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MAPPING DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT RESEARCH: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THEMATIC STRUCTURE AND CONCEPTUAL ASSOCIATIONS

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Abstract. Diversity management (DM) is a multidisciplinary field encompassing workforce diversity, equality and inclusion, human resource management, organizational processes, leadership, governance, innovation, and organizational outcomes. This study examines the intellectual and thematic structure of diversity management research through a bibliometric analysis of 1 805 articles and book chapters indexed in Scopus within the business, management and accounting subject area. The author conducted a keyword co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer. After data cleaning and application of occurrence thresholds, 250 keywords remained for the final analysis. The resulting network identified 11 thematic clusters representing interconnected streams of diversity management research. The findings show the prominence of demographic dimensions alongside research on inclusion, human resource management, leadership, corporate governance, innovation, and various dimensions of organizational performance. Rather than replacing earlier approaches, the bibliometric structure suggests a broader field in which established concerns with representation and equality coexist with organizational and strategic perspectives. The findings indicate that diversity management research encompasses multiple thematic areas, with organizational performance-related concepts distributed across several clusters. These patterns highlight the need for further investigation into how diversity is conceptualized, measured, and theoretically connected to organizational outcomes.

Keywords: *Bibliometric analysis, corporate governance, diversity management, inclusion, leadership, organizational performance.*

JEL Classification: **M14, M12, L25**

INTRODUCTION

Workforce diversity has become a major focus in management research worldwide, reflecting differences among organizational members in demographic characteristics, cultural backgrounds, education, professional experience, knowledge, values, and other individual attributes. The corresponding development of diversity management has extended the discussion beyond workforce composition and equal employment opportunity towards the organizational practices and conditions through which differences are recognized, managed, and incorporated into organizational processes. As a result, diversity management now

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intersects with several areas of management research, including human resource management, inclusion, organizational culture, leadership, decision-making, innovation, corporate governance, and organizational performance.

The chosen scope has also made the field increasingly heterogeneous. Earlier research placed substantial emphasis on demographic representation, equality, non-discrimination, and cultural differences. Subsequent studies have examined how diversity relates to participation, knowledge exchange, collaboration, decision-making, and other organizational processes. Demographic dimensions remain relevant to diversity management policies and practices in organizational development; for example, research on gender diversity remains prominent and is increasingly examined in contexts such as leadership, boards of directors, corporate governance, and organizational outcomes. The field's development should therefore be understood not as a simple replacement of demographic approaches with newer forms of diversity, but as an accumulation and extension of research perspectives.

The increased interest in organizational outcomes has further complicated the diversity management literature. Diversity may provide access to heterogeneous knowledge, experience, and perspectives, but these differences do not necessarily translate into improved organizational or financial performance. Previous research has reported mixed relationships between diversity and performance, highlighting the organizational conditions and processes through which differences are expressed and managed. Consequently, understanding the development of diversity management requires attention not only to the dimensions of diversity being studied, but also to the organizational contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes with which they have become associated.

The breadth of these research streams makes it difficult to grasp the field's overall intellectual structure. Diversity management research spans HRM and inclusion, leadership and top management teams, team processes, innovation, corporate governance, equality, cross-cultural management, organizational culture, and various approaches to performance and measurement. Existing research indicates fragmentation across these areas, along with ongoing inconsistencies in how diversity is conceptualized and measured and how it connects to organizational outcomes. A bibliometric perspective is particularly useful here because it lets researchers examine the structure of a large body of literature through recurring concepts and their relationships, rather than through selected individual studies alone.

Accordingly, this study examines the intellectual and thematic structure of diversity management research and identifies how its principal research themes are interconnected with broader organizational and strategic research areas. The analysis draws on 1 805 articles and book chapters indexed in Scopus within the business, management and accounting subject area. A keyword co-occurrence analysis identifies the field's principal thematic structures and examines relationships among research topics represented in the analyzed dataset.

After data cleaning and applying thresholds, the study retained 250 keywords for bibliometric mapping in VOSviewer.

The study addresses three interrelated research questions: (RQ1) What are the principal thematic structures of diversity management research? (RQ2) How are the principal research themes within diversity management interconnected? (RQ3) How is diversity management connected with broader organizational and strategic research themes, particularly leadership, corporate governance, innovation, and organizational performance?

By addressing the research questions, the study provides a structured account of diversity management's development as a management research field, while maintaining the distinction between the presence of diversity and the organizational processes through which diversity may become consequential. Rather than assuming a linear progression or a uniform diversity–performance relationship, the analysis examines how established concerns with representation and equality coexist with broader organizational and strategic research themes.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. The Changing Scope of Diversity Management

Workforce diversity has become a major focus in management research worldwide. Diversity management emerged from earlier debates on equality, non-discrimination, and equal employment opportunity. Much of this work focused on ensuring fair access to employment and reducing discrimination in recruitment, promotion, remuneration, and other employment practices. Diversity was consequently discussed largely in terms of demographic characteristics, particularly gender, race or ethnicity, age, and disability (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Wrench, 2007). These concerns have not disappeared, but the scope of diversity management has since broadened considerably.

Workforce changes contributed to this development. Growing international mobility, increasingly heterogeneous workforces, and the expansion of multinational organizations meant that employee differences were no longer relevant only to questions of equality or regulatory compliance. They also became part of everyday organizational practice (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004; Armstrong et al., 2010). This brought greater attention to a distinction that remains important in the literature: diversity describes differences among individuals and groups, whereas diversity management concerns how organizations respond to those differences.

Observable characteristics remain important, particularly because of their links to representation and inequality, but they capture only part of organizational heterogeneity. Education, professional experience, knowledge, values, beliefs, and cognitive characteristics may also differentiate employees and influence how they approach their work (Brazzel, 2003; Jackson et al., 1995). In this view, Diversity management is not simply about achieving a particular demographic composition. It also concerns the practices and organizational conditions that enable different employees to participate and contribute.

Existing literature defines diversity management in ways that reflect its scope, but no single interpretation prevails. Brazzel (2003), for instance, situates diversity within organizational change and links it to organizational effectiveness, respect for human differences, and social justice. Pless and Maak (2004) approach the issue

through inclusion, emphasizing the importance of an organizational culture in which people with different backgrounds can participate and contribute to a common aim. The emphasis differs, but both perspectives move beyond a narrow view of diversity management as mere compliance with equality requirements.

The concept has not developed identically across institutional contexts. In the United States, its history is closely tied to affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. European debates have also been shaped by anti-discrimination policies, but migration, intercultural management, internationalization, and social inclusion have played an important role in their development (Wrench, 2007). It is therefore unsurprising that the literature uses several related concepts, equality, equal opportunity, managing diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion, without always drawing identical boundaries between them.

Over time, research on diversity management has examined diversity in relation to organizational performance. Cox and Blake (1991) linked managing cultural diversity to organizational competitiveness, while later studies explored how diverse knowledge and perspectives shape creativity, learning, problem-solving, and adaptability (Milliken & Martins, 1996; Pless & Maak, 2004). This shifted attention to a more complex issue: diversity alone says little about its organizational consequences. What matters is how organizations use differences in their processes and the conditions under which they may be associated with particular outcomes.

A wider range of knowledge, experience, and perspectives may foster discussion and problem-solving; however, heterogeneity can also make communication and coordination more difficult or contribute to conflict and weaker cohesion, yielding negative results. Reviews of the evidence have accordingly reported mixed findings on diversity and performance (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). It is therefore difficult to attribute organizational outcomes to diversity as a compositional characteristic alone. How differences are experienced, managed, and incorporated into organizational processes also matters.

Research on inclusion and organizational learning developed partly in response to this issue. Ely and Thomas (2001) showed the importance of whether employees' different experiences and perspectives are actually integrated into organizational work and learning. Shore et al. (2011) later conceptualized inclusion around two simultaneous experiences: belongingness and uniqueness. From this perspective, inclusion does not make diversity management redundant. Rather, it focuses on what happens after different people are present in an organization: whether they can participate meaningfully and whether their different perspectives can enter organizational processes.

Diversity management is thus better understood as a field that has broadened through the accumulation of perspectives, rather than one in which a new approach has simply replaced an older one. Equality, representation, and non-discrimination remain central concerns, but they now coexist with questions of inclusion, organizational practice, knowledge, decision-making, and organizational outcomes. This broader scope also makes demographic indicators alone insufficient for describing organizational diversity. Understanding the field's subsequent development therefore requires closer attention to the different forms of diversity

considered in management research, particularly the distinction between surface- and deep-level characteristics.

1.2. From Demographic Diversity to a Multidimensional Understanding of Diversity

The meaning of diversity in organizational research has broadened over time. Earlier studies often focused on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and nationality. These dimensions remain important, particularly in research concerned with representation, equal opportunity, discrimination, and social categorization. At the same time, demographic characteristics alone do not capture the full range of differences that employees bring to organizations.

A key step in developing a broader understanding of diversity management was distinguishing between surface-level and deep-level diversity. Harrison, Price, and Bell (1998) define surface-level diversity as characteristics that are readily observable, whereas deep-level diversity refers to differences that are less immediately visible. These may include education, professional experience, knowledge, values, attitudes, and other individual characteristics that become more apparent through interaction.

This distinction broadened the scope of diversity research. Attention was no longer limited to a group's demographic composition; it also encompassed differences in knowledge, experience, and approaches to work. These differences may affect communication, knowledge exchange, problem-solving, and decision-making. Studies of work groups have therefore examined diversity not only in terms of who is represented but also in the perspectives and resources group members bring to their work (Mohammed & Angell, 2004; Phillips et al., 2006).

Demographic characteristics remain central to questions of representation and social inclusion. However, this perspective broadens the understanding of diversity beyond demographic differences. Visible characteristics are particularly relevant to representation and inclusion, while less visible differences may become more important through work, interaction, and decision-making. Diversity can therefore be understood as multidimensional, encompassing both demographic and less visible individual differences. Recent bibliometric evidence indicates that management research has paid unequal attention to different diversity dimensions. In their analysis of 2 510 publications on diversity and inclusion, Van Bommel et al. (2024) identified a strong emphasis on surface-level diversity, including gender, race, and cultural diversity, while deep-level diversity received comparatively less attention. This finding highlights the importance of examining how different diversity dimensions are represented in the research literature.

This broader understanding also matters for the development of diversity management as a research field. If the concept of diversity has expanded, the literature should reflect this in the topics it addresses. Research on gender, age, ethnicity, race, and nationality may increasingly be accompanied by work on education, experience, knowledge, cognition, leadership, and decision-making. Examining these patterns offers one way to trace how the conceptual scope of diversity management has evolved over time.

Recent scholarship also highlights the importance of distinguishing diversity characteristics from the organizational conditions used to assess their management. Park et al. (2023) review 13 measures of diversity and inclusion climate across individual, group, leadership, and organizational levels. Their findings demonstrate that diversity climate and inclusion climate capture related but distinct organizational experiences, including fairness, belongingness, and recognition of uniqueness. This distinction matters for bibliometric interpretation because the presence of diversity- and inclusion-related keywords does not necessarily indicate that the underlying studies use equivalent constructs or measurement approaches.

1.3. Diversity Management as a Strategic and Organizational Issue

As diversity management developed, attention shifted to its role in organizational processes and outcomes. Diversity was increasingly considered not only in relation to equality and representation but also in how organizations draw on employees' knowledge, experience, and perspectives. Cox and Blake (1991) were among the first to link managing cultural diversity to organizational competitiveness. This contributed to a growing interest in diversity as an organizational and strategic issue.

Research has since examined how diversity may contribute to creativity, learning, problem-solving, innovation, and adaptability. Different perspectives and experiences can provide organizations with a broader range of information and approaches to problems. However, these potential benefits do not arise simply because a workforce or team is diverse. Differences among employees may also create communication difficulties, conflict, or coordination and cohesion problems (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Researchers have also examined how organizational conditions shape diversity's effects on organizational culture and performance. Ely and Thomas (2001) found that diverse experiences and perspectives can contribute to organizational learning when they become part of everyday work. This shifts the focus from representation to participation and contribution. Shore et al. (2011) developed a related perspective through the concept of inclusion, which combines a sense of belonging with recognition of individual uniqueness.

More recent research has further clarified the relationship between workforce diversity, diversity management, and inclusion. Roberson (2019) synthesizes the theoretical foundations and empirical development of workplace diversity research, emphasizing the continued need for conceptual clarity and closer examination of organizational outcomes. Shore et al. (2018) distinguish inclusion from workforce composition and identify multiple organizational levels at which inclusion can be supported, including leadership, work groups, organizational practices, and climate. These contributions reinforce the view that diversity management involves not only the presence of differences but also the organizational conditions that enable employees to participate and contribute.

From this perspective, diversity management concerns not only workforce composition but also the organizational practices through which organizations recognize and manage differences. Leadership, organizational culture, human resource management practices, and opportunities for participation can influence

how diversity is experienced and whether diverse perspectives enter organizational processes. Diversity management can therefore be examined within a broader organizational and strategic context rather than as an isolated human resource practice. Recent evidence further demonstrates the importance of organizational interventions in addressing diversity-related challenges. Treffers et al. (2024), in a systematic review of 116 publications comprising 159 experimental studies, examined interventions targeting bias and discrimination related to age, disability, ethnicity, and sexuality. Their findings indicate that the effectiveness of structural, similarity-building, informational, and exposure-based interventions vary across minority groups and organizational outcomes. This reinforces the importance of considering organizational practices and mechanisms alongside workforce diversity.

For bibliometric research, this development raises the question of whether the evolving organizational role of diversity management is also reflected in the literature's structure. Connections between diversity and concepts such as inclusion, leadership, organizational culture, innovation, performance, and decision-making may indicate how the field has expanded beyond its earlier emphasis on demographic representation and equality.

Previous bibliometric studies provide an important basis for positioning the present research. Yadav and Lenka (2022) examined the intellectual structure of diversity management research using 785 publications, while van Bommel et al. (2024) analyzed 2 510 publications on diversity and inclusion, identifying diversity management, board diversity, and team diversity as prominent themes. Building on these contributions, the present study focuses specifically on diversity management publications indexed in Scopus within the business, management and accounting subject area. Its contribution lies in examining thematic associations between diversity-related concepts and broader organizational and strategic management topics, particularly leadership, corporate governance, innovation, and organizational performance, rather than claiming to provide the first bibliometric mapping of the field.

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

2.1. Data Source and Search Strategy

This study employed a bibliometric approach to examine the thematic structure of diversity management research and its connections with organizational and strategic management concepts. Bibliographic data were retrieved from the Scopus database on 13 January 2026 using the keyword search field (KEY). The search was restricted to the business, management and accounting subject area and included journal articles and book chapters. The exact Scopus search query was:

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KEY (diversity management) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "BUSI")) AND
(LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ch"))
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The search returned 1 805 publications from 1931–2026. These records constituted the dataset for the bibliometric analysis. Bibliographic metadata, including author keywords and indexed keywords, were exported for subsequent analysis using VOSviewer.

The initial keyword pool comprised 4 766 terms. As the data were retrieved in January 2026, the final publication year represents incomplete calendar-year coverage and should not be interpreted as a full year in publication trend analyses.

2.2. Data Selection and Keyword Processing

After retrieving 1 805 Scopus publications, the author prepared the keyword data for co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer. The initial dataset contained 4 766 keywords extracted from the bibliographic records.

Keyword selection and preprocessing followed successive stages. First, VOSviewer keyword records with a minimum occurrence of five were retained, resulting in 285 keywords eligible for further assessment. Second, the author evaluated keyword relevance to the research objectives, reducing the set to 258 terms. Finally, further refinement, including the harmonization of terminology and exclusion of overly generic or insufficiently relevant expressions, yielded 250 keywords retained for the bibliometric analysis.

The preserved keyword records and documented selection stages provide a basis for independent examination of the reported results. However, the original counting method (full or fractional counting) and the complete record of individual keyword exclusions could not be retrospectively verified. The resulting network may also contain broad indexing terms and geographical descriptors, which were considered when interpreting the thematic structure.

Table 1. Keyword Selection and Refinement Stages

Selection stage	Number of keywords
Initial keyword pool	4 766
Meeting the occurrence criterion	285
Retained after relevance assessment	258
Final set after refinement	250

The successive selection stages reduced the initial pool of 4 766 keywords to a final set of 250 terms. This refinement was intended to improve the interpretability of the keyword co-occurrence network while retaining terms relevant to the research objectives. The resulting keyword set provided the basis for identifying thematic clusters and examining relationships among research concepts in the subsequent VOSviewer analysis.

2.3. Bibliometric Analysis Using VOSviewer

The bibliometric analysis used VOSviewer to construct and visualize a keyword co-occurrence network. Keyword co-occurrence analysis identifies relationships between research concepts based on their joint appearance within bibliographic records.

The final network comprised 250 selected keywords organized into 11 clusters. These clusters represent groups of keywords with relatively strong co-occurrence relationships within the analyzed network.

The analysis focused on keyword co-occurrence patterns and the thematic relationships represented in the network visualization. Keyword occurrences indicate how frequently individual terms appear in the analyzed records, while links between keywords represent their co-occurrence relationships. The interpretation focused on the thematic composition of the clusters and the relationships visible in the network, without treating visual proximity or connectivity as direct evidence of theoretical integration. The resulting network visualization was used to identify major thematic concentrations and examine connections among diversity management, human resource management, leadership, corporate governance, innovation, and organizational performance.

The algorithmically generated clusters were examined to identify prominent keyword groupings and thematic relationships. The broader thematic areas presented in Table 2 constitute an interpretative synthesis of the research landscape and do not correspond one-to-one to the individual VOSviewer clusters.

2.4. Analytical Scope and Interpretation

The analysis focused on the thematic structure and relationships among keywords in the selected Scopus publications. Keyword co-occurrence provides evidence of conceptual associations within the literature but does not independently establish causal relationships, theoretical integration, or how individual studies operationalize constructs.

Accordingly, the author interpreted keyword occurrence patterns and co-occurrence relationships as indicators of thematic prominence and conceptual associations within the literature, rather than as direct measures of research quality, theoretical integration, or organizational performance.

The interpretation also considered the limitations associated with using a single bibliographic database, keyword selection and cleaning procedures, and the sensitivity of network structures to analytical thresholds.

The bibliometric findings therefore characterize the research landscape and identify topics for further theoretical and empirical investigation, rather than establish causal effects of diversity on organizational outcomes.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Development of Diversity Management Research

The results indicate that diversity management has become a multidimensional field spanning multiple levels of organizational analysis. The literature extends beyond workforce composition and equal opportunities to include human resource management, leadership, team processes, organizational culture, innovation, corporate governance, and organizational performance. This development is reflected in the field's bibliometric structure, which identified 11 interconnected thematic clusters. Table 2 provides an interpretative synthesis of 11 thematic areas

relevant to the keyword co-occurrence network. These thematic areas are used to organize the discussion of the research landscape and should not be interpreted as a one-to-one reconstruction of the 11 algorithmically generated VOSviewer clusters. The thematic labels are intended to summarize the broader research areas represented in the analysis and should not be interpreted as direct reproductions of individual keyword labels.

Table 2. Interpretative Overview of Thematic Areas in Diversity Management Research

No.	Thematic area	Main research topics
1	Foundations of diversity management and inclusion	Inclusion, equal opportunities, diversity climate and policies
2	Human resource management practices and outcomes	Recruitment, training, development, retention and engagement
3	Leadership, decision-making and top management teams	Leadership behavior, managerial diversity and strategic decision-making
4	Team diversity, conflict and collaboration	Teamwork, communication, conflict, cohesion and psychological safety
5	Innovation, creativity and knowledge diversity	Innovation, creativity, knowledge sharing and organizational learning
6	Corporate governance and board diversity	Boards, gender diversity, governance and organizational performance
7	Corporate social responsibility, ethics and legitimacy	Corporate social responsibility (CSR); reputation; legitimacy; environmental, social, and governance (ESG), and accountability
8	Gender, equality and labor-market dynamics	Gender inequality, representation, pay gaps and career progression
9	Cross-cultural management and international contexts	Cultural diversity, multicultural workforces and global teams
10	Organizational culture, identity and inclusion climate	Inclusion, belonging, identity and employee perceptions
11	Measurement, performance indicators and methodological approaches	Diversity measures, inclusion measures and performance indicators

Source: Author's interpretation of the thematic areas represented in the VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence network based on 1 805 Scopus-indexed publications. The network comprises 250 selected keywords organized into 11 algorithmically generated clusters. The thematic categories in the table are interpretative summaries and should not be treated as a verified list of keywords belonging to each cluster.

As Table 2 shows, the field comprises several related yet distinct research streams. Diversity management and inclusion provide the conceptual foundation, while HRM, leadership, teams, and organizational culture address the organizational mechanisms through which organizations manage diversity. Other thematic areas extend the discussion to innovation, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility (CSR), gender equality, and international management.

Performance-related concepts appear across several thematic areas, indicating that researchers examine organizational outcomes in different contexts rather than within a single, clearly separated research stream.

The results therefore show that contemporary diversity management research extends beyond workforce differences towards a broader organizational perspective in which diversity is connected with managerial practices, organizational processes, governance, and outcomes. At the same time, the observed thematic structure does not establish the extent to which these research streams are theoretically or methodologically integrated. In particular, further examination of individual studies is needed to determine how deep-level diversity dimensions are linked to measurable financial outcomes.

3.2. Thematic Structure of Diversity Management Research

The keyword co-occurrence network offers a more detailed view of the relationships among the main research themes identified in the bibliometric analysis. As shown in Fig. 1, diversity management sits at the center of the network and is closely connected to human resource management, inclusion, cultural diversity, gender diversity, and other organizational and managerial concepts. The pattern of these connections illustrates the field's multidisciplinary character and indicates that diversity management is studied across different levels of organizational analysis.

The network also reveals several more specialized areas. Human resource management appears alongside personnel, job satisfaction, team diversity, and organizational performance, suggesting that these concepts are frequently examined within related research contexts. These co-occurrence patterns do not establish how HRM practices influence the relationship between diversity and organizational outcomes. Gender diversity appears in the network alongside corporate governance, top management team concepts, and related governance terms.

In parallel, cultural diversity links to cross-cultural management, communication, identity, and international organizational contexts. Innovation also appears within the interconnected managerial part of the network, linking diversity-related research to questions of organizational value creation.

Overall, Fig. 1 shows that diversity management research comprises interconnected rather than isolated thematic areas. Particularly important for the present study is the intersection of diversity, management practices, governance, innovation, and organizational performance. This structure provides a basis for examining thematic associations among diversity-related concepts and organizational research areas, particularly those concerning organizational performance.

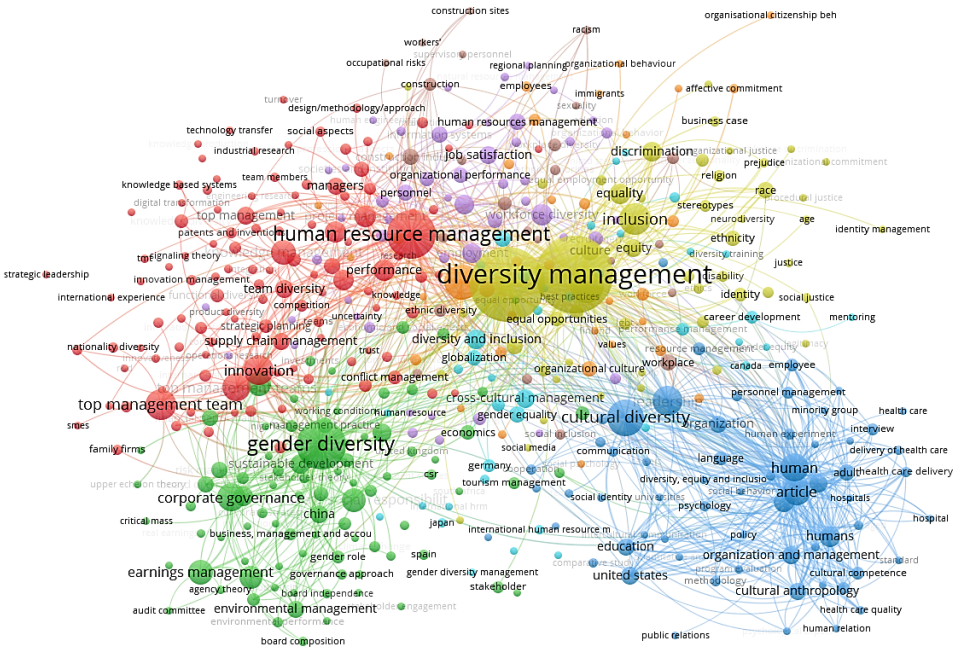


Fig. 1. Keyword co-occurrence network of diversity management research

Source: Author's bibliometric analysis of 1 805 Scopus-indexed publications (1931–2026); visualization generated using VOSviewer.

3.3. Thematic Relationships Across Diversity Management Research

The thematic structure shows that diversity management (DM) research extends beyond workforce diversity, equality, and inclusion to encompass a broader range of organizational processes and outcomes. The identified clusters link diversity to human resource management (HRM) practices, leadership, team processes, organizational culture, innovation, corporate governance, and strategic decision-making. This breadth indicates that diversity is embedded across multiple areas of management and organizational research.

The network indicates that diversity-related concepts are associated with several organizational research areas, including leadership, team processes, innovation, corporate governance, and performance. Gender diversity appears alongside governance and top management team concepts, while other diversity-related terms appear in different parts of the network. These patterns suggest thematic differentiation within the literature. However, keyword co-occurrence analysis does not establish whether the underlying studies employ integrated theoretical frameworks or comparable measures of diversity and organizational outcomes.

The distribution of performance-related keywords across several clusters further supports the thematic breadth of diversity management research. Although these terms appear in different parts of the network, their cluster membership does not, by itself, indicate strong or weak theoretical integration. Consequently, the observed relationships reflect patterns of keyword co-occurrence rather than direct

evidence of integrated theoretical frameworks or consistent approaches to measuring organizational outcomes.

3.4. Diversity Management and Organizational Performance

The bibliometric results show that organizational performance is linked to several areas of diversity management (DM) research rather than forming an isolated research stream. In the keyword network, performance-related concepts co-occur with terms associated with gender diversity, top management teams, corporate governance, innovation, and firm performance, indicating thematic associations across these research areas.

This structure indicates that researchers examine the diversity–performance relationship across organizational levels and mechanisms.

A particularly visible connection appears in research on gender diversity, top management teams, and corporate governance. The presence of upper echelons and upper echelons theory (UET) in this part of the network further underscores the theoretical relevance of managerial composition to the diversity-performance debate. Innovation provides another link, suggesting that the relationship between diversity and performance is also examined through organizational processes associated with knowledge, creativity, and value creation.

However, the bibliometric structure also reveals a limitation in the existing literature. The visualization suggests that observable diversity characteristics, particularly gender diversity, are prominent in performance-related research contexts. The available keyword network establishes less clearly how deep-level diversity dimensions relate to measurable organizational outcomes. Further document-level analysis is needed to assess these relationships systematically.

The findings therefore highlight the need for further research examining relationships among different diversity dimensions, organizational mechanisms, and measurable performance outcomes.

The findings should be interpreted within the methodological scope of keyword co-occurrence analysis. Identifying multiple thematic clusters and the distribution of performance-related keywords across clusters show the thematic diversity of the research landscape but do not, in themselves, establish theoretical or methodological fragmentation. Assessing how diversity is conceptualized and operationalized, and whether studies integrate theoretical frameworks, requires further systematic examination of the publications themselves.

The findings can be considered in relation to previous bibliometric research on diversity and inclusion. Van Bommel et al. (2024) identified a pronounced emphasis on surface-level diversity and highlighted the comparatively limited attention given to deep-level diversity in the literature they examined. The present study, based on a differently defined Scopus dataset, identifies a broad thematic structure in Diversity Management research and the distribution of performance-related concepts across several keyword clusters. Although the two studies differ in database coverage and search strategy, both demonstrate the importance of distinguishing diversity dimensions when interpreting the research landscape. However, this keyword co-occurrence analysis does not establish whether

individual studies integrate these dimensions within common theoretical or empirical frameworks.

CONCLUSIONS

The bibliometric analysis identifies diversity management (DM) as a multidimensional research field that spans workforce diversity, inclusion, human resource management, leadership, team processes, organizational culture, innovation, corporate governance, and organizational performance. The keyword co-occurrence network comprises 250 selected terms organized into 11 clusters, illustrating the field's thematic breadth and the relationships among its principal research concepts.

The findings indicate that performance-related concepts span several thematic areas rather than forming a single, clearly delineated research stream. Gender diversity appears alongside corporate governance and top management team (TMT) concepts, while human resource management, innovation, and team processes represent additional organizational perspectives. These patterns demonstrate thematic associations but do not establish the extent of theoretical integration or methodological consistency across individual studies. Further examination of the underlying publications is required to assess these relationships.

The presence of upper echelons theory (UET) among the identified keywords suggests that this theoretical perspective is represented in research on managerial characteristics and organizational outcomes. However, the bibliometric findings do not establish how consistently UET is applied across studies or whether it provides a common explanatory framework for the diversity–performance relationship. The observed associations among gender diversity, TMTs, corporate governance, and performance-related concepts therefore indicate a relevant thematic area for further investigation rather than evidence of an established theoretical relationship.

Another important issue concerns how diversity is conceptualized and measured. The network includes demographic diversity concepts, particularly gender diversity, alongside organizational and performance-related themes. However, keyword co-occurrence analysis does not provide sufficient evidence to determine how consistently deep-level diversity dimensions, including knowledge, professional experience, values, and cognitive differences, are examined in relation to measurable organizational performance. Establishing these relationships requires document-level analysis of how individual studies define and operationalize diversity dimensions and performance indicators.

The findings also suggest the importance of examining diversity within broader organizational contexts. Human resource management practices, leadership, organizational culture, inclusion, team processes, corporate governance, and innovation are research areas associated with diversity-related concepts. Nevertheless, the bibliometric analysis cannot determine whether these organizational factors mediate or moderate the relationship between diversity and performance. Similarly, employee outcomes, team effectiveness, innovation, productivity, and financial performance represent different analytical levels and should not be treated as interchangeable performance indicators.

Because the bibliometric findings identify thematic associations without clarifying how diversity characteristics, organizational mechanisms, and performance outcomes are theoretically explained or empirically measured in individual studies, further document-level and empirical research is needed. One possible direction is to investigate how objectively measured diversity within TMTs relates to strategic decision-making and organizational performance. A complementary direction concerns managers' perceptions of diversity-related characteristics. These questions represent potential research avenues rather than gaps directly established by the present bibliometric analysis. Future studies could also examine the possible roles of leadership, HRM practices, organizational culture, and innovation using clearly defined constructs and performance indicators.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The analysis is limited to Scopus-indexed publications in the business, management and accounting subject area and includes only journal articles and book chapters, excluding other document types. The use of the Scopus keyword search field (KEY) may have excluded relevant publications that discuss diversity management without including it in their keywords. Furthermore, the keyword network is sensitive to the selected occurrence threshold, counting method, and keyword refinement procedures. Although the successive selection stages and final keyword counts are reported, the complete original VOSviewer configuration and detailed exclusion records are not available for retrospective verification. Consequently, the reproducibility of the preprocessing procedure and the stability of the network under alternative analytical settings cannot be fully assessed.

Overall, the study advances understanding of the thematic structure of diversity management research by identifying major research areas and their conceptual links to organizational and strategic management topics. The findings underscore the need for further investigation into how diversity dimensions are defined, measured, and examined alongside organizational mechanisms and performance outcomes. Such research could provide a stronger foundation for theoretical development and empirical investigation of the relationships among diversity, strategic management, and organizational performance.

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DECLARATION OF USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The author used OpenAI ChatGPT to support language editing, academic phrasing, and structural refinement of the manuscript. All AI-assisted content was reviewed and revised by the author, who takes full responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, and final content. Generative AI was not used to generate the bibliometric dataset or results.

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