

Racial Diversity in Organizations: A Framework and Future Research Agenda

Humberto Reis dos Santos-Souza¹ , Orlando C. Richard² , Pedro Jaime³ 

¹Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

²University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management, Amherst, MA, United States

³Centro Universitário da FEI, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

³Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação e Práticas de Consumo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

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Corresponding author:

Humberto Reis dos Santos-Souza

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio de Janeiro
R. Sen. Furtado, n. 121/125, Maracanã, CEP 20270-021,
Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Objective: this article offers an overview of research on racial diversity within organizations, mapping its foundations, tensions, and theoretical horizons. **Methods:** we analyze the intellectual structure and evolution of the field using an integrative literature review employing mixed methods (scientific mapping and content analysis) on Web of Science data. **Results:** key findings reveal thematic stratification by journal impact tier, theoretical progression from foundational studies towards dynamic perspectives, performance debates shifting focus to causality and context, and predominantly US-centric collaboration networks. **Conclusions:** synthesizing the reviewed literature underscores that the organizational impact of racial diversity is not automatic but highly sensitive to the dynamic interplay between managerial approaches, internal organizational factors (e.g., culture, leadership, context), and the external business environment. Effectively managing racial diversity thus requires moving beyond simplistic paradigms towards systemic, context-dependent understandings. This highlights the critical need for tailored organizational strategies and points towards future research investigating these complex, interacting conditions to better harness racial diversity's potential.

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INTRODUCTION

Diversity can be understood as a characteristic of a social grouping (such as dyads, groups, organizations, or societies) that reflects the extent to which objective or subjective differences exist among its members (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), which can be visible or non-visible (Roberson, Ryan et al., 2017). Expanding on this concept, Harrison and Klein (2007) define diversity as the distribution of differences among members of a unit (such as a team or organization) with respect to a common attribute X. According to these authors, diversity is a unit-level compositional construct that is attribute-specific (referring to specific characteristics of the members), reflecting how differences are distributed within the group. These differences manifest in three distinct ways: differences in opinions or positions (separation), differences in types of knowledge and information (variety), and differences in the distribution of resources (disparity).

This nuanced understanding of diversity, encompassing its varied forms (separation, variety, or disparity) and compositional nature, underscores why it cannot be overlooked as an organizational phenomenon, especially in a context where outcomes increasingly depend on effective interaction among diverse groups (Ely et al., 2012; Joshi & Roh, 2009; Julian & Ofori-Dankwa, 2017; Roberson, Holmes et al., 2017).

Given that organizations are not racially neutral entities (Nkomo, 1992), this study focuses on racial diversity within organizations. Race, as a social construct permeated by subjective connotations, operates as a historically positioned and ideologically situated principle that structures the domination and division of labor in society (Nkomo, 1992). Thus, race can represent an analytical category in the study of organizations, which are spaces where race has always been present, although often silenced, contested, or suppressed (Nkomo, 1992).

Furthermore, the literature on racial diversity acknowledges the need to organize and advance the research agenda (Harrison & Klein, 2007; King et al., 2023; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Conversely, while other literature reviews on diversity have been completed (Roberson, Holmes et al., 2017; Roberson, Ryan et al., 2017), their approaches are typically qualitative (narrative or thematic). In line with other studies (Nkomo, 1992; Roberson, Ryan et al., 2017), our literature review shows that no thorough effort has been made to synthesize and organize scholarship that focuses specifically on racial diversity in organizations.

Given this gap, this study aims to offer an overview of research on racial diversity within organizations through an integrative literature review, specif-

ically mapping the intellectual structure of this field as it has been institutionalized within management scholarship. In doing so, we draw an analytical distinction between the study of racism as a broad structural and historical phenomenon of domination (Jaime & Santos-Souza, 2025), and the study of racial diversity as a specific organizational construct that gained prominence in the 1980s, focusing on composition, interaction, and managerial outcomes (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). While we recognize that these phenomena are inherently linked, our review, due to methodological issues, concentrates on the latter to accurately identify the dominant theoretical and methodological paradigms, mainly functionalist in nature, that have influenced mainstream managerial debate.

To achieve this objective, this study is organized as follows. The integrative literature review method is presented in the following section. The academic production and thematic structure analysis is detailed in the sequence, followed by science mapping, which encompasses co-citation, citation, and co-authorship network analyses. Subsequently, the main pillars and key themes identified through these analyses were synthesized into a conceptual framework. Finally, the article concludes with remarks that underscore the significance of this overview for future research and organizational practices related to racial diversity.

METHOD

This integrative literature review employed mixed methods. This strategy was employed because integrative literature reviews address both well-established and emerging topics. In the case of recent issues, such as racial diversity in organizations, this type of review can be particularly valuable for developing preliminary conceptualizations and for proposing theoretical models. This approach typically requires a more creative data collection process, as its goal is not necessarily to cover all existing publications on the topic but to bring together perspectives and contributions from different fields or research traditions (Snyder, 2019).

However, to uphold its scientific validity, an integrative review demands methodological rigor that ensures the process's transparency and replicability (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020; Torraco, 2005). To ensure such replicability, it is imperative that the author explicitly details the literature selection strategies, including the keywords used, the databases consulted, and the criteria for selecting articles, documenting which searches yielded relevant literature (Torraco, 2005, 2016). This methodological transparency enables the reader to understand how the synthesis and

findings were developed from the literature and lends legitimacy to the work, demonstrating that the selection was not arbitrary but rather the result of a structured investigative process (Torraco, 2005, 2016). The integrative review also entails a critical analysis by examining the central ideas and relationships presented in the texts, describing their basic elements (such as historical origins, theoretical perspectives, main concepts, and research methods) to reveal knowledge that may have been neglected or taken for granted over time (Torraco, 2005, 2016). The purpose of this critique is to assess how well the literature represents the issue at hand, identifying the strengths and contributions of previous studies and, primarily, their deficiencies, omissions, inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and contradictions (Torraco, 2005, 2016). It does so not to point out errors, but out of the need to foster new perspectives and establish the logical rationale for theoretical contributions, whether these are new conceptual frameworks or new theoretical models (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020; Torraco, 2005, 2016).

For this purpose, a search was conducted in the Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection. This platform was chosen because of its rigorous indexing standards, high-quality bibliographic data and advanced analytical tools (Archambault et al., 2009; Marina & Sterligov, 2021; Sevinc, 2004; Singh et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Archambault et al. (2009) demonstrated the consistency of bibliometric macro-trends and the fundamental citation structure in large-scale analyses, supporting the methodological validity of employing WoS as the sole database. Consequently, reliance on a single indexing source did not compromise the validity of the results. This robustness is statistically corroborated by Singh et al. (2023), who evidenced a high degree of concordance in the relative rankings between the compared databases (as measured by Spearman's rank correlation coefficient [SRCC]). Notably, this study validates the superiority of WoS over Scopus in certain aspects. This advantage regarding the relevance of retrieved results is a critical factor in research in which the accuracy of top-ranked items is paramount (Singh et al., 2023). In light of this validation, the specific choice of WoS is justified by the priority placed on precision and document quality (Marina & Sterligov, 2021; Singh et al., 2023). This distinction is underpinned by a policy of active curation and meticulous selection, which ensures a bibliometric sample with a lower incidence of predatory noise (Marina & Sterligov, 2021), thereby preserving the integrity of the analysis corpus (Singh et al., 2023).

The search was carried out on March 6, 2024, using the following keywords: 'racial diversity,' or 'racial

equality,' or 'racial inclusion,' or 'racial equity.' These descriptors were strategically selected to ensure construct validity and alignment with the mainstream management literature. Following Harrison and Klein (2007), we treat diversity specifically as a unit-level compositional construct focused on the distribution of differences, rather than individual-level psychological prejudice. Furthermore, the selection of these terms reflects the field's historical evolution from a focus on legal compliance (affirmative action) to a strategic focus on valuing diversity and diversity and equality management (DEM) as sources of competitive advantage (Cox & Blake, 1991; Richard, Roh et al., 2013). Consequently, these specific keywords are consistent with the terminological standards established by major prior reviews in the field (e.g., Joshi & Roh, 2009; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004), ensuring that our analysis captures the core conversation on organizational outcomes.

The document types selected were 'Article' and 'Early Access'. The categories chosen were Management or Business, and the publication date range was limited to 1945–2024. A total of 161 articles were retrieved. An initial skim-reading excluded 27 studies that fell outside the scope of this research. These studies were removed because they did not address racial diversity in its strict sense as a unit-level compositional construct or a strategic managerial resource, as pointed in the literature (Cox & Blake, 1991; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Richard, Roh et al., 2013). In other words, these excluded works lacked a direct link to organizational dynamics or management practices. As a result, 134 articles were included.

After this, the research was divided into two phases. The first one was the mapping of academic production and thematic structures. This research phase included a productivity analysis, focusing on the evolution of academic output in the main journals. Additionally, correspondence analysis was utilized as a technique for scientific mapping. This multivariate statistical technique is designed to explore relationships between categories of qualitative variables by visualizing them in a two-dimensional or multidimensional space (a two-dimensional space was used in this study). This process facilitates analyzing and visualizing how specific themes cluster based on shared characteristics (Hair et al., 2009). In sixteen articles, the main theme could not be identified. Accordingly, 118 articles were categorized by their main topic through reading the abstract, introduction, and final remarks. In addition, the articles were classified according to their quartile ranking based on WoS impact factor. This metric considers citations received in the preceding

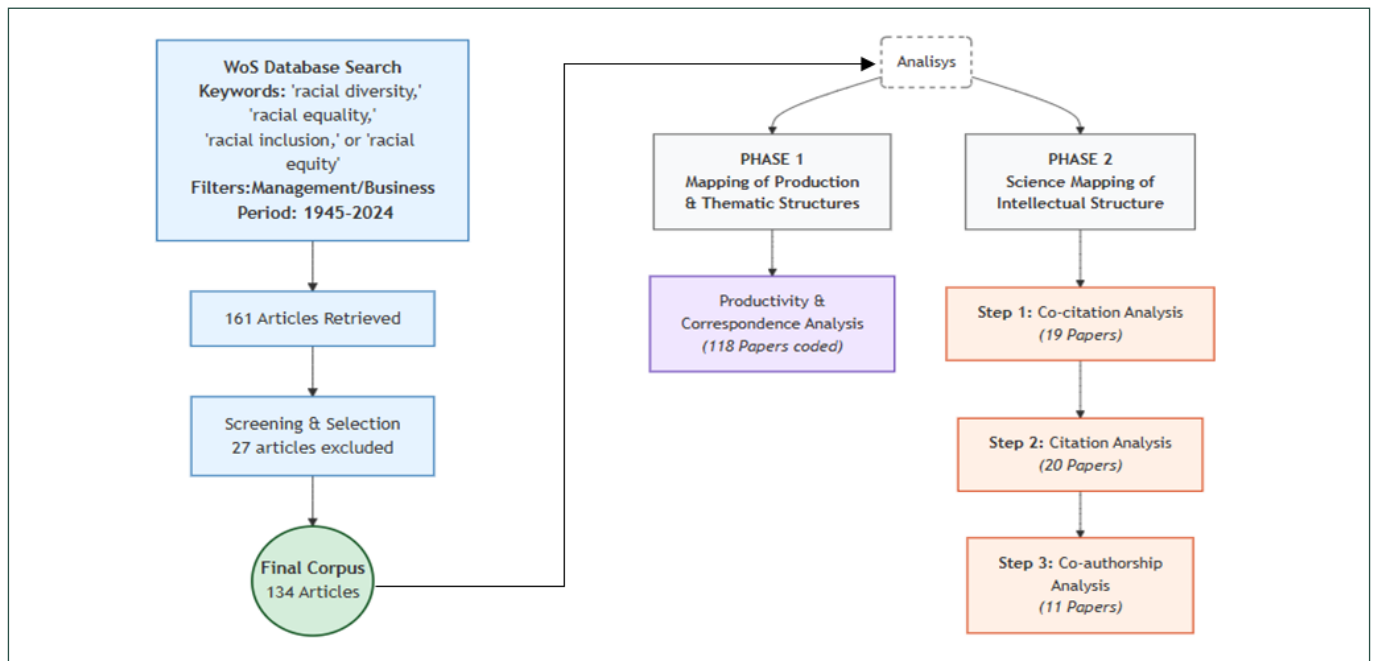
two years and classifies journals into four quartiles. Q1 encompasses the top 25% with the highest impact, recognized for their rigor and international visibility. Q2 includes the subsequent 25–50%, which are still relevant. Q3 comprises journals between the 50 and 75% range, generally focused on specialized or emerging areas. Q4 includes the bottom 25% with the lowest impact (Glänzel & Moed, 2002). Categorical content analysis (Bardin, 2016) was conducted to support this categorization using Atlas.ti. The correspondence analysis was conducted utilizing RStudio to perform calculations and generate graphics.

In the second phase of the study, science mapping techniques were employed through co-citation analysis (step 1), citation analysis (step 2), and network analysis (step 3). In step 1, co-citation analysis explored the relationships between jointly cited publications, allowing for the identification of foundational themes and the construction of the field's theoretical basis (Donthu et al., 2021). Based on the analysis of the references of all selected articles, conducted using VOSviewer software, the co-citation analysis classified articles that were co-cited more than ten times, establishing a lower threshold of thirty co-citations per article. Consequently, 19 studies constituting the theoretical core of racial diversity research were analyzed. Categorical content analysis (Bardin, 2016) considered the following categories: 'theoretical approach' and 'key findings.'

In step 2, citation analysis was performed using data provided by the WoS report. This stage involved a comprehensive evaluation of citation patterns, including cross-disciplinary citations, to assess the broader academic impact of the selected publications. Citation analysis is traditionally used to map the most influential publications within a specific scientific area. The selection focused on two groups of articles extracted from the WoS database: the most cited overall (1945–2024) and the most cited in the last five years. The analysis of the overall period allows for the identification of consolidated theoretical frameworks and the structuring patterns of the field. Conversely, the examination of more recent publications seeks to encapsulate the immediacy factor and the emerging trends that are gaining significance in the current academic debate.

The selection of articles was based, on the one hand, on the Pareto Principle, which suggests that a fraction of citations concentrates the central interest of scientific production and, therefore, exerts a disproportionate influence on the theoretical and methodological configuration of the field; and, on the other hand, on Bradford's Law of scattering, which indicates the existence of a concentrated core of high-impact publications (Bailón-Moreno et al., 2005). Accordingly, from the 6,748 mapped citations, it was considered that the articles responsible for approximately 20% of this total would constitute the central nucleus of the debate. However, the scope was doubled to broaden the analysis, and articles responsible for approximately 50% of the citations (3,348) were included. Thus, 10 articles were selected for the overall period, and by similarity, 10 more cited articles from the last five years were also selected. These 20 articles were analyzed using categorical content analysis (Bardin, 2016) regarding their central findings, method, sample, and focus of analysis (racial, demographic, and/or gender) and suggestions for future studies.

Co-authorship network analysis was conducted in step 3 of the second phase. This technique is particularly useful for identifying researcher behavior and the relationships established among scholars during the process of scientific communication. This analysis aimed to examine the social interactions or relationships among authors and their affiliations, and their equivalent impacts on the development of the research field (Donthu et al., 2021). Among the analytical tools employed, we utilized Bibliometrix, an open-source software package developed in the R language, specifically designed for conducting bibliometric analyses and constructing scientific maps. It was chosen for its functionalities that enable the exploration and visualization of patterns in scientific production (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The central cluster of the co-authorship network, comprising 11 articles, was analyzed using categorical content analysis (Bardin, 2016) concerning central findings, method, sample, and suggestions for future studies. Figure 1 illustrates the methodological framework employed in this research.



Source: Elaborated by the authors using Mernaid.

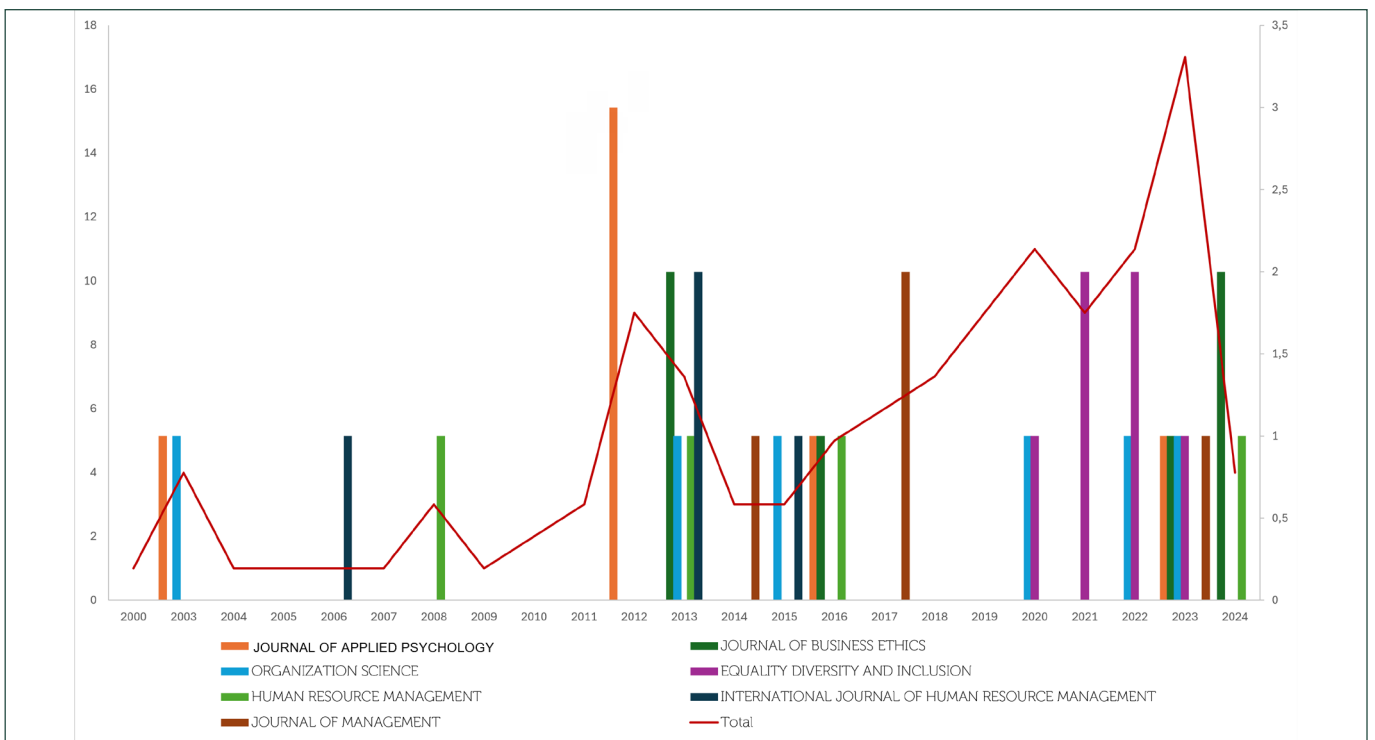
Figure 1. Research methodological framework.

ANALYSIS

Mapping of academic production and thematic structures

Figure 2 illustrates the evolution of academic production per year and the main journals that publish on this topic. It is worth noting that, at the time of data extraction, 2024 only included a portion of the publica-

tions. A growth trend has been evident since 2015, with a production peak of 17 articles in 2023. This increase may be attributed to more recent social and political contexts, with particular attention to the global anti-racist protests post-2020 (such as Black Lives Matter) and the debates surrounding Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) in companies (Abdallah et al., 2025).



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 2. Evolution of academic production and main journals.

The journals with the most publications during the analyzed period were the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Organizational Science*, and *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*, each with six articles. Following these, the *Human Resource Management*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, and *Journal of Management* each published four articles within the timeframe. The journals with the most publications include those specializing in psychology, ethics, diversity, and core management journals. This indicates that the topic of racial diversity is not confined to academic niches and is published in

high-impact journals as well. However, the number of articles per journal (a maximum of six) suggests on-going fragmentation in production and the absence of a dominant journal specifically on this topic, which may imply that the field is still in a phase of consolidation or that racial diversity is a sub-area within broader domains.

The studies were also classified according to their journals and main topics. Based on the stratification of journal citations in the WoS, known as the Journal Impact Factor (JIF), the articles were grouped according to the quartile associated with each journal.

Table 1. Contingency table.

Dimension	Eigenvalue	%	% Cumulative	Histogram
1	0.146504	41.6	41.6	*****
2	0.117857	33.5	75.1	*****
3	0.087442	24.9	100.0	*****
Total	0.351803	100.0		

Note. Developed by the authors.

Table 2. Category coordinates.

Category	Dimension 1				Dimension 2			
	Coord	K=1	Cor	Ctr	Coord	K=2	Cor	Ctr
Q1	-0.465	466	675	432	0.286	287	255	203
Q2	0.011	-12	1	0	-0.254	-254	611	272
Q3	0.704	-704	620	486	0.548	548	376	3661
Q4	0.416	-716	132	82	-0.519	-520	206	159

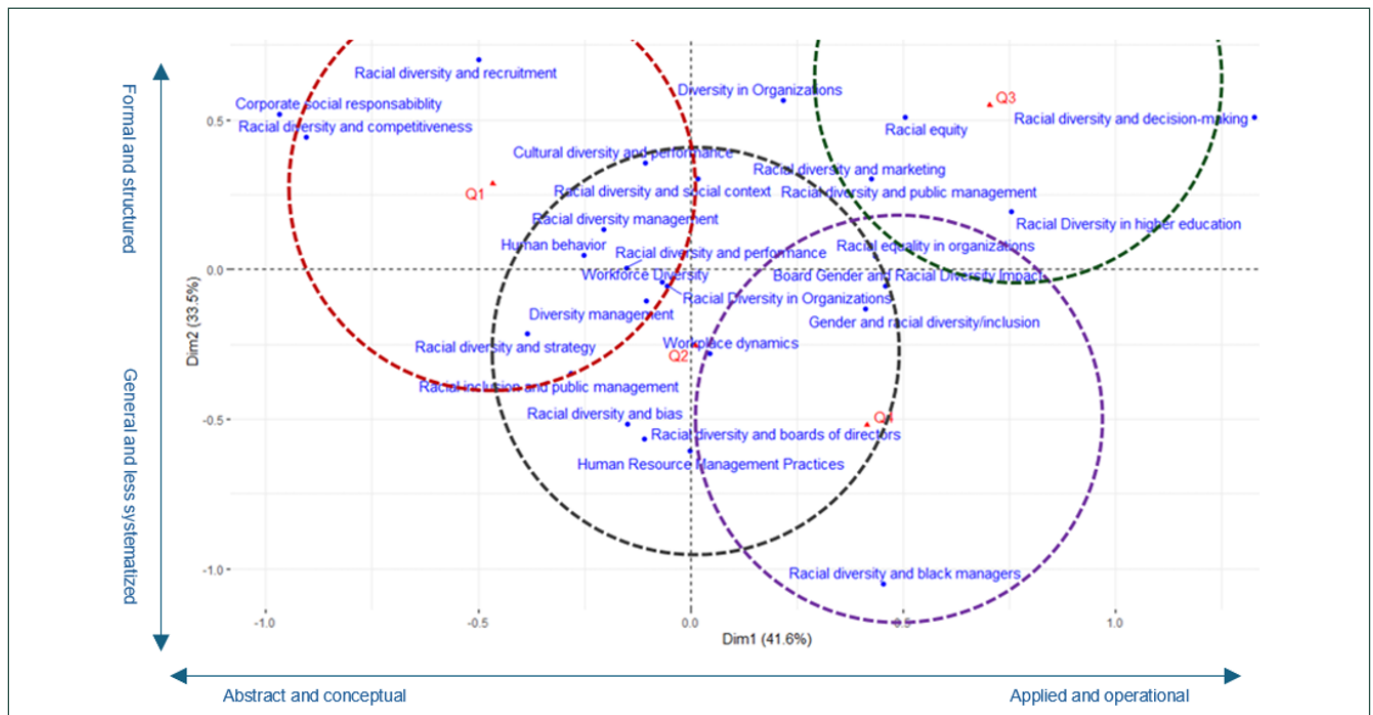
Note. Developed by the authors.

Following this, multivariate correspondence analysis was employed (Hair et al., 2009). In this case, it was applied through the 'quartile' versus 'main subject' matrix, from which 27 central themes emerged. In the present study, the three extracted dimensions accounted for 100% of the data variance, with Dimension 1 capturing 41.64%, Dimension 2 capturing 33.50%, and Dimension 3 capturing 24.85%. This pattern suggests that the first two dimensions accumulate 75.15% of the variance and are sufficient to interpret the primary associations in the data (Table 1). The coordinates of the categories can be observed in Table 2.

As shown in Figure 3, Dimension 1, represented by the X-axis, reflects a spectrum ranging from more abstract and conceptual approaches to more applied and operational practices related to racial diversity. Dimension 2, represented by the Y-axis, reflects a gradient ranging from a broad and less formalized approach to a more formal and structured perspective.

In this regard, the position of Q1 (X-axis, with a value of -0.4659, see Table 2) is close to a more abstract and

conceptual pole of the analysis (Figure 3), characteristic of journals that emphasize theoretical advancements, encompassing 34 articles. This alignment highlights their orientation towards in-depth and far-reaching conceptual debates involving themes such as cultural diversity and performance, human behavior, and racial diversity management (Andrevski et al., 2014; Blount & Li, 2021; Julian & Ofori-Dankwa, 2017; Richard, 2000). On the Y-axis (with a value of 0.2865, see Table 2), the position of Q1 indicates a connection with seemingly more institutionalized themes that transcend specific issues and relate to organizational structures and institutional practices (Bocquet et al., 2019; Konrad et al., 2021; Richard et al., 2021). This configuration reinforces the role of this group of high-impact journals as spaces that promote analyses of strategic and structural topics, such as organizational diversity and performance (Avery, 2003; Konrad et al., 2021; Leslie, 2019; Richard, 2000).



Source: Elaborated by the authors using RStudio®.

Figure 3. Correspondence analysis.

The 43 articles classified as Q2 (Dimension 1: 0.01, Dimension 2: -0.25; see Table 2) appear to form a bridge between the Q1 and Q3 clusters (Figure 3), reflecting an intermediate approach that balances the more abstract and conceptual pole of Q1 with the practical and applied orientation of Q3. This suggests that journals classified as Q2 combine the characteristics of both extremes, presenting content that is not as theoretical as that of Q1, but also not as focused on specific applications as that of Q3. This implies that the studies associated with Q2 tend to present relevant theoretical underpinnings (Guillaume et al., 2017; Richard et al., 2003; Roberson & Park, 2007) but with some practical inclination that facilitates their application in organizational contexts (Richard, Kirby et al., 2013). Consequently, themes such as racial diversity in organizations (Guillaume et al., 2017), workforce diversity (Chapman et al., 2023; Houston et al., 2023), racial diversity and boards of directors (Guest, 2019; Wu et al., 2019), and workplace dynamics (Ely et al., 2012; Heinze & Soderstrom, 2024) also relate to Q2. The latter element also orbits the Q4 cluster.

Comprising seven articles, Q4 represents an applied approach (Figure 3) that retains a degree of flexibility, allowing for the exploration of themes in more situational and less structured contexts, both in informal settings and flexible organizational structures, such as diversity initiatives driven by specific practices or departments. In any case, its greater distance from the themes compared to other clusters may reflect thematic differentiation.

The position of Q3 on the X-axis (Dimension 1, Table 2) reinforces its alignment with the more applied pole within

the 34 articles. On the Y-axis (Dimension 2, Table 2), its positive position suggests a relationship with formalized structures, such as legislation, institutional policies, and managerial practices that promote diversity in organizational environments structured at some level (Figure 3). For example, themes such as racial diversity in higher education emphasize the implementation of inclusive strategies in educational institutions (Grier & Poole, 2020), while racial diversity and marketing explore the implications of diversity in market strategies and organizational outcomes (Cook & Glass, 2014; McKinley-Floyd & Shrestha, 2008). Thus, studies published in Q3 journals appear to focus on the more or less institutionalized practical implications of racial diversity.

In summary, the findings suggest a division of academic labor: high-impact (Q1) journals act as the field's conceptual core, setting the theoretical agenda with abstract frameworks, while this knowledge appears to cascade down to other journals (Q2, Q3, and Q4), which serve to translate these broad ideas into more operational and practical applications. However, this hierarchical flow risks creating a lag or disconnect between the grand theories debated in elite circles and the pressing, on-the-ground challenges faced by organizations. In essence, while the field is organized, its very organization may create silos that separate the 'why' (Q1) from the 'how' (Q3). This highlights the need for an integrative framework (such as the one we develop in section Conceptual Framework for Racial Diversity in Organizations) capable of bridging this gap and articulating the complex interplay between theoretical approaches and organizational dynamics.

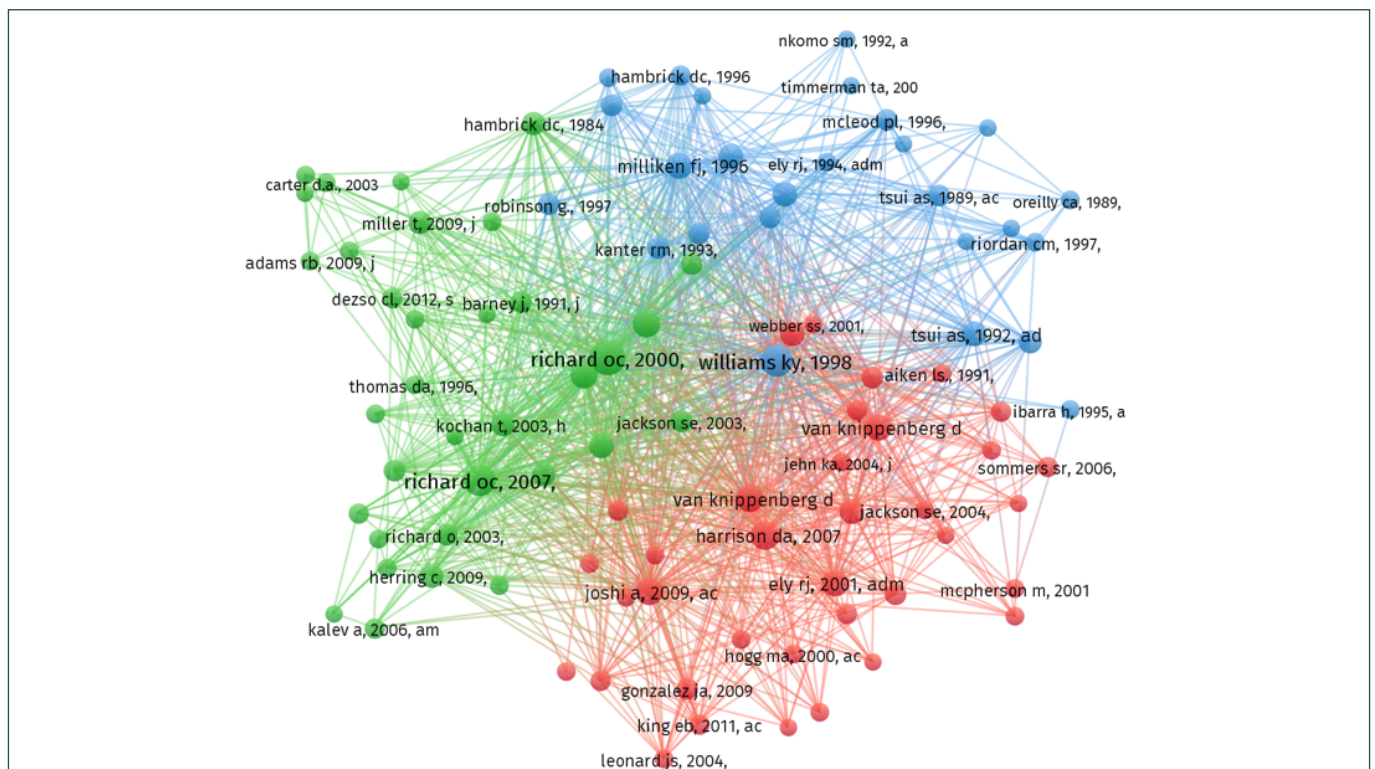
Foundations, tensions, and horizons in the theoretical construction of racial diversity in organizations

Co-citation analysis

The co-citation analysis, operationalized using VOSviewer, grouped the central citations into three distinct clusters, as depicted in Figure 4. The blue cluster is the foundational base of the organizational diversity field, primarily composed of works from the 1990s, including seminal studies by Williams and O'Reilly (1998) and Nkomo (1992). This cluster reflects an initial scholarly effort to comprehend the impact of dimensions such as race, gender, and age on performance, group processes, and decision-making across different organizational levels (Hambrick & Mason, 1982; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Tsui et al., 1992; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Influential works within this cluster, such as those by Harrison et al. (1998), Pelled et al. (1999), and Watson et al. (1993), emphasize that an inclusive culture and effective leadership play crucial roles in mitigating initial challenges, particularly within newly formed, demographically homogeneous, and culturally diverse groups. These early approaches broadened the understanding of how diversity shapes group dynamics and influences management practices, providing a basis for the more critical and integrative analyses that have been developed in subsequent clusters.

The green cluster represents a transitional point in the diversity literature, marking the field's evolution between the 1990s and the 2000s. Scholars such as Hambrick and Mason (1982) and Blau (1979) provided the theoretical underpinnings for this cluster by introducing the concept of heterogeneity into social and organizational dynamics. Blau's (1979) work, particularly *Inequality and Heterogeneity: A Primitive Theory of Social Structure*, theorized how inherent inequality and heterogeneity within human societies influence social organization and power dynamics. Building on these foundations, the green cluster advances towards contingency analyses, examining how factors such as business strategies, organizational culture, and management practices influence the effects of diversity (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Discussions on performance also feature prominently within the green cluster, emphasizing that the relationship between diversity and organizational performance is complex and is mediated by contextual factors (Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2004). Richard (2000) demonstrates that diversity yields greater benefits for firms pursuing growth strategies than for those focused on cost reduction, owing to potential coordination costs and conflicts.



Source: Elaborated by the authors using VOSviewer®.

Figure 4. Co-citation Analysis.

Richard et al. (2004) reveal that in innovative firms, diversity enhances productivity and return on equity, although very high levels may impair cohesion during rapid decision-making. Richard et al. (2007) identify both a curvilinear (short-term) and a positive linear (long-term) relationship between racial diversity and performance, particularly in favorable environments. Corroborating this, Herring (2009) finds that racial and gender diversity is associated with superior financial outcomes, reinforcing its strategic value. Cox and Blake (1991) highlight that effective diversity management can foster creativity, flexibility, and competitiveness. However, Kochan et al. (2003) caution that their study's evidence does not support the simplistic argument that diversity automatically enhances performance. Nevertheless, they note that diversity can be a source of innovation and competitive advantage under favorable conditions, such as inclusive leadership and adequate training. This suggests that organizations should adopt a more critical and strategic approach when integrating diversity into their practices. This perspective underscores that diversity should not be viewed merely as an ethical imperative but as a strategic resource capable of generating competitive advantages, such as enhanced innovation, creative problem-solving, and improved organizational performance.

The red cluster represents the most current stage of the organizational diversity literature, characterized by efforts focused on developing more refined theories and consolidating the field. It adopts an integrated and contingency-based approach, exploring how contextual, processual, and relational factors mediate the effects of diversity within workgroups. Studies such as those by Van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007) and Ely and Thomas (2001) combine social categorization and information/decision-making perspectives, highlighting that diversity, far from being an intrinsically positive or negative phenomenon, yields different outcomes depending on variables such as task type, member interdependence, and group processes.

This cluster emphasizes the complex, interactive nature of the diversity phenomenon, recognizing that its impacts depend on the intricate interplay among variables, thus proposing more sophisticated theoretical models (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Jehn et al., 1999; Joshi & Roh, 2009; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). These models place greater emphasis on mediating processes (such as cohesion, conflict, and communication) and multilevel analysis.

Based on the analysis, some fundamental theoretical elements underpinning contemporary research were identified: Social Identity Theory (social categorization perspective) (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998), demographic studies (Joshi & Roh, 2009; Pelled et al., 1999; Tsui et al., 1992; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998), heterogeneity theory (Blau, 1979; Hambrick & Mason, 1982; Richard et al., 2004), the value-in-diversity perspective (Cox & Blake, 1991; Herring, 2009; Richard et al., 2004), strategy perspectives (Cox & Blake, 1991; Herring, 2009; Joshi & Roh, 2009; Kochan et al., 2003; Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2004), and decision-making theories (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hambrick & Mason, 1982; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Richard et al., 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Thus, this co-citation analysis identifies the core works and theories that form the central foundations for contemporary studies on racial diversity, mapping the field's pillars.

Citation analysis: Contextual and intervening factors identified across the studies

Citation analysis was conducted in two stages: the first examined overall citations throughout the research period, while the second focused on the most cited articles in the last five years. Regarding the most cited articles over the entire period, a persistent focus is observable on performance (Erhardt et al., 2003; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013; Jackson & Joshi, 2004; Leslie, 2019; Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2003; Roberson & Park, 2007), strategy (Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2003), the board of directors context (Erhardt et al., 2003; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013), innovation (Guillaume et al., 2017; Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2003), and leadership (Roberson & Park, 2007).

Citation analysis: Contextual and intervening factors identified across the studies

As shown in Table 3, quantitative studies strongly predominate in this area. The focus on performance may partly explain this methodological predominance, given the emphasis on financial and/or social outcomes. A tension exists surrounding the findings, with evidence indicating negative (Jackson & Joshi, 2004), positive (Erhardt et al., 2003; Guillaume et al., 2017; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013), or contingent (Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2003; Roberson & Park, 2007) effects of diversity. This highlights a dilemma concerning racial diversity: it holds the potential to generate competitive advantage and/or innovation, yet it can also lead to conflict. Intervening and contextual factors can influence the outcomes associated with racial diversity, including business strategy, organizational culture, leadership style, inclusion practices, regulatory pressures, industry characteristics, and internal conflict levels.

The specific themes explored in highly cited works also warrant attention. Clair et al. (2005) highlighted that racial identity may not always be conspicuous, noting the existence of 'invisible identities' within organizations, which are revealed or concealed depending

on the environment. [Leslie's \(2019\)](#) work recommends metrics for measuring diversity performance that extend beyond numerical representation and intentional

outcomes, as well as assess organizational signals regarding diversity and evaluate associated ethics and morality.

Table 3. Overview of citations.

Author/Journal	Citations general period		Author/Journal	Citations last five years	
	Citations	Method/Sample/Analysis		Citations	Method/Sample/Analysis
Erhardt et al. (2003) <i>Corporate Governance: An International Journal</i>	863	Method: Quantitative Sample: 112 large US public firms Analysis: Racial.	Bocquet et al. (2019) <i>Long Range Planning</i>	82	Method: Quantitative Sample: 1348 Luxembourgish Analysis: Gender and nationality
Richard (2000) <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	635	Method: Quantitative Sample: 63 banks in the USA Analysis: Racial.	Guest (2019) <i>British Journal of Management</i>	71	Method: Quantitative Sample: 1,906 firms listed on the S&P 1500 index Analysis: Racial
Clair et al. (2005) <i>Academy of Management Review</i>	542	Method: Qualitative Sample: 55 individuals from diverse sectors and contexts Analysis: Individuals with invisible social identities	Samorani (2022) <i>Manufacturing & Service Operations Management</i>	38	Method: Quantitative (Computational experiment) Analysis: Racial
Hafsi and Turgut (2013) <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	365	Method: Quantitative Sample: 95 companies from the S&P 500 index & demographic data for 1,028 directors Analysis: Demographic	Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2022) <i>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</i>	29	Method: Quantitative Sample: 650 migrant workers from Myanmar in Thailand Analysis: Racial
Jackson and Joshi (2004) <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	198	Method: Quantitative Sample: 2,333 salespeople and 309 sales managers from a US company Analysis: Demographic	Longhofer et al. (2019) <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>	28	Method: Quantitative Sample: Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign data from 3,108 countries Analysis: Demographic
Guillaume et al. (2017) <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	187	Method: Qualitative (Literature review) Corpus: WoS articles selected for review Analysis: Demographic aspects/themes	Byron et al. (2023) <i>Personnel Psychology</i>	27	Method: Quantitative Corpus: 134 studies on organizational teams, 35 studies on student teams Analysis: Demographic diversity findings
Leslie (2019) <i>Academy of Management Review</i>	160	Method: Qualitative (Conceptual review/Theoretical analysis) Analysis: Demographic aspects/concepts	Blount and Li (2021) <i>Journal of Supply Chain Management</i>	26	Method: Quantitative Sample: 277 buyers in the US and UK Analysis: Racial
Roberson and Park (2007) <i>Group & Organization Management</i>	143	Method: Quantitative Sample: 97 fortune-listed companies recognized as "Best for Minorities" (1998-2003 period) Analysis: Racial	Kolev and McNamara (2020) <i>Long Range Planning</i>	25	Method: Quantitative Sample: 1,303 firms from the S&P 1500 index Analysis: Racial and gender diversity
Avery (2003) <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	141	Method: Quantitative Sample: 273 university students Analysis: Racial factors/stimuli	Grier and Poole (2020) <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i>	24	Method: Qualitative Sample: 21 Black and Latino faculty members Analysis: Racial
Richard et al. (2003) <i>Group & Organization Management</i>	114	Method: Quantitative Sample: HR managers and presidents from 177 US banks Analysis: Racial	Vairavan and Zhang (2020) <i>Corporate Governance</i>	23	Method: Quantitative Sample: S&P listed firms (N not specified) Analysis: Racial

Note. Developed by the authors.

The second stage of this research phase involved analyzing the most cited articles from the last five years. Compared to the analysis of the most cited articles over the entire research period, quantitative studies still predominate, and the focus on performance remains evident ([Bocquet et al., 2019](#); [Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022](#); [Guest, 2019](#); [Kolev & McNamara, 2020](#)). However, attention is also given to organizational culture ([Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022](#)), HR practices ([Grier & Poole, 2020](#)), and boards of directors ([Guest, 2019](#); [Kolev & McNamara, 2020](#); [Vairavan & Zhang, 2020](#)). In these recent studies, diversity effects are reported as positive ([Bocquet et al., 2019](#); [Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022](#)),

negative ([Kolev & McNamara, 2020](#); [Longhofer et al., 2019](#)), neutral ([Guest, 2019](#); [Vairavan & Zhang, 2020](#)), and contingent ([Byron et al., 2023](#); [Guest, 2019](#)).

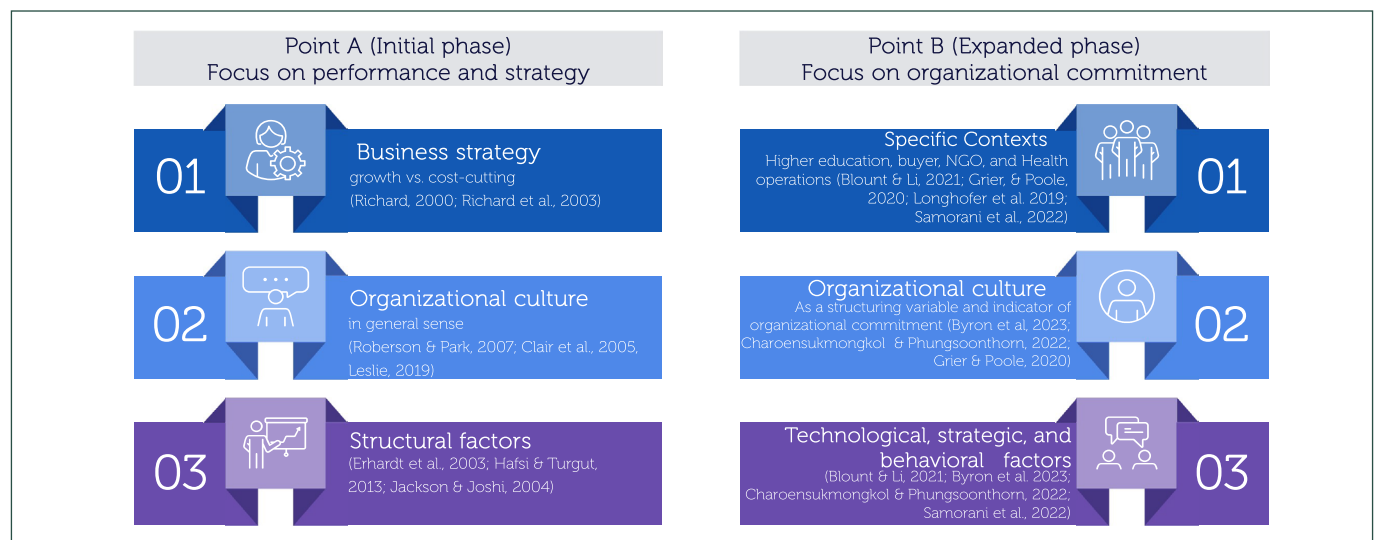
In this group of studies (most cited in the last five years), intervening and contextual factors encompass organization size and type; country; strategic or responsive CSR; the presence or absence of diversity policies; organizational culture; homogeneity; team collaboration, potency, tenure, size, cohesion, conflict, and reflexivity; intrinsic motivation; exogenous culture; leadership type; and combined gender and racial diversity.

The common ground between the two groups of articles (overall vs. recent) relates to performance and

strategy, as evidenced by the works of Bocquet et al. (2019) and Hafsi and Turgut (2013), particularly because both studies address CSR and report positive results concerning racial diversity and performance. Another shared theme is the operational practice of human resource management in hiring Black individuals, generally (Avery, 2003) and in specific contexts, such as hiring Black management professors (Grier & Poole, 2020).

The primary difference observed is that in the more recent articles, racial diversity effects seem to be associated with greater organizational commitment (Bocquet

et al., 2019; Byron et al., 2023; Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022; Grier & Poole, 2020). These current studies also appear to focus on other operational aspects within specific contexts, such as racial diversity management in purchasing departments (Blount & Li, 2021), NGOs (Longhofer et al., 2019), higher education (Grier & Poole, 2020), and the analysis of algorithms in health operations that perpetuate racial inequalities (Samorani et al., 2022). The main differences between these two groups are visualized in Figure 5.



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 5. Main differences between most cited articles (overall period vs. last 5 years).

Evidence suggests that studies in the first group (overall period) primarily address whether diversity impacts performance. In contrast, the second group (recent studies) appears to shift the focus towards why diversity has an impact (or lacks one), delving into issues such as strategic CSR (Bocquet et al., 2019), cultural intelligence (Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022), algorithmic bias (Samorani et al., 2022), and power dynamics (Grier & Poole, 2020).

Both groups converge in identifying avenues for future research, suggesting the need for: expanded longitudinal analyses and investigation of causal relationships; deeper exploration of connections with other forms of diversity; consideration of structural factors; exploration of different industries, contexts, and populations; and analysis of diversity effects at distinct hierarchical levels. Studies on creativity, leadership, technology, organizational culture, and other factors influencing the functioning of boards of directors are also highlighted as relevant research agendas. Finally, calls were also made for greater utilization of qualitative approaches, investigation of behavioral effects, in-

clusion of non-financial indicators, and incorporating dimensions of both performance and identity.

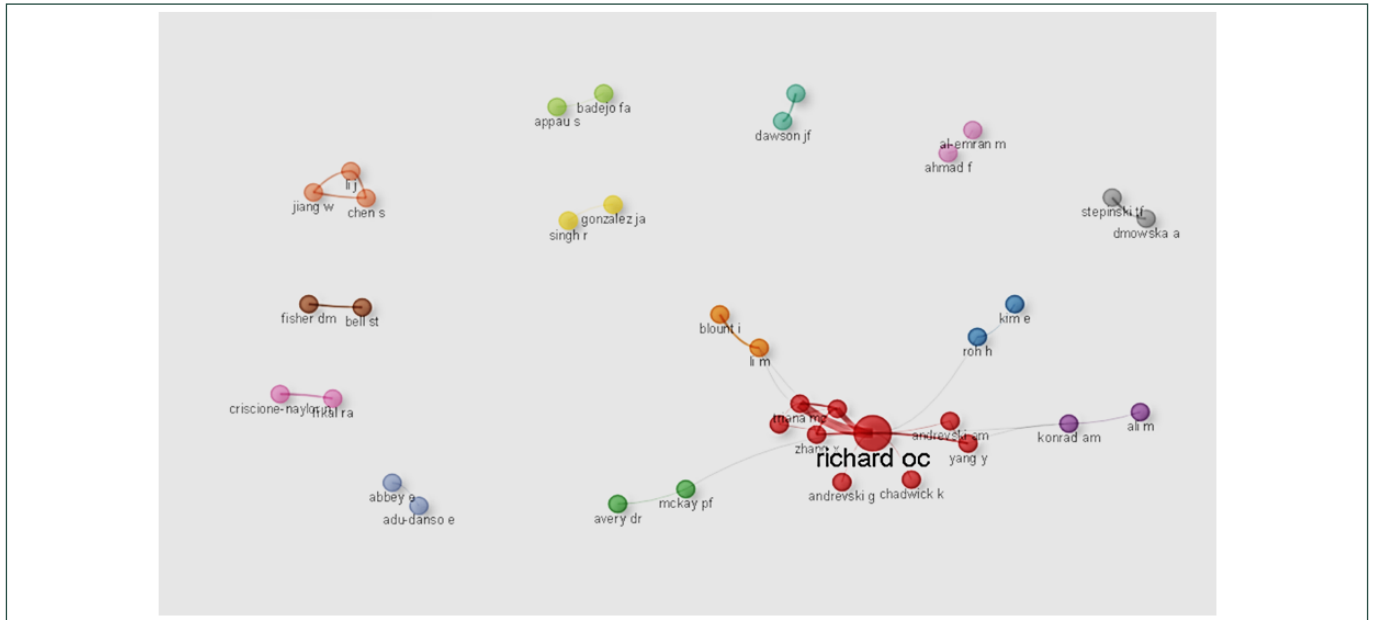
Co-authorship network analysis

Based on the data extracted from WoS, a co-authorship network analysis was performed using the Bibliometrix software (Figure 6). The analysis reveals a research landscape fragmented across 10 distinct clusters. A prominent central cluster is led by the work of Orlando C. Richard from the University of Massachusetts. Visual inspection suggests that this research area is still in a developmental phase, characterized by limited articulation among researchers. Nevertheless, emerging from the central cluster towards the peripheries (represented by orange, green, lilac, and blue nodes), new research efforts appear that diverge from close collaboration with the core group. This pattern may indicate nascent directions for the field's development.

Analysis of the studies within the central cluster reveals a body of empirical literature focused on the relationship between racial diversity and organizational performance. Although findings vary, a recurrent pattern

of contingent effects is observable: diversity tends to yield positive results when aligned with specific contextual and structural factors, such as growth strategies (Richard, 2000), innovation orientation (Richard et al., 2003), participative practices (Richard, Kirby et al., 2013), congruence between organizational composition and community demographics

(Richard et al., 2017), the influence of competitive intensity and environmental munificence (Andrevski et al., 2014), or narrow and coordinated organizational structures (Richard et al., 2006). Conversely, diversity can become a source of conflict or inefficiency in contexts marked by broad structures, low participation, or strategic misalignment.



Source: Elaborated by the authors using Bibliometrix®.

Figure 6. Network analysis.

In this vein, more recent studies within this cluster broaden the perspective by integrating cognitive organizational mechanisms and specific diversity management routines (Vlas et al., 2022), examining racial diversity in top management and performance (Wu et al., 2019), and exploring the notion of racial diversity congruence across different hierarchical levels (Richard et al., 2021). Furthermore, theoretical efforts attempt to reconcile the tensions between diversity and meritocracy through organizational ambidexterity (Konrad et al., 2021), suggesting that inclusion demands diverse composition and fine-tuning of decision-making and identity-validation mechanisms. In essence, the cluster demonstrates that the effects of diversity are neither automatic nor universal but are instead mediated by organizational, cognitive, and contextual conditions that shape their strategic and operational outcomes.

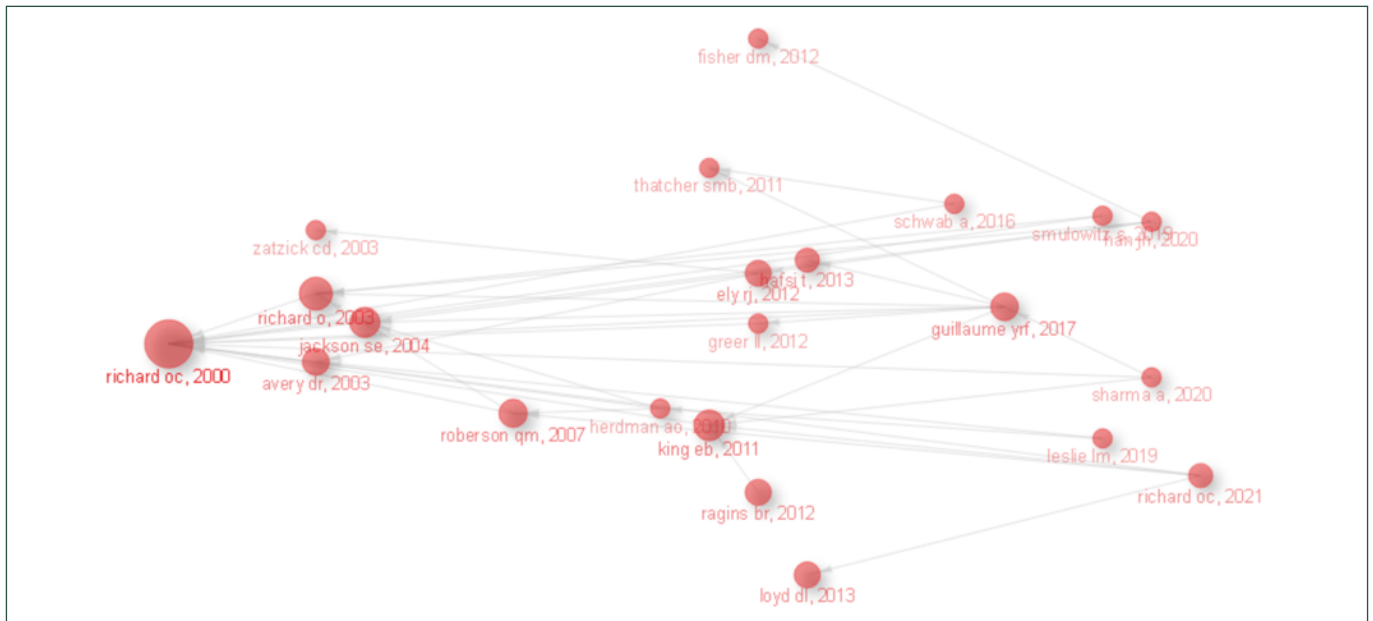
Figure 7 presents the historical evolution based on the Local Citation Score (LCS). This index identifies a timeline of central theoretical milestones based on the frequency with which a specific article is cited by other articles within the analyzed data corpus; in other words, it measures a work's influence solely among the documents comprising the dataset extracted from WoS. The historiographic analysis of the dataset reveals the cen-

trality of Richard to the field's theoretical architecture. Richard's (2000) work is the initial milestone in articulating racial diversity, business strategy, and organizational performance from a Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective. Richard et al. (2003) further explored the link between diversity and innovation. Subsequently, Richard et al. (2021) addressed the concept of diversity congruence across hierarchical levels. These three articles account for 96 of the 208 internal citations (LCS) within the analyzed dataset, representing 46.15%.

In addition to these works, several other studies highlighted in the overall citation analysis (previous section) are noteworthy, collectively accounting for 48 citations (23%). Beginning with two literature reviews, Guillaume et al. (2017) argue that individual differences, such as personality traits and beliefs about diversity, moderate the effects of diversity at work. Openness to experience, extraversion, and positive beliefs favor social integration and performance. Furthermore, complex tasks and moderators that reduce intergroup bias enhance the positive impacts of diversity. Leslie's (2019) review proposes a typology of unintended consequences stemming from diversity initiatives, highlighting that their effects are multidetermined.

Three empirical studies of this analysis are also found in the citation analysis. Avery (2003) discusses how racialized recruitment and selection practices can influence Black candidates' career choices. In turn, Roberson and Park (2007) present a curvilinear relationship between racial diversity in leadership and performance, with an inflection point between 20% and 25% minority representation in top management teams. They introduce the concept of diversity reputa-

tion, highlighting how it can provide a competitive advantage for firms, particularly in capital markets. Finally, Jackson and Joshi (2004), studying multilevel diversity and its influence on sales team behavior, demonstrated that ethnic and gender diversity harms performance in teams with low tenure diversity. Conversely, when tenure diversity is high, ethnic diversity tends to enhance performance, especially in teams characterized by low gender diversity.



Source: Elaborated by the authors using Bibliometrix®.

Figure 7. Historiographic evolution.

These analyses show that racial diversity studies, although growing, remain fragmented with poorly defined cores. Orlando C. Richard's cluster is key, linking diversity to organizational performance under specific conditions. His central role is highlighted by frequent citations and ongoing research from the Resource-Based View to multilevel congruence. The increasing use of systematic reviews and empirical studies on moderating effects, nonlinear relationships, and reputations indicates the expansion of theoretical and methodological approaches.

The dispersal of newer analytical efforts towards network margins highlights the need for greater theoretical integration among different clusters to develop a comprehensive foundation. US dominance may explain the focus on themes such as the link between racial diversity and financial performance, often studied quantitatively, reflecting the US socioeconomic context and history of the 'business case' for diversity. Conversely, diverse institutional, historical, and cultural contexts (such as Europe's social welfare and equality approaches or Brazil's racial legacy and social inequali-

ties) likely pose different questions and methodological approaches. This underscores the need for more pluralistic epistemological debates and stronger connections with peripheral research centers in the field.

Conceptual framework for racial diversity in organizations

Table 4 groups the analyzed studies based on three central pillars and their associated key themes. The co-citation analysis allowed us to identify the central theoretical foundations as the first pillar. The citation analysis identified the central debate (second pillar) and the perspectives for future studies (third pillar). This structural organization is directly mirrored in the internal logic of our proposed conceptual framework (Figure 9), ensuring that the model is anchored in the field's intellectual history.

Specifically, the blue cluster (Figure 4) provides the foundation for the structural variables in the model, such as level and industry (Hambrick & Mason, 1982; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Tsui et al., 1992; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998), as well as the demographic context,

given its focus on the initial impacts of demography on performance (Joshi & Roh, 2009; Pelled et al., 1999; Tsui et al., 1992). In turn, the green cluster posits strategic and organizational culture mechanisms as critical mediators, drawing on the work of Richard (2000) and Harrison and Klein (2007). Specifically, by incorporating the mechanism of disparity (Harrison & Klein, 2007), the model explains why mere numerical representation is insufficient for positive outcomes without substantive shifts in power hierarchies. Finally, the red cluster justifies the model's complexity (characterized by nonlinear and contingent effects) by introducing group processes and relational variables as key drivers of leadership and managerial action (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Jehn et al., 1999; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Regarding the oscillation between managerial approaches, research is organized around strategic and responsive postures. This element of the model aligns directly with our correspondence analysis (Figure 3), where the strategic approach is primarily grounded in a high-impact conceptual core (Q1) (Avery, 2003; Konrad et al., 2021; Leslie, 2019; Richard, 2000). Conversely, responsive approaches and operational HR practices are supported by a more applied and operational body of literature found in the lower quartiles (Cook & Glass, 2014; Ely et al., 2012; Grier & Poole, 2020; Heinze & Soderstrom, 2024; McKinley-Floyd & Shrestha, 2008).

As evidenced by both the citation analysis and co-authorship network mapping, preoccupation with performance remains a dominant theme in both current and future research agendas. The core findings of these quantitative mapping approaches indicate a consistent focus on demonstrating the tangible outcomes of racial diversity in organizational management. These outcomes, systematically identified through the evaluation of high-impact and highly cited literature, are shown to be positive, negative, neutral, or contingent (Guest, 2019; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Jehn et al., 1999; Julian & Ofori-Dankwa, 2017; Leslie, 2019; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Specifically, the citation analysis highlights a persistent tension between studies reporting competitive advantages and those identifying internal conflicts, while the network analysis reveals that the field's most influential research cluster is primarily dedicated to articulating racial diversity with financial and organizational performance under specific contingent conditions (Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2003; Richard et al., 2021). This data-driven convergence justifies the central position of the performance and strategy pillar within our framework, reflecting how the field has been institutionalized around the business case for diversity.

Table 4. Structural synthesis of the literature on racial diversity.

Pillar	Key theme	Authors
Research Agenda	Longitudinal analyses and causal relationships	Avery (2003); Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2022); Erhardt et al. (2003); Guest (2019); Richard (2000); Richard et al. (2003)
	Connections with other dimensions of diversity	Avery (2003); Blount and Li (2021); Bocquet et al. (2019); Byron et al. (2023); Chapman et al. (2013); Ely et al. (2012); Grier and Poole (2020); Guest (2019); Jackson and Joshi (2004); Longhofer et al. (2019); Roberson and Park (2007); Samorani et al. (2022)
	Structural factors	Grier and Poole (2020); Kolev and McNamara (2020); Longhofer et al. (2019); Richard et al. (2003); Samorani et al. (2022)
	Different industries, contexts, and populations	Avery (2003); Blount and Li (2021); Bocquet et al. (2019); Byron et al. (2023); Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2022); Chapman et al. (2013); Erhardt et al. (2003); Guillaume et al. (2017); Hafsi and Turgut (2013); Heinze and Soderstrom (2024); Houston et al. (2023); Jackson and Joshi (2004); Kolev and McNamara (2020); Konrad et al. (2021); Longhofer et al. (2019); Richard et al. (2003); Richard et al. (2021); Roberson and Park (2007); Vlas et al. (2022); Wu et al. (2019)
	Hierarchical levels	Avery (2003); Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2022); Chapman et al. (2013); Guillaume et al. (2017); Richard et al. (2021); Roberson and Park (2007); Vlas et al. (2022)
	Leadership	Bocquet et al. (2019); Jackson and Joshi (2004); Richard et al. (2021); Wu et al. (2019)
	Organizational Culture	Heinze and Soderstrom (2024); Richard et al. (2021); Vairavan and Zhang (2020)
	Other contexts affecting boards of directors	Guest (2019); Hafsi and Turgut (2013); Kolev and McNamara (2020); Vairavan and Zhang (2020)
	Qualitative studies	Chapman et al. (2013); Erhardt et al. (2003); Grier and Poole (2020); Guest (2019); Kolev and McNamara (2020); Konrad et al. (2021); Vairavan and Zhang (2020)
	Behavioral effects	Clair et al. (2005); Guest (2019); Erhardt et al. (2003); Richard (2000)
	Non-financial performance metrics	Bocquet et al. (2019); Erhardt et al. (2003); Guest (2019); Leslie (2019); Richard (2000); Richard et al. (2003); Richard, Roh et al. (2013); Vlas et al. (2022)
	Performance	Clair et al. (2005); Ely et al. (2012); Guillaume et al. (2017); Hafsi and Turgut (2013); Leslie (2019); Richard et al. (2003); Roberson and Park (2007); Wu et al. (2019)
	Innovation	Bocquet et al. (2019); Byron et al. (2023)
	Moderation process	Byron et al. (2023); Guillaume et al. (2017); Leslie (2019); Wu et al. (2019)
	Mediation	Cook and Glass (2014); Wu et al. (2019)
	HR practices	Cook and Glass (2014); Grier and Poole (2020); Konrad et al. (2021); Richard et al. (2021); Vlas et al. (2022)

(continue)

Table 4. Structural synthesis of the literature on racial diversity. (continuation)

Pillar	Key theme	Authors
Central debate	Outcomes	Positive Bocquet et al. (2019); Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2022); Cook and Glass (2014); Erhardt et al. (2003); Heinze and Soderstrom (2024); Houston et al. (2023); Richard et al. (2021); Vlas et al. (2022); Wu et al. (2019)
		Negative Chapman et al. (2013); Kochan et al. (2003); Kolev and McNamara (2020); Longhofer et al. (2019)
		Contingents Blount and Li (2021); Byron et al. (2023); Ely et al. (2012); Heinze and Soderstrom (2024); Richard et al. (2003); Richard, Roh et al. (2013); Richard et al. (2021); Vlas et al. (2022)
		Neutral Guest (2019); Vairavan and Zhang (2020); Wu et al. (2019)
	Performance	Bocquet et al. (2019); Byron et al. (2023); Cook and Glass (2014); Erhardt et al. (2003); Guillaume et al. (2017); Leslie (2019); Richard (2000); Richard et al. (2003); Richard, Kirby et al. (2013); Richard et al. (2021); Roberson and Park (2007); Vlas et al. (2022); Wu et al. (2019)
	Strategy	Bocquet et al. (2019); Richard (2000); Richard et al. (2003); Guillaume et al. (2017)
	Leadership	Byron et al. (2023); Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2022); Guillaume et al. (2017); Heinze and Soderstrom (2024); Houston et al. (2023); Roberson and Park (2007); Wu et al. (2019)
	HR Practices	Avery (2003); Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2022); Grier and Poole (2020); Guillaume et al. (2017); Heinze and Soderstrom (2024); Konrad et al. (2021)
	Decision Making	Clair et al. (2005); Kolev and McNamara (2020)
	Non-financial performance	Konrad et al. (2021); Leslie (2019)
Theoretical basis	Decision Making	Ely and Thomas (2001); Milliken and Martins (1996); Hambrick and Mason (1982); Richard et al. (2004); Van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007); Williams and O'Reilly (1998)
	Strategy (Value in Diversity, RBV)	Cox and Blake (1991); Herring (2009); Richard (2000); Richard et al. (2004)
	Demographic Studies	Joshi and Roh (2009); Pelled et al. (1999); Tsui et al. (1992)
	Social Identity Theory – Social categorization	Williams and O'Reilly (1998)
	Heterogeneity Theory	Blau (1979); Hambrick and Mason (1982); Richard et al. (2004)

Note. Developed by the authors.

Nevertheless, the convergent findings from the diverse analytical approaches employed (ranging from the theoretical foundations elucidated through co-citation analysis, through the complexity and contingency of outcomes evidenced in the citation analysis, to the structural fragmentation revealed by the network analyses) collectively point towards the need for a framework capable of integrating these multiple facets. Therefore, building upon this multifaceted understanding of the field and the key factors consistently identified in the literature, we developed the Conceptual Model of Racial Diversity Management (Figure 8). This model represents our effort to synthesize these dynamics, proposing a structure that articulates the central elements theoretically presumed to shape the effects of racial diversity within organizations.

In this context, as shown in our model, racial diversity management appears to oscillate between a strategic approach focused on organizational value creation (Bocquet et al., 2019; Cox & Blake, 1991; Herring, 2009; Richard, 2000) and a responsive posture guided by social and institutional pressures

(Bocquet et al., 2019; Ely & Thomas, 2001). Indeed, an important relationship seems to exist between organizational strategy, innovation, racial diversity management, and performance (Herring, 2009; Richard, 2000; Richard et al., 2004).

However, organizational commitment, strategic positioning, and the role of managers influence outcomes, especially within a business environment characterized by interacting dynamic elements (complexity and unpredictability) (Cox & Blake, 1991; Harrison et al., 1998; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Kochan et al., 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999; Richard, 2000) and. Racial diversity management is not merely responsive or symbolic (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Our literature mapping suggests that inclusive and flexible leadership can yield positive results in racial diversity management (Milliken & Martins, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999). Furthermore, an organizational culture that values learning and innovation, remains flexible, and fosters an inclusive organizational climate can also positively influence these outcomes (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Richard, 2000; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

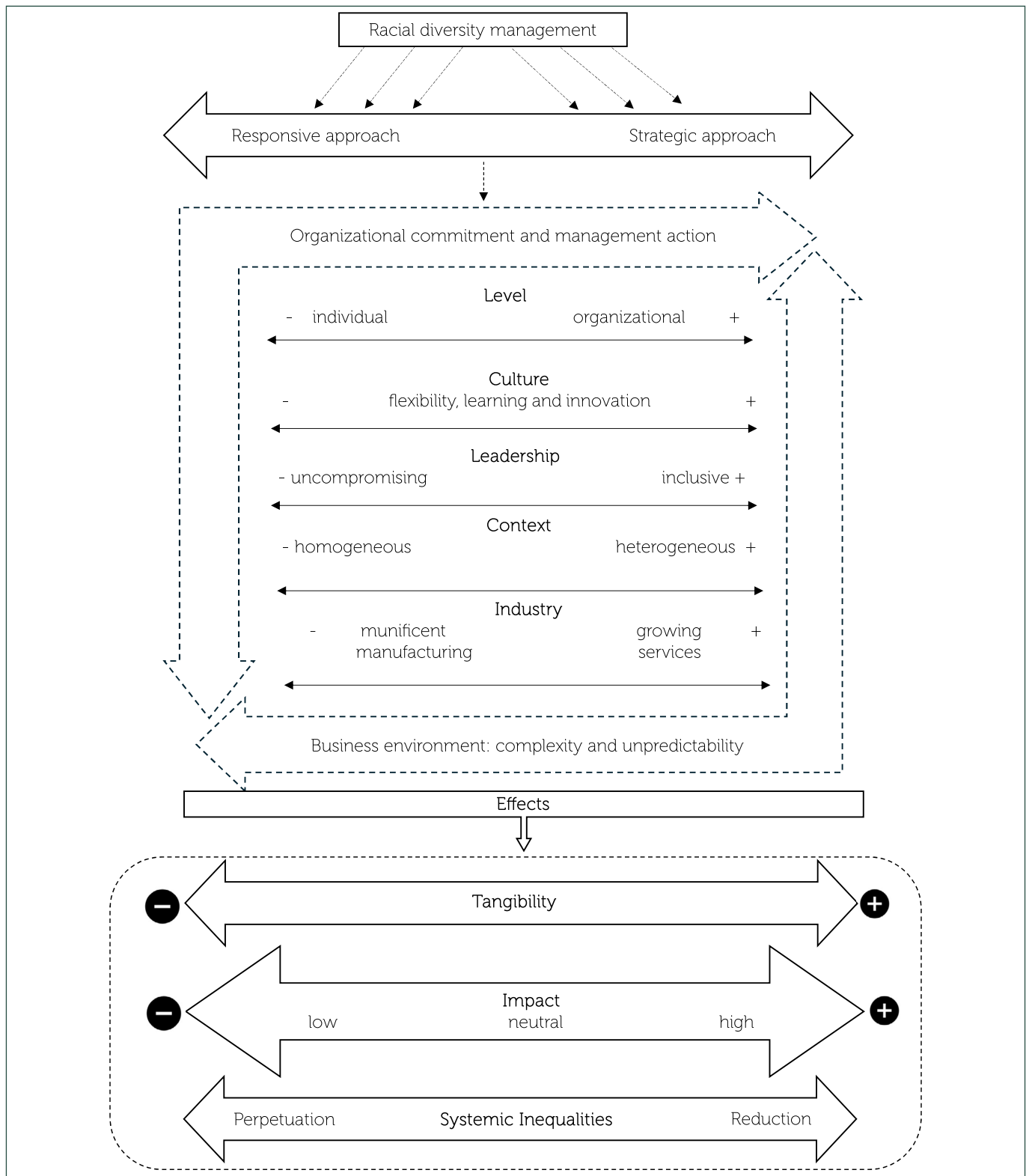
Moreover, organizational outcomes are influenced by structure, making it imperative to integrate racial diversity across all levels, transcending the superficiality of mere numerical or departmental representation (Hambrick & Mason, 1982; Milliken & Martins, 1996). Likewise, the demographic context can influence racial diversity outcomes (Hambrick & Mason, 1982; Joshi & Roh, 2009; Longhofer et al., 2019; Pelled et al., 1999; Richard et al., 2004; Tsui et al., 1992; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Watson et al., 1993). The industry environment (municipal or growing) and type (manufacturing or services) also appear to shape diversity management results (Joshi & Roh, 2009; Richard et al., 2007).

Additionally, regulatory pressure and stakeholder interests exert influence, especially regarding investment attraction and market share (Blount & Li, 2021; Cook & Glass, 2014; Herring, 2009; Roberson & Park, 2007). Given this dynamism, the effects of managing racial diversity are multidetermined and contingent, potentially varying in tangibility and yielding positive, negative, or neutral impacts (Guest, 2019; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Jehn et al., 1999; Julian & Ofori-Dankwa, 2017; Leslie, 2019; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

The conceptual framework depicts the phenomenon as recursively influenced by organizational commitment and management action and the complexity and unpredictability of the business environment. Consequently, the effects of this interaction may also generate negative impacts. This implies how human resource practices, institutionalized routines, internal policies, or hierarchical structures produce and reproduce racial inequalities, acknowledging that organizations can act as drivers of racial exclusion (Avent-Holt & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2019; Ray, 2019). Our mapping identified, for instance, discussions regarding negative effects stemming from algorithmic bias (Samorani et al., 2022), biased HR practices (Grier & Poole, 2020), and even the unintended consequences of diversity initiatives (Leslie, 2019). The framework captures these negative dynamics under the 'effects' category, where mismanaged practices result in negative impacts.

These negative impacts are often worsened by an incomplete understanding of diversity that overlooks power imbalances, as simply having a diverse group is not enough. In this regard, Harrison and Klein (2007) argue that many diversity initiatives treat differences merely as variety (differences in knowledge or category) or separation (differences in opinion), while ignoring disparities. Disparity refers to vertical differences in asset concentrations, such as status, pay, decision-making authority, and social power. When management ignores disparity, it renders invisible the fact that valued resources are concentrated within one group (usually the organizational elite), while others are deprived of them. Relational demography indicates that being different from the group affects those in minority positions (e.g., women and ethnic minorities) more negatively than those in majority positions (e.g., White men) (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). If management does not foster cooperative interdependence, the natural tendency towards a preference for similarity perpetuates the exclusion of historically marginalized groups (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Therefore, we argue that racial diversity management initiatives can either perpetuate or reduce systemic inequalities.

The conceptual model (Figure 8) demonstrates that racial diversity does not necessarily entail a linear cause-and-effect relationship, as is often assumed for organizational phenomena. Instead, it suggests that given environmental complexity and organizational dynamics, specific factors influence the resulting outcomes. Our objective is not to prescribe a rigid model but rather one that elucidates the factors identified as central to racial diversity management within the literature. Therefore, the presented conceptual model illustrates that effective racial diversity management does not operate in a vacuum but functions systemically, influenced by a range of contextual and organizational factors. Thus, rather than searching for a single formula for diversity's impact, management practices should focus on understanding the intricate interactions among the key contingency factors highlighted by this research.



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 8. Conceptual framework for racial diversity in organizations .

DISCUSSION

Implications for research, practice, and society

Historically, diversity management research addressing racial issues has tended to treat race as a secondary demographic variable (Nkomo, 1992). This perspective has been dominated by an ethnicity and assimilation paradigm that ignores power relations and the historical nature of racism (Nkomo, 1992). To rewrite race into or-

ganizational studies, it is necessary to recognize that organizations are constituted by racial relations and power struggles (Avent-Holt & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2019). In Brazil, for example, organizations are often described as white spaces, reflecting structural racism that persists despite the myth of racial democracy (Jaime & Santos-Souza, 2025; Santos-Souza, 2024).

In the diversity literature, inequalities are also analyzed through the lens of disparity, which refers to differences in the concentration of valued assets or resources (material and symbolic) among members of a unit, creating a vertical hierarchy in which few dominate (Harrison & Klein, 2007). The combination of multiple diversity attributes (such as race, gender, and age) can create hypothetical fault lines splitting groups into subgroups based on these demographic characteristics, potentially exacerbating internal conflicts and inequalities (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). These elements generate organization-wide effects involving compensation, recruitment and selection, disciplinary practices, and occupational and hierarchical segregation (Avent-Holt & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2019; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Nkomo, 1992; Ray, 2019). Even with diversity initiatives aimed at addressing inequalities, organizations may decouple their formal equity policies from actual practices; that is, they adopt diversity rules ceremonially to maintain legitimacy, while their everyday practices continue to reproduce racial hierarchies (Ray, 2019).

The proposed framework explicitly articulates key organizational factors, such as culture, leadership, and context, with management action and commitment as central determinants (Cox & Blake, 1991; Harrison et al., 1998; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Kochan et al., 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999). We argue that institutional routines and policies are captured within these dimensions as contingency factors that, when misaligned with the external business environment and strategy, produce negative outcomes (Chapman et al., 2023; Kochan et al., 2003; Kolev & McNamara, 2020; Longhofer et al., 2019), which can effectively reproduce inequality. Our text supports this by discussing unintended consequences, algorithmic bias, and biased HR practices as evidence of these mechanisms in action (Grier & Poole, 2020; Leslie, 2019; Samorani et al., 2022).

However, it is fundamental to note that current business/management literature (the scope of this review) prioritizes outcome analyses focused on performance, predominantly concentrating on meso- and macro-variables (such as strategy, culture, and environment). Therefore, we acknowledge that this literature often fails to capture the depth of subjective experience, pointing to a structural limitation of the field we mapped, rather than merely of the proposed model. We agree that fully understanding the effects of racial diversity management in organizations requires investigating the interactions between the micro, meso, and macro levels.

In this sense, our framework serves as a map of this managerial territory, indicating precisely the frontiers where the functionalist approach reaches its limits. To

overcome this limitation and bridge the micro-level gap (specifically the psychodynamics of racism, suffering at work, and mechanisms of subject agency), we argue that it is necessary to break through the disciplinary boundaries of Management. Consequently, for the field to advance, we understand that new studies must dedicate themselves to a critical and transdisciplinary multilevel perspective, expanding into Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Psychology, for instance. In these disciplines, microfoundations are treated as central human experiences rather than mere performance variables. Thus, we propose that new investigations integrate these perspectives to understand the core mechanisms of racial inequality reproduction, articulating individual and subjective effects (micro) with group dynamics and institutional structures (meso and macro).

Our results indicate that the relationship between racial diversity and outcomes is nonlinear, but multiterminated and contingent (Blount & Li, 2021; Byron et al., 2023; Ely et al., 2012; Heinze & Soderstrom, 2024; Richard et al., 2003; Richard, Roh et al., 2013; Richard et al., 2021; Vlas et al., 2022). We believe that understanding these interactions from the micro-level can contribute to the field's advancement by explaining the factors influencing these results. By incorporating the agency, resistance, and lived experience of racialized subjects, future research will be able to transcend the view of diversity as a mere strategic resource, revealing the human and ethical tensions permeating organizational life. Ultimately, this ontological and epistemological expansion has the potential to refine the theoretical precision of management models and reposition the area to face the structural challenges of equity, shifting racial diversity management from a focus on financial metrics to an organizational practice committed to social justice.

Another promising path lies in the analysis of consumption relations, branding, and consumer behavior. The literature, carefully selected according to our methodological parameters, focuses more on the workplace than the marketplace. Some studies analyzing these phenomena, although not selected by our method, indicate possible avenues for research.

On this horizon, a future agenda must recognize that race and ethnicity profoundly influence consumer interactions with companies, configuring the market as a locus of vulnerability (Baker et al., 2005). This vulnerability manifests in critical ways, ranging from negative experiences in consuming high-risk health products (Trujillo-Torres & DeBerry-Spence, 2023) to the imperative need for racialized consumers to perform grueling emotional and strategic labor to be respected in environments where racial stigma persists (Crockett, 2017).

These dynamics require individuals to mobilize agency and coping tactics, such as using technology to mediate interactions and deal with racism in physical retail (Ekpo et al., 2018). However, it is crucial to observe that such individual attempts to manage stigma (adaptation or resistance) are limited. Often, they fail to make daily or professional life more egalitarian and merely more tolerable (Crockett, 2017).

From an organizational standpoint, ignoring this reality imposes tangible risks. Lack of preparation to deal with a diverse clientele can entail legal and financial consequences, evidenced by discrimination litigation in the market (Harris et al., 2005). Furthermore, the sophistication of diversity management in marketing demands overcoming old assimilation assumptions; empirical studies challenge the hypothesis that social mobility implies the loss of racial identity, demonstrating that economic mobility does not necessarily erase one's identity (Williams & Qualls, 1989). Therefore, we propose that future investigations explore the inextricable connection between internal diversity management and external cultural competence, articulating how organizations can transition from mere legal risk mitigation to the authentic recognition of the racialized consumer's identity and dignity.

The review highlights the lack of discussion on racialized countries in the Global North, noting that post-capitalist societies originated from colonial and racist exploitation, with Western universities as key pillars (Quijano, 2000). Colonial influence skews academic thought, ignoring non-white histories. Management research similarly focuses mainly on the Global North (Boussebaa et al., 2025), neglecting many countries affected by colonialism, economic disparities, and racialization. Expanding epistemology can address these gaps and deepen our understanding of racial dynamics in diverse settings. The scarcity of Global South studies reflects epistemic coloniality in organizational research, which is dominated by Global North journals that marginalize alternative perspectives (Alcadipani & Faria, 2014; Ibarra-Colado, 2006). Our map of mainstream research is incomplete, as it excludes peripheral ontologies and epistemologies. The field's maturity requires overcoming parochialism, which universalizes the Anglo-Saxon experience. Including Global South voices as legitimate theoretical sources is essential for understanding specific forms of racialization, such as racism in miscegenation, neocolonialism, and the racial democracy myth. Confronting coloniality with native theories enhances research validity and produces truly global knowledge that explains racial relations across different contexts.

Our research shows that the selected studies adopt a predominantly positivist approach focused on performance, which, due to an epistemological limitation, fails to capture the historical and ideological nature of race in organizations and its individual effects on performance. We understand the need to broaden these discussions beyond the business-case paradigm. Therefore, we suggest formally incorporating perspectives such as Critical Race Theory (CRT), Black Feminist Thought, and postcolonial studies. These lenses must not be considered peripheral additions but rather central analytical structures to unveil power dynamics, racial glass ceilings, and the microphysics of oppression. Such a movement is decisive for balancing the debate: by shifting the exclusive focus from financial performance to issues of institutional racism and structural justice, management research can offer diagnoses that are both technically useful and socially transformative.

In summary, to operationalize this expansion, our findings suggest specific research avenues. Beyond calls for longitudinal studies, future research must shift from exploring general themes to prioritizing explanatory mechanisms, at the micro, meso, and macro levels. To achieve this, our framework (Figure 8) indicates methodological directions across three distinct levels of analysis. At the macro-level, we recommend examining the structural interactions between external influences, managerial approaches (responsive vs. strategic), and the impact of different configurations on financial performance and market value, acknowledging that these are often noisy indicators. Analyzing these macro dynamics requires longitudinal models, such as panel designs and event history analysis, to understand how structural mechanisms, like organizational decoupling between policies and practices, dynamically influence financial performance and reputation. At the meso-level, organizational factors such as culture, leadership, and the integration of multilevel racial diversity must be investigated. Scholars should apply qualitative methods to expose the relational and power dynamics that shape the authenticity of racial diversity management and its impact on perceptions of social justice. Observational studies and organizational network analysis (ONA) are requisite to expose the relational mechanisms by which implicit bias translates into homophilic departmental routines. Finally, at the micro-level, studying how race intersects with gender, class, and nationality is vital. To capture these mechanisms, approaches should focus on the subjective impact on racialized talent. Scholars should employ phenomenological or autoethnographic approaches to document the psychological mechanisms at play in racialized subjects and the nuances of their daily agency.

In this sense, expanding these integrated methodologies across new regions and sectors (including technology and board dynamics) is vital for advancing theory from correlational observations to understanding the generative mechanisms of diversity itself.

Finally, the model we propose is not the end of the line but a means to generate new relationships and perspectives on the subject, creating more questions than answers (Torraco, 2005). We reiterate that the framework offers a guiding theoretical contribution, designed precisely to enable the research community to develop new and more nuanced hypotheses. By mapping the systemic interplay of factors rather than fixing linear causalities, the framework provides the necessary heuristic ground for future researchers to formulate propositions, incorporating the gaps we have identified as part of the future research agenda.

Consolidating these insights yields a comprehensive view of the practical and social implications of our study, demonstrating that racial diversity management must transition from reactive, superficial, symbolic, or generic initiatives to a systemic integration within an organization's dynamic capabilities. For practice, our synthesis cautions against viewing racial diversity as a panacea; its impact is not automatic and depends critically on tailored, context-sensitive strategies aligned with business objectives and deeply embedded within organizational culture, leadership practices, and equitable HR systems. Consequently, organizational policies must move beyond purely numerical metrics of representation to focus on the elimination of disparity, demanding the genuine redistribution of status, decision-making authority, and resources among racial groups. Socially, the study reveals that organizations function as active mechanisms in either the reproduction or mitigation of structural inequalities. By identifying how biased HR practices and management algorithms can perpetuate institutional racism, this research warns that corporate social responsibility must prioritize structural justice over a simplistic 'business case.' Effective management requires understanding the specific conditions under which diversity fosters positive outcomes and proactively mitigating potential conflicts or unintended negative consequences. Ultimately, effective racial diversity management positions itself not merely as a strategic resource for competitiveness, but as an indispensable ethical commitment for organizational legitimacy in democratic and multicultural contexts.

Central theoretical contribution

To synthesize our theoretical contribution unequivocally, this study advances the field through a structural and epistemological repositioning of racial diversity

management. By mapping a highly fragmented literature, we move beyond the dominant, simplistic search for linear causality between diversity and financial performance (a hallmark of the functionalist 'business case' paradigm). Instead, our contribution is twofold. First, we provide a systemic conceptual framework that reorganizes the field's intervening variables, demonstrating that diversity outcomes are contingent upon a complex interplay of managerial postures, organizational structures, and external environmental pressures. Second, and more profoundly, this framework serves as a heuristic bridge. By exposing the limits of the mainstream, performance-driven literature, our systematization creates the theoretical scaffolding necessary for future research to formally incorporate critical, multilevel, and Global South epistemologies. Consequently, this study shifts the analytical focus from merely questioning 'if' racial diversity pays off, to systematically understanding 'how' organizational mechanisms either mitigate or reproduce racial disparities, thereby grounding management theory in both structural rigor and social reality.

FINAL REMARKS

We employed an integrative literature review method, combining scientific mapping (productivity, correspondence, co-citation, citation, and co-authorship networks) with qualitative content analysis. Both the literature and the proposed model emphasize the need to consider organizational, business environment, and societal contexts, alongside inherent tensions, to fully understand racial diversity in organizations. In epistemological terms, our analysis encompasses the premise that management-oriented approaches can incorporate conflict-based perspectives into social and organizational analyses (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Séguin & Chanlat, 1992). In aiming to offer a systematic overview of research on racial diversity within organizations, we map the contours of this fragmented field by presenting our results across four key structural analyses.

First, correspondence analysis provided a key structural contribution by unveiling the field's thematic architecture, which oscillates between strategic managerial approaches and responsive postures. A distinct stratification pattern emerged, wherein high-impact journals (Q1) anchored the conceptual core, addressing racial diversity primarily through theoretical and strategic lenses. Conversely, responsive postures and operational human resource practices are supported by the more applied literature situated in the lower quartiles, with the Q2 stratum serving as an intermediary bridge between these poles. This thematic diagnosis is vital for contextualizing the paradigmatic fractures between theory and practice, helping explain why certain

empirical findings appear contradictory or why specific theoretical currents remain tangential to everyday organizational realities. Regarding its direct implications, this systematization fulfills a fundamental dual role: for managerial praxis, it equips professionals to locate the academic debates and evidence most pertinent to the specific operational challenges they face; and for the scientific community, it provides a navigational map that enables researchers to direct their submission efforts towards journals whose editorial scopes and target audiences genuinely align with the nature of their inquiries.

Secondly, the intellectual structure, mapped through co-citation analysis, illuminates the field's theoretical bedrock. Foundational work from the 1990s focused on the demographic impacts on group processes, evolving through the 2000s to incorporate contingency perspectives linking diversity to strategy and performance under specific conditions, drawing on theories such as heterogeneity (Blau, 1979) and the value-in-diversity proposition (Cox & Blake, 1991). More contemporary work strives for integrated multilevel models that emphasize processes and context.

Third, the citation analysis underscored a central, enduring tension: the relationship between racial diversity and organizational outcomes, particularly financial performance. While early highly cited works debated whether diversity impacts performance, revealing positive, negative, and contingent findings, more recent influential studies have increasingly explored why and how these effects manifest, pointing towards being influenced by factors such as strategic CSR alignment, cultural intelligence, algorithmic bias, and power dynamics. This signals a move towards more sophisticated causal explanations and a recognition of structural and systemic influences.

Fourthly, the co-authorship network analysis revealed a field characterized by significant fragmentation, albeit with a prominent central cluster, focusing on the contingent performance effects of racial diversity often viewed through a Resource-Based View lens. The analysis further underscored the predominance of U.S.-based researchers and the limited scope of international collaboration, which remains largely confined to countries within the Global North. This pattern highlights a pressing need to diversify both the geographical and epistemological dimensions of the field, fostering more inclusive and globally representative research networks.

As discussed, the synthesis of these findings culminates in two primary contributions. First, we structured the analyzed literature into a framework organized around three pillars, offering a map of the field's evolu-

tion, tensions, and directions. Second, drawing on the multiple intervening factors identified in the literature, we propose a Conceptual Model of Racial Diversity Management. In reviewing this 24-year body of literature, which is highly fragmented and dispersed, we chose to develop a model that, by bringing together the contributions of this quarter century of scientific production on the subject, would help companies improve the management of racial diversity. The proposed model highlights the importance of considering the organizational setting, business environment, and societal context to understand the dynamics of racial diversity in companies. Moreover, it draws attention to the fact that this dynamic is crossed by conflicts and power relations.

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. Firstly, it is constrained by its reliance on the WoS database and the specific keywords utilized, which may potentially exclude pertinent scholarship from alternative databases or those employing different terminologies. To advance our understanding of the results of racial diversity management, empirical validation of the proposed framework (Figure 8) is essential. Contingency Theory emerges as a pertinent analytical framework to explain this variation by focusing on how organizational and contextual factors condition the effectiveness of different approaches. Investigating the optimal 'fits' between strategy, internal structure, and external context in racial diversity is a promising avenue for future research. In practical terms, it is important to understand how our conceptual model can be operationalized as a diagnostic tool to identify systemic misalignments (between managerial approach, culture, leadership, context, and external environment) that lead to predominantly negative or neutral outcomes of racial diversity management, and how interventions based on this diagnosis may or may not reverse these situations.

In conclusion, while research on racial diversity in organizations has developed, establishing foundational theories and identifying key contingencies, it remains a fragmented and evolving field grappling with complex realities and the tensions characteristic of an emergent study area. The persistent underrepresentation of racialized groups in positions of power globally, juxtaposed against the increasing diversity of the workforce driven by migration and demographic shifts, lends profound urgency to this research agenda. This overview provides a structured map of the terrain, consolidating current knowledge and illuminating critical pathways for future scholarship committed to advancing both theoretical understanding and practical progress towards genuine racial equity and inclusion within organizations.

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Authors

Humberto Reis dos Santos-Souza

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio de Janeiro
R. Sen. Furtado, n. 121/125, Maracanã, CEP 20270-021, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
humberto.souza@ifrrj.edu.br

Orlando C. Richard

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Isenberg School of Management
121 Presidents Dr, Amherst, MA 01003, United States
orichard@isenberg.umass.edu

Pedro Jaime

Centro Universitário da FEI, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração
Rua Tamandaré, n. 688, Liberdade, CEP 01525-000, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Programa de Pós-Graduação em
Comunicação e Práticas de Consumo
Rua Joaquim Távora, 1240, Vila Mariana, CEP 04015-013, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
pedrojaime@fei.edu.br, pcoelho@espm.br

Authors' contributions

1st author: conceptualization (lead), data curation (lead), formal analysis (lead), investigation (lead), methodology (lead), software (lead), writing - original draft (lead).

2nd author: conceptualization (equal), data curation (supporting), supervision (lead), writing - review & editing (equal).

3rd author: conceptualization (supporting), supervision (supporting), writing - review & editing (equal).