

Review article

Diversity Climate as a Multilevel Strategic Mechanism: A Bibliometric and Scoping Review of Three Decades of Global Research

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Abstract

Diversity climate refers to the shared perceptions concerning the valuation, support, and equitable management of differences related to ethnicity, gender, culture, and other social identities within organizations and educational institutions. This research seeks to chart the global progress of diversity climate studies and consolidate evidence regarding its functions and outcomes. By employing a combined bibliometric and scoping review of 158 Scopus-indexed publications released between 1993 and 2025, we identified trends in publication, major themes, and empirical patterns, with 45 studies selected for the qualitative synthesis. The results reveal a significant increase in diversity climate research since the late 2000s, primarily led by Western countries but gradually extending to other parts of the world. The findings show that diversity climate acts as a multilevel mechanism that impacts psychological well-being, team cohesion, innovation, employee retention, and the intercultural development of students. In summary, the evidence indicates that diversity climate is linked to more inclusive environments and may enhance resilience and performance in culturally diverse institutions.

Keywords: Diversity climate, team cohesion, employee retention, organizational performance, inclusion, diversity management, cross-cultural education.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a nation characterized by a significant degree of diversity, encompassing variations in ethnicity, language, culture, and religion (Sari, 2022). The 2020 Population Census indicated that Indonesia is home to over 1,300 ethnic groups and 718 regional languages recognized by the language authority, positioning it as the country with the second-highest number of regional languages globally (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). These findings indicate that Indonesia is not only rich in culture but also confronts significant challenges in navigating its differences (Mailin et al., 2023). Nevertheless, in addition to its varied demographics, Indonesia presents a unique socio-cultural framework distinguished by collectivist principles, gotong royong (mutual aid), musyawarah (decision making through consensus), and a long-standing tradition of interreligious harmony (Mailin et al., 2023). These cultural principles prioritize social cohesion, mutual respect, and shared accountability, which can influence the way diversity is understood and managed in organizations (Sinaga et al., 2026). Consequently, addressing diversity in Indonesia calls for not just an inclusive and strategic framework but also an appreciation of the local cultural values that foster unity in multicultural environments (Mawardi, 2024).

Diversity indeed serves as valuable social capital; however, if not managed appropriately, it can lead to various issues, particularly within organizations. Data from the Indonesian Tolerance Index 2015–2024 indicates fluctuations and declines in tolerance across different regions (Katadata, 2024), while qualitative research has identified that key barriers to tolerance include differing religious interpretations, a propensity to be easily incited, and insufficient interfaith comprehension. (Azzahrah & Dewi, 2021). In a professional setting, variations in ethnicity, culture, and religion can lead to stereotypes, bias, and unequal opportunities, ultimately diminishing job satisfaction, escalating conflicts, and impairing team effectiveness (Hofhuis et al., 2016; McKay et al., 2014). Studies in Indonesia also confirm that weak diversity management has implications for value misalignment among employees across generations and reduces organizational performance (Raimann et al., 2025).

In this framework, the idea of diversity climate is key, referring to the shared perception of how much an organization or institution values, includes, and fairly manages diversity (Barak et al., 1998). Research worldwide indicates that a positive diversity climate enhances employees' psychological well-being (Hardeman et al., 2016), boosts cohesion within multicultural teams



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(Hofhuis et al., 2016), and promotes behaviors that support the organization (Mouro & Duarte, 2021). Nevertheless, most of these studies are centered on Western contexts, which focus more on formal non-discrimination policies. In contrast, in Asian, particularly Indonesian, collectivist societies, diversity tends to be more connected to social harmony and group cohesion (Leslie & Flynn, 2024). This highlights an epistemological gap that calls for further investigation.

Research conducted locally in Indonesia on diversity climate is starting to yield positive outcomes. For instance, studies with school teachers indicate that diversity and organizational climate have a significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior (Karyaningsih et al., 2022), while another study revealed that diversity management contributes to the performance of generations Y and Z, with organizational climate as an important mediator (Farid et al., 2025). However, current research remains scattered across various disciplines and contexts. Most studies focus on diversity climate within specific environments like schools or workplaces, without connecting findings from different settings. Consequently, our understanding of how diversity climate operates at various levels—such as an antecedent, mediator, moderator, or outcome—is still limited. Additionally, no research has yet provided a comprehensive overview of how the field has evolved, including the factors and effects related to diversity climate. This lack of integration hinders the development of a unified understanding of diversity climate across multiple social and organizational contexts.

To overcome these limitations, this study integrates trend analysis (bibliometrics) with a scoping review. Bibliometric analysis helps to map the evolution of global literature on diversity climate, identify publication trends, key academic contributors, and both current and emerging research themes (Donthu et al., 2021). This approach allows the positioning of diversity climate studies in Indonesia within the broader international discourse. Additionally, a scoping review is employed to systematically synthesize empirical findings, categorize factors influencing diversity climate, and pinpoint relevant research areas gaps (Munn et al., 2018). This combination is essential since global trends show that the diversity climate is becoming increasingly intricate and multifaceted, serving as an antecedent, mediator, moderator, and outcome. Nevertheless, the context in Indonesia is still not adequately represented.

This study offers a dual contribution. It enriches the international literature by presenting a perspective from Indonesia, one of the world's most ethnically diverse countries, which is underrepresented in diversity climate research. Practically, the results can guide organizations, educational institutions, and policymakers in Indonesia to develop inclusive, equitable, and sustainable diversity management strategies. Without such efforts, diversity—one of Indonesia's key traits—could shift from a strategic asset to a potential source of organizational conflict, undermining social cohesion and national competitiveness.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: Based on a bibliometric analysis, what are the global research trends, influential contributors, and thematic developments in the literature on diversity climate?

RQ2: Through a scoping review, what antecedents, correlates, and outcomes of diversity climate have been identified in empirical studies?

2. Research Methods

This research combines bibliometric analysis with a scoping review to offer a thorough understanding of diversity climate studies. The bibliometric part analyzed publication patterns, key contributors, and evolving themes, while the scoping review summarized empirical evidence on factors related to diversity climate and its roles in various contexts. All data were sourced from the Scopus database, known for its strict quality checks and extensive citation coverage (Baas et al., 2020). Combining these methods provides both an overarching view of the field and a detailed synthesis of empirical results.

The study used a two-stage review process. First, articles meeting the criteria were analyzed bibliometrically to identify publication trends, influential researchers, and thematic areas. Then, a subset of these articles underwent a scoping review to consolidate empirical findings about diversity climate factors. The detailed screening process for the scoping review is shown in Figure 1.

2.1. Search Strategy

The search was performed on the Scopus database on September 15, 2025, using the specific search term "diversity climate." This term was chosen because it is the core and most well-established construct in the existing literature, as seen in foundational works by Barak et al. (1998) and McKay et al. (2007). The goal was to identify research explicitly centered on the diversity climate construct, rather than broader concepts of diversity or inclusion. To reduce recall bias, the search was confined to the Title, Abstract, and Keywords fields in Scopus, ensuring that only studies directly addressing diversity climate in various contexts were retrieved. Subsequently, articles were selected and assessed according to our predefined inclusion criteria (see Table 1).

Table 1. Inclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	All years	-
Document type	Article	Book chapter, conference paper, review, notes, conference review, In-press
Language	English	Non-English
Publication stage	Final	-
Accessibility	All open access	Non-open access articles

2.2. Bibliometric analysis

Bibliometric analysis is widely used to examine datasets, track research trends, and identify emerging themes (Donthu et al., 2021). This study utilizes a bibliometric approach to provide a comprehensive overview of research patterns in this field, utilizing R software version 4.4.3, developed by Aria & Cuccurullo (2017), for data processing and visualization. We also used VosViewer to display co-occurrence. This analysis aims to answer the first research question: "What are the trends and developments in research related to diversity climate?"

2.3. Scoping Review

Alongside performing a bibliometric analysis, we carried out a scoping review to critically and systematically consolidate research findings. To guarantee a methodical and clear research approach, we adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines in our processes of searching, selecting, and assessing studies, thereby ensuring transparency, objectivity, and a strong level of replicability in the methodological review (Page et al., 2021).

This study examines descriptive data from the included studies, such as author, year, country, method, participant number, context, and key findings about diversity climate. Irrelevant factors and poorly presented information were excluded. Two researchers independently conducted the selection process, resolving disagreements through discussion.

For the qualitative synthesis, an inductive thematic categorization approach was used. Findings from each study were reviewed and coded based on their reported relationships with diversity climate. Instead of applying a fixed theoretical framework, categories emerged organically from the data via an iterative comparison process. Similar factors, mechanisms, and outcomes were grouped and organized into broader thematic categories. Two researchers independently conducted the coding and categorization, then discussed and refined the themes until reaching consensus. This method allowed for the identification of recurring patterns in the antecedents, mediating mechanisms, moderating factors, and outcomes related to diversity climate across various contexts.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Search Results

The literature search initially identified 184 articles. After filtering by document type, language, and publication status, 158 articles met the inclusion criteria (see Figure 1). These results formed the basis for a bibliometric analysis. Subsequently, we screened the articles for open access availability, narrowing the pool to 68 full-text articles for the scoping review. A detailed review of these texts led to the exclusion of 23 irrelevant articles. In the end, 45 studies were considered eligible and included in the synthesis phase.

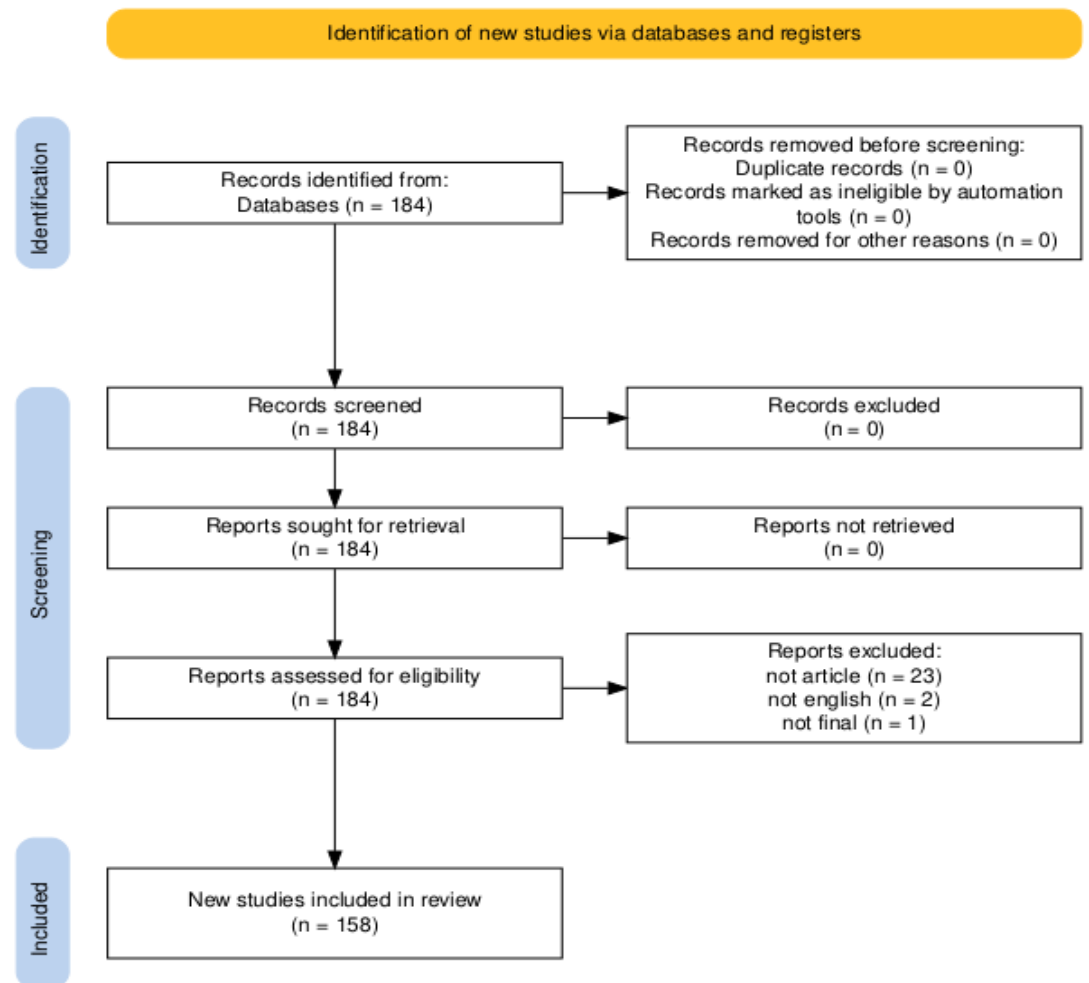


Figure 1. Flow diagram

Bibliometric results

Question 1: “What are the current trends and recent developments in research concerning diversity climate?”

Trends research

A bibliometric analysis of 158 articles reveals that research on diversity climate has taken place from 1993 to 2025. The publications are growing annually at an average rate of 9.05%, with each article receiving about 44.23 citations on average. The study draws from 119 sources written by 446 authors, and approximately 28.7% of these publications involve international collaborations. This trend suggests that the topic is attracting growing global interest and is supported by a strong international research network.

Table 2. Descriptive characteristics of the bibliometric dataset

Main Information	Result
Timespan	1993-2025
Sources	119
Documents	158
Annual Growth Rate %	9.05
Document Average Age	6.28
Average citations per document	44.23
Keywords Plus (ID)	395
Author's Keywords (DE)	855

Authors	446
Authors of single-authored docs	12
International coauthorships %	28.75

Figure 2 illustrates a consistent rise in scientific publications on diversity climate, especially after 2007, reaching a peak in 2024. By 2025, these articles are projected to be the second most published, and this pattern is expected to persist throughout the year. This reflects increasing scholarly interest in exploring diversity climates within organizations, education, and the wider community.

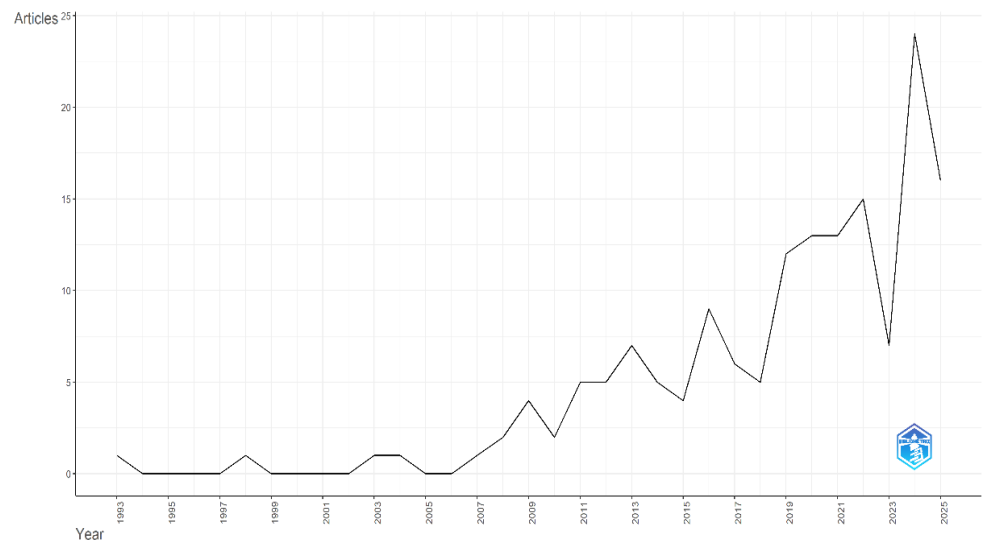


Figure 2. Annual output of scientific articles

Trends authors

The ten most prolific authors in diversity climate research are listed here. Schachner MK leads with 9 publications, followed by Avery DR with 8. McCallaghan S and McKay PF each have 7 publications. Heyns MM and Schwarzenthal M are next with 6 publications. Jackson LTB and Juang LP each have 5 publications, while Dawson ME and Madera JM have 4 publications.

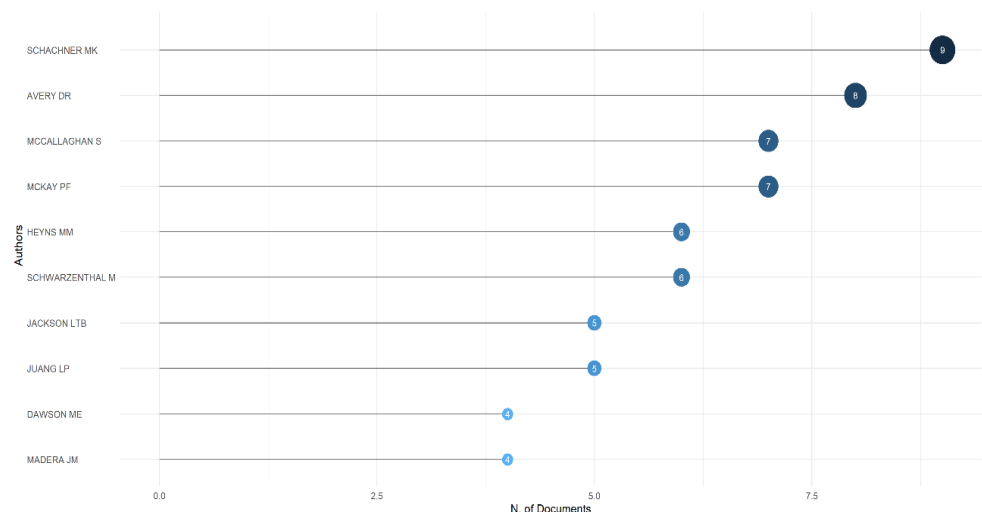
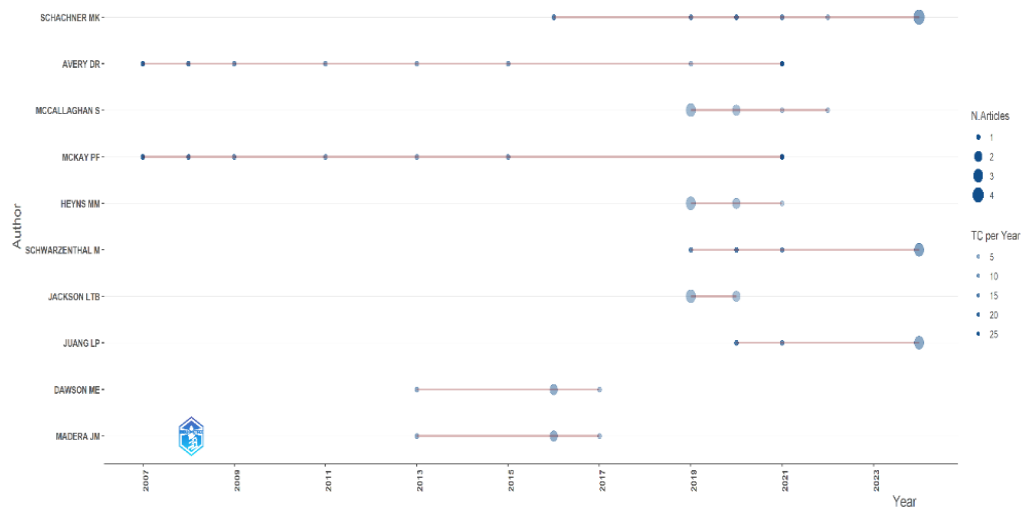


Figure 3. Most relevant authors

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of publications by leading authors on the research topic from 2007 to 2025. Authors like McKay PF, Avery DR, and Schachner MK show long, consistent publication streaks, underscoring their key roles in shaping the literature in this field. Their work is spread throughout the period, with larger circles at certain points reflecting higher publication counts and citation rates. In contrast, authors such as Dawson ME and Madera JM started contributing around 2013 to 2015, but their activity did not span as many years as the senior

authors. The pattern also reveals peak publication years, such as 2023 for Schachner MK and 2022 for Juang LP, when their work received higher citation rates. Overall, this visualization



confirms the most productive authors and highlights how each contributor's publication activity and citation impact evolved over time.

Figure 4. Authors' article outputs over time

We also highlight the ten most influential articles in the diversity climate study (see Table 3). Leading the list is Barak et al., whose foundational work on organizational and personal aspects of diversity perceptions has been cited 528 times. McKay et al.'s (2007, 2008, 2009) publications also stand out, with many citations reflecting their key role in exploring the links between diversity climate perceptions, employee retention, and performance. Additionally, research by Gonzales and DeNisi (2009) and Kossek and Zonia (1993) enhances the theoretical base by emphasizing organizational embeddedness, firm effectiveness, and methods for empirically evaluating diversity climate.

Conversely, newer studies like Boehm et al. (2014) on age diversity climate and Dwertmann et al. (2016) on equity, discrimination, and synergy insights demonstrate increasing citation rates, highlighting current focus on cross-generational inclusion. Works by Chen et al. (2012) on cultural intelligence and Szalacha (2003) on education expand the diversity climate discussion into wider contexts. Overall, this list illustrates the evolution of diversity climate research, from its initial roots to more complex themes.

Table 3. Most Cited Articles

Author	Year	Title	Source	DOI	Tc	TCPY
Barak et al	1998	Organizational and Personal Dimensions in Diversity Climate: Ethnic and Gender Differences in Employee Perceptions	The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science	10.1177/0021886398341006	528	18.86
McKay et al	2007	Racial differences in employee retention: are diversity climate perceptions the key?	Personnel Psychology	10.1111/j.1744-6570.2007.00064.x	420	22.11
Gonzales & Danisi	2009	Cross-level effects of demographics and diversity climate on organizational attachment and firm effectiveness	Journal of Organizational Behavior	10.1002/job.498	337	19.82
Kossek & Zonia	1993	Assessing diversity climate: A field study of reactions to employer efforts to promote diversity	Journal of Organizational Behavior	10.1002/job.4030140107	305	9.24
McKay et al	2008	Mean racial-ethnic differences in employee sales performance: the moderating role of diversity climate	Personnel Psychology	10.1111/j.1744-6570.2008.00116.x	304	16.89
Boehm et al	2014	Spotlight on Age-Diversity Climate: The Impact of Age-Inclusive HR Practices on Firm-Level Outcomes	Personnel Psychology	10.1111/peps.12047	283	23.58
Dwertmann et al	2016	Disentangling the Fairness & Discrimination and Synergy Perspectives on Diversity Climate: Moving the Field Forward	Journal of Management	10.1177/0149206316630380	206	20.60
McKay et al	2009	A tale of two climates: diversity climate from subordinates' and managers' perspectives and their role in store unit sales performance	Personnel Psychology	10.1111/j.1744-6570.2009.01157.x	204	12.00
Chen et al	2012	A multilevel investigation of motivational cultural intelligence, organizational diversity climate, and cultural sales: Evidence from US real estate firms.	Journal of Applied Psychology	10.1037/a0024697	196	14.00
Szalacha	2023	Safer Sexual Diversity Climates: Lessons Learned from an Evaluation of Massachusetts Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students	American Journal of Education	10.1086/377673	190	8.26

Tc: Total citations, TCPY: Total citations per Year

Most productive institutions and top publication sources

Table 5 lists institutions publishing on diversity climate. North-West University leads with 12 articles, making it the most prolific in this field. The University of Houston follows with 8 articles, then Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg with 7, and Universität Potsdam with 6. Several universities, including NWU Business School and Rutgers University–New Brunswick, have each published five articles. Additionally, California State University, Tilburg University, the University of St. Gallen, and Univerza v Ljubljani have each contributed four articles.

Table 4. Most productive universities

Institutions	Total Article
North-West University	12
University of Houston	8
Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg	7
University of Potsdam	6
Nwu Business School	5
Rutgers University–New Brunswick	5
California State University	4
Tilburg University	4
University of St. Gallen	4
Univerza V Ljubljani	4

Figure 6 shows the main publication sources contributing to articles on this topic. The Journal of Organizational Behavior and Personnel Psychology (Q1) lead with six articles each. The Journal of Psychology in Africa (Q3) follows with four articles, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Q1) published three. This spread indicates that diversity research appears in both top-tier journals in organizational behavior and psychology and in journals dedicated to equality, diversity, and inclusions issues.

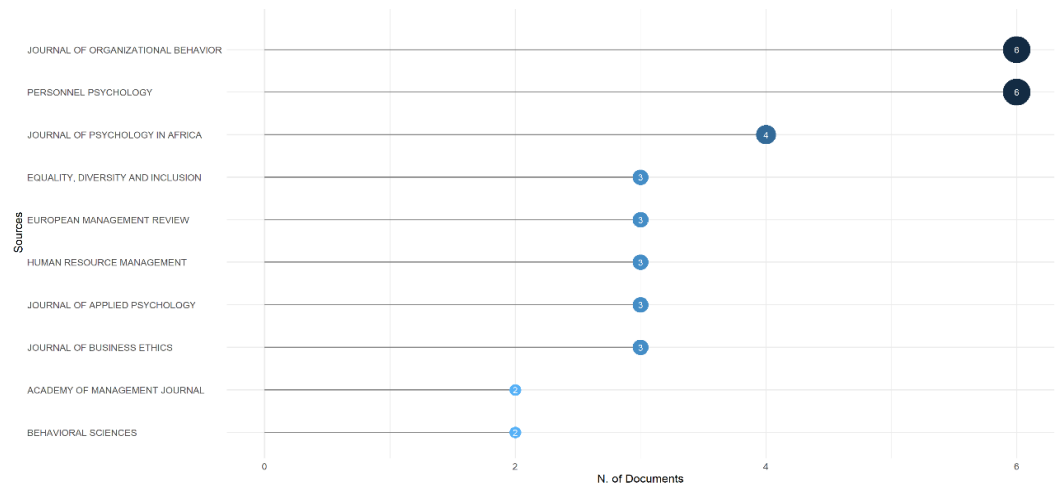


Figure 6. Most Relevant Sources

Most productive countries

Table 5 reveals that the United States led in publications on diversity climate, with 146 articles—significantly more than other countries. Germany ranked second with 37 articles, and China followed with 21. Several countries showed steady contributions, such as the Netherlands (17), Australia (16), and South Africa (16). Asian nations like India (12) and South Korea (11) are increasingly active, with Canada and Italy each contributing 10 articles.

Table 5. Most productive countries

Country	Total Article
USA	146
Germany	37
China	21
Netherlands	17
Australia	16
South Africa	16
India	12
South Korea	11
Canada	10
Italy	10

Figure 5 presents a map illustrating the worldwide distribution of publications on diversity climate. The United States leads significantly, shown by the darker blue shade relative to other nations. Europe also exhibits a high concentration of publications, especially in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden, which are key academic hubs in this area. Asian countries such as South Korea, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and China are beginning to contribute more, although their numbers remain lower than those of North America and Europe. South Africa is the primary representative from the African continent, while Australia indicates regional contributions from Oceania. Overall, the map highlights that research on diversity climate is a global effort but remains predominantly focused in North America and Europe, which serve as major centers of study.

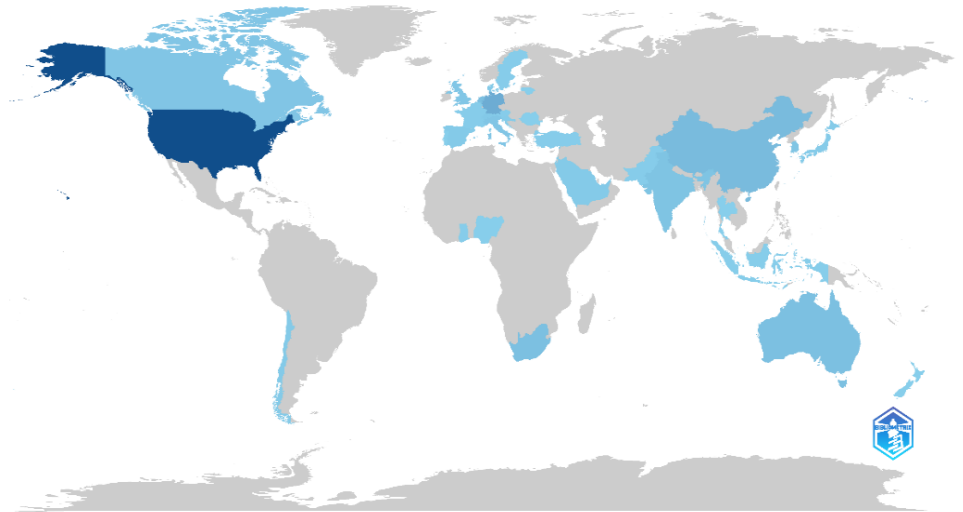


Figure 5. Scientific Article Output by Countries

Trends Themes

We conducted a topic trend analysis (see Table 6) to reveal the dominant topics related to this topic. The term “diversity climate” dominated the literature, appearing in 84 articles, confirming its position as a core concept in the research. Other terms that appeared quite frequently were “human” (22 articles), “diversity” (18 articles), and “job satisfaction” (16 articles), indicating that discussions of diversity climate were largely linked to human aspects and job satisfaction as a key outcome. Furthermore, more specific themes such as “cultural diversity” (12 articles) and “diversity management” (7 articles) highlighted the importance of cultural dynamics and managerial practices. The presence of methodological terms such as “cross-sectional studies” and a focus on “psychological diversity climate” (5 articles each) also indicated that this research was developing not only at the organizational level, but also encompassed broader psychological and methodological aspects.

Table 6. Trends topics

Term	Total Article
Diversity climate	84
Human	22
Diversity	18
Job satisfaction	16
Cultural diversity	12
Diversity management	7
Cultural anthropology	5
Cross-sectional studies	5
Psychological diversity climate	5
Cross-sectional study	5

Figure 7 presents a strategic map of diversity-related research themes, plotted on two axes: relevance (centrality) and development level (density). The map shows that cultural diversity and diversity climate are among the motor themes, indicating they are rapidly evolving and central to linking various studies. Themes like job performance and transformational leadership are identified as niche themes, characterized by strong development but more specialized focus. Conversely, diversity, job satisfaction, and discrimination are basic themes, serving as essential foundations but still in need of further conceptual development. Additionally, themes such as genetic diversity and workplace belongingness are classified as emerging or declining, suggesting new research directions or decreasing relevance. Overall, these findings emphasize that diversity climate is a strategic element, both as a core concept and a key driver in organizational diversity research

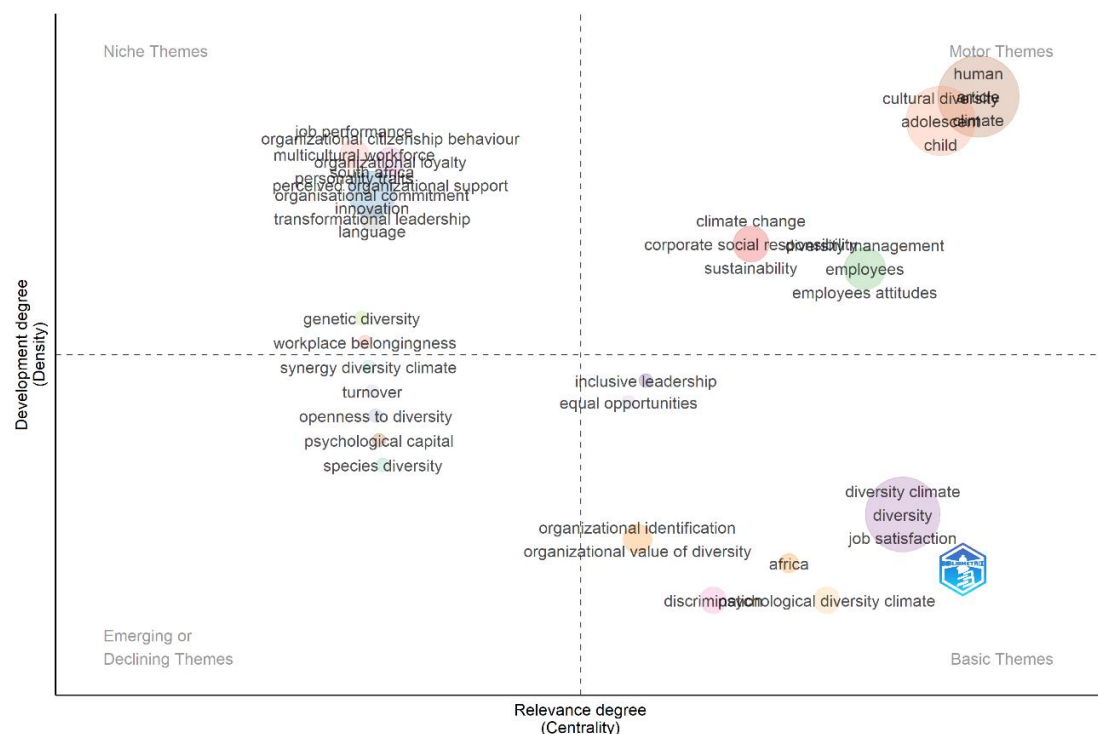


Figure 7. Thematic map

Figure 8 presents a network visualization from VOSviewer showing keyword co-occurrence analysis results. The map illustrates the relationships among keywords in research on diversity and organizational climate. Node sizes indicate how often each keyword appears, while line thickness reflects the strength of their connections. The map confirms that "diversity climate" has the largest node, positioning it centrally in the network. It is closely associated with topics like diversity, job satisfaction, inclusion, turnover intentions, discrimination, and diversity management, highlighting its crucial role in linking diversity issues with organizational and psychological aspects. Additionally, clusters such as human, cultural diversity, adolescent, female, male, and psychology emerge, representing demographic and social dimensions of diversity research. Overall, this map shows that diversity climate acts as a vital link integrating psychological, sociological, and managerial perspectives within the organizational diversity literature.

Scoping review results

Question 2: What elements influence the climate of diversity?

Study characteristics

Before addressing the research questions, we outline the characteristics of the reviewed articles. This scoping review analyzed 45 articles, encompassing approximately 48,600 participants from 23 countries. Europe contributed the most, with 42% (n=19) of the articles, primarily focusing on Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. North America accounted for 22% (n=10), with the United States prominently featured in workplace and higher education studies. Asia represented 24% (n=11). Africa and the Middle East together made up 7% (n=3), including Ethiopia, South Africa, and Jordan. Oceania was the least represented at 4% (n=2), with studies from Australia.

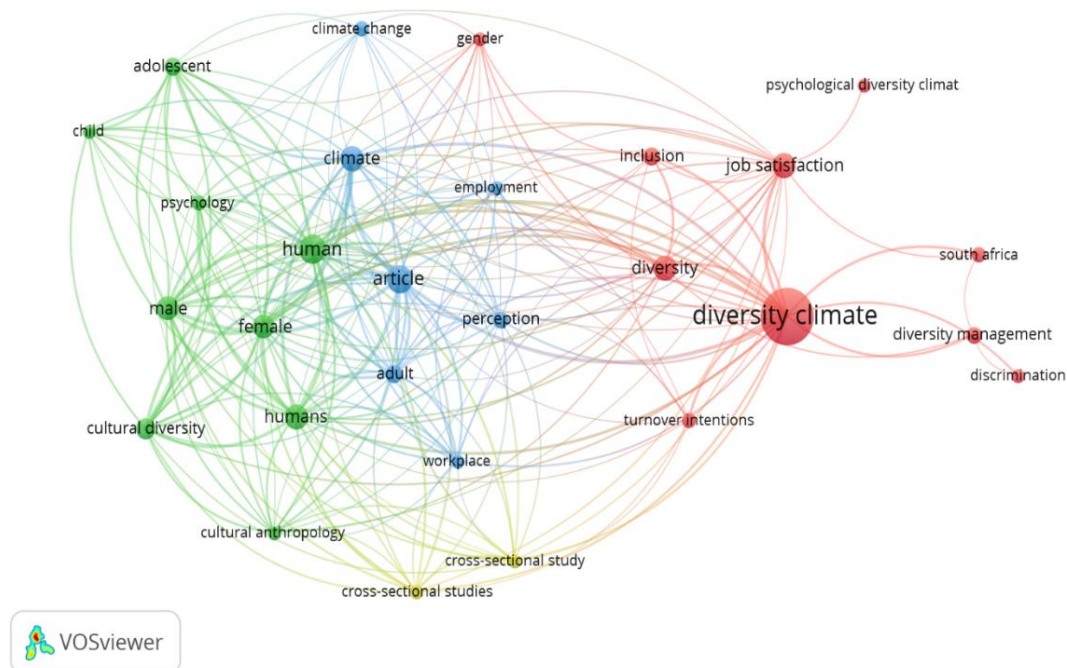


Figure 8. Co-occurrence

Most participants were employees from diverse industrial sectors such as healthcare, hospitality, construction, public administration, and the military, comprising 61% of the studies (n=27). The educational setting was also prominently represented, including students from high school, university, and medical schools, as well as teachers and parents, accounting for 39% of the studies (n=18). The largest sample involved 7,689 military personnel from the United States, whereas the smallest was a qualitative case study in South Korea with only 8 employees.

According to the synthesis results, quantitative methods were the most prevalent, appearing in 38 articles (84.4%). This group involved nearly 46,000 participants. The research designs employed comprised Regression and correlation (40%), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM/PLS-SEM) (36%), Multilevel analysis and conditional process modeling (14%), and experiments (10%).

Most quantitative research employs instruments such as the Diversity Perceptions Scale (Barak et al., 1998, 2004; 2007; 2011) the Diversity Climate Scale (McKay et al., 2008, 2011), the Classroom Diversity Climate Scale (Schachner et al., 2016), and the Age Diversity Climate Scale (Boehm, Dwertmann, et al., 2014; Profili et al., 2017). The application of diversity climate in quantitative studies varies considerably: it functions as an independent variable or antecedent in 55% of articles, as a mediator in 20%, as a moderator in 13%, and as a dependent variable or outcome in 11%.

Additionally, five articles (11.1%) used a qualitative approach with around 250 participants. These studies employed methods such as ethnography, grounded theory, and thematic coding. They highlight that diversity climates are not only structural but are also influenced by everyday interactions, social narratives, and experiences of discrimination and inclusion. Moreover, two articles (4.4%) adopted mixed methods research involving approximately 1,200 participants, combining quantitative surveys with in-depth interviews.

Thematic Results

To clarify the synthesis results, we created a chart illustrating the position of diversity climate along with its antecedent factors, mediating and moderating roles, and related outcomes (see Figure 9). Subsequently, we organized the synthesis findings into key themes: individual factors, team and organizational factors, and school and education factors.

Individual Factors

Many studies confirm that a diversity climate significantly affects individual attitudes and behaviors within organizations. For instance, a positive diversity climate encourages employees to engage in extra-role behaviors and customize their work through job crafting (Ayele et al., 2024; Ingusci, 2018). In healthcare settings, nurses in inclusive environments often demonstrate greater innovation, both directly and via specific mediating processes (Baig et al., 2022). Additionally, research shows a strong link between a diversity climate and psychological well-being, including lower withdrawal behaviors and depressive symptoms among medical students (Dhanasekar & Anandh, 2025; Hardeman et al., 2016). Other research emphasizes the role of a diversity climate in strengthening employee identification with the organization (Jiang, 2024) and increasing intercultural self-efficacy in teachers working in multicultural classrooms (Ulbricht et al., 2022). Consistent evidence indicates that diversity climate functions as a psychosocial resource, safeguarding individuals and fostering their development.

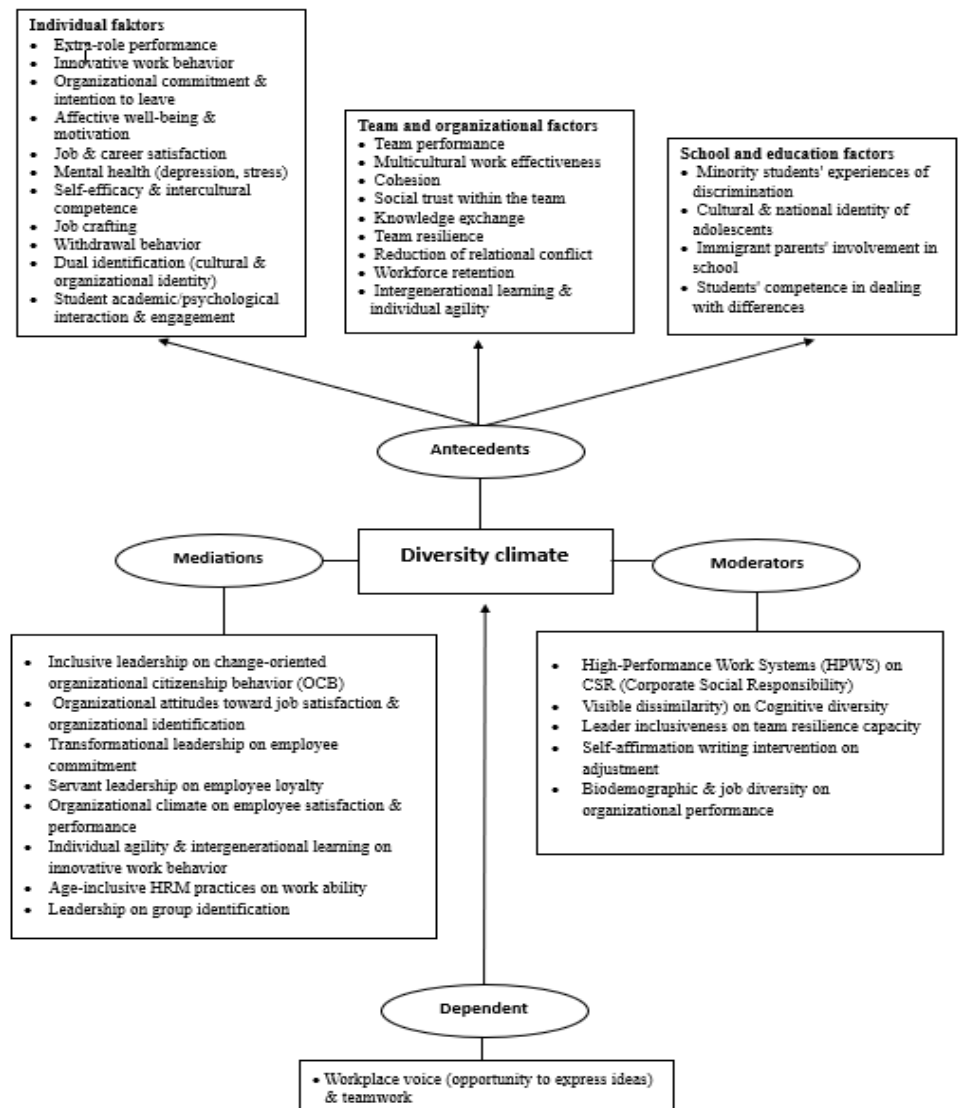


Figure 9. The role of diversity climate

Education and schools

In educational settings, a diverse climate serves as a protective factor for students from minority and immigrant backgrounds. A long-term study in Belgium found that such a school environment can lower the likelihood of ethnic discrimination experienced by minority adolescents (Baysu et al., 2024). Research in Germany found that a diverse classroom climate contributes to the development of students' intercultural competence and supports adolescents' exploration of cultural identity, particularly when combined with curriculum interventions such as The Identity Project (Schachner et al., 2016; Schwarzenenthal et al., 2020). Similar findings emerged from a study in Latin America that highlighted the role of school climate in fostering immigrant parents' involvement in their children's education (Mera-Lemp et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the findings are

occasionally inconsistent. Certain studies suggest that diversity climate does not consistently serve as a significant mediator between teacher beliefs and students' academic adjustment (Ialuna et al., 2025) or in relation to competence in dealing with differences (Sincer et al., 2021). These findings indicate that although diversity climate can significantly promote inclusive learning environments, its effectiveness may differ based on specific contextual factors and the individuals engaged.

Teams and organizations

At the organizational level, diversity climate is a crucial factor that impacts team effectiveness, social cohesion, and resilience. Studies across different settings show that a positive diversity climate can boost multicultural team performance by fostering trust, cohesion, and knowledge sharing (Hajro et al., 2017; Hofhuis et al., 2016). Large-scale studies in both the U.S. military and German companies have shown that implementing inclusive human resource management practices is associated with improved team performance and employee retention, particularly when discrimination is mitigated (Boehm, Dwertmann, et al., 2014, 2014; Boehm, Kunze, et al., 2014; Dwertmann et al., 2016). Furthermore, the diversity climate often serves as a mediator between leadership styles—transformational, servant, or inclusive—and employee loyalty and commitment (Lee & Shin, 2024; Mansoor et al., 2021; McCallaghan et al., 2019). The moderating role of diversity climate is also evident in strengthening the relationship between leader inclusiveness and the resilience capacity of multinational teams (Hundschell et al., 2025), as well as in protecting workers from incivility arising during social crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Shen et al., 2024). Overall, empirical evidence suggests that diversity climate is not simply an organizational attribute, but also a strategic instrument for building team performance, innovation, and well-being.

Additionally, multiple studies have found that diversity climate acts as a mediating factor linking leadership styles—such as transformational, servant, or inclusive—to employee loyalty and commitment (McCallaghan et al., 2020). In other cases, diversity climate acts as a moderator, for example by strengthening the relationship between leader inclusiveness and the resilience capacity of multinational teams (Hundschell et al., 2025), or weakening the effect of perceived differences on cognitive diversity within groups (Bogilović et al., 2021). In the public sector, the diversity climate also functions as an outcome variable, with workplace voice and teamwork identified as factors that help shape positive perceptions of this climate (Jiang, 2024). Even during social crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, a positive diversity climate has offered some protection, though unevenly, from mistreatment faced by minority workers (Shen et al., 2024).

3.2. Discussion

This study shows that research on diversity climate has grown substantially, with a steady rise in publications since the late 2000s. This increase is largely due to the influential work of McKay et al. (2007). It links the perception of diversity climate with employee retention in multiethnic organizations, along with the research by Barak et al. (1998), which has become a primary reference in measuring diversity perceptions. These studies established a foundational understanding of how diversity climate influences organizational behavior. Since then, research has shifted to more practical applications, connecting diversity climate with managerial challenges, mental health, and cross-cultural education (Dwertmann et al., 2016; Kossek & Zonia, 1993).

The distribution of publications, primarily from the United States and Western Europe, highlights an epistemological imbalance in diversity theory development. In Western settings, diversity climates tend to focus more on formal mechanisms like nondiscrimination policies and transparent procedures to promote equal treatment (Cunningham, 2023). In contrast, Asian and African collectivist contexts have received less research attention, despite the possibility that diversity climates in these cultures are more connected to aspects of collectivist societies that prioritize group cohesion, social stability, and respect for hierarchy (Leslie & Flynn, 2024). This suggests that global findings still have limited generalizability, and future studies should include more non-Western viewpoints to deepen the contextual understanding of diversity climates.

The scoping review findings indicate that a diversity climate can serve multiple roles, including as an antecedent, mediator, moderator, and outcome. For individuals, a positive diversity climate has been linked to enhanced psychological well-being and a decrease in depressive symptoms among college students (Hardeman et al., 2016). This protective effect can be explained through psychosocial mechanisms, where an inclusive environment reduces stereotype threat while

increasing a sense of belonging (Casad & Bryant, 2016). Furthermore, a diversity climate plays a significant role in increasing proactive behaviors such as job crafting and innovation among employees, indicating that an inclusive environment provides space for individuals to experiment and express their potential (Baig et al., 2022; Ingusci, 2018). Therefore, fostering a diversity climate not only shields individuals from discrimination's harmful effects but also enhances their ability to adapt within the workplace.

In education, a diverse climate acts as a protective factor for minority and immigrant students. A long-term study in Belgium found that positive views of a diverse school environment can lessen ethnic discrimination experienced by adolescents (Baysu et al., 2024). A German study found similar results, indicating that a diverse classroom environment helps develop students' intercultural skills and encourages adolescents to explore their cultural identities (Schwarzenthal et al., 2020). This mechanism aligns with social identity theory, suggesting that an inclusive environment affirms students' social identities, which helps decrease identity conflict and boosts academic engagement (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). This theoretical explanation is supported by the findings of Filipovska (2024), who demonstrated that diversity and inclusion initiatives can enhance the social environment, foster community cohesion, and develop an inclusive institutional culture, thereby positively influencing academic success. Nonetheless, some research indicates inconsistencies, such as instances where the diversity climate did not serve as a significant mediator between teacher beliefs and student academic adjustment (Ialuna et al., 2025). This inconsistency indicates that the effect of diversity climate in education largely relies on the quality of teacher-student interactions and curriculum support.

At the organizational level, a diversity climate serves as a strategic mechanism that enhances team effectiveness and organizational performance. A multilevel study by Boehm et al. (2014) showed that inclusive human resource practices are positively correlated with employee retention and team performance in multinational organizations. Similarly, research by Hofhuis et al. (2016) confirmed that a positive diversity climate strengthens trust and cohesion in multicultural teams, thereby encouraging knowledge exchange. This effect is also reflected in the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee loyalty, where a diversity climate acts as a mediator that strengthens affective commitment (Lee & Shin, 2024; McCallaghan et al., 2020). These findings are consistent with social exchange theory, which states that fair and inclusive treatment from an organization will be reciprocated by increased employee contributions to the organization (Blau, 1964).

While most studies use quantitative designs with standard scales such as the Diversity Climate Scale (McKay et al., 2008) or the Classroom Diversity Climate Scale (Schachner et al., 2016), qualitative approaches demonstrate that diversity climate is not only a structural phenomenon, but also a narrative and interactional one. Ethnographic research, for example, has found that perceptions of diversity are shaped through everyday practices, language, and experiences of discrimination experienced by minority groups (Ulbricht et al., 2022). While surveys offer a consistent overview, qualitative methods are essential for uncovering the micro-processes influencing diversity climates at the ground level. This highlights the importance of incorporating more mixed methods and longitudinal designs to better understand causal relationships (Jiang, 2024).

Overall, this study confirms that a diversity climate serves a dual purpose: safeguarding individuals from the adverse effects of discrimination and enhancing an organization's innovation capacity. Practically, this means organizations and educational institutions should implement more inclusive policies and foster a culture of diversity through consistent leadership, communication, and management practices. Consequently, a diversity climate becomes not just a moral symbol but also a strategic asset for organizational success and sustainability.

In addition to patterns found in global research, the results emphasize the significance of understanding diversity climate within multicultural societies like Indonesia. While much of the literature focuses on formal inclusion policies, anti-discrimination efforts, and fairness perceptions, Indonesia's context may involve additional socio-cultural factors. As a country with ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity, Indonesia values principles such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah* (deliberation), and social harmony, which influence daily experiences of inclusion and diversity. From this viewpoint, a positive diversity climate not only reflects equal treatment but also promotes harmonious intergroup relationships and collective well-being. These cultural values suggest that diversity climate in Indonesia may operate through mechanisms beyond those highlighted by Western frameworks, which often emphasize individual rights and organizational procedures. Thus, the findings point to the need for expanding current

concepts of diversity climate to include culturally specific perspectives from non-Western societies.

Implications

This study underscores the role of diversity climate as a multidimensional variable capable of serving as an antecedent, mediator, moderator, and outcome. It highlights the potential for creating more comprehensive conceptual models, such as integrating social identity theory with social exchange theory to better explain how diversity climate impacts individual behavior and organizational performance. Additionally, the prevalence of quantitative research indicates a need for more diverse methodologies, including qualitative, longitudinal, and mixed methods studies, to deepen understanding of how diversity climate develops and evolves (Jiang, 2024).

Practically, this study's findings have significant implications for organizations, educational institutions, and policymakers. Organizations should see a diversity climate not just as a moral duty or legal obligation but also as a means to enhance employee retention, foster innovation, and promote well-being. Key strategies include implementing inclusive leadership, fair human resource practices, and transparent cross-cultural communication. In education, schools and universities must embed diversity policies into their curricula and daily interactions, ensuring a diversity climate that safeguards minority and immigrant students.

At the public policy level, these findings highlight the importance of regulatory measures that foster inclusion and prevent discrimination in workplaces and educational settings. Governments and international bodies can leverage this evidence to craft diversity initiatives that better address the specific needs of local communities. However, implementing such programs can be challenging, especially in environments with structural inequalities, limited access to opportunities, and deeply rooted social biases. Thus, while a positive diversity climate is a valuable strategic asset, its success relies on ongoing institutional dedication and adaptation to local contexts. Overall, the evidence indicates that a strong diversity climate can promote social justice, organizational resilience, and social cohesion when backed by suitable organizational strategies and policies.

Limitations

While this study makes a valuable contribution to mapping the literature on diversity climate, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the data was limited to the Scopus database. Although Scopus is known for its extensive coverage and quality, relying on a single source can affect representativeness, as relevant articles in Web of Science, PsycINFO, or Google Scholar may be missing. Additionally, the study may be affected by language and publication biases. The focus on English-language publications might have excluded relevant studies in other languages and reduced the diversity of cultural perspectives included. Moreover, dependence on Scopus could lead to regional publication bias, since research from developing countries and non-English-speaking regions is often underrepresented in major databases. Consequently, local research, such as studies conducted in Indonesia and published in national journals not indexed by Scopus, might not be fully captured. Thus, the results mainly reflect international trends rather than providing a complete overview of global diversity climate research.

Second, the bibliometric analysis relies on quantitative measures like publication counts, citations, and collaborations, but these do not fully reflect the articles' conceptual depth or methodological rigor (Donthu et al., 2021). This approach could bias results toward more frequently cited works, which are not always the most innovative in theory.

In scoping reviews, even when adhering to PRISMA-ScR guidelines, the methodology does not evaluate the methodological quality or evidence strength of individual studies (Munn et al., 2018). Consequently, studies with weaker designs are included, making these reviews more about mapping the landscape than establishing causal links. Additionally, scoping reviews are typically more descriptive than analytical. While they can identify variations in how diversity climate functions as an antecedent, mediator, moderator, or outcome, they do not facilitate empirical testing of the relationships' strength or differences across contexts.

4. Conclusion

This study offers a thorough overview of diversity climate research by combining bibliometric analysis with a scoping review. The results show that interest in diversity climate has grown significantly, especially in organizational and educational contexts. The review highlights that diversity climate functions as an antecedent, mediator, moderator, and outcome, positively

AI Declaration

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used ChatGPT I.S. Santosa et al. Social Sciences & Humanities Open 11 (2025) 101479 11 (OpenAI), Grammarly, and QuillBot to improve the readability and language of the manuscript. After using this tool, the author(s) carefully reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the published article.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: First Author, Second Author; **methodology:** First Author, Second Author; **investigation:** First Author, Second Author; **writing—original draft preparation:** First Author, Second Author; **writing—review and editing:** First Author, Second Author; **visualization:** First Author, Second Author. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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impacting employee well-being, organizational success, innovation, inclusion, and social cohesion. However, the literature is still mostly centered on Western settings and relies heavily on quantitative methods, indicating a need for more diverse approaches and contexts in future research. In addition to mapping existing studies, this review emphasizes the importance of studying diversity climate in multicultural societies like Indonesia, where local values of social harmony, cooperation, and collective well-being may influence diversity climate differently from Western models. Future research should focus on creating culturally specific conceptualizations of diversity climate and exploring how indigenous perspectives can deepen understanding and improve inclusion practices in diverse societies.

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