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REVIEW ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

Contextualization and Context Effects: An Integrative Review of Studies on the Outcomes of Diversity Management Practices

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ABSTRACT

Research on the outcomes of diversity management practices has produced inconsistent and even contradictory results. It has been argued that these discrepancies are due to contextual differences between studies. Building on this argument, this integrative review provides an in-depth analysis of context, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the outcomes of diversity management practices. We used Johns' categorical framework to synthesize the literature and systematically review contextualization and context effects in empirical studies. We offer suggestions for future contextualization, point to under- and unexplored contextual factors, outline ways to advance theorizing, and argue for more complex conceptualizations of contextual factors.

1 | Introduction

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) present a turning point for businesses as their role to drive transformation toward sustainability is highlighted for the first time (Scheyvens et al. 2016). They led to a shift in practice as organizations began taking action and implementing voluntary initiatives to contribute to the SDGs (Rashed and Shah 2020). SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) call on organizations to promote inclusive practices to counter discrimination based on demographic factors such as gender, race, age, disability, religion, or sexual orientation (United Nations, n.d.). Socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) plays a key role in organizations' efforts to address these issues (Campos-García et al. 2024) and in creating organizational legitimacy (Karatas-Ozkan et al. 2022). Organizations are paying increasing attention to workforce diversity, adopting diversity initiatives and allocating budgets to diversity management practices (DMPs). Academia has followed

developments in DM since the concept was first introduced in the 1980s (Kelly and Dobbin 1998). Researchers have predominantly been preoccupied with the question of how diversity influences organizational outcomes (van Dijk et al. 2012). Studies have examined the relationships between diversity and variables related to social integration, performance, and well-being (Guillaume et al. 2017). However, workplace diversity has been described as a double-edged sword due to inconsistent or even conflicting findings on its outcomes (Guillaume et al. 2017), which make generalizations difficult (van Dijk et al. 2012). We propose a shift in focus from studying the outcomes of diversity to studying the inconsistencies between previous studies. According to one line of thinking, to fully grasp diversity and its effects, more attention should be paid to the context in which organizations operate (Joshi and Roh 2007; Nkomo et al. 2019; Post et al. 2021), as contextual differences between studies can lead to conflicting results (Rousseau and Fried 2001). In this integrative literature review (Dwertmann and van Knippenberg 2020), we delve

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into contextualization and context effects (Bamberger 2008; Johns 2006) by addressing the following research questions: (a) How have studies on the outcomes of DMPs been contextualized? (b) How do contextual factors influence the outcomes of DMPs?

Although previous reviews of studies on DMPs have considered contextual factors (Nishii et al. 2017), an in-depth analysis of contextualization and the effects of contextual factors has not been conducted. Research contextualization allows readers “to better assess the applicability of the theory or findings” (Bamberger 2008, p. 840) and contributes to an understanding of discrepancies between findings. Analyzing context effects can enable future studies on the outcomes of DMPs to better predict their findings (Bamberger 2008). In this review, we build on Johns’ (2006) contextual dimensions to conceptualize context on different levels of analysis and to respond to recent calls to move away from micro-level research on workplace diversity and integrate findings that encompass the micro- and macro-levels (Joshi et al. 2011). In this article, we start by presenting the categorization and contextualization of DMPs that served as the analytical framework for this review. We then describe the methodology, outline the reviewed articles’ contextualization efforts, and provide suggestions for future contextualization. We then present an analysis and discussion of context effects. We provide recommendations for future research and conclude the paper with a reflection on the study’s limitations.

2 | Analytical Framework

2.1 | Diversity Management Practices

DM can be viewed as part of an organization’s efforts to practice SRHRM, which involves the application of corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles to HRM. This approach extends beyond viewing HR merely as a strategic asset contributing to the organization’s bottom line, and instead emphasizes the organization’s moral obligations (Santana and Lopez-Cabrales 2019). At the core of SRHRM is the belief that organizations should not only focus their CSR efforts outward, but also prioritize internal stakeholders, including employees (Qamar et al. 2023). Diaz-Carrion et al. (2020) outline equal opportunities and nondiscrimination as core CSR dimensions of SRHRM. These dimensions are reflected in DMPs which are defined as organizational practices “aimed at improving the workplace experiences and outcomes of groups that face disadvantage in both organizations and the broader society” (Leslie 2019, p. 540). Organizations use various DMPs to achieve this goal. In this review, we adopted Leslie’s (2019) categorization of DMPs into (a) resource practices, (b) nondiscrimination practices, and (c) accountability practices. Resource practices, such as mentoring programs and network groups, provide the targeted individual with increased access to resources and aim to promote equity (Leslie 2019; Richard et al. 2013). They are also referred to as identity-conscious practices (Leslie 2019) because they acknowledge differences and emphasize their importance (Leslie et al. 2020). Nondiscrimination practices, such as diversity training (Kalev et al. 2006), aim to raise awareness of and reduce biases. These identity-blind practices are based on

the assumption that differences are not relevant and should be minimized (Leslie et al. 2020). Accountability practices, such as assigning responsibility for diversity by appointing diversity staff, aim to measure performance against diversity goals and increase responsibility, accountability, authority, and expertise (Kalev et al. 2006; Leslie 2019).

2.2 | Diversity Management Practices and Context

Reviews of studies on DM and DMPs have recommended that researchers provide rich descriptions of the research settings (Joshi and Roh 2009; Nishii et al. 2017) to facilitate the interpretation of their findings (Nishii et al. 2017; Post et al. 2021) and contribute to increasing the effectiveness of DMPs (Joshi and Roh 2009). Rousseau and Fried (2001, p. 1) regard such rich descriptions as contextualization, which they define as “linking observations to a set of relevant facts, events, or points of view that make possible research and theory that form part of a larger whole.” Johns (2006) introduced the concepts of *omnibus context* and *discrete context*, which can guide researchers in contextualizing their studies by moving from broad descriptions of general information to specifics. The omnibus context concerns *who* is being studied, *where*, *when*, and *why* a study is conducted. Examples of contextual variables that answer the question of *who* include demographics such as gender composition (Johns 2006). The answer to the question of *where* may be a country, institution, or market. The question of *when* may be related to societal events or times of crisis (Oc 2018). The question of *why* is answered by a researcher’s or an organization’s rationale for conducting a study (Johns 2006).

The discrete context “is nested within omnibus context” (Johns 2006, p. 391) and includes the dimensions of *task context*, *social context*, and *physical context*. Variables related to the task context include autonomy, uncertainty, accountability, and resources (Johns 2006). Practical examples of these variables are the workload of organizational members, the complexity of tasks (Bell et al. 2018), and the freedom that organizational members have in performing their tasks (Dierdorff et al. 2009). Social context variables include social density, social structure, and social influence (Johns 2006), which are the “result of having to interact with others” (Bell et al. 2018, p. 2748). Such variables can be manifested in organizational culture, team/organization size, leadership style (Bell et al. 2018), leaders’ attributes (Joshi and Roh 2007), norms, and conflict (Dierdorff et al. 2009). Physical context variables include temperature, light, built environment, and décor (Johns 2006). In practice, they can mean, for instance, hazardous working conditions (Dierdorff et al. 2009), physical distance between the workplace and the home or family (Bell et al. 2018), and team dispersion (Joshi and Roh 2007).

Johns’ (2006) framework was developed for research in organizational behavior. This field has a long tradition of studying organizations’ approaches to managing individual and group differences as well as their outcomes, making the framework a relevant choice for the present study. At the same time, approaches to studying DMPs in organizational behavior reflect the field’s underlying assumptions, often emphasizing measurable performance outcomes which may not capture the complexity of DM such as its relation to structural inequalities. We

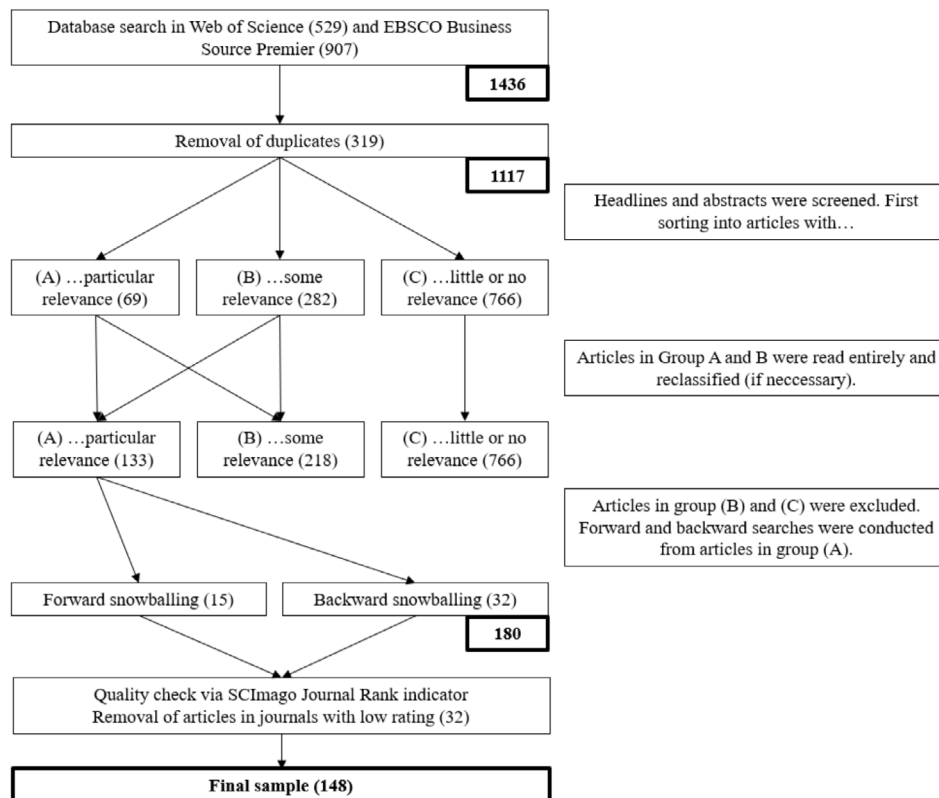


FIGURE 1 | Sampling process.

recognize that Johns' (2006) framework was influenced by these assumptions and that it was not specifically developed for research on DMPs or, more broadly, on SRHRM.

3 | Methodology

An integrative literature review should provide a detailed explanation of the steps taken and the articles selected for analysis. The sampling process is portrayed in Figure 1. The systematic literature search started with a Boolean keyword search in the multi-publisher Web of Science and EBSCO Business Source Premier databases, which represent a large share of relevant journals and are the most frequently used databases for reviews of articles published in top journals (Hiebl 2023). Building on Leslie (2019), the following search string was used: "diversity management" OR "diversity management practice*" OR "diversity management program*" OR "diversity management activit*" OR "diversity management initiative*" OR "diversity practice*" OR "diversity program*" OR "diversity activit*" OR "diversity initiative*" OR "diversity training*" OR "diversity mentor*" OR "diversity network*" OR "diversity committee*" OR "diversity taskforce*" OR "diversity staff" OR "targeted recruit*" OR "diversity statement*" OR "diversity evaluation*" OR "diversity performance" OR "diversity goal*". Only peer-reviewed articles published in English in academic journals between 2013 and 2023 were included. The aim of including only peer-reviewed articles was to guarantee a minimum level of quality. To focus the search, the category "Management" in was used in Web of Science. The search yielded 529 results in Web of Science and 907 results in EBSCO Business Source Premier. After duplicates were removed, 1117 articles remained.

Only articles that focused on at least one outcome of at least one DMP and reported empirical findings were included. First, the articles' headlines and abstracts were screened. During this initial screening, the articles were classified into three groups: articles with (a) particular relevance ($n = 69$), (b) some relevance ($n = 282$), and (c) little or no relevance ($n = 766$). The large number of articles that fell into the third category can be attributed to the search string, which did not include keywords related to outcomes of DMPs due to their wide variety. The articles in the first two categories were read in their entirety and reclassified if necessary. All articles in the first category ($n = 133$) were retained. From the initially identified studies, an additional 47 articles were identified through forward searches (15 articles) and backward searches (32 articles). The forward searches were conducted on Google Scholar. Finally, the journals in which the selected articles were published were subjected to a quality check using the SCImago Journal Rank indicator. All articles published in journals ranking below the second quartile (32 articles) were excluded. The final sample consisted of 148 articles.

To categorize the data, the first author performed a thematic analysis using MAXQDA software (Braun and Clarke 2006). The first sections of each article (introduction to methodology) were used to answer the first research question. To answer the second research question, among the 148 articles, quantitative studies on contextual factors as moderators and qualitative studies that regarded contextual factors as constructs were identified. This process yielded 54 articles. The analysis took a deductive approach based on the analytical framework. Leslie's (2019) categorization was used to sort the DMPs into resource practices, nondiscrimination practices, and accountability practices. The following sections elaborate how this

TABLE 1 | Contextualization of the reviewed studies.

Context dimension	Contextual factor	Level of analysis					
		Individual	Team	Department	Organization	Industry	Country
Discrete	Social	Social structure	1	1	1	1	1
		Culture			1	1	2
		Leaders' attributes	1		1	1	1
		Politics and legislation					2
	Task	Autonomy	1				
		Empowerment	1				
		Job demands	1				
		Resources	1		2	1	1
		Accountability			1		
	Physical	Workplace	1				
Omnibus	When ^a				1		1
	Where			1	1	4	4
	Who	4					
	Why				1		1

Note: 1, reported in less than 25% of the articles; 2, reported in 25%–50% of the articles; 3, reported in 50%–75% of the articles; 4, reported in more than 75% of the articles.

^aInformation on the period of data collection is not included. It was provided in approximately 57% of the articles.

was not always possible as studies were often looking into a combination of multiple practices from different categories. The dimensions omnibus context and discrete context and their related variables based on Johns (2006) provided the structure for grouping contextual factors. Additionally, the level of analysis of each contextual factor was considered. The analysis and its results were discussed with the second author. Adaptations were made jointly when deemed necessary by both authors.

4 | Results

Publications gradually increased between 2013 (9 articles; ≈6%) and 2023 (18 articles; ≈12%). The reviewed articles were published in a total of 72 journals. Most studies ($n = 118$; ≈80%) used quantitative approaches, while two combined qualitative and quantitative methods.

4.1 | Contextualization

In their meta-analytical review, Joshi and Roh (2009) criticized the lack of rich descriptions of research settings in studies on diversity as early as the 2000s. We found that although well-established contextual information, such as the period of data collection, was frequently provided, most contextual dimensions were not described or were described only superficially. As can be seen in Table 1, the extent to which contextual information was reported varied across dimensions. We elaborate on the dimensions in the following subsections. The

detail provided in the subsections is subject to the uneven frequency with which certain dimensions were included in the reviewed articles.

4.1.1 | Discrete Context

4.1.1.1 | Social Context. The social dimension was the most frequently described discrete context dimension. We found descriptions of social structure, which refers to the distribution of diversity dimensions in a group, culture, politics and legislation, and leaders' attributes. Leaders' attributes received the least attention. This is surprising, as the importance of leaders in the implementation of DMPs has been widely acknowledged (Nishii et al. 2017). The success of DMPs is linked to leaders' motivation to implement them (Bowen and Ostroff 2004), which is, in turn, linked to their personal characteristics (Nishii et al. 2017). There was little variety in the reported diversity characteristics of leaders. The reviewed articles most frequently described gender diversity in managerial positions, followed by age, ethnic, and racial diversity. We observed similar patterns in the description of the distribution of diversity dimensions on different levels of analysis. Contextual information on culture was almost entirely related to the acceptance and treatment of minorities and women on the industry and country levels. These aspects were not described on lower levels, such as teams and departments. Country-specific legislation and political developments related to diversity, such as the Marriage Act in Ireland (McFadden and Crowley-Henry 2018), the German gender quota regulations (Windscheid et al. 2017), and Canada's gender diversity

disclosure regulation for organizations (Ben-Amar et al. 2022) were acknowledged in some articles. Legislative pressure can urge organizations to implement DMPs to counter discrimination and contribute to workforce diversity. However, vague regulations have often failed to achieve these goals, as they have led organizations to respond “with largely ceremonial compliance measures that would not disturb management routines” (Dobbin and Kalev 2021, p. 295). This underlines the importance of rich contextualization that moves beyond the mere listing of national regulations and critically reflects on them.

4.1.1.2 | Task Context. The task context was almost exclusively represented by resources, which varied widely depending on the level of analysis. For instance, on the organizational level, studies reported on economic performance and organizational size, whereas on the country level, they provided broad overviews of organizations’ DM efforts and the employment situation of minority groups and women. There were no task context descriptions on the team or department level. Task-related aspects on the individual level, including autonomy, empowerment, job demands, and accountability, were examined in only a few studies.

4.1.1.3 | Physical Context. The physical context was largely overlooked and was noted by only two studies that examined whether the study participants’ workplaces were the organizations’ headquarters or field offices. The recent trends toward digitization (Post et al. 2021) and multinational organizations (Nkomo et al. 2019), which can make differences between workers increasingly salient, may increase the importance of the physical workplace. For instance, employees face different environments when working from home depending on diversity-related factors, such as their family situations and socioeconomic status. Virtual work and internationalization can contribute to team dispersion and change the mode of collaboration (Antonacopoulou and Georgiadou 2021).

4.1.2 | Omnibus Context

4.1.2.1 | When. Few studies went beyond mentioning the period of data collection to detail organizational or societal trends or events connected to the period in question. One example is Fontana (2020), who conducted a case study of the contribution of a DM initiative for the inclusion of transgender individuals in a Bangladeshi organization. In the methodology section, the author provides a chronological outline of the implementation of the DM initiative and relate it to societal and political events, such as legislation, that shaped the implementation process. This detailed description provides the reader with an understanding of transgender discrimination in Bangladesh, in response to which the organizational initiative was undertaken.

4.1.2.2 | Where. As DM has its roots in the USA (Nkomo and Hoobler 2014), we were not surprised to find that North America and Europe represented the majority of studies. The USA was the most frequently represented, followed by Central-Western European countries, such as Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. Few studies were conducted in Asian countries, such as China, South Korea, Vietnam,

and Japan. Fontana’s (2020) study was the only one conducted in Bangladesh. None of the review studies was conducted in South America, and only one study was conducted in Africa—specifically, in South Africa (Carstens and De Kock 2017).

4.1.2.3 | Who. All descriptions related to the *who* dimension were on the individual level of analysis and included demographics, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and personality. Demographics, which can also be referred to as surface-level diversity, received considerably more attention than the other categories, which can be considered aspects of deep-level diversity. Surface-level diversity is often readily visible and deep-level diversity becomes apparent over time and through social interactions (Harrison et al. 2002). Gender was frequently noted, followed by managerial level, age, occupation, and race. In an analysis of diversity theorizing over the past decades, Nkomo et al. (2019) identified a research shift from surface-level diversity to deep-level diversity between the 1980s/1990s and the 2000s/2010s. However, our analysis shows that this development is not reflected in contextualization. As discussed above in relation to the social dimension, contextualization still seems to focus on a few surface-level diversity characteristics.

4.1.2.4 | Why. Disclosing the reason for collecting data can promote readers’ understanding of participants’ responses, which may be influenced by the study’s rationale (Johns 2006). For instance, if a study is conducted as part of an organization’s evaluation and the participants are aware that the results will be shared with management (even if they are anonymized), their responses may differ from the responses they might give if they know that they will not be shared with their employer. Nevertheless, few of the reviewed studies explained the reasons for data collection. The most cited reason was that a study had been initiated by an external party, which was either an organization wanting to gather information on its own practices or a local government wishing to gain insights into the inclusion of minority groups in the labor market.

Poor contextualization limits the comparability of findings across studies (Rousseau and Fried 2001). Although guidance on how to contextualize research exists (Johns 2006; Rousseau and Fried 2001), contextualization does not seem to be a well-established practice. Table 2 provides suggestions on how to contextualize specifically research on DMPs based on the results of this review and Johns’s (2006) framework. In the reviewed studies, contextualization concerned mainly the individual, organizational, and country levels, whereas other levels of analysis, such as the team level, received less attention. Research findings highlighting the importance of team characteristics for DM (Joshi and Roh 2007; van Knippenberg and van Ginkel 2022) suggest that contextualization on this level is particularly interesting. Our proposed approach considers different levels of analysis. Although the relevance of contextual information is unique to each study, researchers on DM can use our analysis as a starting point for greater contextualization of their studies. Context dimensions are often closely intertwined. For instance, where a study is conducted raises questions not only about a city or country but also about its economic and political situation. The economic and political aspects, in turn, may also be interrelated. Thus, contextual factors should be viewed as a whole rather than separately.

TABLE 2 | Suggestions for contextualization by context dimension.

Context dimension		Contextual factor	Level of analysis						
			Individual	Team	Department	Organization	Industry	Country	
Discrete	Social	Distribution of diversity dimensions		X	X	X	X	X	
		Diversity climate and culture		X	X	X			
		Cross-group interaction		X	X	X	X	X	
		Hierarchical structure		X	X	X			
		Leaders' attributes		X	X	X	X		
		Historical developments				X	X	X	
		Involvement with unions				X	X	X	
		Activism and protests				X	X	X	
		Size		X	X	X	X		
		Demographic development		X	X	X	X	X	
		Diversity-related legislation						X	
		Political situation						X	
		Task	Performance	X	X	X	X	X	X
			(Diversity) strategy				X		
	Governance					X			
	Availability of labor							X	
	Employment situation							X	
	Turnover			X	X	X			
	Reputation		X	X	X	X			
	Autonomy		X	X	X	X			
	Empowerment		X	X	X	X			
	Demands associated with work (physical, psychological)		X	X	X				
	Workload		X	X	X	X			
	Office/field		X	X	X	X			
	Remote work		X	X	X	X			
	Automation		X	X	X	X			
	Distance between workplace and home		X						
	Distance between workplace and family	X							
	Dispersion		X	X	X				

(Continues)

TABLE 2 | (Continued)

Context dimension	Contextual factor	Level of analysis					
		Individual	Team	Department	Organization	Industry	Country
Omnibus	When	Event	X	X	X	X	X
		Trends		X	X	X	X
		Duration of project/activity		X	X		
	Where	Location	X	X	X	X	X
	Who	Demographics	X				
		Attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions	X				
		Personality	X				
	Why	Reason for collecting information	X	X	X	X	X

4.2 | Context Effects

In this subsection, we discuss the context effects related to DMPs and outcomes. An overview of the context effects is provided in Table 3. We grouped contextual factors, DMPs, and outcomes and present the most frequently studied combinations in Table 4. A lack of clear definitions of DMPs complicated the evaluation. We were often unable to assign DMPs to one of the categories suggested by Leslie (2019), as multiple practices were studied together. Some of the reviewed articles explicitly referred to them as practice bundles (e.g., Leung et al. 2023; Richard et al. 2013), which consist of “interrelated and internally consistent” practices (MacDuffie 1995, p. 204) that complement each other and are aligned with an organization's strategic goals (Bowen and Ostroff 2004). Practice bundles, which have been suggested to be more effective than single, isolated practices (Combs et al. 2006), were the exception rather than the rule in our reviewed articles. The strategic motivation for studying practices in combination, the exact practices studied, and their targets were often unclear. Unclear definitions of DMPs were frequent in quantitative studies that used secondary data. For instance, our sample included studies that used the results of federal employee surveys, such as the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) by the US Office of Personnel Management. The following survey item from the 2022 survey (FEVS 2022, p. 35) concerns DMPs: “My supervisor demonstrates commitment to workforce diversity (e.g., recruitment, promotion opportunities, development).” Such definitions made practices difficult to categorize, as they did not concern a specific practice or a strategic combination of practices that might target a specific minority group or women.

4.2.1 | Discrete Context

4.2.1.1 | Social Context. Contextual factors related to the social dimension were often studied in combination with resource practices and organization-related attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (e.g., job pursuit intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational attraction) as outcomes. They were also studied with DMPs fitting combinations of the established categories and performance outcomes (Table 4). The studied

contextual factors were categorized into social structure, culture, and politics and legislation. Social structure, which is related to the distribution of diversity dimensions, was found to restrict range, affect base rate, and prompt curvilinear effects (Table 3). The representation of women across hierarchical levels, a contextual factor studied multiple times, moderated the relationship between DMPs and outcomes. For instance, in organizations with a female executive, childcare leave and flexible work arrangements contributed to positive relationships between female managers and their female supervisors (Shin and Kim 2022). Ali and Konrad (2017) found that the positive association between DMPs and CSR performance was stronger in organizations with great gender diversity in lower and middle management.

The influence of cultural aspects on the relationship between DMPs and organizational performance outcomes was frequently studied. The studied cultural aspects varied widely depending on the level of analysis and restricted range, affected base rate, prompted curvilinear effects, and changed causal direction (Table 3). While diversity climate, diversity environment, and diversity perspective were related to the organizational level, broader cultural practices were analyzed on the country level. For instance, following Dwertmann et al.'s (2016) suggestions for advancing research on diversity climate, Ali and French (2019) found that in organizations with a synergy perspective (as opposed to a fairness and discrimination perspective), DMPs were positively associated with return on assets. Baker et al. (2021) found that in organizations with a strong diversity environment, DMPs contributed to profit before tax. While these two studies focused on the organizational level, Peretz et al. (2015) considered variables across levels of analysis. Specifically, they investigated the influence of national cultural practices on the relationships between DMPs and organizational absenteeism and turnover. For instance, in low power distance countries, the adoption of DMPs contributed to fewer absent days per employee than in high power distance countries.

Politics and legislation, analyzed in only two instances, restricted range and prompted curvilinear effects (Table 3). The two studies' results pointed in different directions. Whereas

TABLE 3 | Context effects.

				Context effects					
Context dimension		Level of analysis	Contextual factor	Restricted range	Affected base rate	Prompted curvilinear effects	Changed causal direction	Reversed signs	
Discrete	Social	Team	Social structure	4	1	1			
			Culture ^a	4	2	2			
		Organization	Social structure	3	3	1			
			Culture	3	2	1	1		
		Country	Culture	4					
			Politics and legislation ^a	4		2			
		Task	Department	Resources ^a	4		3		
			Organization	Resources	4	2	1		
			Industry	Resources ^a	4		2		
Omnibus	When	Country	Events ^a			3		3	
	Where	Department ^a				4			
		Organization ^a		4	4				
		Industry ^a		4			3		
		Sector ^a		4	4				
	Who	Individual	Attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions	4	2	1	1	1	
			Demographics	4	3	1	1	1	

Note: 1, occurred in less than 25% of the times the contextual factor was examined; 2, occurred in 25%–50% of the times the contextual factor was examined; 3, occurred in 50%–75% of the times the contextual factor was examined; 4, occurred in more than 75% of the times the contextual factor was examined.

^aExamined fewer than five times.

TABLE 4 | DMPs and outcomes repeatedly studied together by context dimension.

Context dimension		DMP category	Outcome
Discrete	Social	Resource practices	Organization-related attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (e.g., job pursuit intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational attraction)
		Resource practices	Performance
		Combination	Performance
		Task	Performance
Omnibus	When	N/A ^a	N/A ^a
	Where	N/A ^a	N/A ^a
	Who	Resource practices	Organization-related attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (e.g., job pursuit intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational attraction)
		Combination	Organization-related attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (e.g., job pursuit intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational attraction)
		Nondiscrimination practices	Organization-related attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (e.g., job pursuit intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational attraction)

^aNo pattern emerged due to the small number of studies examining the influence of this dimension.

Windscheid et al. (2017) found that a government-mandated gender quota contributed to the job pursuit intentions of participants who were presented with an identity-conscious diversity statement. Pichler et al. (2018) reported that state laws prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation had a negative influence on the relationship between DMPs focusing on sexual minorities and productivity. When there were no such state laws, DMPs focusing on sexual minorities were positively associated with productivity.

4.2.1.2 | Task Context. All contextual factors related to the task dimension concerned resources on the department, organization, and industry levels. They restricted range, prompted curvilinear effects, and affected base rate (Table 3), and they were considered together with resource practices and performance outcomes (Table 4). For instance, Pichler et al. (2018) and Leung et al. (2023) analyzed engagement in research and development (R & D) as a moderator of the relationship between DMPs and Tobin's *q*. Pichler et al. (2018) used this moderator as an indicator of the extent to which organizations needed highly skilled labor and found that a positive relationship between progressive LGBT-supportive corporate policies and Tobin's *q* existed only in organizations engaging in R & D activities. On the other hand, Leung et al. (2023, p. 8) examined R & D intensity on the industry level as an indicator of "technological opportunity-seeking behaviors." Firms operating in industries with high R & D intensity benefited more from DMPs than firms operating in industries with low R & D intensity.

4.2.2 | Omnibus Context

4.2.2.1 | When. Events were studied in only two qualitative studies and in combination with resource practices. They exerted curvilinear effects and reversed signs (Table 3). In both cases, the time of data collection influenced the relationship between DMPs and outcomes. Egan and de Lima Voss (2023) studied the effects of diversity statements on decisions to "come out" when marriage equality legislation was enacted in Australia. While some participants reported heightened feelings of acceptance and support, others perceived increased danger due to scathing public discussions preceding the legislation. Beaver (2023) interviewed members of an LGBT employee resource group (ERG) at two time points and examined how the participants' perceptions of the benefits and risks of being a member of the group changed. The members of the ERG more than doubled between the two time points (from 200 to 500 employees). In the first round of interviews, the participants reported fearing negative career outcomes due to increased visibility, whereas in the second round, they reported that the increased visibility had, in fact, advanced their careers.

4.2.2.2 | Who. Scholars seemed to be particularly interested in who was being studied, as the related contextual factors were the most frequently analyzed. These factors were related to demographics as well as attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions on the individual level and specific characteristics of a department, organization, industry, or sector on higher levels of analysis. They restricted range, affected base rate, prompted curvilinear effects, changed causal direction, and reversed signs (Table 3). We were not surprised to find that demographics mostly concerned race

and gender, despite long-standing calls to consider other diversity dimensions (Nkomo et al. 2019). Organization-related attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions were frequently studied as outcomes (Table 4). This included reactions to DMPs that were found to be influenced by demographics. Differences in reactions were identified between majority and minority groups and between men and women. For instance, Windscheid et al. (2017) found differences between men's and women's job pursuit intentions in response to two different organizational diversity statements. Preferential treatment statements containing information on a voluntarily established gender quota as well as opportunity enhancement statements including information on gender initiatives were more attractive to women than to men. Kossek et al. (2024) conducted one of only a few studies that examined the outcomes of DMPs in a university setting. They used gender and racial minority status as contextual factors and found that diversity training contributed to satisfaction with department affiliation among underrepresented groups but not among White males.

Beliefs and attitudes were also found to influence individuals' organizational perceptions. Brady et al. (2015) reported that women who strongly believed in benevolent sexism perceived an organization as more procedurally just when diversity training focused on gender diversity. This perception was not observed among women who did not hold strong benevolent sexism beliefs. Gutiérrez and Saint Clair (2018) analyzed the role of an individual's social dominance orientation in the relationship between an ERG for employees of color and job pursuit intentions. The authors found that the existence of such an ERG decreased the job pursuit intentions of individuals with a strong social dominance orientation, which refers to an individual's support for policies aimed at maintaining group-based hierarchy and inequality.

4.2.2.3 | Where. The sector, industry, organization, and department were also found to shape organizational perceptions. A qualitative study conducted by Bacouel-Jentjens and Yang (2019) found that individuals' perceptions of DMPs differed depending on the department in which they worked (R & D or production) and the social identity associated with that department. Blue-collar workers in production showed higher sensitivity to and awareness of diversity and DMPs than white-collar workers in R & D. Jansen et al. (2021) compared the influence of diversity statements on perceived organizational morality between private and public sector organizations. While there was no difference in perceived morality between moral and business motives communicated by private organizations in their diversity statements, public sector organizations were perceived as more moral when they communicated moral rather than business motives for diversity.

5 | Moving Forward

The aim of this literature review was to place the contexts of studies on the outcomes of DMPs under a magnifying glass by reflecting on contextualization and context effects. We built on this reflection to highlight research gaps and indicate future directions. Future research must advance our understanding of the differing and sometimes contradictory outcomes of DMPs. Based on our analysis, we outline three ways of moving the field

forward. First, future research should focus on contextual factors that have thus far received little or no attention. Second, horizontal and vertical contrasting can advance theorizing and fill some of the identified gaps. Third, some contextual factors that have been studied extensively should be subjected to a more complex conceptualization. This particularly applies to contextual factors of the *who* dimension, which have mainly been studied as single-dimension demographics.

5.1 | Un(der)explored Context Dimensions

Our analysis indicates that our knowledge of context effects is unequally distributed. As visualized in Figure 2, several of the reviewed studies examined the *who* and social dimensions as contextual factors, few studies focused on the *when*, *where*, and task dimensions, and no studies considered the physical and *why* dimensions. The under- and unexplored dimensions represent an interesting research avenue that can contribute to a better understanding of the outcomes of DMPs. For instance, it has been argued that societal and political events have shaped DM as an integral component of SRHRM since its inception. These events include movements such as the recent Me Too and Black Lives Matter movements (Nkomo et al. 2019), the annual letter from Larry Fink, CEO of the investment firm BlackRock, urging companies to prioritize social responsibility, or the release of the SDGs by the United Nations in 2015. These events have pushed organizations to modify their management approaches. Economic disruptions such as financial crises could also be an interesting influence to explore, raising the critical question of whether organizations maintain their efforts under financial strain (Nundhapana et al. 2024). The physical context has also become of increasing interest as digitization changes workplaces. One major development has been a shift toward virtual work propelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires organizations to find new ways of personnel management (Antonacopoulou and Georgiadou 2021). In the following subsection, we discuss the potential roots of the observed imbalance in the contextual factors investigated in the reviewed studies.

5.2 | Advancing Theorizing

Micro-level theories were dominant in the reviewed studies. An overview of these theories is provided in Table 5. We grouped them into four categories according to their assumptions regarding the outcomes of DMPs. These theories were most often applied to the most frequently studied contextual factors: the social dimension and especially the *who* dimension (Figure 2). Most of these theories have their roots in psychology and concern the

relationships between individuals or individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. The most frequently employed theory was the social identity approach, which posits that people categorize themselves into social groups and contrast their groups with other groups. Williams and O'Reilly (1998) noted the prevalent use of this approach as early as the 1990s, and it is interesting to see its continued influence more than two decades later.

Meso-level theories were used in only a few studies and included contingency theory, signaling theory, strategic human resource management theory, and the resource-based view. No macro-level theories were used in the reviewed studies. Future studies could use more meso- and macro-level theories, such as institutional theory or the national business systems approach, which are well established in research on SRHRM.

Two other interesting approaches that we would like to emphasize can be used to advance existing theories through contrasting. Horizontal and vertical contrasting can be used to examine contextual factors on higher levels of analysis. Horizontal contrasting refers to comparing observations on the same level of analysis in different contexts (Fisher and Aguinis 2017). Considering our findings, it would be particularly interesting to compare the outcomes of DMPs on higher levels, such as the country level. For instance, since very few or none of the reviewed studies were conducted in South America, Africa, or Asia, conducting research in these countries and contrasting results across local regions (Sheldon and Sanders 2016) or with those from North America or Central-Western Europe may be a promising avenue for future research. Such cross-country comparisons could be particularly valuable if they incorporate cultural dimensions such as collectivism versus individualism or uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1991), as prior research has demonstrated the influence of local culture on diversity in organizations (Pucheta-Martínez et al. 2021). Vertical contrasting refers to comparing a single construct across levels of analysis (Fisher and Aguinis 2017) and can contribute to narrowing the micro-/macro-level gap in diversity research (Joshi et al. 2011). As shown in Table 3, contextual factors operate on multiple levels of analysis. However, most of the reviewed studies analyzed them in isolation rather than examining how they may differ between levels of analysis. For instance, it could be interesting to vertically contrast leaders' attributes, which may differ between team, department, and top management leaders. This could contribute to refining frequently used generic approaches to leadership (van Knippenberg and van Ginkel 2022). Demographic composition is another contextual factor well-suited for vertical contrasting. Comparing the influence of demographic patterns at the team, department, and organizational level could enhance our understanding of DMPs.

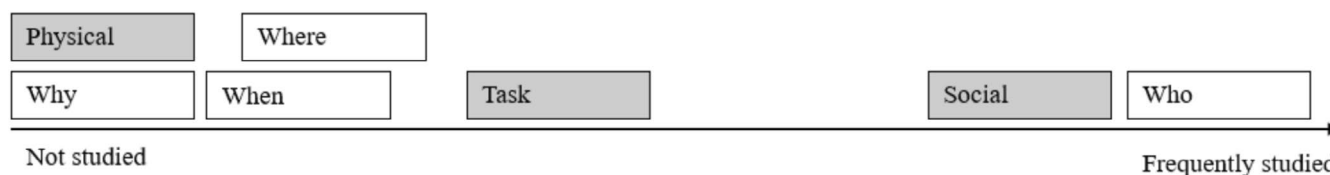


FIGURE 2 | Frequency of context dimensions studied. The gray boxes indicate discrete context dimensions, and the white boxes indicate omnibus context dimensions.

TABLE 5 | Micro-level theories categorized according to their assumptions regarding the outcomes of DMPs.

The outcomes of DMPs are influenced by group constellations	The outcomes of DMPs are influenced by individuals' judgments about fairness or justice	The outcomes of DMPs are influenced by individuals' attitudes toward organizational actions and values	The outcomes of DMPs are influenced by interpersonal relationships
Information exchange perspective	Equity theory	Expectancy theory	Disequilibrium theory
Information processing perspective	Ethics of care	Perceived organizational support theory	Information processing perspective
Optimal distinctiveness theory	Fairness theory	Social exchange theory	
Psychological safety perspective	Theory of procedural justice	Supplies–values fit theory	
Social cognitive theory		Value congruence theory	
Social identity approach			

5.3 | Complex Conceptualizations

As previously noted, the *who* dimension has been the most frequently studied contextual factor, and demographics have been the focal point of this dimension. We found a lack of variety in the demographics analyzed, as there was an emphasis on gender and race. We see potential for broadening the scope and engaging in more complex conceptualizations of demographics. This could be achieved by adopting an intersectional approach to go beyond single diversity dimensions. Intersectionality, which refers to the interaction between multiple identities that creates varying systems of oppression (Nkomo and Hoobler 2014), has received little attention in organizational studies (Holvino 2010) and research on CSR specifically (Sinicropi and Cortese 2021), although organizational practices have been found to sustain intersectional inequalities (Acker 2006). A study in our sample that successfully grasped the complexity of intersectional identities was conducted by Dennissen et al. (2020), who explored how diversity networks centered on a single identity (e.g., women's, LGBT, and ethnic minority networks) marginalized members with multiple disadvantaged identities. Studying intersections beyond race and gender as contextual factors may provide new insights into the outcomes of DMPs. This includes considering deep-level diversity dimensions, such as attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and personality, which have received less attention than demographics.

6 | Limitations and Future Research

While the findings of this study offer valuable insights into contextualization and context effects in studies on the outcomes of DMPs, they must be interpreted within certain limitations. We provide suggestions for future research based on these limitations. Johns' (2006) context dimensions served as the analytical framework for this study. As they were originally developed for research in organizational behavior, they are not ideally suited to address issues central to DM, such as power relations and structural inequality. Future research should not only incorporate

insights from critical diversity studies, such as the concept of intersectionality, but also draw from SRHRM scholarship, given that DM is often situated within SRHRM initiatives. In particular, perspectives that frame SRHRM as a moral obligation rather than a performance enhancer could enrich the development of an analytical framework that foregrounds concerns related to power relations and structural inequality. Additional limitations stem from our methodological choices. We restricted our literature search to the Web of Science and EBSCO Business Source Premier databases. Although these two platforms encompass a substantial share of relevant publications and were supplemented by snowballing, it is possible that some relevant articles were overlooked. This limitation could be addressed in future research by incorporating additional databases, such as Scopus. We excluded gray literature from the review and focused exclusively on peer-reviewed journal articles to ensure the inclusion of high-quality research. However, this approach may have missed valuable insights and practical perspectives. Future research could systematically include high-quality gray literature to capture a broader spectrum of viewpoints.

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