1.3.1]

Responsiveness was even detected in formal channels in instances when the Indigenous employee challenged leadership to become more inclusive and collaborative. As one interviewee stated,

“All the campuses have an [Indigenous] advisory... and some of the advisories were saying “We come to these meetings, how do we know you even listen to what we say? How do we know our reports are heard by the president or the dean or whatever?”. And so, the president started a council. So, [now] each advisory appoints two [Indigenous] people, and then those two people come together two or three times a year and they talk about college wide issues. And that meeting is co-chaired by one of them and the president. So systemically I think we have a good structure.” [2.3.1]

Likewise, another interviewee reported a similarly positive experience within a formal voice channel:

“[In the] Senate committee on the Indigenous initiatives, I was challenging one of the senior leaders (who's proposing work at the institution) to share his vision, to communicate his vision for this plan. He's trying to push [it] through the university without [the] consensus of Indigenous faculty and students and staff...So, I took the opportunity in senate chambers to say, “We need to know what exactly your plans are. If we don't know, how can we have a conversation? How can you build consensus without expressing clearly what your vision is for these proposed changes?”. And they're big [changes] -, they're not like, let's start a new program. It sounds like pulling together all Indigenous targeted programs and services, including the Department of First Nation studies, into one institute, and we don't need another institute within the institute. And it also impacts everyone who's ever taken a First Nation Studies course, their accreditation on their certificates, their diplomas, their degrees, right through undergrad to PhD level. So... I offered to go for coffee with him, and he accepted my offer on Monday. So today

we are going for coffee this afternoon, because I think I'm about the only person left in the university that's willing to have a chat with him about this." [1.2.1]

As yet another example, one Indigenous participant expressed a novel idea for greater inclusion on their institution's policy for fee deferrals, and it was accommodated:

If a student is being funded by their band, we call that sponsorship. But prior to this last September, if a student didn't have constant communication with the school about their band funding [i.e., If it was not going to arrive ...[for] the fee deadline], then that student would automatically get removed from their program. So, it caused big problems ...and we brought this feedback to the registration department and the finance department... [non-Indigenous] students that use student loans get these things called 'fee deferrals' put on their file [essentially saying that they're good for the money, so they get an extension of the fee deadline]. So now that's kind of becoming more of a permanent practice [for band-sponsored Indigenous students as well]. [2.2.1]

Thus, participants were generally of the view that despite some apparent discrimination within the institution, the formally established voice channels were responsive to some voice expressions.

Norm of constructive feedback. The participants also felt their voice was suitably acknowledged when their work group behaved inclusively by providing constructive feedback on their written input throughout a decision-making process. For example, one participant referred to her experience providing input on a discussion about their Senate's policy on Indigenous membership verification:

“I reviewed and provided my consent for the university to move forward on their plan for addressing Indigenous membership verification (...a university-wide policy that will be implemented). And ... I was a part of all the discussions that led to that topic. I rewrote the terms of reference and renamed the Senate Committee on Indigenous Initiatives.”

[1.2.1]

Normative expectations for regular constructive feedback from staff signalled that their colleagues were keen to help them [the Indigenous employee] learn to improve performance of their Indigenous-related job duties:

“I’m the event coordinator and I coordinate a lot of events within both my wellness coach position and my Aboriginal advisor liaison.... I receive regular feedback from our staff about things that they feel went over really well [or not]. Things that were like...we didn't have a good turnout of people or sometimes things just come up, you have hiccups, and these are just learning curves. You just do these when you plan your next event, you try not to repeat the same mistake over.” [2.4.1]

This norm of providing constructive feedback was most apparent in formal channels. It enabled the Indigenous participant to feel secure, and indeed encouraged the participants to proactively seek out their colleagues’ feedback (e.g., to generate a successful Aboriginal program), after which they were gratified to receive feedback in a constructive and timely manner:

“When I first came on board, I was quickly able to assess the program here and I could see very, very early on within my role here what needed to improve...It’s always best in any work situation, I find, for any new employee to engage the staff in... a survey questionnaire....The staff gave me feedback as to what was working and what was not.

Programs that they would like to see, programs that have happened in the past that didn't work so well. So, I approached it that way and then ... it was more of a team collective thing... And so ... that was my groundwork to sort of build on creating a successful Aboriginal program here.” [2.4.I]

Likewise, another Interviewee gave an example of how receiving constructive feedback to their voice expression via formal channels helped them to feel valued and listened to:

“I think when people actually do read it and they'll come back and ask for more emails or whatever, say this is something we could do. So that happens and it is helpful because then I feel valued that my contribution is being listened to and looked at and integrated in some ways.” [2.3.I]

Here is yet another example of how the institution was receptive to a participant’s feedback regarding reconciliation in the strategic plan:

“Yeah, I think when they were looking to rework and redo their new strategic plan, and I really gave them strong feedback that they really had to focus in on reconciliation and ways to bring these calls to action forward and to make their actions accountable. So, they actually built, instead of having four pillars, they made five pillars. And that middle pillar, the foundation pillar is reconciliation. So that was the time where I felt I was really listened to.” [4.1.I]

Finally, another interviewee mentioned receiving feedback that left them feeling respected and valued. Their suggestion about Indigenous student recruitment had been heard and acted upon:

“We've often hosted a lot --especially coming out of covid -- a lot of online information sessions for all students, including Indigenous students. So, one suggestion I brought

forward is that that's not always going to work for Indigenous students and maybe we should lean more towards in-person events and... changing our strategy with things. So not necessarily just bringing them up to be like, "hey, these are our programs" kind of thing. But also hosting other things like movie nights and stuff. Because sometimes with Indigenous students, they are youth in care, you do have to take a different approach.... It [my feedback] definitely was not ignored. It was valued and we ended up going with that approach." [1.3.I]

Quality of supervisory relationships. Task-related feedback from their supervisor, about their Indigenous-related tasks, was also welcome because it enabled them to pursue their decolonization goals more effectively. As one participant stated:

"I'm fielding questions that get forwarded to us from Indigenous potential students about requirements and things. So, I've been answering a lot of questions, and I don't know the answers. So, I go to the supervisor, and he helps me with everything. I've helped people, I've helped a lot of people. It's amazing. Thanks to support from above." [3.1.I]

Similarly, one interviewee pointed to how the quality of supervisory leadership at the provost level was clearly indicative of their institution's efforts to create change and move away from their old ways of doing things:

"The provost is from another institution. I spent a long time at this institution. There's a lot of other people who are ...in certain roles that have had multiple post-secondary institutional experience. And so, this whole thing of" well this is the way it's done, and we can't do it anyway any other way, this is how it is", we just challenge that. This

president is very invested in changing the institution. So, he listens, like he has staffed his team in that way. Like he's here to listen and he's here to learn.” [1.1.I]

In circumstances where there was an absence of formal voice channels for addressing certain issues, the quality of supervisory relationships was particularly important. For example, one participant shared an instance where they complained to their supervisor about the lack of substantive attentiveness given by others to certain Indigenous issues. Their supervisor’s support meant their voice was heard and substantively acted upon:

“They [initially] treated my work with the curriculum center in a checkbox, tokenistic way. They actually did the checkbox mark... like, “Oh yeah, you work in the library, you did the center. Check, we did that”. And I was like, “Oh, you don't understand this work at all”. And so, I haven't directly talked to the president about that, but my supervisor, we came up with a strategy together and my supervisor has addressed it in a certain way that I think is making impact on how the president speaks about it and to me.” [3.2.I]

Supervisory support was also helpful when informally bouncing ideas around:

“I would say I help strategize and develop new ideas, maybe events, or how a new way of structuring something so it would work smoother. And...saying those things in an informal way, just kind of like off the cuff. And [then I get], like a sense of feedback, from my manager who would either say, you know, “That's probably going to be more trouble than it's worth” or “Yeah, let's take a look at that idea even more”. [2.2.I]

Senior Indigenous Allies. Senior Indigenous employees occasionally facilitated participants’ voices in instances where informal discussions with one’s manager did not appear to lead to fruitful results. In such cases, Indigenous participants successfully obtained a response

from senior Indigenous managers who regarded themselves as being effective voice channels for others (e.g., their colleagues, other staff, and students). The Indigenous participants described how they would approach these senior Indigenous managers and share their thoughts, concerns and experiences informally, which the Indigenous higher-ups would then express more formally to the institutional leadership.

However, even senior Indigenous allies were not always successful in instances when the formal channels for voice expression were unsupportive of even their senior Indigenous voices. One senior Indigenous participant described their experience of trying to influence the decolonizing committee meetings as oppressive, because their voice was tightly controlled:

“The decolonizing committee meetings.... I find them the most colonial and the most suppressive meetings that I have. Which is an irony, right? It's very like, everyone's scared to talk. The only people that talk are the ones welcomed to, and you just [get to] talk how much we want you to, and that's it. And so, I created a self-reflection questions thing to put on the teams meeting for that group. No one's ever even acknowledged it, but it's about, like, self reflecting your own power, positionality, things like that. Because decolonization really is one of my [areas of] expertise.” [2.1.I]

And as another Indigenous leader noted, senior leaders themselves need a safe channel to express their voice about the challenges they have been experiencing:

“Sometimes different organizations, people have a system in place that makes it safe to be able to express yourself freely. We don't really have a system, I feel I'm the system as the wellness coach, but I need to feel like I have somewhere safe to [express my voice], and I don't necessarily feel that all the time.” [2.4.I]

No Channel for Lobbying Societal Indigenization Goals. Indigenous employees often lacked formal channels for expression, which led to marginalization of their voice. This is especially relevant for voice directed at creating systemic change. One interviewee stated creating an Indigenous run education system, which requires changes to the education act. However, their voice has limited influence in this regard.

” We’re hoping that the government will eventually allow us to operate as a tricameral and it’ll be that college within the college, much like the Māori system in New Zealand is, where that community-driven curriculum and instructor development and really advising us and running their own programs is happening within the college. But legally we can’t get there yet. So, we have to have some change in the education act.” [4.1.1]

Exclusion from Informal Channels (i.e., Marginalization of Indigenous Voices)

While lack of responsiveness can be problematic, at least it enables some expression of voice. By contrast, “Exclusion/non-consultation” refers to institutions’ failure to seek any Indigenous employees’ input or feedback whatsoever in certain key institutional decisions. As one participant put it:

“Sometimes I get... ignored because, say if I make a recommendation to say you need to do A, B, C, ... they continue on and do X, Y, Z. At least, come back to me and say, ‘These are the reasons why I chose to do it this way instead’. [Just say] something to acknowledge the effort that I put into it. Like I say, I don’t make recommendations based on nothing. I do the research, I keep in touch with First Nations and Metis organizations,

I do my homework. And so, I do my best... to provide informed guidance. And I don't think people acknowledge that in a lot of cases.” [2.3.I]

Similarly, another participant stated:

“I don't get feedback. Like if something's just not taken up, they don't say we don't want it or they don't say, they just do whatever they choose to do instead. Like, they don't say anything or whatever. I don't really get a chance to say, this is why this is embedded in Indigenous ways of knowing. I don't ever get a chance to share that. Like with processes or protocols where things are actually, you know, part of decision making, I never get to share. There's always just this awkward, like, we know this was supposed to matter, but we don't actually want to get into the discussion about it.” [2.1.I]

Instances of exclusion arose in relation to a variety of contexts, including: 1) scheduling of sporting events, 2) re-branding, 3) representation of diversity within Indigeneity, 4) Unilateral checking off Indigenous cultural ‘boxes’, and 5) access to resources. Each of these will be addressed below.

Exclusionary scheduling of a sporting event. As one participant explained,

“Our current sporting event that we just had on the 30th was a prime example of that. That decision was made to host it on that day [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation], and you know what. You should have consulted with us and talked to us first and not made that. They make unilateral decisions a lot of times and we just kind of shake our heads sometimes. They say they consult, but it's very much a tick box approach.” [4.1.I]

Exclusionary Re-Branding. Another participant noted a lack of consultation with them on Indigenous affairs. They stated,

“They went ahead and changed the entire branding and logo without our consultation, got rid of our Indigenous logo and opted for a more generic one without consultation.”

[2.2.1]

In response, this participant expressed their prohibitive voice, albeit to no avail as it was too late:

“An incident where I lodged a complaint would be with our communications department. They were the ones that [who] were in charge of rebranding the logo and stuff. They opted to get rid of our Indigenous gifted logo and went for a generic logo that really is just kind of plain, and without consultation. So, my initial complaint was, you know, ‘Why weren’t we consulted on this? Most other departments were involved except for us, and it went over everybody’s head.’”

Exclusionary Representation of Diverse Indigeneity. Another Indigenous participant who was excluded from decision making expressed exasperation with all Indigenous groups being treated as one:

“This whole Indigenous institute is, it’s a very big problem and I was not included even though I am faculty...It would impact our faculty as well in the faculty of [specific faculty name hidden for confidentiality purposes]. Because the perception is that if you just push it through, we’re just going to be quiet and take it.... We might only be a small group of Indigenous faculty and spread across... three or four departments, but we’re loud and we’re done being treated in a pan-Indigenous way. We don’t want that anymore.” [1.2.1]

Similarly, another participant mentioned that lack of consultation about diversity among Indigenous cultures inhibited their vocal expression of their cultural needs. For example, regarding the issue of Metis discrimination, they wrote:

I asked why Louis Riel Day doesn't have a banner and it got shot down. I really want for next November to have that; other institutions have had that. I don't really think there's much [done] for Metis representation at all. It's like the local Indigenous culture or you know, the regular standard Canadian way. Metis are just the ones that are diluted, and they see it as quantified. When Metis people are a hundred percent Metis. They're not like, like the blood quantum racism is when, you know, it's a very colonial lens of seeing it, of seeing Metis people. And so, nobody has that depth of understanding about Metis people and why Metis people are Metis and why it's a relevant culture in and of itself, right. That's not even a conversation that's on the table at this point. [2.1.I]

Unilateral checking of Indigenous Cultural boxes. Another interviewee mentions the lack of effort to understand Indigenous culture by the institution. They stated:

“My supervisor was great, she took my notes – exactly how I presented them – to the vice president, but they were brushed off. And then what they ended up encapsulating was just a tiny line of like, “We will do Indigenous ways of knowing, and being, and doing”. You know that vague overstatement. That doesn't really, define and say like, how that's going to happen, what that looks like. This is just what the government put out, so we're just going to replicate what we know. That's it. And so, I felt stuffed off then for sure.”
[2.1.I]

Obstructed Access to Resources. Marginalization of Indigenous voices also occurred by not supporting Indigenous employees in the way of resources needed for the job, therefore not able to fully engage in reconciliation work. For example, interviewees also highlighted the lack of a variety of other resources which hindered their job, such as a lack of access to information (including lack of information sharing from departments with the IRC). One participant states:

“So essentially, I work as like a first point-of-contact type of person, and [am] supplementary for Indigenous students only. So, there are already departments like registration and recruitment and academic advising. They all do their own things, their own department things... I essentially do something similar...[and] because of that they think I'm stepping on their toes. So, they don't want to share information. If I need statistics or student information, I have to make like all of these grant proposals and reasons why I need that information, when other peoples can readily have that information ...And I do need it in order to do my job and help the students. But at the same time, they're like, “Well, you're not our department, so why do we need to give it to you?” ...We're supposed to be, you know, same team.” [2.2.I]

Additionally, another participant similarly highlighted the delayed access to resources hindering the job:

“I've been in the position for a month, and I still don't have access to the budgets for the First Nation Center. I don't have access to a purchasing card to purchase all of the new computer equipment and technology that we need to replace in the First Nation Center. There are things that I don't have access to that I should have had access to when I started the position. I just got my swipe access to the Gathering place where the First Nation Center hosts events for students and community.” [1.2.I]

Exclusion from resources mainly occurred when there was a trifecta vacuum of supports: An absence of suitable formal channels, an absence of a quality supervisory relationship to compensate for the lack of formal channels, and, where senior Indigenous managers were perceived to serve as gatekeepers to inclusion, rather than advocates. In such perfect storm types of circumstances, informal reliance on leadership to indirectly express the Indigenous participants' voices simply proved to be insufficient:

“There isn't a channel, no. So, it's all kind of informally, like an email somewhere. If an Indigenous employee wanted to say something and it pertained to the institution, they'd have to go through the Aboriginal Education Director, and then that Aboriginal Education Director would probably have to say that it mattered and decide if it mattered. But that Aboriginal Education Director also is stifling and suppressing Indigenous workers' voices, so they're not getting heard. And so, it's unfortunate, right... I know a liaison that was trying to do really good work and it took them five months to get their credit card, which is supposed to come with the role and a list of what they could do at events and activities. This is because the Aboriginal education director just didn't give it and didn't bother answering emails. Right? And so, I think that there should be, and could be a [formal] channel creating more [formalized access for voice expression], but I see it [the situation] as a [need to remove a] barrier too, from the Aboriginal education Director.” [2.1.E]

Unfortunately, as one interviewee shared, repeated proactive efforts (to circumvent their challenges with informal influence by creating a formal voice channel, such as a steering committee for Indigenization) stalled, and the desired formal voice channel was never created.

Their voice was even ignored by leadership when they offered to create an infographic to raise awareness on how the institution can Indigenize:

“I made an infographic that is a definition for Indigenization because I saw that as a gap and I saw it as something to fill, where it just gives a great awareness how the institution could Indigenize. I'm really proud of that...it's valued by some. But it hasn't even been acknowledged by leadership. It hasn't really been acknowledged as like, “Wow, like this actually could be a goal to strive for by anyone who actually makes decisions.” [2.1.I]

The same participant noted their institution even neglected the recommendations of the audit and went against what was advised:

“The audit people came back with a suggestion for the institution to work on, it was to actually do consultation and learn from Indigenous staff at the institution, to actually learn from us, and this hasn't changed a thing, Like they're not. In fact, they've actually let go one of the most amazing Aboriginal instructors they could have gotten, who really fully, deeply breathes Indigenous ways of knowing.”

Critical Mass of Indigenous and Allied Voices

Allies were sometimes instrumental in recognizing and empowering Indigenous voices. For example, one participant shared their appreciation of the supportive allied voices that were on the education council. They stated:

“I sit on the Education Council for [the institution] and [am] vice chair of the education council...I work with instructors to decolonize their practice and Indigenize their curriculum. So, when I do that –and I've done that on a regular basis across departments -- I've seen some really good outcomes with that. In terms of our departments, I've got a

very strong voice of the input in how we move forward. We've got some good voices in our team. So, we're very much [in a situation of] open dialogue and sharing of ideas. And so that's really comfortable." [4.1.I]

Likewise, another interviewee states:

"There's only two of us who are Indigenous on the committee, and so, the bulk of the committee is non-Indigenous folks. But the work moves forward because everybody's committed and wants to do the work. That's why we're all there." [3.2.I]

Unfortunately, apart from these positive reports, the Indigenous participants felt the potential impact of their voice continued to be constrained by their minority status. As such, it was largely left to them to attempt to remedy the performance gaps in Indigenous inclusion, because in many cases, allies did not step up to the task. Indeed, due to the persistent problem of minority status in their own institution as well, one participant stated that they felt constantly put in the position of being the 'contrarian' cultural representative:

I feel like it's always a constant battle... because we're [The Aboriginal Resource Centre] such a small minority department against the rest of the departments in this organization... We always feel like we're being a bother when we're trying to bring up, you know, "You guys did promise more Indigenous influencing here, but there was nothing." So, I feel like it's constantly like us complaining. And then from their [point of] view, it's just like, "Oh no, it's another complaint". Instead of, like, a collaboration or a team". [2.2.I]

Likewise, another participant complained that no one ask questions about how Indigenous people are doing in higher education, and in their assessment, this was symptomatic of a lack of caring.

They stated:

“Nobody's asking the question other than you. Like, how are we doing as an institution for Indigenous folks? No one's asking the question. What feedback can we get? How can we improve? Like, as an institution, no one's asking that question, no one wants that to hear the answers.” [2.1.E]

Others concurred. One participant added that this experience of exclusion was compounded by an unfair work burden in trying to make their organization more equitable:

“We don't feel like we're being heard. We don't feel like we're being respected. And most of the time we feel like we're being tokenized and overworked... like we're being distracted with overwork so that we don't accomplish the things that we need to accomplish.” [1.2.I]

Similarly, yet another participant succinctly stated:

“Until we [more effectively] deal with the fact that we don't have enough staff, we're not going to have the time to think about this [reconciliation/decolonization/inclusion] stuff.” [1.1.E]

One participant felt that the challenges noted above (of minorities having to be the main ones to provide their voice to get equity matters addressed in higher education institutions), were systematic across post-secondary institutions, not only in their own:

I think that there's a long way to go before post-secondaries are considered safe for equity deserved groups... I think that we [as an institution] present as though we want radical change from post-secondary, but we don't. We [higher educational institutions] want very safe, controlled change in a way where the structure is not impacted too severely. And also, we've put way too much weight on equities deserving groups to do the work...The problem is only one or two of us make it to a level that [permits] our voices [to] even [be] recognized, where we're even respected or valued. And then when you get there, you can only do so much, right? [1.1.1]

4.6 Indigenous Participant Perspectives on the Implications of Non-Inclusion & Steps to Remedy the Consequences of Non-Inclusion

In summary, most of the Indigenous participants saw some progress toward decolonization/inclusion, but it is also clear that most had a palpable sense of being caught in a vicious circle which inhibited Indigenous voice expression: First, there was a sense of helplessness among Indigenous people about discrimination on campus. As one participant summarized:

“There's been a big [sense of] defeatedness [defeat] in the Indigenous people on campus. Even if someone complains or an Indigenous student complains about racism, or unfair or inaccurate information in the classrooms or whatever, they have a defeatedness [sense of defeat] that nothing will happen about it anyways. So, they don't even bother trying at this point.” [2.1.1]

Second, many also felt that they had minimal influence, which was another hindrance in their willingness to express their voice. As one participant noted:

“When I build relations with some of the [other Indigenous] instructors and stuff...they're just defeated that nothing will change anyway. So, I don't really think that they try to [express their voice anymore]. I think they want to. Especially, like the new kind of program manager at the IRC... I know that she wants to be in more of the decision-making capacity, but she's not, and she always feels like her voice is shut down or doesn't really matter.” [2.1.E]

Third, these experiences of discrimination and voice neglect/exclusion not only had the effect of suppressing Indigenous voice, but it also prompted Indigenous intentions to turnover. As several participants observed, Indigenous employees frequently opted to leave rather than to struggle further to be heard:

“I think we have recruited First Nation people over the years, but they don't stay long because they don't feel safe. It's not an inclusive, respectful environment. And so, they tend to move on where their skills are appreciated. They feel that they're valued, and their skills are, they're treated respectfully. So...if you look at the various sectors... at admin, faculty, support staff, there are [non-Indigenous] individuals who are doing really good [reconciliation] work, they totally get it. They're trying to change their curriculum to Indigenize it, to make more inclusive spaces to give students voice. But it's [still] not built into how we do things at [our institution]. And so, once those individuals are gone, the [proactive inclusion] work is gone too. And so, this is really [the challenge of] pushing people to think about ... what systemic change is... that...no matter who's in a position, this [reconciliation work] is what we [need to] do.” [2.3.I]

Regardless of the specific reasons or context for non-responsiveness, varying degrees of exclusion were deeply apparent to the participants. It was demoralizing for them: They felt their culture was demeaned and their skills were underutilized. As one participant stated:

“I don't really feel like they're really fully utilizing me. I feel like 30 to 40% they're utilizing me, which is pretty draining to my spirit. I think it's a power ego thing. I think it's like making sure I feel smaller and less relevant and not able to actually have a voice. And I know other Indigenous faculty that have not been able to, they should be at certain meetings and they're not and it's not right. Like, I was just talking to one yesterday and I asked him if he was included, and he wasn't. And it was so weird to me.” [2.1.1]

This also left them with an impression of insincerity (at best) on the part of their organization, and the feeling that Indigenous ways of learning and knowing were simply not respected in the institution. Many participants simply concluded there was a lack of readiness for Indigenization and decolonization by their institution. As one interviewee stated,

“I don't feel like story is valued enough because it's something that isn't like taken up in this campus in some spaces. It is ... a really powerful tool, but not in a colonial meeting setting.” [2.1.1]

Likewise, the same participant remarked:

“I don't think the administration has decolonized, Indigenized at all. They're kind of like, oh, everyone else do it. We're not going to. But then that informs policy, like, if they don't see why it's valuable, then what, why, how will they prioritize even two minutes at a meeting to ensure certain things that need to be ensured. They haven't chosen to unlearn and relearn.” [2.1.1]

One conjecture made about the lack of openness to change was that it was due to long term employees who were set in their ways, which perpetuated a toxic environment:

“I feel like the reason why there's so much pushback in things is that a lot of people are set in their ways. Like a lot of the executives or long-term staff members have always done things a certain way and they're reluctant to change. They don't want to conform to their structure or to be more inclusive... So, like even in their let's say business management courses, they're teaching how the old ways are out, they're not effective anymore. And these are the new ways businesses are being planned and structures are going up. And inclusivity and being very more informal and relaxed environments are actually having higher success rates. But the school itself that's teaching this doesn't practice these... So aside from the long-term employees that are reluctant to change it makes it harder for new employees to come in try to get a foothold, but then be iced out or shoved out, therefore they leave because of the toxic environment.” [2.2.I]

Yet as others observed, there was also a lack of prioritization by the institution towards anti-racism training:

“I wasn't working there [before joining institution in 2018], but I was asking about their anti-racism policy and they didn't even have one and they said that they were forming it, that was back in 2018, but they still say they're forming it and it's 2023. So, it hasn't been prioritized.” [2.1.E]

Likewise, another participant stated:

“I think it's really inconsistent over the years [cultural training] and so hopefully our office is able to provide that on a more consistent basis. We definitely have leaders on

campus, Indigenous colleagues, Indigenous leaders on campus that are consistently providing some of that training year after year. But then obviously things change as people leave and new people come in. So yeah, a lot of it's voluntary.” [1.2.E]

Other Indigenous participants conjectured there may be a need for even more intensive inclusion in recruitment committees:

“When it comes to Indigenous recruitment and retention specifically, maybe having a committee that is all Indigenous as requirement.” [1.3.I]

Yet another HR-related recommendation brought forth was to integrate allyship into all employees’ job descriptions:

“I've said that equity work needs to be embedded; Indigenization and equity work needs to be embedded into job descriptions. So, what happens is when you're trying to do EDI work, your white colleagues will always be like, oh, well we don't want to make a mistake. Right? Like, that's like the safe way out, is to be like, I don't want to make a mistake. If you embed it into somebody's job description that they have to advance this work, they will figure out how to do it. Otherwise, it looks like they're doing us a favor by doing equity work. And so that's one thing that I presented in Senate when I was hired and it hasn't been operationalized, but it's been approved.” [1.1.I]

Ultimately, the failure to adequately respond to Indigenous human resource capacity needs, and the resultant turnover, made it impossible to retain a credible critical mass of Indigenous employees who could properly support reconciliation work. For these reasons, some participants highlighted a need for EDI policy to be integrated more thoroughly throughout the institution, to improve the retention of Indigenous employees:

“You see quite a bit of turnover. So, we're trying to build for sustainability... I always remind people of that. I say, “We've got this stuff going forward, but we need people to be here for a few years to really build things”. I'm always reminding people about sustainability [in the sense of succession planning].” [4.1.1]

4.7 Quantitative results: Perceptions of Inclusion and Safety for Voice Expression

The quantitative Likert-scale questionnaire served as a complementary means of tapping into participants' experiences of inclusion and safety to express voice. The five quantitative questions (previously indicated in Appendix 2) attempted to gain insight into participant experiences and perceptions of inclusion and safety in different ways. They are re-posted below for the readers' convenience:

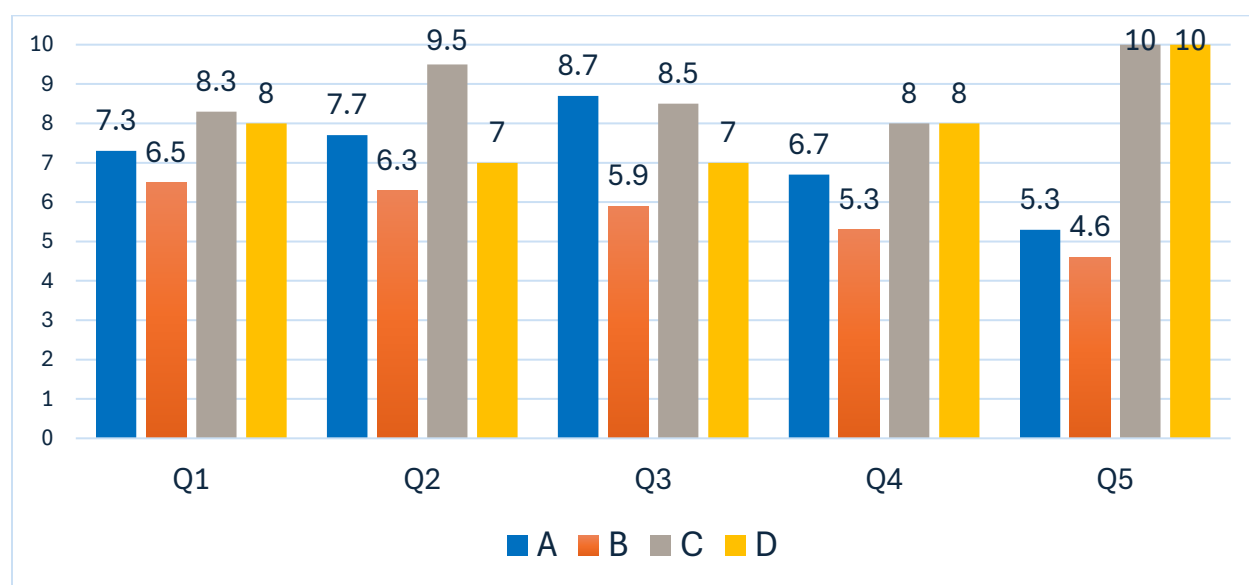
1. Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how respected/fairly-treated do you feel by others at this institution?
2. Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), to what extent do you feel able to access information/support resources that you need at this institution?
3. Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), to what extent do you feel this institution is responsive to your needs?
4. Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how safe do you feel to express your needs at this institution?
5. Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how safe do you feel to express your cultural/traditional identity at this institution?

Although these quantitative questions did not distinguish between individual freedom to be culturally authentic versus advocacy on behalf of the Indigenous community (i.e., a distinction that emerged as relevant only upon analysis of the qualitative data, and which led to a re-

phrasing of RQ#2 and RQ#3), quantitative questions 1,2 and 3 nonetheless broadly addressed participants' overall assessments of their institution's inclusion efforts. Question 4 and 5 then aimed to understand how safe individuals felt in expressing their needs and identity at the institution. Accordingly, this section's discussion of these quantitative results (and associated commentary by the participants) will be divided into A) Experiences of inclusion, and B) Safety for Voice expression. Table 4, below, displays each institution's average response score on all five questions.

Table 4

Average Institution Response Scores



Experiences of Inclusion

With regard to how respected and involved Indigenous employees felt at their institution (i.e., Questions 1,2 and 3), participants from Institutions A, C and D all responded with high quantitative scores. Overall, these participants acknowledged the importance of support received from leadership (including supervisors) and colleagues, and having some degree of access to information and resources needed.

Nevertheless, despite these high scores, participants from these three institutions also observed that Indigenous ways of healing were not a part of their work benefits; They did not receive cultural days off. They did not escape exclusion (from consultation), and they attributed this to their institutions still being colonial structures, highlighting a need to improve Indigenous access to resources and support services.

Meanwhile, participants from the Institution that had particularly low scores on inclusion (i.e., Institution B), made comments about experiencing more frequent instances of discrimination and exclusion. For example, an Indigenous director from Institution #2 elaborated on their score, attributing it to the lack of supportive EDI policy:

“I am just not being included. So, a lot of times I will hear about, oh this such and such a program is going on in such and such First Nations community, or we're going to do this great big recruitment drive. And it's like, how come I don't know about this? I can at least look into the initial [contact], I can touch base with that community, make sure that whatever their needs are, that they are being identified, let them know who's working with them, and they know that they can get ahold of me if they run into any barriers.” [2.3.1]

Another participant from this same institution similarly explained their score by noting that institutional policy was lacking for all vulnerable populations, which ultimately influenced inclusion outcomes for such populations.

Say... you're developing policy... Think of the most vulnerable students in your institution. So of course, that's First Nations, Metis, that's LGBTQ plus and that's all these vulnerable populations. And then how could you accommodate their needs or make sure this policy isn't further marginalizing them and placing unnecessary barriers. We haven't really implemented the

process to do that, to ask those questions and to make our language more inclusive. It's still in its infancy, I guess you would say. [2.3.I]

Safety for voice expression

Question 4 and 5 were asked to understand how safe participants felt about expressing their needs and cultural/traditional identity at the institution. According to theory introduced earlier, the more inclusive an environment is, the more likely an individual will feel safe in expressing their needs and cultural identity.

Table 4 highlights the difference between institution response scores. As the table reveals, Institutions C and D both had high response scores on perceived safety. The participants from these institutions described how being able to engage in cultural activities enabled a sense of comfort and safety:

I drum and I sing, I smudge. We have a gathering space and I smudged there and I even smudge in my office and we're not supposed to smudge in our office because of possibly triggering other people's allergies, but there's times where I just needed to smudge in my office and I did. And I feel comfortable doing that. [4.1.I]

By contrast, Indigenous participants from Institutions A and B responded with lower scores about safety to express voice. Their comments on the quantitative form echoed themes from the qualitative data, revealing that experiences of exclusion, tokenism, and marginalization within these institutions influenced how Indigenous employees perceived their safety for voice expression. As one participant mentioned, they had begun to feel safe when expressing their cultural voice on their own terms, or within their own team and department, but not when it was

expected of them to be the token Indigenous representative at their institution for policymaking outside of their own department:

“I feel like I can wear traditional regalia whenever I want, I can attend any event or create any event that I want. But when it comes to policy structure or anything like that, definitely, no.” [2.2.I]

It should be noted that for some participants, even when their organizational climate had changed (e.g., more inclusive practices had been put into place), it still took quite a while to register that it was actually safe to express their voice. As participant mentioned, they only recently felt safe to say what they wanted to say in a meeting after working almost 30 years at the institution:

“I was actually just at a meeting about a month ago and afterwards there's one of the administrators who are, I know she understands, and I trust her. And I was saying that that was the first meeting I've ever been to that where I felt safe to say what I wanted to say. And that was something to think about, right, because I've been here so long.” [2.3.I]

It is noteworthy that while only Institution B faced challenges specifically related to inclusion, both Institution A and B exhibited low scores for safety of voice expression. One possible explanation is that Institution A predominantly housed participants in higher leadership positions who, despite being treated respectfully and provided with necessary resources and information, felt stifled when attempting to express their needs or cultural identity at an institutional wide level. Participants from Institution A also raised concerns about being excluded from advancing reconciliation efforts and perceived deficiencies in EDI policies tailored for minority groups. Notably, one participant from Institution A rated their experience as 0/10 for

question 3, significantly skewing the response score average due to the limited number of participants. However, this response underscored a profound sense of inability to express cultural identity within the institution, highlighting an environment perceived as unsafe for authentic expression. Furthermore, only one respondent from institution A was in a non-leadership role, they scored high in both experiences of inclusion and safety to express voice. In this case, the participant perceives inclusion and safety for voice expression within their workgroup but may have never voiced at an institutional wide policy level. Whereas the senior Indigenous leaders discuss institutional wide voicing challenges. Therefore, the challenges faced by Indigenous leaders may have led to the low scores in safety to voice, as there is more pushback when trying to create systemic change. This shows the differences in institutional logic at the systemic level, where real change is not happening, and Indigenous voices and perspectives are not being adequately recognized. Moreover, this shows Institution A having inclusion at the individual level but not when engaging in the collective advocacy level. This corresponds to the revisions done to the research questions for the different levels of analysis - individual vs collective.

These quantitative findings complemented the qualitative data, ultimately converging to form the overarching theme identified in the study. The alignment between quantitative measures of inclusion and safety and the qualitative narratives provided a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences within their institutional contexts. These insights highlight the complex interplay between structural factors, cultural dynamics, and interpersonal relationships that shape individuals' perceptions of inclusion and safety in expressing their voices within academic settings.

4.8 Summary: Overarching Theme – Perceived Safety for Voice Expression

This chapter presented the results from the qualitative study. It included data from Indigenous employees in higher education, along with data from employees working in the EDI departments. As mentioned previously, this overarching theme was derived from the qualitative themes and further supported by the quantitative findings. Each of those themes has an influence on how an individual perceives their level of safety for voice expression. The analysis of the data yielded three interconnected themes that collectively contribute to the overarching theme of perceived safety for voice expression. Indigenous employees require a supportive climate conducive to voice (Liang et al., 2012; Detert & Burris, 2007), with psychological safety shaped by organizational norms, group dynamics, and management style (Kahn, 1990). Merely establishing formal channels for employee voice is insufficient; it is crucial to examine employee perceptions of voice and the organizational climate surrounding voice mechanisms (Wilkinson et al., 2004). This approach allows for the assessment of an organization's employee voice climate, emphasizing the importance of aligning institutional policies and practices with culturally appropriate voice structures that foster safe spaces for expression, particularly through reconciliation efforts.

Below, Figure 6 summarizes the resultant model. From the data, it was clear that Indigenous employees can understand what voice channels are formally available, and what type of voice they can engage in. Generally, the more formal channels offered are more beneficial for employees as they circumvent the need to rely only on allies – which varies as a supportive channel for relaying their voice to leadership. Employees also derived a sense of safety for voice expression from their job factors, supervisor relationship and institutional policy towards Indigenization and decolonization, all which influenced their perception of the climate and of the

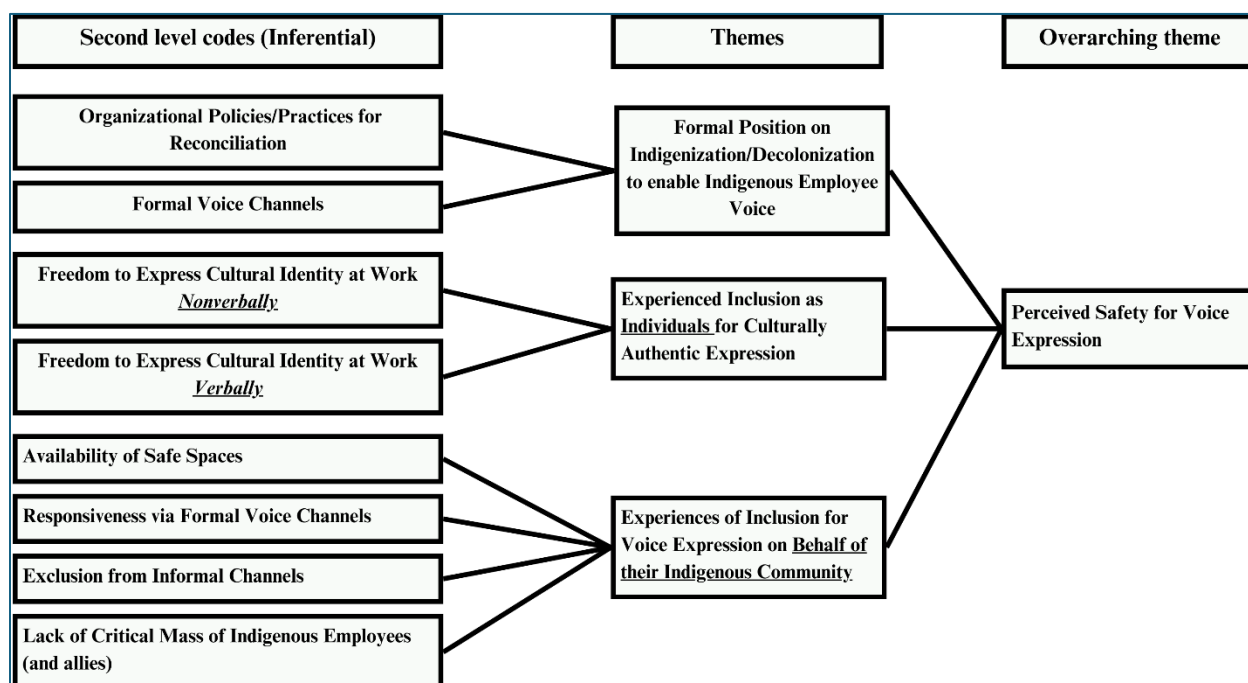
institution. Relationships with supervisors and colleagues play a pivotal role in creating safe spaces for Indigenous employees to engage in voice (Kahn, 1990). Leadership support is essential for incorporating voice into decision-making processes, while dedicated spaces like Indigenous Resource Centers (IRCs) provide invaluable opportunities for cultural engagement and authentic expression within institutions. Organizational contexts that prioritize inclusiveness significantly enhance psychological safety, positively influencing employees' identity expression and performance (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Singh et al., 2013). However, the prevalence of exclusion and marginalization in institutional settings poses significant barriers to voice expression for Indigenous employees, resulting in reluctance to voice concerns openly. Cultural training is crucial to enhance understanding among staff and leadership, thereby fostering safer environments encouraging Indigenous voice expression. Notably, formal voice channels such as sharing circles, rooted in Indigenous cultural practices, offer culturally appropriate spaces that empower Indigenous employees to voice their perspectives comfortably.

Moreover, the findings show, that merely establishing formal policies and voice channels is not enough, there needs to be experiences of inclusion at both the individual and collective level. If not, the objectives of the TRC will not be met and voice will still be marginalized. The findings also indicate a need for better inclusion. Pidgeon (2016) critiques higher education adopting a checklist approach to Indigenous inclusion, which often consists of fulfilling formal requirements (land acknowledgement or hiring Indigenous staff) without creating meaningful change. Meaningful inclusion requires institutions to engage with Indigenous peoples and communities in ways that respect their knowledge, traditions, and experiences. This involves shifting from a surface-level approach to one that prioritizes long-term relationship building and transformative change. This study found mixed results and room for improvement. Outreach and

co-creation of programs and MOUs were positive, same with Indigenous specific hiring. However, exclusion and marginalization, and a lack of cultural training led to a checklist, tokenistic approach to inclusion which resulted in poor recruitment strategies, poor utilization of Indigenous staff, and the ignoring of Indigenous voices, ultimately leading to exclusion and a lack of safety for voice. Therefore, all three themes together influence perceptions of safety for voice expression. Valuing diverse ways of knowing and being are crucial in order to create a safe environment where Indigenous voice can be heard and acted upon. The rewards of diverse employment can be reaped only when employees feel included and safe enough to express their voice.

Figure 6

Data Structure for Overarching Theme: Perceived Safety for Voice Expression



Next, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the results and offers recommendations for stakeholder groups. Additionally, recommendations for future research will be discussed to build on this study.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The research objective was to explore whether (and how) Canadian higher education institutions' EDI practices and policies provide effective voice mechanisms and opportunities for the Indigenous population. Specifically investigating whether, and how, institutional EDI practices and policies encourage Indigenous voice expression and whether/ how voice mechanisms contribute to inclusion for Indigenous employees. Thus, by studying voice in a new context (e.g., Indigenous people, higher education) and integrating it with EDI literature we gained a greater understanding of minority voice. The findings from this study help answer the research questions (and as noted in the results section, research questions 2 and 3 were revised to better reflect participants' way of viewing the issues). The research questions were:

1. How do Canadian education institutions formally facilitate or hinder Indigenous employee voices?
2. How do Indigenous employees in Canada perceive their organizations' inclusion of themselves as Indigenous individuals (includes references to their engagement in voice behaviour)?
3. How do Indigenous employees in Canada perceive their organizations inclusion of their voice behaviour on behalf of their Indigenous community (if at all)?

The remainder of this chapter provides a summary and discussion of the results for each research question, including both theoretical and practical contributions of this study. The chapter concludes with limitations of the study and provides recommendations for future research concerning Indigenous voice in higher education.

5.2 Research Question 1: How do Canadian Education Institutions formally facilitate or hinder Indigenous Employee Voices?

This research question was answered by the theme, Formal Position on Indigenization and decolonization (refer to Figure 3 for data structure). The two second level codes making up this theme are 1) organizational policies & practices for reconciliation and 2) formal voice channels, which will be elaborated on below. Institutions had some organizational policies and formal channels for indigenization/decolonization, so on a formal level there were some efforts made that helped with voice. However, there is room for improvement, and participants highlight a need for a shift in paradigms for real change to happen.

Organizational Policies & Practices for Reconciliation

The institutional policies and practices used reflected the institutions' readiness for change. Overall, participants found the institutions slow to change. Findings highlight inconsistencies between Indigenous participants and the institutions' paradigms or worldviews, as participants state the institutions do not value Indigenous perspectives, therefore, perpetuating cognitive imperialism. Hence, participants expressed the setting of reconciliation goals that aligned with the TRC and UNDRIP. Specifically, efforts needed to advance reconciliation included improving EDI efforts by recruiting more Indigenous students into STEM education to build Indigenous community capacity and creating an Indigenous run education system. In doing so, all institutions were involved in outreach efforts with external Indigenous communities. Institutions are facilitating Indigenous voices by their outreach efforts with Indigenous communities. As listed in the TRC calls to action, institutions are trying to improve their relations with communities and collaborate with them to meet community needs. The results show the establishment of memorandums of understanding that meet community needs. This

shows a shared governance approach where Indigenous voice is heard by implementing Indigenous Terms of Reference into institutional policy.

Moreover, institutions facilitate Indigenous voice by advancing reconciliation through proactive HR strategies. First, by improving recruitment and retention practices. Thus, by proactively hiring Indigenous individuals, who then can further work to create change and work towards reconciliation. The results indicate an important aspect of recruitment is to make sure the position entails reconciliation work, which provides a more meaningful job. In addition, the results show the institutions creating proactive on-boarding for newly recruited Indigenous employees, to ensure they have all resources needed, understand how to utilize those resources, so they can perform their Indigenization tasks effectively, and therefore maximize the likelihood of their retention. However, the results indicate that these orientation efforts need further development to in order to create a safe environment for new hires. The findings highlight an initiative by one institution to engage consultants in refining onboarding processes for new hires. However, addressing potential discrimination emerges as a critical factor influencing retention rates, requiring proactive measures to better prepare newcomers. A recommended strategy involves providing realistic job previews that illuminate the challenges inherent to the role, thereby allowing organizations to select candidates who are not only aware of but also comfortable navigating these challenges. Moreover, recruitment of Indigenous individuals needs to be across various departments and not just for specific Indigenous positions or offices. As the results highlight this as a form of marginalization and exclusion

Second, institutions provided inclusive training and development for employees. Formal policies for anti-discrimination training included cultural considerations for employees involved in the recruitment process. In this training, recruiters were made aware of how the recruitment

processes have typically echoed an implicitly colonial outlook. In terms of development, formal activities included mentoring, which focused on eventually advancing employees into higher positions of authority. Moreover, institutional engagement with Indigenous communities provided further training opportunities, mainly via community engagement, the institutions discovered opportunities to develop new educational programs with culturally relevant content. This enabled institutions to discover culturally relevant methods to deliver their learning. This included involving elders, land-based experiences, their language, storytelling and using circles instead of classrooms. This aligns with the Calls to Action, as they require developing culturally appropriate curriculum and providing funding to train post-secondary instructors how to integrate Indigenous knowledge into the classrooms. Moreover, this shows the institution incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems to decolonize knowledge and learning. Adopting these diverse ways of knowing and being is to recognize that Indigenous voices are being heard. However, the results still highlighted a lack of cultural training and development at institutions. Participants noted the lack of consistent trainings available and it being voluntary to attend. This is important because managers can limit the successful use of voice mechanisms due to their lack of emotional and cultural competence and communication skills (Alang et al. 2020; Gollan et al. 2005; Wilkinson et al. 2004). Therefore, with the lack of cultural awareness training, it is difficult for non-Indigenous staff to understand Indigenous ways of knowing and being thus, leading to a greater suppression of Indigenous voice and creating less of a safe space for Indigenous voice.

Lastly, all institutions implemented the HR strategy of performance management regarding Indigenous inclusion goals. Institutions noted they were held accountable by the

Ministry of Education, with student feedback serving as a primary mechanism for assessing and improving performance.

Participants highlighted notable examples of institutional progress in raising cultural awareness, such as hosting Indigenous graduation ceremonies and designating cultural days for events of significance. However, a participant underscored the need for improvement in formally acknowledging and crediting Indigenous employees and communities for their contributions to the adoption of Indigenous ways of knowing, particularly in areas like holistic supports and wellness. The participant implies that their institution may have engaged in cultural appropriation. If so, this runs contrary not only to the TRC mandate, but also to any higher educational institution's academic ethos for proper citation. Whether accurate or not, addressing these concerns is essential for fostering greater satisfaction with the Indigenization process among participants. Implementing bidirectional training on cultural appropriation would enable a clearer understanding of what constitutes appropriation and what does not, especially given that holistic supports and wellness practices are not exclusive to Indigenous culture.

Formal Voice Channels

Indigenous voice within Canadian higher education institutions was facilitated through formal voice channels, which although pre-existing independently of reconciliation policies, were accessible for purposes aligned with reconciliation efforts. Participants identified a diverse range of formal channels available for voice expression within their institutions, albeit with variability based on the Indigenous employee's position within the organizational hierarchy.

All Indigenous employees had access to fundamental formal channels, including weekly meetings with managers and departmental gatherings. However, those in leadership positions

enjoyed additional formal opportunities such as engagements with higher-level committees like the senate chamber, education council, and dedicated committees or sharing circles focused on Indigenization and decolonization. These channels were best for voice expression and receptiveness as they incorporated Indigenous values and traditions, which encouraged and empowered Indigenous voice. Despite the existence of these formal channels, the study revealed areas for improvement, particularly concerning the clarity and accessibility of these avenues for Indigenous employees. Challenges were noted, especially in less supportive supervisor-manager relationships and in smaller institutions, which impacted access to and effectiveness of formal voice mechanisms. Consequently, Indigenous employees often resorted to less formal or indirect channels, with variable responsiveness from individuals involved.

The results revealed there are not many formal channels available for Indigenous employees to express their voice. Several interviewees highlight themselves being informal voice channels for others in their institutions, who then share this voice formally with leadership. This highlights the importance of having Indigenous individuals in supervisory roles, as employees may feel more comfortable voicing concerns to someone sharing their cultural background (Detert & Burris, 2007; Dutton et al., 1997), with the expectation that such concerns will be elevated to higher levels of leadership and acted upon (Morrison, 2014). However, the results revealed that due to the lack of formal channels, leadership can become a barrier for voice. Without formal channels, there is no formal accountability or monitoring of Indigenous voice, it is up to leader discretion on what they are expected to do; thus, it becomes a performance management issue. To address this, ample opportunities for Indigenous employees to engage in formal voice mechanisms are essential (Wilkinson et al., 2018) for ensuring leadership accountability.

Despite the potential benefits of formal voice mechanisms, they can be subject to managerial control, limiting discussions to matters deemed appropriate by management and potentially rendering them ineffective (Mowbary et al., 2017; Dundon & Rollinson, 2004; Wilkinson et al., 2004). Consequently, participants strategically sought positions on committees or advocated for dedicated Indigenous committees to influence agendas and initiatives within their institutions.

In summary, while formal voice channels offer avenues for Indigenous voice expression, addressing challenges such as clarity, accessibility, and managerial oversight is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of these mechanisms in supporting Indigenous inclusion and advancing reconciliation efforts within higher education institutions.

5.3 Research Question 2: How do Indigenous Employees in Canada perceive their organizations' inclusion of themselves as Indigenous Individuals (includes references to their engagement in voice behaviour)?

This research question was answered by the theme, Experienced Freedom for Personal Culturally Authentic Individual Expression (refer to figure 4 data structure). This theme consists of two second level codes, 1) freedom to express cultural identity at work nonverbally and 2) freedom to express cultural identity at work verbally. Both will be summarized below.

Freedom to Express Cultural Identity at Work Nonverbally

This second level code consists of the freedom participants felt they had to authentically express their Indigenous identity nonverbally. It largely focuses on the Indigenization of their workspace. One participant was internally motivated to express their cultural identity at work by Indigenizing their cubicle workspace, despite initial negative feedback, they visibly communicated that their cubicle space was occupied by an Indigenous person. However, in another example, an Indigenous instructor wished to Indigenize their classroom, but was

prevented from doing so. Thus, the results suggest participants did experience constraints on their individual cultural expression, although they partially attributed it to bureaucratic red tape, participants also felt it was due to a lack of sufficient caring for cultural understanding. This lack of caring for Indigenous culture shows that institutions are not ready for change and are not implementing Indigenous Terms of Reference. Thus, ultimately, they are not following the TRC calls to action and are perpetuating cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2011), making higher education institutions not a safe and inclusive space. Moreover, participants mentioned occasional inter-Indigenous challenges in personally expressing their culture. As Indigenous leaders discriminated against participant Indigenous culture for being different than their own. These challenges are aligned with research on Indigenous Australian youth in higher education (Durmush et al., 2021) as discrimination and a lack of cultural support were barriers to well-being.

Freedom to Express Cultural Identity at Work Verbally

The analysis of participants' experiences concerning the freedom to express their cultural identity verbally at work revealed mixed outcomes. Given the Indigenous culture's emphasis on interpersonal relationships, supervisory support played a pivotal role in fostering participants' sense of cultural safety and inclusion (Shore et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011). This support enabled participants to be authentic and have conversations about work-life balance, which they greatly valued, as it reflects a deeper appreciation for their holistic identities beyond their roles as employees. However, challenges arose when participants attempted to discuss their culture verbally with non-Indigenous colleagues. The findings suggest tokenism and the institutions lack to learn about Indigenous culture stifles participants' verbal expressions of their cultural identity. Institutions did not respect Indigenous culture and traditions, thus, participants reported feeling

unsafe expressing their cultural identity when pressured to perform tokenistic displays of Indigeneity, highlighting the importance of fostering genuine cultural understanding and respect within workplace environments.

5.4 Research Question 3: How do Indigenous employees in Canada perceive their organizations' inclusion of their voice behaviour on behalf of their Indigenous community (if at all)?

This research question was answered by the theme, Experiences of Possibilities for Voice Expression (refer to figure 5). This theme addresses the factors that influenced participant experiences as they sought to express their voice on behalf of their community. This theme consists of the following second level codes: 1) availability of safe spaces, 2) responsiveness via formal voice channels, 3) exclusion from informal channels, and 4) lack of critical mass of Indigenous employees (and allies). Each of these will be elaborated below.

Availability of Safe Spaces

This second level code consists of institutional community stereotyping/discrimination versus the IRC as a safe space. Participants highlighted instances of discrimination experienced within their institutions, which raised doubts about the depth of institutional commitment to inclusion. Discrimination was observed at both individual and societal levels, with participants reporting overt instances of discriminatory behavior from institutional leadership. For instance, one participant shared a distressing encounter of public harassment by a leader, which was perceived as culturally motivated but could also be attributed to misogyny. The emotional impact of such experiences underscores the need for further research to explore patterns of institutional harassment, particularly among female Indigenous graduate students compared to their peers. Despite efforts in proactive hiring, ongoing discrimination in recruitment practices towards the Indigenous community was reported by participants. Furthermore, instances of intra-Indigenous

discrimination were noted, complicating the perception of institutions as safe and welcoming environments for expressing cultural identity and needs. This unsafe environment posed challenges for Indigenous voice expression within institutional settings.

Moreover, issues arose beyond the confines of the institution's own establishment; they arose within the institutions' allied contexts as well. As one participant explains that despite the institutions intent to advance reconciliation, the institution did nothing to intervene when societal stereotypes adversely impacted Indigenous students who needed to function in these allied contexts to obtain and benefit from their degree. Specifically, Indigenous students were impacted in their practicums, gaining employment after graduation, and access to student housing. This broader societal impact highlights the need for empirical investigation to determine whether similar challenges are faced by non-Indigenous students amid Canada's housing crisis.

Therefore, it was mainly the IRCs to whom Indigenous participants turned to for a sense of a safe space. The IRCs were viewed as safe spaces for engaging in cultural activities and described as beneficial for the broader Indigenous community. They are places where one could find various members from the Indigenous communities, such as students, mentors, faculty and elders. This allowed Indigenous individuals to be authentic. These offices often hosted Indigenous events that promoted Indigenous culture. The institutions allocated resources for these events which advanced Indigenous culture into institutional life. However, viewing the IRCs solely as safe spaces reveals a deeper issue - exclusion in broader institutional settings. One non-Indigenous participant even described the IRC as its own 'little community,' implying that non-Indigenous staff often perceive the IRC as exclusively Indigenous, rather than a space for learning and collaboration for all. This perception isolates the IRC from the institution, limiting

its potential impact. Additionally, Indigenous participants working at the IRCs reported a lack of collaboration and insufficient resources from the institution.

To address these concerns, Indigenous Resource Centers (IRCs) should be restructured and adequately funded to serve as significant knowledge hubs, with ambitious equity goals for both Indigenous students and staff. These centers could develop comprehensive Indigenous studies programs led predominantly by Indigenous scholars and equipped to support Indigenous students and staff across various disciplines. Additionally, community-based Indigenous knowledge - rooted in lived experience and community engagement - should be recognized as equivalent to traditional academic credentials for university appointments and promotions.

Beyond academic initiatives, these centers could facilitate power-sensitive and transformative dialogues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, fostering mutual understanding within the university. Crucially, they would also provide spaces for Indigenous communities to engage in discussions, both within the institution and in broader societal and global contexts. These forums would amplify Indigenous voices, enabling them to influence institutional reforms, promote collaboration, and extend their impact beyond the university, advancing decolonization and Indigenous empowerment (Bunda et al., 2012; Battiste, 2011). Achieving this vision requires ensuring these offices have sufficient resources and that Indigenous voices are genuinely heard and acted upon to secure meaningful institutional support and collaboration.

Responsiveness via formal voice channels (to Indigenous voice, once expressed)

This second level code involves creating an environment where diverse voices are valued, respected and actively sought out in decision making. Although formal voice channels

did exist, it does not necessarily mean they operate in a functional or culturally appropriate manner. On several occasions, participants indeed experienced voice receptiveness (which did not necessarily require agreement, just sincere engagement), while on other occasions, neglect of Indigenous voice was more prevalent.

Culturally appropriate voice channels and structures made sure participants were comfortable enough to engage in voice. This included sharing circles and formally established channels such as committees, that worked on decolonization and reconciliation. These channels ensure Indigenous people have a voice in shaping institutional policies and practices, empowering them to address system barriers (institutional logics) and incorporate Indigenous Terms of Reference. Many participants highlighted the cultural responsiveness of such formal structures and made sure to be part of these formal channels, so they had an opportunity to bring an Indigenous perspective. Within such formal voice channels, participants generally felt their voice was heard and acted upon. Thus, participants were generally of the view that despite some apparent discrimination within the institution, the formally established voice channels were open to some voice expressions. Individuals are more likely to engage in voice when they have opportunities for participation in decision making (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Kwon et al., 2016; Harley, 2014). When an employee is satisfied with opportunities for expressing voice, they will be more engaged with their work and organization (Ruck et al., 2017), and improve their retention (Caron et al., 2020). Therefore, it is vital that institutions provide ample opportunities for Indigenous employees to express their voice in decision-making.

The participants also felt their voice was suitably acknowledged when their work group behaved inclusively by providing constructive feedback on their input. Regular feedback from staff signalled that their colleagues were keen to help them and improve performance of their

Indigenous related job duties. This norm of providing constructive feedback was most apparent in formal channels. This finding is aligned with existing management literature on employee voice. Feedback on voice expression makes Indigenous employees feel their voice is valued and listened to, whereas no feedback makes Indigenous employees feel not acknowledged and their voice not being heard (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Lee et al., 2014).

Positive supervisory relationships enabled greater voice responsiveness, which enabled participants to pursue their decolonization goals more effectively. Employee trust in management is critical for determining the effectiveness of employee voice systems and employee inclination to engage in voice (Mowbary et al., 2017; Gao et al. 2011). Supervisor openness and support lead to a more effective, safer and communicative workplace. A safer and more communicative workplace enables Indigenous employees to share ideas about Indigenization and reconciliation. The data highlights the importance of supervisor relationships in order to provide a safe space for voice expression. Interviewees discuss how they are able to have open communication with their supervisor. Management openness has been consistently related to employee voice (Detert & Burris, 2007). Moreover, in circumstances where there were no formal channels available for addressing certain issues, the quality of supervisory relationships was important. Participants were able to voice and have their voice acted upon because of their supervisor's support.

Moreover, senior Indigenous allies enabled participant voices when informal discussion with one's manager did not appear to lead to productive results. These Indigenous allies were effective voice channels for others. Participants described Indigenous individuals would informally share their thoughts, concerns and experiences, with them, which they then would express formally to institutional leadership. However, even these Indigenous allies were not always successful when the formal channels for voice expression were unsupportive of

Indigenous voices. One participant noted the limited safe voice channels for senior Indigenous leaders to express their voice about the challenges they face.

In conclusion, fostering responsive formal voice channels and cultivating positive supervisory relationships are essential for empowering Indigenous voice within higher education institutions. Emphasizing cultural appropriateness, inclusive feedback mechanisms, and support from Indigenous allies can contribute to a more inclusive and supportive organizational climate, ultimately advancing efforts towards Indigenization and reconciliation. Addressing these factors is crucial for creating environments where Indigenous voices are heard, respected, and valued in decision-making processes.

Exclusion from Informal Channels (i.e. Marginalization of Indigenous Voices)

This second level code refers to the institutions' failure to seek any Indigenous employee voice in the decision-making processes. This form of exclusion extends beyond mere unresponsiveness to voice; it actively precludes Indigenous perspectives from contributing to Indigenous-focused initiatives. Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation on Indigenous affairs and highlighted the detrimental impact of receiving inadequate feedback and support that failed to consider Indigenous cultural contexts.

Marginalization of Indigenous voice was further exacerbated by the deprivation of necessary resources essential for meaningful engagement in reconciliation efforts. This resource deprivation often occurred in situations characterized by a trifecta of deficiencies: the absence of suitable formal channels for voice expression, a lack of quality supervisory relationships that could compensate for this absence, and the perception that senior Indigenous managers acted more as gatekeepers of inclusion rather than advocates. Moreover, exclusion manifested within

the representation of diverse Indigeneity, where participants noted instances of their specific Indigenous culture being overshadowed or overlooked in favor of other Indigenous groups. This homogenization of Indigenous perspectives disregards the intra-Indigenous diversity that exists among Indigenous communities.

To address these issues effectively, comprehensive training initiatives are imperative to educate staff about the rich diversity within Indigenous peoples and promote greater awareness and sensitivity toward the unique cultural contexts and perspectives of Indigenous employees. Such training efforts are essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable institutional environment that respects and values Indigenous voices and contributions.

Critical Mass of Indigenous and Allied Voices

Recognizing and empowering Indigenous voices within higher education institutions is greatly facilitated by the presence of supportive allies. Several participants expressed gratitude for the support of allied voices within education councils and committees they were in. Despite these instances of support, Indigenous participants consistently perceived the ongoing constraint on their voices due to their minority status. Consequently, they often found themselves shouldering the responsibility of addressing performance gaps in Indigenous inclusion largely on their own. Participants frequently described feelings of being the contrarian cultural representative, highlighting a sense of standing apart within institutional contexts. Moreover, they conveyed a sense of institutional neglect towards the Indigenous community, noting a lack of proactive inquiry into the well-being of Indigenous individuals in higher education settings. This perception underscores an important cultural attribution, suggesting that the absence of overt care may not necessarily reflect apathy but rather a societal norm emphasizing individual job focus over collective well-being. Additionally, participants expressed frustration over the

unfair work burden associated with efforts to promote equity within institutions. The data revealed a significant imbalance, with equity-deserving groups, including Indigenous individuals, often bearing disproportionate responsibilities for diversity, equity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives—an issue commonly referred to as the "minority tax" (Siad & Rabi, 2021). This practice of offloading difficult work onto those harmed by existing cultural norms is deemed inappropriate yet remains prevalent. Therefore, it is necessary to reach a critical mass of Indigenous employees to ensure a positive work climate by reducing prejudices, breaking the feelings of isolation and increasing motivation and well-being at work (Caron et al., 2020).

Despite the challenges outlined, it is important to note that some participants were specifically hired to advance Indigenous inclusion efforts. This underscores the critical importance of providing realistic job previews (RJPs) during onboarding and orientation processes to enhance newcomers' understanding of their roles. By familiarizing new employees with the institutional work environment, including its strengths, limitations, and systemic challenges, institutions can foster a broader recognition that certain issues are inherent faults within the system rather than personal shortcomings. However, many legitimate grievances among Indigenous employees' stem from recruitment and retention issues, leading to overwork and limited capacity to focus on reconciliation efforts (Povey et al., 2022). Consequently, the collective Indigenous voice often remains marginalized and unheard within institutions.

In addressing these complex challenges, it is imperative to prioritize the development of inclusive and supportive institutional practices. This includes implementing strategies to alleviate the burden on equity-deserving groups, fostering greater awareness and accountability among all stakeholders, and ensuring that recruitment and retention practices prioritize equitable workload

distribution. Ultimately, these efforts aim to create a more inclusive and equitable environment where Indigenous voices are genuinely respected and valued.

5.5 Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical focus of this study was to deepen knowledge of the role of diversity in the utilization of voice channels, as well as the role of voice mechanisms in the recruitment, integration, and retention of Indigenous population. Additionally, this study helped to better understand how voice systems can enable the implementation of EDI and how EDI practices can strengthen the voice of Indigenous employees. As noted earlier, employee voice studies have tended to focus on mainstream employees, while neglecting minority groups (Wilkinson et al. 2018). There has been a notable lack of research specifically examining which voice channels and mechanisms are most effective for minorities (Shore et al., 2011; 2018; Tang et al., 2015). Although scholars on employee voice are starting to understand the need for research on EDI to address ‘missing’ voices (Syed, 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2018; 202; Um-E-Rubbab, & Mehdi Raza Naqvi, 2020), most literature on voice continues to be conducted in with western cultural populations (Morrison, 2014; Freeman et al., 2007; Wilkinson et al., 2021; Kwon & Farndale, 2020). To effectively capture diverse voices, organizations must develop engagement practices specifically targeting minority employees (Farndale et al., 2015). Yet, the EDI literature has considered a variety of forms of diversity, albeit without explicit reference to the theoretical concepts found in the voice literature. The EDI literature has also devoted negligible attention to key cultural communities, such as Indigenous cultures, who differ on important cultural dimensions such as collectivism and relationship to nature. Overall, by studying voice in a new context (e.g., Indigenous people, higher education) and integrating it with EDI literature we gained a greater understanding of Indigenous voice.

This study integrates the fragmented management sub-disciplines with each other (voice & EDI) and with the education literature. The Indigenous participant's expectation echoed the education literature and therefore, this strengthens the Canadian data on what expectations are for Indigenous employees in higher education institutions. Furthermore, this research fills gaps in the management voice and EDI literature.

The findings unveil that formal and direct channels are best suited for Indigenous voice. Culturally appropriate formal voice channels and structures made sure participants were comfortable enough to engage in voice. This includes sharing circles which are important in Indigenous culture (Indigenous communication is best with open dialogue and a team based, non-hierarchical approach (Hunt, 2021)) and formally established channels such as committees that worked towards reconciliation. Within these formal channels, participants had an opportunity to bring an Indigenous perspective. This aligns with the recommendations from Pidgeon, 2016; Sonn et al., 2000; Bunda & Brennan, 2012, who offered approaches for improving inclusion and the voices of Indigenous people in higher education by stating Indigenous people need to be represented through advisory committees and leadership roles. Moreover, a lack of formal channels was a significant barrier to voice and often led to marginalization of Indigenous voice. Without formal channels, there is no formal accountability or monitoring of Indigenous voice, it is up to leader discretion on what they are expected to do. Hence, dependency on supervisor relationships is critical for access to and effectiveness of formal voice channels, and particularly, when no formal channels are available, as it is up to leader discretion on what to do with voice. Therefore, relations with leadership were important in circumstances where no formal channels were available for addressing certain issues, participants were able to voice and have their voice acted upon because of leadership support.

The findings indicate that supervisors were felt to be highly facilitative of participants' sense of cultural safety and inclusion. This is due to Indigenous cultures emphasis on interpersonal relationships, and this support enabled participants to be authentic and have conversations about work-life balance. This was greatly valued by participants because it reflects an appreciation of their value as a human and not just an employee. Indigenous cultural values influenced their interpersonal relationships and how they perceive their job duties should be performed.

Interviewees expressed the importance of creating community on campus and collaboration with non-indigenous staff when voicing and engaging in Indigenous initiatives that work towards reconciliation. One participant referred to being on the 'same team' when referring to other departments in the institution and many participants' expressed disdain when collaboration with other departments was not happening. Relationship building and creating allyship is important for the Indigenous community, as they are a much more collectivistic culture compared to Canadian culture (Hofstede et al., 2005) and the focus is on community and collaboration (Hunt, 2021; Bear, 2000), in contrast with Canadian culture where the individual self and independence is highly regarded (Dumont, 1993). Therefore, cultural training is significant at all levels of the institution. Despite the need for inclusive training, findings revealed inconsistent inclusive training and development for employees at the institutions. Although some cultural training is provided, most is voluntary. Insufficient cultural training can hinder Indigenous voice because managers can limit the successful use of voice mechanisms due to their lack of emotional and cultural competence and communication skills (Alang et al. 2020; Gollan et al. 2005; Wilkinson et al. 2004). Consequently, the absence of cultural awareness training makes it challenging for non-Indigenous staff to comprehend Indigenous ways of knowing, further suppressing Indigenous voice and diminishing the creation of a safe environment for expression. Many

participants urged the need for more cultural training and development for institutions, so other staff can become better in making sure Indigenous employees feel safe to voice. For example, this includes understanding the significance of storytelling and sharing circles. This is in line with exiting literature (Ruck et al., 2017; Detert & Burris, 2007) suggesting paying attention to both sides of the employee voice coin, one being upward employee voice and the other being manager receptiveness to voice. The lack of cultural training is concerning as research suggests the need to consider not just the effects of cultural dimensions on voice but also cultural differences and employees' competencies in managing those differences (Ng et al., 2019; Morrison, 2023).

Furthermore, due to a lack of formal channels and poor supervisor relationships, several interviewees highlight themselves being informal channels for others in their institution, who then share this voice formally with leadership. These Indigenous leaders had a difficult time having their voice heard in higher level institutional policy matters and often stated they needed a channel for themselves. Nevertheless, these Indigenous leaders had to become emergent and indirect voice channels, which were much needed by other Indigenous people in the institution.

Institutional policies and practices towards reconciliation includes EDI work that helps facilitate Indigenous voice in higher education. A significant finding was that having a lack of policies for collective inclusion can defeat formal policies for Individual inclusion. This is because the Indigenous people see themselves as a part of a people, a community, whereas western society views themselves as individuals. Thus, policies created in the higher education institutions tend to center on individual inclusion focusing on employees and don't focus on broader societal group inclusion. Therefore, inclusion must extend to the collective level and formal policies have to extend to that as well because Indigenous employees see themselves

connected internally to the institution but also externally to their community. That is why external voice relations are important for broader societal reconciliation. The study reveals that outreach and collaboration between institutions and communities brings forth that collective level inclusion. Findings highlighted institutions and communities working together to indigenize courses and co-creating Indigenous specific programs. This aligns with recommendations from existing education literature on Indigenous voice and inclusion (Durmush et al., 2021; Pidgeon, 2016; Bunda et al., 2012). What is important here is the level of community involvement in the program because the development of a program is not an inherently positive action, and if the development proceeds without the collective community's free, prior, and informed consent, the potential for failure and the perpetuation of the colonial encounter increases (Stefaneli et al., 2019). Therefore, voice is crucial and if utilized correctly, it is seen as a bottom-up participatory planning (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020; Wilkinson & Barry, 2016; Glew et al., 1995). If used in this manner, communities will have decision-making power and not have to collaborate with an already set agenda. Findings support this claim. Through this outreach and engagement, Indigenous voice from the community and employees was heard, and influenced decision making.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that through community engagement, institutions were provided training opportunities. Institutions discovered opportunities to develop new educational programs with culturally relevant content and discovered relevant methods to deliver this learning (elders, land-based experiences; circles, storytelling, Indigenous language). Battiste (2000) also highlights these learning methods as crucial for decolonizing knowledge and working towards reconciliation. This EDI practice not only works towards reconciliation but also elevates Indigenous knowledge in higher education. This collaboration demonstrated willingness

by the institution to incorporate Indigenous Terms of Reference by using Indigenous methodologies for learning. Thus, Indigenous knowledge was recognized as equal to western knowledge.

In conclusion, this study first, advanced scholarship on the expectation of Indigenous employees in Canadian higher education institutions based on the education literature, which was mainly from Australia and New Zealand. Second, this study adds to the limited literature of Indigenous voices in Canadian higher education by looking at which voice mechanisms are best at the organizational level (Wilkinson et al. 2018; Shore et al., 2011; 2018; Tang et al., 2015; Morrison, 2014; Freeman et al., 2007; Wilkinson et al., 2021; Kwon & Farndale, 2020; Syed et al., 2011). Third, it shows that outreach and collaboration with communities extends the inclusion to the collective level, which is important for indigenization/decolonization of the institution.

5.6 Practical Implications (Participant Perspectives)

This study reveals a mixed perspective among Indigenous participants regarding progress towards decolonization and inclusion within Canadian higher education institutions. While some observed incremental steps forward, a prevailing sense of frustration emerged due to perceived barriers inhibiting Indigenous voice expression. This study aimed to illuminate the practices and policies related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) that enhance the recruitment, retention, and inclusion of Indigenous employees in higher education institutions. Our findings provide practical insights into which EDI practices and voice mechanisms are most effective in fostering Indigenous employee inclusion, thus supporting broader reconciliation efforts.

From participant perspectives, there need to be more EDI-focused formal voice policies and structural channels. First, more internal inclusive voice mechanisms are needed. This

includes Indigenous committees, councils and diversity networks, as these mechanisms allow for effective voice expression and responsiveness. The study found that Indigenous employees have limited formal channels for voice, which hinders their ability to express concerns. Institutional management should create intra-organization diversity networks, equality promotion councils and celebrate diversity. Bell et al. (2011), suggests the increase in workforce diversity requires new and different voice mechanisms. They offer mechanisms which may be used to give minorities at work a greater voice and create a culture of inclusion. This includes:

- Providing anonymous complaint mechanism.
- Allowing feedback free from harassment.
- Providing safe spaces.
- Creating diversity councils.
- Making a commitment to includes minorities in decision making processes.
- Allocating adequate staff and resources to EDI efforts
- Building representatives of internal and external minority networks.
- Identifying and promoting champions of ethnic minorities.

Incorporating these practices and mechanisms will increase inclusion and perceived inclusion for employees, which means that they feel connected to others at the workplace, believe they have an influence and can participate in decision making process. This is seen through the effectiveness of sharing circles highlighted in this study. Moreover, it is crucial Indigenous employees have influence over decisions affecting Indigenous matters. In addition to the internal inclusive voice mechanisms, there need to be external inclusive voice mechanisms. This consists of engagement with Indigenous communities. All institutions in this study did this to some extent. This is engagement is critical because it extends to the collective inclusion of the Indigenous community, which is vital for genuine reconciliation efforts.

Next, is the importance of having inclusive HR practices. First, there needs to be the integration of allyship into all employees' job descriptions to embed EDI work as a fundamental

organizational responsibility. Second, institutions must improve their recruitment and onboarding process by offering realistic job previews (RJPs). In the context of Indigenous representation, this approach would entail identifying individuals who are willing to serve as change agents within the institution. Extensive research within the human resource management field supports the efficacy of RJPs in fostering stronger organizational commitment among new employees. By offering a comprehensive view of both the benefits and drawbacks associated with a position, organizations can significantly enhance retention rates and promote a more informed and committed workforce. (Premack & Wanous, 1985; Wanous, 1973). Moreover, supervisor involvement in the recruitment process is vital for Indigenous employees taking the position. The findings show that supervisor relationships and their cultural understanding helped with recruitment, therefore, it is important that discussions between the supervisor and potential future employee happen during the recruitment process to evaluate their fit in the job and institution. When the goals of employees and the institution are aligned, the frequency of voice increases (King et al., 2020). In terms of retention and selection, there needs to be the promotion of Indigenous employees into decision making roles. It is vital the institutions hire and promote Indigenous employees to managerial and central positions, so not only will there be more voice expression, but the voice will more likely be acted upon (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Kwon et al., 2016; Harley, 2014). This is consistent with Syed's (2014) diversity management paradigm of voice, involving voice mechanisms such as intra-Indigenous diversity networks and equality councils for minority voice in order to lessen discrimination, improve performance and benefitting from a diverse workforce. Moreover, Indigenous employees must not be overworked, as the findings indicate many of them hold various roles throughout the institution. By being overworked they do not have enough capacity to work on reconciliation efforts and more times

than not, this leads to turnover, resulting in a lack of sustainable indigenization and decolonization in the institutional policies and practices.

Next, effective implementation of voice mechanisms requires cultural training for all staff, particularly leaders. Cultural training helps eliminate biases and fosters an understanding of Indigenous perspectives. The absence of cultural training for non-Indigenous staff was identified as a critical issue contributing to the suppression of Indigenous voices and the creation of unsafe spaces within the workplace. Continuous, mandatory cultural training ensures that leaders are equipped to respond to Indigenous voice appropriately, enhancing the overall inclusiveness of the institution. Research has shown ethnic minority voice is not as receptive as the majority. In a recent study, employees who were seen as offering low quality ideas were more likely to be seen as incompetent, and as a result, more likely to be ostracized by their peers (Ng et al., 2022). Indigenous employee voice can be seen as going against the majority and therefore, seen as low quality; hence, the importance of cultural training to get rid of these biases. Moreover, research (Howell et al., 2015) has found that supervisors were more likely to recognize and give credit to voice from employees with higher ascribed status (cued by demographic variables such as majority ethnicity). On a similar note, Lam et al. (2019) found that responses to how employees voice vary across cultures. In the US, managers were more likely to endorse suggestions when the voicer was credible and managers in China were more likely to do so when the voicer was polite. Thus, with an already minority presence and low levels of recruitment for Indigenous people, leaders and staff need cultural training, so Indigenous voice can be equally heard. EDI policies need to put emphasis on consistent and mandatory training. Furthermore, to emulate a real leader, one must be up to date with knowledge and understand the diversity and culture of their colleagues, to reap benefits of diversity. Research suggests that the link between cultural

values and institutional and managerial approaches becomes crucial for organizational success. Hence, to be more inclusive, and ultimately more effective, management practices must be flexible, adaptable, and less ethnocentric when collaborating with Indigenous peoples (Redpath & Nielsen, 1997).

Lastly, there need to be more formal feedback mechanism implemented to assess the efficacy of communication channels. For example, regular needs assessments and climate surveys with Indigenous employees. The participants felt their voice was suitably acknowledged when their work group behaved inclusively by providing constructive feedback on their input. Regular feedback from staff signalled that their colleagues were keen to help them and improve performance of their Indigenous related job duties. This norm of providing constructive feedback was most apparent in formal channels. Receiving feedback and being able to have the opportunity to give feedback was shown as a facilitator for voice (Ruck et al., 2017; Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Lee et al., 2014). Interviewees expressed that they felt valued and listened to when they received feedback on their voice efforts, whereas receiving no feedback made interviewees feel they were not acknowledged for their efforts and were ignored. Moreover, interviewees stated the importance of feedback in learning and improving their job. Additionally, research (King et al., 2020) found that when supervisors fail to provide feedback for not implementing an employee suggestion, employees see voice as less safe, and are less likely to engage in future voice. However, if supervisors provide an explanation for not endorsing a suggestion, future voice behaviour is more likely. Therefore, even if an idea is not adopted, the employee can still feel heard and valued, and feel the supervisor was receptive to his or her input. This is consistent with the findings from the study, as several participants noted any feedback rather than no feedback would make them feel valued. Hence, feedback mechanisms

must be implemented in communication channels. In conclusion, by implementing these strategies, institutions can create a supportive environment that promotes the voice of Indigenous employees, contributing to a more inclusive and engaged organizational culture.

5.7 Limitations & Recommendations

This study faced several limitations. Firstly, colonialist assumptions are often implicit in much research on the topic (e.g., Conference Board of Canada by MacLaine, C., Lalonde, M., & Fiser, A). However, the most significant is the low sample size. Also, the participants were recruited from a single province, and only one institution included in the study had more than 10,000 students. It is important to note, many potential participants' felt they lacked the capacity and time to participate in the study due to their already full workloads, which mainly focused on Indigenous initiatives. Consequently, the challenges faced by these institutions may vary significantly due to their size, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The small sample size particularly impacted the quantitative results, as it increased the potential for skewed scores.

Future research should address these limitations by increasing the sample size to gain more comprehensive insights. The recruitment of Indigenous participants followed a conventional research approach, utilizing a recruitment script and an interview protocol. Alternative methods rooted in Indigenous cultural practices might have yielded greater participation. For example, foregoing a formal interview protocol in favor of a more conversational, relationship-centered approach (e.g. sharing circles) could have created a more comfortable and engaging environment. Additionally, incorporating Indigenous terms of reference (4Rs) - focusing on community-oriented, less structured dialogue - would better align with Indigenous cultural values and foster a sense of collective sharing and mutual respect. These approaches may have created a more inviting and relational environment, encouraging broader

engagement and deeper connections with participants, which can enhance the inclusivity and richness of future research. Furthermore, expanding the study to include participants from multiple provinces and institutions of varying sizes will enhance the generalizability of the results. Future research should explore differences between rural and metropolitan higher education institutions to see a difference in Indigenous voice and inclusion outcomes.

Additionally, exploring the resultant integrated model from this study for Indigenous employee voice mechanisms in contexts outside of higher education can broaden the understanding of this phenomenon. For example, looking at best channels for external Indigenous outreach and in government ministries of education.

In conclusion, addressing these recommendations will enhance the understanding of Indigenous employee voice and contribute to more inclusive and effective organizational practices.

5.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the urgent need for enhanced EDI policies that effectively promote Indigenous voices. Key factors for achieving this include increased recruitment, retention, and promotion of Indigenous employees, ensuring they have access to culturally appropriate formal voice channels. This approach will address the lack of capacity many Indigenous employees experience, enabling them to significantly influence Indigenous initiatives. Additionally, developing comprehensive cultural training for staff will ensure that Indigenous voices are not only heard but also acted upon. Despite significant strides in reconciliation efforts, a substantial gap remains in dismantling deep-rooted colonial structures. Povey et al. (2022) found consensus among the senior Indigenous leaders interviewed in their study and Canadian Indigenous academics (Battiste et al., 2002; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Henry

et al. 2017; Kovach, 2019; Louie, 2019; Mohamed & Beagan, 2019) that systemic change is the desired long-term outcome. This necessitates paradigm shifts at both individual and institutional levels, embracing diverse ways of knowing and being. One participant emphasized how no one has asked what decolonization and indigenization mean or look like. In concluding the interview, I made sure to ask. The following was a portion of their impactful response:

Decolonization is the unlearning, and the indigenization is the relearning. So, decolonization is more of the macro picture of power dynamics, of looking at the colonial empire and kind of what has been incentivized, by creating capacity to critically self-reflect what beliefs of paradigms come from that. And then to decolonize is actually an inner journey of your own mental belief systems and then when people get far enough in that process, they start to unravel historical trauma...I'm not even saying colonial is bad or wrong, right, it just is...They [colonial empire] created a standardized school system in order to do that. That's why if you've been through a standardized school system, you're colonized right. Because those values shape all the messaging that comes down to that child. And what it means to be enough, what it means to become something. Those are all values that are based in that colonial structure, which is through the education system. So, to decolonize that means, okay, well what are my values? Who am I? Why do I do what I do?... And so indigenizing is to unpack all of that, to relearn the proper history and to open people's paradigms to see with compassionate empathy...and wherever they're at in their learning, it's a process we're doing together. But Indigenization isn't marrying the two worlds of western education and indigenous knowledge and ways of being. But it's walking side by side with the ways of knowing, seeing that it's equal to. And so, for so long it's been looked at, that western ways of

*knowing are superior, but it's a way of knowing just like indigenous ways of knowing are.
They're actually equal.*

While these words offer a powerful vision for decolonization and indigenization, a considerable gap remains between this vision and the current state of institutions. There is potential for institutions to embrace both decolonization and indigenization, however, progress remains slow, with Indigenous voices often overlooked. Without meaningful efforts to address the systemic challenges, the goal of creating inclusive and equitable environments remains elusive. Amplifying Indigenous perspectives is an essential, albeit challenging, step towards reconciliation, which requires ongoing commitment rather than superficial gestures.

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Appendix 1

Recruitment Letter

Thesis Title: Indigenous Voices in Higher Education

Ricky Jhander

Background

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established in response to systemic damage of colonialism and to start the process of reconciliation between Indigenous people and Canada. In 2015, the TRC released its final report which included 94 Calls to Action. The calls encouraged all levels of Government (territorial and Indigenous) to work together and change policies to promote reconciliation (TRC, 2015). Along with the TRC Calls to Action, in 2016 Canada committed to supporting the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP).

Commitment of the Canadian government to the TRC has demonstrated that the country is taking steps to heal a broken relationship with Indigenous people. Education plays a vital role toward reconciliation; thus, Calls to Action 7-12, and 62-66 are focused on improving educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples and for funding to educate Canadians about Indigenous history. The aim of these calls is to ensure Indigenous peoples receive the same quality of education at all levels as non-Indigenous peoples. This includes checking for funding gaps, income gaps, improving on-reserve education and providing greater access to post secondary education (MacLaine, 2019), all of which has brought to light the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in university. As of 2016, only 8% of the Indigenous population had a university degree, compared to 20% of the general population (MacLaine et al., 2019). Universities must therefore play an important role in bridging this gap and working towards reconciliation.

Specific Problem Domain for this Study

Many higher education institutions have established Indigenous Resource Centres (IRCs) that support Indigenous students and deal with Indigenous initiatives of all kinds, such as recruitment and retention. However, we still do not know whether/how the voices of these offices are being heard in higher education institutions: Are Indigenous employees in these institutions being heard and included in decision making relating to the Indigenous population? Do these employees have the appropriate channels to engage in voice behaviour? Are they feeling included? In addition, do the equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts of these institutions promote voice and inclusion? If employees in these offices are not being heard, then ultimately it may adversely influence recruitment efforts for the Indigenous population. Therefore, gaining a better understanding to these questions will ultimately show how universities are doing with their EDI efforts and reconciliation efforts for the Indigenous population.

When we turn to the management literature for guidance on Indigenous employee voice, empirically grounded theoretical prescriptions are lacking. Most literature on voice is conducted in a western context and limited research has addressed the impact of cultural values on voice systems (Wilkinson et al., 2021; Kwon & Fardale, 2020; Morrison, 2014; Freeman et al., 2007).

The voice literature has only recently begun to acknowledge the need for research on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and ‘missing’ voices (Wilkinson et al., 2018; 2021; Um-E-Rubbab, & Mehdi Raza Naqvi, 2020; Syed, 2014). Similarly, research in the EDI literature still has not identified which EDI practices and policies provide effective mechanisms and opportunities for many diverse voices.

Research Questions

The objectives of this study are to better understand Indigenous employee voice in higher education institutions – specifically, to explore how well high educational institutions’ voice systems work for Indigenous Resource Centre employees’ inclusion and decision making. Thus, the research questions for this study are as follows:

- How do higher education institutions facilitate or hinder Indigenous employee voices?
- How do Indigenous employees perceive their institutions’ inclusion efforts?
- How do Indigenous employees engage in voice behaviour, if at all?

Research Method

The study will be qualitative in nature and will utilize a multiple case design. Participants will include employees from Indigenous Resource Centres and staff/leaders at Canadian higher education institutions who are engaged in supporting EDI and associated communication channels. Primary data will be collected via semi-structured interviews and, secondary data will be collected from pertinent institutional policies and documents.

The anticipated *theoretical value* of this study is that it will advance knowledge on the role of diversity in the utilization of voice channels, as well as advance awareness of the role of voice mechanisms in the diversity literature. Moreover, by studying these issues in the context of a particular form of diversity that has been relatively neglected (e.g., employees from Indigenous cultures) we will gain a greater understanding of how best to accommodate this important minority voice.

The anticipated *practical implications* of this study are to develop a deeper understanding of college and university EDI and voice practices/policies that support inclusion and decision making for Indigenous employees, and to then disseminate this understanding via brown bags to participant educational institution channels. A greater understanding along these lines will help to advance Indigenous learning and employment outcomes.

Please Note:

1. This study will be conducted in English.
2. Participation is voluntary, participants are free to decline without any consequences.
3. Participation will be kept confidential. Your colleagues will not know of your participation status.
4. Before participating in the study, participants will be given detailed information about the study and be asked to sign an informed consent form.

5. All those interested in participating are highly encouraged to contact the researcher. However, due to time constraints, only 30 participants can participate in this study (on a first-come first-served basis). Therefore, if that limit is reached, the researcher will contact any remaining individuals who have expressed interest (but who have not yet been interviewed) to explain that the study data collection period is completed and their participation is no longer needed.
6. For participation, please contact Ricky Jhander at *****@uottawa.ca

Appendix 2

IRC & EDI Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol – IRC Employees

Introduction

Hi, my name is Ricky, thank you for meeting with me today. I really appreciate you giving me your time to participate in this interview. This interview will take approximately anywhere from 30 – 60 minutes and will be recorded. You have received a consent form to sign which indicates your consent for this interview. Your responses to the questions will be confidential. Please remember you are here voluntarily and can withdraw at any time.

To tap this aspect of the model:	Ask this:
Demographics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which minority groups do you identify with, in your context as an employee at this institution, if at all? (e.g., Could be Indigenous, gender, age, marital/parental status, etc. – if they refer to society in general also ask specifically in their institution) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Probe: If they say Indigenous, ask if they identify as First Nations, Metis, or Inuit, then ask which community b. Probe: If they say age, then ask their age range (by decade) c. Probe: If they say parental status, then ask how many kids and their ages
Antecedents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ATTITUDE TOWARD RECRUITMENT: Why did you choose this particular institution? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What was their recruitment strategy? (Probe e.g: demonstrable cultural awareness? Use of culturally similar mentors/role models? Recruitment via Indigenous networks? Promotion of progressive HR policies/practices and/or progressive Institutional Leadership?) b. What aspects of their recruitment strategy made this job opportunity seem meaningful for you? (e.g., training opportunities, community outreach opportunities, etc?) 2. If IRC employee is not Indigenous, then ADD THIS QUESTION: How have you experienced not being Indigenous while working at an IRC? How were you trained to serve at an IRC if you are not Indigenous?
Voice Expression for Individual Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. POSITIVE CRITICAL INCIDENT FOR INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES: Please provide an example of on occasion when

	<p>you expressed your authentic self and felt respected/valued/safe in doing so?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What approach did you take to express yourself? (Channels: Formal/informal, direct/indirect) b. What helped? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) c. What hindered? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) <p>2. NEGATIVE CRITICAL INCIDENT FOR INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES: Now provide an example of on occasion when you were your authentic self and DID NOT FEEL respected/valued/safe in doing so?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What approach did you take to express yourself? (Channels: Formal/informal, direct/indirect) b. What helped? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) c. What hindered? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>)
<p>Voice Expression for WORK decision outcomes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FREQUENCY OF VOICE EXPRESSION ABOUT WORK: How often do you develop and make suggestions for issues that may influence your work and work group? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) How often, re: suggestions to help improve the program and reach its goals? b) How often, re: suggestions to advise your organization against undesirable behaviours that would hamper your work and work group? c) If not often, why? (for a &/or b above) 2. PROMOTIVE VOICE ABOUT WORK: Think of an incident where you were able to make a proactive/constructive suggestion for improvement (to your work or institution). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What influenced you to make this suggestion? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) b) How did you choose to express your voice? What approach did you take to express yourself? (Channels: Formal/informal, direct/indirect)

	<p>c) What influenced how you made this suggestion? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>)</p> <p>d) What were the consequences?</p> <p>e) What do you think had the greatest influence on those consequences? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>)</p> <p>3. PROHIBITIVE VOICE ABOUT WORK Think of an incident where you lodged a complaint (i.e., advised your organization about undesirable behaviours that hamper your work and work group).</p> <p>a) What influenced you to make this suggestion? (problems that might cause serious loss/inefficiency to your work or work group? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>))</p> <p>b) How did you manage to voice this to administration/management even if it would embarrass others and/or hamper relationships with others? (e.g.. coordination problems in your work?)</p> <p>c) What influenced how you made this suggestion? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>)</p> <p>d) What were the consequences?</p> <p>e) What do you think had the greatest influence on those consequences? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>)</p>
<p>Individual Inclusion Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taps into cultural differences and psychological safety 	<p>1. FEELING RESPECTED/FAIRLY TREATED: Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how respected/fairly-treated do you feel by others at this institution?</p> <p>2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY TO EXPRESS NEEDS: Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how safe do you feel to express <u>your needs</u> at this institution?</p> <p>a) PROBES: Can you tell me more about this? What about expressing your needs with regard to Cultural/Traditional matters?</p> <p>2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY TO DISPLAY IDENTITY: Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), how safe do you feel to express your cultural/traditional identity <u>at this institution?</u></p>

	<p>a) PROBES: Can you tell me more about this? What about expressing your identity with regard to Cultural/Traditional matters?</p>
<p>Work-Group Level Inclusion Outcomes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ACCESS TO RESOURCES: Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), to what extent do you feel able to access information/support resources that you need at this institution? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. PROBES: Can you tell me more about this? (e.g. Please think about specific resources that have mattered to you. They could be task-related information resources (such as information others in your cohort/work group had, or institutional learning service resources), or social supports (e.g., accommodation for childcare services, cultural/religious/spiritual accommodation, etc.)) 2. ACCESS TO INFORMATION: Please provide an example of an occasion when members in your cohort/work group shared information with you. THEN ASK THE SAME QUESTION ABOUT MEMBERS OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL INSTUTION <i>OUTSIDE OF THEIR IRC WORK GROUP</i> (EG., EDI/HR/ER). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What helped? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) b. What hindered? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) 3. ACCESS TO INFLUENCE ON DECISION-MAKING: Aside from formal task-related requirements of your work, can you think of an example when you felt part of/ didn't feel part of your cohort/work group informal decision-making networks? THEN ASK THE SAME QUESTION ABOUT FEELING A PART OF DECISION MAKING AT THEIR EDUCATIONAL INSTUTION <i>OUTSIDE OF THEIR IRC WORK GROUP</i> (EG., EDI/HR/ER). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What helped? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) b. What hindered? (<i>nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?</i>) 4. RECEIPT OF FEEDBACK Please provide an example of an occasion when you were provided with feedback by admin and management in your program.

	<p>a. What helped about how that feedback was provided? <i>(nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?)</i></p> <p>b. What hindered about how that feedback was provided? <i>(nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?)</i></p> <p>5. RECEIPT OF SUPPORT Please provide an example of an occasion when other social support resource services were adequate/inadequate for you (e.g., accommodation for childcare services, religious accommodation, cultural awareness training, etc.)</p> <p>a. What helped? <i>(nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?)</i></p> <p>b. What hindered? <i>(nature of the work situation, people directly involved, organizational policies/practices/other org'l-cultural factors such as diversity networks/role models?)</i></p> <p>6. OVERALL CONTROL/SELF-DETERMINATION: Overall, on a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high), to what extent do you feel this institution is responsive to your needs?</p>
<p>Organizational Outcomes</p>	<p>1. Work Unit Efficacy: How do you monitor and confirm that the representation you are offering is meeting your work group goals (e.g., offers value to Indigenous students)?</p> <p>2. Indigenous Retention: Can you give me an example of how (a) your expression of your voice and/or (b) your institution's responsiveness (or lack thereof) to your voice is influencing Indigenous Retention?</p> <p>3. Indigenous Recruitment: Can you give me an example of how (a) your expression of your voice and/or (b) your institution's responsiveness (or lack thereof) to your voice is influencing acquisition of Indigenous talent (e.g., recruitment of other Indigenous employees and/or students)?</p> <p>4. Broadening of Indigenous World Views: Can you give me an example of how your institution's responsiveness (or lack thereof) is influencing the broadening of the institution's world views about Indigenous Peoples and their communities?</p>

Awesome. Thank you for sharing your answers. Now I will end the interview with a couple **concluding questions**.

1. **Is there anything I have not asked but should have asked? Anything else you would like to add to this interview? (e.g., the role of networking opportunities with IRCs at other institutions)?**
2. **If I have additional questions or need more clarification, after reviewing your transcript, is it ok to contact you?**

This is the end of the interview thank you very much for your participation. I will be sharing the transcript with you once it's prepared, so you can review it for accuracy. If you have any questions about this study at that point, or before then, please don't hesitate to contact me. Have a great day!

Interview Protocol – Non-Indigenous Employees (EDI/HR Staff & Leaders)

Introduction

Hi, my name is Ricky, thank you for meeting with me today. I really appreciate you giving me your time to participate in this interview. This interview will take approximately anywhere from 30 – 45 minutes and will be recorded. You have received a **consent form** to sign which indicates your consent for this interview. Your responses to the questions will be **confidential**. Please remember you are here **voluntarily** and can withdraw at any time.

To tap this aspect of the model:	Ask this:
Indigenous Cultural Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How long have you been employed at this institution? What other roles have you served? 2. To what degree are you involved in Equity, Diversity & Inclusion activities (policy-setting, implementing practices) at your institution? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Could you tell me more about that? 3. To what degree are you involved in Indigenous affairs at your institution? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Could you tell me more about that?
Organizational Outreach, Recruitment and Retention Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you tell me about your institution's general EDI policies and practices? 2. Could you tell me about your institution's policies and practices specifically towards the recruitment of Indigenous employees? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is working? What is not working? How do you know - Can you provide an example? b. What can be improved to achieve the best policies and practices for recruitment of Indigenous employees?

	<p>3. Could you tell me about the institution's policies and practices for the integration and retention of Indigenous employees?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is working? What is not working? How do you know - Can you provide an example? What can be improved?
Cultural Awareness and Inclusion Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How familiar are you with Indigenous culture? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What factors have helped you become familiar with the culture? What do you think can help you become more familiar with the culture? Does your institution provide cultural awareness and inclusion training? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If so, who receives it? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How can it be improved? If not, why? Does your institution have dedicated cultural safe spaces for Indigenous employees? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think this is beneficial? How can it improve?
Organizational Voice Systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How does the institution listen to Indigenous employee suggestions and concerns? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What channels are available for Indigenous employees to express their voice? Can you provide an example? What are the benefits of this? How can this be improved? How often do Indigenous employees express their voice (make suggestions) at this institution? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What actions are taken upon receiving the voice? Are they provided feedback?

Probes: Ask about items in model they have not discussed.

- Can you give me an example?
- Could you elaborate more on that?
- Is there anything else?

Awesome. Thank you for sharing your answers. Now I will end the interview with a couple concluding questions.

1. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?
2. Is there anything I have not asked but should have asked?
3. If I have additional questions or need more clarification, is it ok to contact you?

This is the end of the interview thank you very much for your participation. If you have any questions about this study, please don't hesitate to contact me. Have a great day!

Appendix 3



Interview Participation Consent Form

Name of student researcher: Rickjit Jhander

Contact details: *****@uottawa.ca

Name of professor: Sharon O'Sullivan (*****@telfer.uottawa.ca)

Affiliation: Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study entitled “**Indigenous Voices in Higher Education**”, conducted as a part of Rickjit Jhander’s Master’s Thesis.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to understand what equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) practices and voice mechanisms work best for inclusion of Indigenous employees in higher education institutions. More specifically, it will help in understanding how higher education institutions can best collaborate with Indigenous Resource Centre (IRC) employees to support the fulfillment of the IRC missions.

Participation: My participation will consist of participating in an audio-recorded, semi-structured interview with Rickjit Jhander. The interviews will last about 30 - 60 minutes. Each interview will be scheduled at a date/time and using a medium (e.g., phone or videoconference, such as Apple Facetime, Zoom, or MS Teams) that is convenient to me. All video recording features will be disabled, and audio will be recorded through digital audio recorder. Following the interview, I will be asked to review the typed transcript of my interview for accuracy and will be offered the opportunity to correct typos/elaborate upon or delete any of my comments in the transcript.

Risks: My participation will involve voluntarily sharing my personal views on EDI practices and voice mechanism for inclusion of Indigenous employees in higher education institutions. I have been assured by the researcher that all information shared will be kept confidential and interview transcripts and audio recordings will be stored in a secure place (e.g., locked filing cabinet, password-protected files on a computer).

Benefits: My participation in this study will enhance understanding of EDI practices and voice mechanisms in higher education institutions for better collaboration and inclusion of Indigenous employees.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. The contents will be used only for the current study “**Indigenous Voices in Higher Education**” and my confidentiality will be protected by removing any personally identifying information in any of the contents and quotes used.



The identity of participants will be protected by removing any self-identifying information and coding any identifiers. Only the researcher will have access to these codes. Participant roles/positions/ and/or departments, and institutions will not be revealed in publications. All data will be anonymized. Participants will review transcripts and work with researcher to anonymize/decontextualize data.

Conservation of data: All interview transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and electronic information, including audio clips, will be stored in password-protected files on a secure computer. Only the student researcher and the supervisor will have access to this. The data will be stored for 5 years after the time of completion. Transcripts will be shredded, and electronic data (including digital audio recordings) will be deleted.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed upon my request.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Rickjit Jhander at the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Prof. Sharon O’Sullivan.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the student researcher and/or Prof. Sharon O’Sullivan at the emails mentioned above.

If I have any questions regarding the *ethical conduct* of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research:

c/o University of Ottawa

Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

55 Laurier E
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5
613-562-5731
TELFER.UOTTAWA.CA

Appendix 4

21/02/2023

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number	S-11-22-8228
Titre du projet / Project Title	Indigenous Voices in Higher Education
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de maîtrise / Master's thesis
Statut du projet / Project Status	Approuvé / Approved
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	21/02/2023
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	20/02/2024

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Role
Rickjit JHANDER	École de gestion Telfer / Telfer School of Management	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Sharon O'SULLIVAN	École de gestion Telfer / Telfer School of Management	Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

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