# Diversity, equality and inclusion maturity model: setting new standards in responsible business education – evidence from PRME reports

Elżbieta Karwowska and Michał T. Tomczak

#### **Abstract**

Purpose - Creating diverse, equal and inclusive (DEI) environments is an important and relevant area of research on corporate social responsibility (CSR). This paper aims to identify recent trends in the business schools context, as they are primary sources of ethical management innovation. The paper also aims to identify business school DEI maturity levels.

Design/methodology/approach - The research design is qualitative. Using thematic analysis, the authors explored all the available and relevant (19) Principal for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Champions' reports regarding their activities in 2022 and 2023. Based on the data, the authors developed the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Maturity Model (DEIMM) in Business Schools, including the DEI maturity scale. The scale was used to explore the recent trends in four main areas: management, teaching, research and the third mission of the business schools.

Findings - The most prominent theme across the dataset is gender equality. The authors also identified new practices, including Indigenous people's inclusion and decolonisation, neurodiversity, homelessness destigmatisation, period destigmatisation and scientific disciplines' anti-discrimination. These activities were observed at various maturity levels, fitting all levels of our maturity model.

Research limitations/implications - This may suggest that business schools not only emulate business trends but also are prone to create their path to diversity, equality and inclusion.

Originality/value - This model can provide a starting point for developing tools for assessing the DEI maturity of business schools and other organisations, i.e. indicating the stage at which a school or a company is on its path to achieving DEI maturity, which creates an important contribution to the CSR research.

Keywords Diversity, equality and inclusion, Maturity model, Responsible business education Paper type Research paper

iversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) in the Business School Context is becoming an increasingly prevalent research direction. By some researchers, the higher educational settings are perceived as a litmus paper of societal complexity and equality (Elliott and Smith, 2004). As Starkey et al. (2009) noted, business schools play a key role in society: they are important sources of management innovation, they gather experts in this area to exchange knowledge and experience and train future managers who create hostile or ethical workplaces when they graduate. Business schools promote managerial practices that adapt to an evolving world, including a greater awareness of individual needs and abilities, especially through research-based education, and providing an important point of reference for stakeholders. Business schools "challenge students' view of their local communities, prompts them to reflect on their privileged status and to question how businesses could meet social challenges" (Singhal et al., 2023). They share

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their experiences with the general public, spreading the idea of social responsibility. All this makes the business schools an important research subject while analysing the most recent managerial trends.

Many acknowledged business schools are engaged in structured reporting processes according to trusted guidelines, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) or the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). These are an opportunity to share management practices and standards and inspire other organisations and individuals to implement similar approaches (Wigmore-Álvarez et al., 2020). PRME is a UN-backed initiative established in 2007 to adapt management education to train leaders to manage the complex demands within contemporary businesses and societies. PRME, like other initiatives (Cooper et al., 2014), targets business schools, including professional schools that confer degrees in business or management, university-based faculties of business and management and profile universities. PRME developed six principles to provide a guiding framework, but still, many schools struggle to implement them on a broad scale. It is fair to admit that not all reporting business schools implement social responsibility in their managerial practices as some treat accreditations and international membership as marketing tools to obtain recognition and attract student candidates. Research shows that the factor that impacts the ability to act according to taught standards is the school's size (Wigmore-Álvarez et al., 2020); thus, it seems reasonable to benchmark with the best and biggest business schools in the world, such as PRME Champions.

PRME Champions is a group of recognised business schools in terms of implementation of the principles of responsible management education, established in 2012. As shared on the PRME website, they are engaged signatories, who undertake advanced tasks and gamechanging projects that respond to systemic challenges and take transformative action on integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into their curricula, research and partnerships. The outstanding management performance of PRME Champions, leaders in implementing PRME principles, and the most recognised business schools in terms of social impact, make them a suitable research group to analyse the latest practices of DEI. These are business schools operating in various cultural and geographical contexts, such as Kazakhstan, France, India, the USA, Hungary, Thailand, Canada, Denmark, Spain, Australia, Mexico, Ecuador, Switzerland, the UK, South Africa, Finland, Slovenia, China, Portugal, Sweden, Malaysia, Colombia and New Zealand.

Addressing DEI in academic leadership is increasingly important. Still, many business schools hesitate to incorporate DEI-related activities because they are uncertain about how to adequately address sensitive diversity issues (Smith et al., 2021). There is a need to develop tools that may help business schools around the world to implement changes for more diverse, equal and inclusive working and studying conditions. We aim to fill this gap.

In this research, we focus on the identification of new trends in creating diverse, equal and inclusive environments in business schools from different backgrounds. We also aim to identify DEI maturity levels in the business school context. We define "Maturity" as the capacity to effectively respond to the environment through organisational practices. This response is characterised by being learned rather than instinctive and is not necessarily tied to the age of the organisation. Instead, it reflects the appropriateness of management practices employed in a given context (Bititci et al., 2014). Also, we introduce the "Maturity model", which describes the phases of maturity of the chosen aspects of the organisation, in which application in a certain domain is presented as a level-based sequence (Zare et al., 2018). It is a matrix of practices that outlines, for each organisational area, the level of formality, sophistication, and integration of practices, ranging from ad hoc to optimising (Bititci et al., 2014. In this approach, certain capabilities (qualitative attributes) are used to classify an object into one of several predefined areas, in a usually sequential manner (Kohlegger et al., 2009). A maturity model is therefore an evolutionary tool to systematically assess and improve capabilities on the way to excellence (Van Looy et al., 2011).

The article is constructed as follows: First, we present existing trends and places our research in the business schools' discourse. In the research methodology section, we outline the process of data collection and data analysis based on the inductive approach and research question development. In the results section we present the themes overview and the maturity model with the author's definitions illustrated with examples from reports. We also present conclusions, implications, limitations and further research directions.

### Existing diversity, equality and inclusion trends in higher education

Business schools are becoming influential actors operating in the higher education sector and thus important higher education institutions (HEI) from the stakeholders' perspective. That is possible due to the changes implemented in their strategies and operations. Less than two decades ago, society perceived business schools as an anti-example of social responsibility. They were profit-oriented institutions that spread theories that ridicule broader perspectives and responsible management (Frederick, 2008; Khurana and Penrice, 2011). After the infamous Enron crisis, business schools reflected on their role in educating future leaders and implemented business ethics and CSR into their curricula (Akrivou and Bradbury-Huang, 2015) and research and management practices (Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016) to impact the stakeholders positively. One of the most relevant good practices is DEI.

In general, the whole higher education sector has been changing in terms of enrollment proportions and the social expectations linked to its outcomes (Deem et al., 2022). There is a global trend to recruit international students, accompanied by the creation of new demands and opportunities for business schools (Zhang et al., 2016). Globalisation, greater mobility among the young generation, the growing middle class, widening access to education and the expansion of the higher education sector worldwide, all encourage business schools to reflect on their attitude and approach to DEI (Yang and Cheng, 2018).

It is now becoming a norm to operate in a diverse educational environment, also called an inclusive educational setting (Mousa et al., 2020) in business schools. Contemporarily, they gather individuals from different demographic characteristics, various educational and professional backgrounds, living individual lifestyles and pursuing distinct research goals (Desivilya et al., 2017). An inclusive work setting represents a balance of individual attitudes and the organisation's norms, values and practices (Turnbull et al., 2010). It safeguards human rights, ensures equality and promotes social justice, exceeding the area of diversity (Knights and Omanović, 2016). Diversity is defined as a variation within a community across specific characteristics. To nourish the diverse environment, business schools are encouraged to include minorities in decision-making or provide equal opportunity principles (Fujimoto and Hartel, 2017). Some researchers notice that "diversity on campus" should be managed in terms of its specific external and internal conditions (Zhang et al., 2016). Business schools, as HEIs, are unique organisations that have broad stakeholders they need to engage with. In business schools, DEI means increasing the numbers of diverse students, faculty and staff, and developing excellent curricula, research, and scholarships, in a way that enables every individual to thrive (Williams, 2023). Recently, some researchers started to analyse DEI more broadly, across physical, psychological and cognitive traits, socio-economic backgrounds, value systems, traditions and emerging identities, as well as diverse expectations around teaching, grading and assessment (Sanger and Gleason, 2020).

Various approaches exist to investigate DEI in the context of higher education. One of them is a critique of inequalities in the system, especially in the Global North, which is grounded in imperial, colonial and neo-liberal values and attitudes (Jansen, 2019). Works often analyse quantitatively female and male, first-year (Colvin, Volet and Fozdar, 2014) or international (Deakins, 2009) experiences on campus. Some studies also cover niche topics

like deaf education, curricula decolonisation (Deem et al., 2022) or expert debates (Buckridge and Guest, 2007).

Still, literature on DEI in higher education remains biased: Frequently treated as a problem in the North American context, diversity issues are limited to race, socio-economic status, and educational background and, as a consequence, lessons learned "do not always travel well to other settings" (Sanger and Gleason, 2020). Recently, Pineda and Mishra (2023) proved that the focus on DEI is not global. There is no common semantic to describe diversity, even though there are various movements regarding this matter across countries, their definitions are influenced by the local socio-political settings. Historically, the USA and Canada first focused on race and gender and spread this issue to other English-speaking countries where researchers debate gender, ethnicity and cultural diversity. It is no surprise then that the best business schools, such as UC Berkeley, Harvard, Stanford and Yale, recognise the urge to include DEI by adapting curricula, research, local initiatives and management practices, especially in the area of the recruitment of faculty and staff. DEI is prioritised and strategised to promote diverse student candidates, student bodies and case study-oriented classes, to make future leaders "fluent" in equality, address barriers, increase access and make an impact (Smith et al., 2021). At the same time, as noted by Grier and Poole (2020), the growth of diversity among faculty is not evident across the world. Recent European research studies focus on inclusion and gender, while diversity discourse is not that present in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America (Pineda and Mishra, 2023). Moreover, Bhopal (2023) recently showed that some HEIs only give the appearance of action towards DEI, as faculty and staff do not have the resources and encouragement from leaders to implement real change. Academics in business schools face cultural, functional and psychological barriers to institutional inclusion. They deal with gender, religious and political ideology biases, nepotism and injustice and even in-out group differentiation and dehumanising (Mousa et al., 2020).

Despite the acknowledged challenges, contemporary global trends make embracing DEI not just the proper course of action, but, according to some researchers, the only viable option (Williams, 2023). Diversity of all kinds makes classes productive and creative, and innovative (Herring, 2009) and helps the whole HEI to keep its relevance and impact (Sanger and Gleason, 2020). Harnessing the differences is important to prepare future managers to change the world. When done with respect and trust, diversity among identities, curricula and pedagogy fosters the development of soft skills, especially critical thinking, problem-solving and communication, as well as emotional intelligence, empathy and respect for other perspectives (Earley and Ang, 2003). Culturally diverse learning groups are particularly valuable in preparing students to participate in a globalised world (Poort et al., 2022). At the same time, faculty experience new perspectives, reactions and feedback regarding their teaching styles and programs, making teaching innovative and interesting to all students (Biswas and Deylami, 2017; Brookfield, 2017; Earley and Ang, 2003). Business schools also benefit from it. Nowadays, they sustain a competitive advantage and gain legitimisation due to implementing CSR in management systems, and the dissemination of responsible attitudes and practices in society (Miotto et al., 2020).

Taking into consideration all the above, the creation of a diverse environment in business schools appears as a necessity. Thus, exploration of the maturity of the activities undertaken by the business schools and identification of new trends in creating diverse, equal and inclusive environments in different cultural contexts seems pivotal to understanding how far we have come and what still needs to be achieved.

#### Research methodology

In this research, we focus on DEI in business schools. For this reason, we selected PRME Champions as our study population and our initial sample consisted of 47 business schools. To analyse their approach to DEI, we examined their latest PRME reports regarding their activities in 2022 and 2023, available in English on the PRME website. We focused on the most recent publications; thus, we excluded 26 reports that are focused on activities undertaken from 2018 to 2021. One report was unavailable online, one report was not written in English, and one report was solely about the COVID-19 crisis, and therefore did not meet our selection criteria. As a result, our final sample included 19 of the 47 business schools (Appendix). Our data set consisted of all DEI extracts contained in the selected PRME reports, i.e. all instances across the entire data corpus that in some way described DEI issues. This included descriptions of DEI approaches in all areas of business school responsibility including research, teaching, the third mission and management (Pinheiro et al., 2015), totaling over 80 Word pages. To analyse how DEI issues were presented by the PRME Champions in their reports, we conducted a thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. The research process is presented below.

Starting with familiarisation with the data, we identified messages suggesting the activities undertaken by business schools representing various maturity levels. It led to the formulation of a broad research question, mapping onto an inductive approach:

#### RQ1. What are the DEI maturity levels in a business school context?

We used a manual coding technique to create initial data-driven codes based on identified messages. The initial analysis of the data was conducted by the first author, who created preliminary codes. The second author was involved in cross-checking emerging themes, providing inter-coder reliability and developing the final coding template. Through multiple re-reading of the text and with researchers cross-checking for greater reliability of the results, we organised the data into narrow groups of meaning. Then we searched for logical links between the codes, with the use of tables and mind maps. After analysing relations between codes and themes, we created sub-themes related to the four areas of business school activity (management, teaching, research and the third mission). Reviewing the generated themes led to making identifiable distinctions between the themes, relying on the clear distinctions in the data set. For example, because in the reports sexual orientation, age, gender and ethnicity are treated as separate aspects (not limited to the umbrella term of cultural diversity), we generated separate themes to represent them. At this stage, we created thematic maps for better clarity of the story found in the data set (Figure A1). We also developed the Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Maturity Model (DEIMM) in Business Schools based on the data.

#### Results

# Diversity, equality and inclusion in business schools – themes overview

The primary result of our research is the identification of the areas of DEI that exist among business schools. The most visible theme across the data set that dominated the reports is gender equality. These are actions related to reduce the underrepresentation of women among students and employees and promoting doing so among external stakeholders. A theme expected to be covered more frequently in the data set but underrepresented is sexual orientation and preference freedom. Cultural diversity, an appreciation of the existence of many cultures, and not discriminating against any of them, and racial equality were also elaborated in the reports. None of the other identified themes is as vivid, yet they indicate some important trends among the business schools in terms of DEI. For example, equal access to education shows the importance of non-discrimination and the inclusion of people who break generational attitudes or fight external obstacles, including financial ones. Indigenous people's inclusion and decolonisation suggest the elevation of the local heritage to the level of Western achievements in developing knowledge and culture. Neurodiversity, a rather new trend in research and practice, aimed to promote different ways human brains work, has not been reported in terms of physical disability (also covered in the reports) which is an optimistic prognosis - neurodivergence still happens to be mistaken as an illness.

Physical disability inclusion and health equality, already mentioned, is another theme that appeared as bottom initiatives. It could be expected that business schools would report systematic improvements in management practice to include physically disabled people, and the total lack of such reports is intriguing. Mental health friendliness is important in the context of the global mental crisis related to the pandemic or war. Digital exclusion prevention, age diversity, homelessness destigmatisation, ethnic minority anti-discrimination, refugees and migrants' inclusion, family situation-based inclusion, period destigmatisation, working conditions equality, work-related abuse prevention, scientific discipline anti-discrimination, privilege awareness and microaggression, and rural and deprived areas inclusion appeared in the data set as rare activities, but the sole fact that those topics were integrated into the business school reports may suggest that these areas are being developed.

#### The conceptual model of diversity, equality and inclusion in business schools

The abovementioned themes represent different levels of maturity of DEI activities (Figure A2). We have identified messages that suggest the existence of various stages of DEI maturity in the data set. This observation leads to the development of the conceptual Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Maturity Model (DEIMM) in Business Schools. Thus, the model was formulated based on the data. It includes a DEI maturity scale, which consists of various stages which were used to present the results. According to this scale, we have proposed seven different stages:

- 1. relevance stage I;
- 2. bottom initiatives stage II (representing immature levels);
- 3. planning stage III;
- 4. implementation stage IV;
- 5. systematic actions stage V (medium maturity levels);
- evaluation stage VI; and
- 7. excellence stage VII (the highest maturity levels).

Definitions of each stage with exemplary codes are outlined below (Figure 1).

#### The interrelations and complexity of the diversity, equality and inclusion issues

Using the model, we could define clear stages of maturity of the practices we have identified. To present the outcome, we selected the codes that captured the essence of the point. We embedded the extracts within an analytical narrative, describing the data and making an argument about the research question.

The model shows that the immature levels of DEI include mentioning specific areas as relevant, and welcoming the bottom initiatives on the campuses. According to this, Indigenous people's inclusion and decolonisation, physical disability inclusion and health equality, neurodiversity, cultural diversity mental health friendliness, rural and deprived areas inclusion and family situation-based inclusion were identified on a low levels of maturity. The observed examples are: Our students research neurodiversity in their theses [Business School 12 on the list below], and Our Professor collaborates with the research centre to research the social inclusion of the marginalised autistic population [7]. It could be expected that business schools will undertake systematic actions to advance their performance in those areas.

The medium maturity stages include planning, implementing plans and then undertaking the DEI tasks regularly. Medium maturity levels were identified among actions related to racial equality, digital exclusion prevention, age diversity, working conditions equality, privilege awareness and microaggression prevention, scientific discipline antidiscrimination, refugees and migrants' inclusion, homelessness destigmatisation and

#### Diversity, equality and inclusion maturity model Figure 1

In management: EDI is one of three main areas of our At this stage, business schools in teaching: We prepare future economists to mitigate include DEI in their mission, vision, inequality [8]. values, and other declarations. in research: not identified, These are "things we say we do". in the third mission: We include all stakeholders no matter their age, gender, ethnicity, pregnancy or parenthood, religion, In management: Our students' union has an equality and At this stage students, faculty, and anti-harassment policy [18], staff engage in external initiatives. in teaching: Our student clubs are safe spaces for the or start their own individually or in students [1]. teams. Actions are not coordinated in research: We conduct a research project on EDI [1]. by the business schools but are in the third mission: We document best business practices very appreciated and welcomed. on EDI from India and Bangladesh [13]. 3 Planning DEI-related strategies or In management: We plan to enrich our diversity formally [12] including specific areas in the in teaching: We commit to creating an inclusive learning strategy. It may include plans environment [12], regarding leveraging the individual in research: not identified, • in the third mission: We develop an indigenous strategy with DEI efforts and plans based on the business school's mission and our stakeholders [7]. vision. In management: We develop guidelines for EDI [4], At this stage, coordinating Implementation in teaching: We developed a student code of conduct to individuals, units, or centers are respect people [6]. established, schools develop in research: We organize events to promote interdisciplinary procedures, implement policies, cooperation in research [3], and engage in external in the third mission: We established partnerships with other collaboration to establish local, universities to research interdisciplinary global crisis national, and international bodies. management to contribute to equality [15]. /stematic In management: We implemented a whistleblowing service to At this stage DEI related activities increase transparency [19], are undertaken on a daily basis. • in teaching: We offer a doctoral program on EDI [3], which result from strategic efforts · in research: We organize research events on human rights in and plans of the business school. actions These are "things we normally do". in the third mission: Our career advisor helps our students find, ethical employers [8]. At this stage, business schools conduct internal audits and In management: We are a Great Place to Work [13] Evaluation surveys and share the results in teaching: We assess our students' reflections on their among stakeholders, especially by attitude to diversity [3] publishing reports. It is also related in research: We worked with students to research the school to external validations, such as experience of students of color [12] in the third mission: not identified. getting recognition and awards. At this stage, business schools In management: We plan to ensure a larger diversity of reflected on their abilities and aim students, faculty, and staff [13], We participate in an to achieve more in the area of DEI. accreditation program to move from LGBTQIA+ friendly to It includes receiving external, and inclusive [7]. international accreditations, but in teaching: not identified, also future plans for the in research: not identified. development of existing internal in the third mission: not identified. practices and policies. Source: Authors' own work

neurodiversity. For example, in the area of homeless destigmatisation, business schools run systematic programs: We run social projects targeted at homeless youngsters [8]. Another example refers to scientific discipline anti-discrimination: We create inclusive research mobilisation groups and encourage mobilisers by granting workloads [12] and We organise events to embrace interdisciplinary cooperation in research [3]. As the analysed business schools report, the activities undertaken on those levels are planned, implemented according to those plans, and then regular. The advancements in those areas, according to our model, are also possible.

The highest stages of DEI maturity in the model include evaluation of the school's performance and undertaking further steps to reach the excellence. We observed high maturity levels in activities related to equal access to education, precisely analysing the results of the DEI efforts: One-third of our students are first-generation [11]. Among the issues related to sexual orientation and preferences freedom, also the highest maturity level was observed: We participate in an accreditation program to move from LGBTQIA+ friendly to inclusive [7]. The first example refers to evaluation, while the other is a sign of striving for excellence. Equal access to education sexual orientation and preference freedom represent highest maturity levels in our study, and the reason for that may be that those are well-established areas of diversity.

Our study also suggests that DEI issues in business schools may be a complex phenomenon. Although the abovementioned DEI activities are being assigned to particular levels of maturity as examples, the themes should not be interpreted as observed at one maturity level only. For example, according to the data, there is a theme that appeared at almost all business schools and almost all maturity levels (from 1 to 6) - gender equality. Among the exemplary observations, there are: We distribute workloads according to grade and gender [3], We evaluate our prevention system of violence against women [7] in the management area, We teach gender equality through role-playing exercises [14] in teaching, Our research team research how gender stereotypes impact inequality in academia [6] in research, and Our researcher is appointed to advise the government on women entrepreneurship [8] or We help women implement homemade products [10] in the area of the third mission. Noticeably, in this area, slightly negative male appreciation was presented as a positive outcome: Our female employees earn slightly more than males [14]. It may be related to the long history of the underappreciation of women in academia, but at a mature stage of diversity, it should not be an expected result. All the above show that the issues we elaborated on are complex and may be interconnected. Still, adding the theoretical model to the research discourse helps us better understand the maturity levels and, as a result, develop further tools to promote diversity, equality, and inclusion in the context of business schools.

#### Discussions and conclusions

The most visible theme across the data set that dominated the reports is gender equality, which has already been present within the DEI discourse for years. Among those themes we expected to see, we also identified new trends in the business school approach to DEI. These are Indigenous people's inclusion and decolonisation, neurodiversity, homeless destigmatisation, period destigmatisation and scientific disciplines' anti-discrimination. This may suggest that business schools not only emulate business trends but are prone to create their path to DEI.

We have identified seven distinct stages of DEI maturity, which suggest that business schools put uneven importance on various DEI topics. It is especially observable in the difference between gender equality and rather minor issues, such as Indigenous people's inclusion and decolonisation. The simultaneous existence of the seven maturity stages may also indicate that new DEI activities continuously arise and become relevant in the business school context or that more and more business schools become aware of the importance of creating diverse, equal and inclusive environments and start to put an effort into it.

Due to the novelty and importance of some themes, for example, neurodiversity, it is expected to show up a bit more often in the reports in the next few years. It is difficult to state whether the analysed schools do not undertake more DEI initiatives or just are unaware of the existence or importance of those areas yet. All of the themes deserve more attention, and developing the areas hidden under those themes may bring positive outcomes to the business schools and individuals.

Among the results of our study are implications of both a theoretical and a practical nature. First, our analysis resulted in the advancement of the theory by developing the conceptual Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Maturity Model (DEIMM) in Business Schools. The empiricalbased model includes seven progressive stages (I - relevance; II - bottom initiatives; III planning; IV – implementation; V – systematic actions; VI – evaluation, and VII – excellence). To the best of the authors' knowledge, no similar models, based on the concept of DEI organisational maturity and addressed specifically to business schools, have previously existed. Previous similar attempts at the development of maturity models have been made in other areas such as, for example, the Business Process Maturity Model (Lee et al., 2007). The introduction of our model may contribute to the development of a more systematic approach to research on DEI in business schools. Second, in terms of practical applications, our model can provide a starting point for the development of tools for the assessment of the DEI maturity of business schools and other organisations, i.e. indicating the stage at which a school or a company is on its path to achieving DEI maturity, providing an important reference point within the self-improvement process. The importance of this was indicated by earlier studies that have confirmed the effectiveness of sustainability metrics in directing organisational change (Slager et al., 2021) through the intraorganisational use of metrics (Vigneau et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the results may have broader implications, contributing to the self-improvement of business schools, in terms of promoting openness and the inclusion of various forms of diversity. This may lead to the exchange of ideas between various business schools, not limited to knowledge transfer from the global north, but rather using the experiences from other parts of the world. These actions are characterised by great potential in the context of possible societal impact. They align with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, going forward, the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 4 -"Quality Education" and Goal 8 - "Decent Work and Economic Growth" (UN, 2015), acting as a blueprint for the global sustainable development plan (Fu et al., 2020).

A limitation of our study is that we were limited to secondary data only, in the form of the PRME Champions reports and future research could examine the DEI visions and perspectives of business school decision-makers on the one hand and students on the other to better understand how these trends are being designed and experienced in specific business school contexts. Despite our data limitations, we proposed a conceptual model that helps us to analyse the DEI in business schools in a structured way. Future research could further develop this model using both quantitative on large-scale samples and qualitative approaches to test its validity. We believe that our model has the potential to apply to various institutions other than business schools, including those outside the higher education sector, and contribute to the development of CSR tools.

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## Appendix. Analysed business schools

- Conestoga School of Business, Canada.
- Mahidol University, Thailand. 2.
- Nottingham Trent University, UK. 3.
- 4. Almaty Management University, Kazakhstan.
- 5. University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Switzerland.
- 6. University of Limerick, Ireland.
- 7. La Trobe Business School, Australia.
- 8. University of Dundee, UK.
- 9. Woxsen University, India.
- 10. Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India.
- 11. Seattle Pacific University, USA.
- 12. University of Sussex, UK.
- 13. Saint Mary's University, Canada.
- 14. Goa Institute of Management, India.
- 15. CUNEF Universidad, Spain.
- 16. Kristianstad University, Sweden.
- 17. IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia.
- 18. Hanken School of Economics, Finland.
- 19. University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Source: Authors' own work

Figure A1 An example of a thematic map: the 'neurodiversity" theme

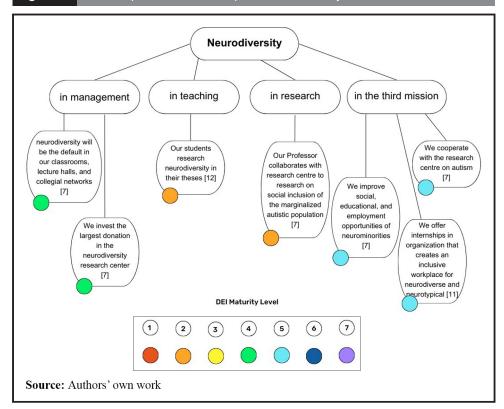


Figure A2

Maturity levels among DEI activities in the areas of management, teaching, research and the third mission

	Management	Teaching	Research	Third mission
specific actions regarding DEI	2	4	2	2
	3	5	5	4
	4	6		5
	5			
	6			
gender equality	1	1	2	2
	2	2	6	3
	3	4		5
	4	5		
	5	6		
	6			
Indigenous people's inclusion	1	5		2
and decolonization	3			3
				5
ethnic minority anti-discrimina- tion		6	2	
privilege awareness and mi- croaggression prevention	5			2
sexual orientation and prefer- ences freedom	2 7			2
cultural diversity	2 6	5		2
digital exclusion prevention		5	2	2
racial equality	5	4		2
	6	6	6	5
scientific discipline anti-discrim- ination	5		4	
mental health friendliness	5	5	2	2 5
physical disabilities inclusion and health equality				2
		5	2	5
neurodiversity	4	2	2	5
work-related abuse prevention			2	2
family situation-based inclusion				2
age diversity			2	2
		5		5
homelessness destigmatisation			5	2
				5
rural and deprived areas inclu- sion			2	5
financial equality	4	2 5	2	5
working conditions equality	6		2	2
refugees and migrants' inclusion				5
period destigmatisation				2
equal access to education		6	2	3

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