



# Mapping Research Trends in Workplace Diversity and Inclusion: A Bibliometric Analysis of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Other Sexual and Gender Minority Workplace Studies

A.V.G.M.D. Karunatillaka<sup>1</sup> , H.A.K.N.S. Surangi<sup>2</sup> , R. Abeysekera<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, <sup>2</sup>Department of Commerce & Financial Management, Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, <sup>3</sup>Department of Finance, Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

\*Corresponding Author: [meditha123@gmail.com](mailto:meditha123@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, growing organizational and societal emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and employee wellbeing has stimulated substantial research on workplace diversity and inclusion (D&I), including studies focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ+) employees. Despite this growth, the literature remains fragmented across multiple disciplines, with limited understanding of its intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and emerging research directions. Addressing this gap, this study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research published between 2015 and 2025. Bibliographic data were retrieved from the Scopus and Web of Science databases following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. A total of 232 peer-reviewed journal articles were analysed using Biblioshiny (Bibliometrix) and VOSviewer. Performance analysis and science mapping techniques were employed to examine publication trends, leading journals, influential authors, productive countries, collaboration networks, thematic development, and keyword co-occurrence. The findings reveal a substantial increase in scholarly output after 2020, reflecting growing academic and organizational interest in LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion. Research is predominantly concentrated in the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, while contributions from developing countries remain comparatively limited. Thematic analysis demonstrates a conceptual shift from traditional diversity management towards employee-centred perspectives emphasising psychological safety, workplace belonging, inclusive leadership, intersectionality, and employee wellbeing. The study also identifies important research gaps relating to geographical representation and emerging workplace inclusion themes. This study contributes to the literature by providing a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research, identifying its intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and future research directions. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers, organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and policymakers seeking to advance evidence-based and inclusive workplace practices.

**Keywords:** Workplace Diversity, Workplace Inclusion, LGBTQ+ Employees, Bibliometric Analysis, Science Mapping, Biblioshiny, VOSviewer

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## INTRODUCTION

Prioritizing workplace equity enhances employee wellbeing and organizational performance. Globalization and social movements lead to shifting demographics and greater diversity. Culturally and socially responsive organizations welcome all employees and allow for the full expression of individuality. Equity inclusion drives employee engagement and innovation while creating sustainable competitive advantages. The evolution of diversity in the workplace leads to new dynamics and greater legitimacy. From a global perspective, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is an interdisciplinary field that includes human resource management, behavior in organizations, psychology, and sociology. Prioritizing workplace equity improves employee wellbeing and leads to greater organizational performance. Globalization and social movements lead to shifting demographics and greater diversity in the workplace. Culturally and socially responsive organizations welcome all employees and allow for the full expression of individuality. Equity inclusion drives employee engagement and innovation while creating sustainable competitive advantages. The evolution of diversity in the workplace leads to new dynamics and greater legitimacy. From a global perspective, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is an interdisciplinary field that includes human resource management, behavior in organizations, psychology, and sociology.

The scholarship has recently begun to incorporate sexual orientation and gender identity as key considerations in workplace diversity studies. The advancement of diversity and anti-discrimination initiatives has not been fully effective in addressing the workplace needs of LGBTQ+ individuals. Evidence shows that employees conceal their identity, experience discrimination, exclusion, and a lack of psychological

safety and workplace belonging (Blanck et al., 2020; Van Laar et al., 2019; Van der Toorn et al., 2024). The concealment of sexual orientation and gender identity often requires the individual to make a choice about the disclosure of their identity. This creates distinct and complex challenges at the workplace pertaining to the issues of inclusion and psychological safety. Thus, inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals within the workplace has become a pivotal aspect of the existing scholarship on workplace diversity. Indeed, the scholarship is beginning to appreciate that inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace and diversity, more generally positively affects the psychological wellbeing of employees and their commitment to the workplace, as well as enhancing workplace innovation, the retention of talented employees, and positive performance outcomes of the organization on a sustained basis (Okpaegbe et al., 2025).

Recently, studies of LGBTQ+ experiences in work-related settings have proliferated so that now multiple disciplines, from public policy to sociology, have dedicated work in this area. Scholars have critiqued various aspects of this research, from management of workplace diversity to inclusion in leadership practices; from workplace discrimination, psychological safety and employee wellbeing, to the ethics of intersectionality and inclusive workplace cultures (Chao et al., 2024; Corby et al., 2025). These studies highlight the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace. However, despite the growing number of studies, understanding the LGBTQ+ workplace experience as a whole has become an increasingly difficult task, since the studies are multidisciplinary and lack a common theoretical or methodological framework. As a result, embracing the breadth and depth of this rapidly growing field of research has become almost impossible.

Bibliometric analysis has the potential to fill this gap. The systematic analysis of trends in publications, themes of citations, and networks of collaborations, and their interrelationships, enable researchers to outline the 'big picture' of knowledge in a succinct, objective manner (Boyack & Klavans, 2010). Unlike other traditional reviews of the literature, bibliometric analysis combines performance measurement with science mapping in order to identify landmark studies, leading authors, and research networks and clusters, and to assess the direction of research (Donthu et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2025). Given the rapid expansion of many research areas, bibliometric analyses are being used to synthesize massive amounts of literature and objectively assess the direction of research.

Considering the attention workplace diversity and inclusion related issues have drawn from researchers, studies that include bibliometric approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion and diversity in the workplace are scarce. Most reviews that have been published are either narrative, systematic or of a conceptual nature, and focus on the spectrum of workplace practices, employee experiences and diversity management frameworks. Although these reviews are important from a conceptual perspective, they are not able to capture the progressive stages of the field, the nature of scholarly collaboration, the themes and the dominant and emergent knowledge frameworks. Moreover, previous studies that have adopted bibliometric approaches have focused on diversity in the workplace in general and have not addressed LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion in a more specific and emergent context. Thus, there is an evident gap in the literature that necessitates a bibliometric analysis of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion that addresses the structure, the scope and the potential of future research in this area.

In an effort to address the evident gap, this study aims to conduct bibliometric analyses of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion studies that have been published in peer-reviewed journals within the Scopus and Web of Science databases for the period that covers 2015 to 2025. The period of study has been selected to capture the decadal increase in research related to LGBTQ+ workplace diversity, inclusion and equality due to the significant focus that various organizations have placed on diversifying their workforce and the resultant initiatives. The study will also identify emerging trends and patterns, and along with the analyses, propose future directions for research in this area.

There are four main research goals:

- To understand the patterns of publication and the progressive stages of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research from 2015 onwards.
- To determine the most seminal authors, journals, nations, institutions, and networks of collaborations in the discipline.
- To analyze the foundations of LGBTQ+ theories of workplace diversity and inclusion, and the theories of related bibliometric science mapping.
- To find the trends of new research, where knowledge is lacking, and what other research has not yet been done in order to stimulate new research and improve current practice in the workplace.

First, it offers one of the most extensive bibliometric analyses of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research, integrating performance analysis with mapping to show the field's intellectual growth. Second, it moves beyond publication analysis of warranted

descriptions to capture themes, networks, and knowledge structures which have been created in LGBTQ+ workplace studies. Third, it identifies new research opportunities and existing ‘research deserts’ to help create a research agenda. Finally, the results offer the managers of organizations, human resource specialists, and the designers of policy the means to create informed hypotheses that help to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ employees.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Evolution of Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Research

Workplace Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) efforts have moved away from the Human Resources Department and their legal compliance duties, to become an issue affecting all employees, on which the success of an organization depends. The work of early diversity researchers was primarily concerned with demographic representation and the legal compliance of equal opportunity employment. This focus has evolved, with the greater understanding, on the need to research the conditions and the ways in which organizations can build environments of inclusivity, allowing employees of all backgrounds to be involved, to contribute, and to be their authentic selves to the fullest extent (Shore et al., 2011; Jonsen et al., 2021).

General definitions of diversity embrace the presence of difference across a variety of characteristics in individuals in an organization, e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity (Jonsen et al., 2021). While demographic diversity within an organization improves the variety of available perspectives, diversity, in itself, does not support and guarantee employee satisfaction and experiences. This has led to the differentiation of diversity and inclusion. Inclusion reflects the conditions under which employees feel and are

respectful of and true to their identities and are supportive and engaged participants in all of the processes and activities of an organization (Shore et al., 2011; Nishii, 2013).

Belonging has been recognized more recently in inclusion research. Inclusion looks at organizational practices and employees, while belonging examines the perception of psychological acceptance and connection and organizational membership (Allen et al., 2021). The literature shows employees’ sense of belonging contributes commitment to the organization, fuller engagement, greater creativity, and enhanced wellbeing. Improved retention, collaboration, and performance are benefits to the organization (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Allen et al., 2021). The inclusion of belonging in diversity research is predominantly viewed as the integration of three organizational constructs (Allen et al., 2021; Jena & Pradhan, 2018).

This inclusion of belonging is a reflection of organizational constructs in the evolution of diversity research. Viewing diversity as an isolated activity in the human resource space is shifting. Organizations are beginning to see the connection of having an inclusion focused workforce with enhancing organizational resilience and innovation, improving employer branding, and attaining a sustainable competitive edge (Comello et al., 2024; Okpaegbe et al., 2025). Consequently, workplace diversity and inclusion is becoming an integrated research focus of numerous fields and professions (Tagliaro et al., 2024). This integrated research focus has the potential to simplify the understanding of workplace diversity and inclusion, despite the paradox of increasing complexity in research within the field.

Even with these developments, academics maintain that efforts to promote organizational diversity still focus more

on workforce representation than on the inclusion of employee lived experiences. There is a significant difference between having formal diversity and equality policies in an organization and having an environment where employees feel psychologically safe, accepted, and valued (Nishii, 2013). Indeed, several academics argue that diversity policies are only one component of the inclusive leadership spectrum, the culture of the organization, interpersonal relationships, and the everyday experiences of employees in the workplace. With this in mind, more academics are studying LGBTQ+ employees in the workplace, one of the most underrepresented groups in scholarship, particularly the workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ employees, which can be impacted by different identity-related experiences.

### **LGBTQ+ Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Research**

The last decade has seen an increase in scholarly research on LGBTQ+ employees. This has largely been due to social, legal, and organizational shifts regarding the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in discussions surrounding workplace diversity. Previous research focused on the discrimination and inequities faced by LGBTQ+ employees at the hands of their employees and documented the various barriers that LGBTQ+ employees confronted in the struggle for workplace equity (Ragins, 2008; Griffith & Hebl, 2002). As the field of diversity and inclusion has advanced, so too has research on the workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ employees, including the disclosure of identity, the presence or absence of psychological safety, feelings of belonging, the need for inclusive leadership, and the culture of the workplace (Van Laar et al., 2019; Bhattacharyya & Berdahl, 2023).

One of the major themes in the research is workplace identity. Unlike many other social categories, sexual orientation and gender identity are often invisible. Employees are thus faced with the dilemma of whether to disclose their identity, or to continue concealing it. Research shows that employees who disclose their identity experience more satisfying workplace relationships and greater job satisfaction, but concealment can result in psychological distress and emotional exhaustion, decreasing the employee's engagement and commitment to their work and the organization as a whole (Clair et al., 2005; Pachankis, 2007; King et al., 2008). This research ultimately establishes the need for psychologically safe workplaces, where employees are able to be authentic and are not subjected to discrimination or exclusion.

Another important branch of research investigates the relevant aspects of an organization that creates an inclusive workplace. Recent studies indicate that workplace diversity policies are insufficient by themselves to foster workplace inclusivity. While the formalization of policies such as anti-discrimination, equal employment opportunities, and the management of workplace diversity represents important building blocks at an institutional level, genuine workplace inclusion is contingent on the implementation of these policies at the level of organizational culture, leadership, and everyday practice (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018). The presence of inclusive leadership, employee resource groups, mentoring, diversity, and inclusion training and interventions, and equitable human resources practices have been identified as critical elements in creating an environment of trust and psychological safety and a sense of belonging at work for LGBTQ+ individuals (Van der Toorn et al., 2024; Okpaegbe et al., 2025).

With these developments, the focus of the recent literature has also been shifting in the direction of workplace inclusivity and away from workplace discrimination to the constructive outcomes for organizations associated with an inclusive workplace. It is now firmly established that inclusive workplace cultures are associated with an improvement in the wellbeing of employees, an increased commitment of employees to the organization, innovation, collaboration, employee retention, and a measurable improvement in the overall performance of the organization (Allen et al., 2021; Comello et al., 2024). Recognizing LGBTQ+ inclusion as a social justice issue has been the dominant perspective in this field of study; however, enhancing the workplace and improving the overall effectiveness of the organization is contributing to a new perspective within this field of study.

There are major gaps in existing literature. Firstly, there is lack of research in developing countries, and particularly in culturally and ethnically diverse countries. Most literature is focused in North America, Western Europe, and Australia, where there are more legal protections and workplace initiatives of diversity. In consequence, we know little about LGBTQ+ workplace experiences in developing countries and countries with greater diversity, where legal and socio-ecological conditions are different. Secondly, while many different studies have investigated LGBTQ+ workplace issues, knowledge remains dispersed across many social sciences, from organizational behavior to sociology and human resource management, and even gender studies. Thirdly, while many scholars have focused on workplace experiences of intersectionality and, more recently, non-binary and transgender individuals, there is little in the workplace diversity literature on these issues (Corby et al., 2025).

Recent decades have added further depth and breadth to this literature. Most of the narrative and systematic reviews that have been published offer little more than classification of disparate studies. As such, there is need for bibliometric studies that survey the breadth and depth of research on LGBTQ+ workplace issues. Such studies can help scholars to advance the field of LGBTQ+ workplace studies as opposed to continuing the synthesis of disparate studies. Instead, scholars can identify gaps in the literature to help advance the field.

### **Bibliometric Analysis in Management and Diversity Research**

Across a range of disciplines, bibliometric analysis is a prominent method for examining the structure, development, and the conformation of scientific knowledge. Various citation and publication frameworks are analyzed by bibliometric methods in contrast to conventional narrative reviews, which focus on a qualitative synthesis of findings. This is primarily because bibliometric methods rely on several forms of quantitative research, including publications, citation frameworks, research collaborations, and the literature theme. These methods have the potential to identify the active publications and personnel in a field, as well as research themes that are more difficult to identify using conventional literature reviews. In addition, bibliometric methods provide a clear and repeatable method to assess the extent of research field activity.

Management and organizational research has seen a widening application of bibliometric techniques due to the use of large bibliographic databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, and the development of bibliometric research software such as Bibliometrix, Biblioshiny, and VOSviewer. These techniques integrate performance analysis and science mapping and support the

visualization of frameworks of co-authorship, citation, keyword occurrence, and the evolution of themes and the intellectual foundations of a field (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). As management research becomes more interdisciplinary, bibliometric methods can be used to chart knowledge frameworks and the development of new research fields.

Within business and management studies, bibliometric analysis has been utilized to explore leadership, organizational behavior, human resource management, sustainability, employee wellbeing, innovation, and diversity management (Donthu et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2025). Recent bibliometric studies have surveyed diversity management, gender diversity, and inclusive leadership as well as the culture of organizations and the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion, illustrating the rapid expansion of these research fields. These studies have identified the leading authors and institutions, networks of collaboration, and the evolution of themes in modern management research. However, the majority of bibliometric studies on diversity and inclusion have examined these concepts through a broad lens of either the entire organization or human resource management and have not addressed specifically the research on LGBTQ+ in the workplace.

Although systematic and narrative literature reviews have significantly advanced the understanding of LGBTQ+ experiences in the workplace, these reviews primarily synthesize the research on the various forms of discrimination, the disclosure of identity, and the inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and sense of belonging and other related organizational practices. Much fewer research studies on LGBTQ+ workplace studies have taken a bibliometric approach. Thus, there is little evidence related to the focus of works, research collaborations, the leading works in this

domain, and the new directions for research in this area.

This constraint is particularly relevant as multiple disciplines have developed LGBTQ+ workplace studies. These include human resource management, organizational studies, psychology, sociology, gender studies, and public policy. This interdisciplinary nature has resulted in fragmentation across various journals, research groups, and academic disciplines. In the absence of a comprehensive bibliometric study, understanding the interrelationships of these domains of knowledge, what the prevailing themes in the literature are, and identifying gaps is largely impossible.

Thus, the systematic mapping of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research is best served by bibliometric analysis. The combination of performance evaluation and science mapping is potentially helpful in defining the structure of a discipline. Such analysis identifies patterns of collaboration and conceptual development and helps to reveal the gaps in knowledge for a particular field. This is valuable for theorists in particular, as it identifies the more productive lines of research, and directs attention to inadequately researched topics, and has implications for future work in and on organizations.

### **Research Gap and Need for Bibliometric Investigation**

From the previous review, it is evident that the last ten years have shown a marked increase in research on workplace diversity and inclusion, with workplace inclusion for LGBTQ+ communities forming a new focus area for researchers. This body of work has addressed discrimination in the workplace, the implications of revealing one's identity, the role of inclusive leadership, and the presence and absence of psychological safety and a sense of belonging in the

workplace, along with the state of wellbeing of employees. The body of work has deepened knowledge of the experiences of LGBTQ+ employees in workplace settings, and has contributed to the diversity and inclusion discourse in a number of fields.

However, there are still some glaring gaps in the research. The first challenge is that we currently have fragmented knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues in the workplace, spread across a variety of disciplines (HRM, organizational behavior, psychology, and sociology, to name a few). While this has fostered the growth of the field, it has also created a lack of cohesion in the knowledge that has been produced, creating challenges for researchers in understanding the trajectory of LGBTQ+ research in the workplace.

The second challenge is that the few existing literature reviews have adopted predominantly narrative and/or systematic review approaches. These reviews have offered valuable insights in terms of empirical and/or theoretical frameworks, but have mostly concentrated on organizational dimensions and/or employee experiences. In contrast, there has been a negligible amount of work focusing on the publication/citation trends, research networks, and the dominant themes in the field to identify the emerging areas and/or research challenges. Thus, the majority of the work has been focused on the organizational and/or employee dimensions of workplace diversity, inclusion, and belonging, creating what is arguably a lack of focus on the (Scientific) Field of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research.

Third, while bibliometric analysis has become a common technique within the management and organizational research communities, few studies have utilized extensive science mapping approaches to examine LGBTQ+ workplace diversity

and inclusion as a unique research area. Existing bibliometric studies have focused on macro topics such as diversity management, human resource management, leadership, and organizational behavior. Therefore, they have not attempted to examine the research maps of LGBTQ+ workplace studies to understand the field's research base, key authors, or existing knowledge gaps. This has hindered understanding the field as a whole.

This study seeks to advance the research by using a complete bibliometric analysis of peer-reviewed research articles published between 2015 and 2025 in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. This study combines performance analysis with science mapping and assesses publication patterns, key authors, key journals, key countries, key research institutions, co-occurring keywords and research themes, and research mapping. The goal of this study is to create the intellectual structure of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research and the knowledge networks to identify critical gaps in this area of research.

This study offers noteworthy advancements to the existing research. First, it details the historical and scientific advancement of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research. Second, it identifies key clusters of influential research and pertinent emerging themes as well as research holes that have yet to be explored. Third, it combines descriptive performance indicators with network-based science mapping in order to provide a complete assessment of the field. Fourth, the study offers researchers, practitioners, and policymakers evidence-based assessments that will aid in the development of future research, practice within organizations, and the advancement of diversity and inclusion policies.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study uses bibliometric analysis to identify the trends, themes, and intellectual progression of the research pertaining to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in workplace diversity and inclusion literature. Bibliometric analysis seeks to find patterns in the development of knowledge and the citations and collaborations in the publications through the systematic evaluation of research (Boyack & Klavans, 2010; Donthu et al., 2021). In comparison to traditional literature reviews, bibliometric analysis offers a systematic way to identify important literature, major authors, research themes, and research gaps, and track the development of knowledge in a particular area of research.

In the field of management and organizational research, the ability of bibliometric analysis to systematically evaluate a considerable amount of literature has resulted in its growing popularity. The rapidly evolving body of workplace diversity and inclusion literature across multiple disciplines suggests that bibliometric analysis is an appropriate research method to determine the state of the research, find the intellectual origins of the field, and identify the research gaps and the future directions of the scholarship.

This study applies the two main approaches of contemporary bibliometric research, science mapping and performance analysis (Donthu et al., 2021). Performance analysis provides a description of the productivity and impact of the research through the publications, citations, and analysis of the leading journals, authors, and countries and institutions that have the greatest influence. Science mapping focuses on the relationships among publications through networks, keyword co-occurrence, and the

evolution of themes and constructs. The combination of these approaches offers a holistic view of the intellectual and quantitative development of the research on the diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in workplace studies.

### Data Sourcing and Search Strategy

The bibliographic data examined in this study were obtained from the Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection databases. These databases were selected because of their reputation as two of the most comprehensive sources of peer-reviewed academic literature, as well as their commendation for bibliometric research due to their extensive coverage of citations, high standards of indexing, and compatibility with bibliometric software (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016; Martín-Martín et al., 2018). In bibliometric research, using both databases enables one to improve dataset comprehensiveness while minimizing publication bias related to each specific database.

The focus was on the publications for the years 2015 to 2025. This timeframe captures the consolidation of the research on workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion. This research has increased in parallel with the formal acknowledgment of diversity, equity, inclusion, and the rapidly growing recognition of the LGBTQ+ community within research.

A systematic keyword search was performed combining sexual and gender diversity terms, workplace terms, and D&I terms. An advanced search was carried out using both inclusive (OR) and exclusive (AND) Boolean operators. The search regimen was built around the prevalent language of workplace diversity research; LGBTQ+, sexual orientation, gender, sexual minorities, workplace, organizations, employment, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

The search strategy employed this Boolean expression:

("LGBTQ+" OR "sexual minority" OR "sexual orientation" OR "gender identity" OR lesbian OR gay OR bisexual OR transgender OR queer) AND ("workplace" OR organization\* OR employment) AND (diversity OR inclusion OR belonging)

The order of terms unified by Boolean operators “and” and “or” was followed to formulate search queries in the title, abstract and keyword fields in both databases to maximize the retrieval of relevant studies within the databases. The combined search identified 1,659 publications, which were then screened.

### Study Selection Process

Selection and identification of studies was done according to the steps of PRISMA (Page et al., 2021) to outline a clear and systematic screening process that can be replicated. PRISMA divides the study selection process into four major steps, namely, identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. This essentially describes the process in a clear and systematic way.

The first search of the Scopus and Web of Science databases resulted in 1,659 records. Articles that appeared in both databases were deleted. The title and

abstract of the remaining articles were then reviewed to remove unrelated studies. In this review, irrelevant studies related to workplace diversity and inclusion, LGBTQ+ studies, and/or studies related to workplaces, were eliminated.

The remaining articles were then reviewed in full to determine their relevance for inclusion. Articles were eliminated if they did not discuss workplace diversity and inclusion from an organizational standpoint, were published in other languages than English, were not peer reviewed, and were focused on medical or clinical issues. After this process, the final number of articles included in the bibliometric analysis was 232 peer reviewed articles.

The process of identification, screening, eligibility assessment and inclusion is summarized in the flow diagram in Figure 1 of this study.

To ensure consistency and transparency throughout the screening process, predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria were established prior to the eligibility assessment. These criteria are presented in **Table 1**.

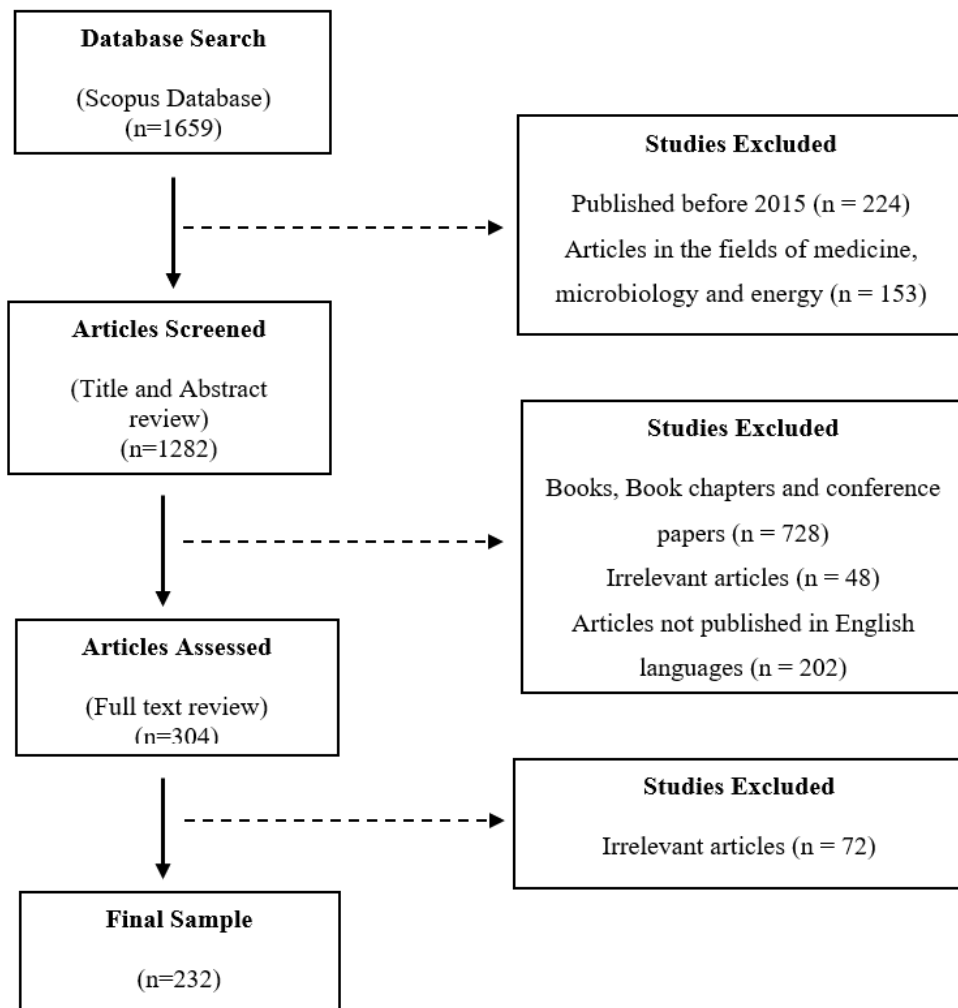
**Table 1:** Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Inclusion Criteria                                                | Exclusion Criteria                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Peer-reviewed journal articles                                    | Conference papers                                                        |
| Published between 2015–2025                                       | Publications before 2015                                                 |
| English-language publications                                     | Non-English publications                                                 |
| Studies focusing on workplace diversity, inclusion or belonging   | Studies unrelated to workplace or organizational settings                |
| Studies focusing on LGBTQ+, sexual orientation or gender identity | Medical, biological, engineering, energy and other unrelated disciplines |

| Inclusion Criteria                  | Exclusion Criteria                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indexed in Scopus or Web of Science | Books, book chapters, reports and other non-peer-reviewed publications |

*Source:* Author developed

**Figure 1:** PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process



*Source:* Author developed, 2025

### Bibliometric Data Analysis

The final dataset of 232 publications was analyzed using Biblioshiny, the web interface of the Bibliometrix package developed in R, and VOSviewer, one of

the leading software applications for bibliometric science mapping (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The integration of these software applications allows both descriptive bibliometric analysis and advanced

network visualizations, allowing for the mapping of the intellectual evolution of a particular domain of research.

Biblioshiny was used in this case to conduct a performance analysis, establishing trends in annual publications, citation analysis, and analysis of productivity pertaining to authors, journals, countries, institutions, and the evolution of research themes. These analyses rendered quantifiable evidence pertaining to the growth and the scientific impact of research concerning LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion for the stated period.

VOSviewer was employed for the mapping of science through the analysis of co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and citation analysis, as well as bibliographic coupling and the visualization of related networks. These techniques made it possible to discern the patterns of research collaboration and the conceptual relationships among research

themes, as well as the intellectual structure of the field.

The integration of performance analysis and science mapping offers complementary views of the literature. Performance analysis typically examines research productivity and the impact of scholarship. Conversely, science mapping discloses the conceptual structuring and the interrelated networks of ideas and research that have emerged in the domain of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion. This combined approach examines the field of study in terms of both the measurable and the empirically observable advancement of the research.

### Characteristics of the Final Dataset

To enhance methodological transparency and facilitate the interpretation of the bibliometric findings, the principal characteristics of the final dataset are summarised in **Table 2**.

**Table 2:** Characteristics of the Bibliometric Dataset

| Characteristic            | Description                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Databases                 | Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection |
| Study period              | 2015–2025                                 |
| Initial records retrieved | 1,659                                     |
| Final articles analysed   | 232                                       |
| Document type             | Peer-reviewed journal articles            |
| Language                  | English                                   |
| Bibliometric software     | Biblioshiny (Bibliometrix) and VOSviewer  |
| Analytical approaches     | Performance analysis and science mapping  |
| Reporting guideline       | PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021)           |

**Source:** Author developed

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Annual Scientific Production

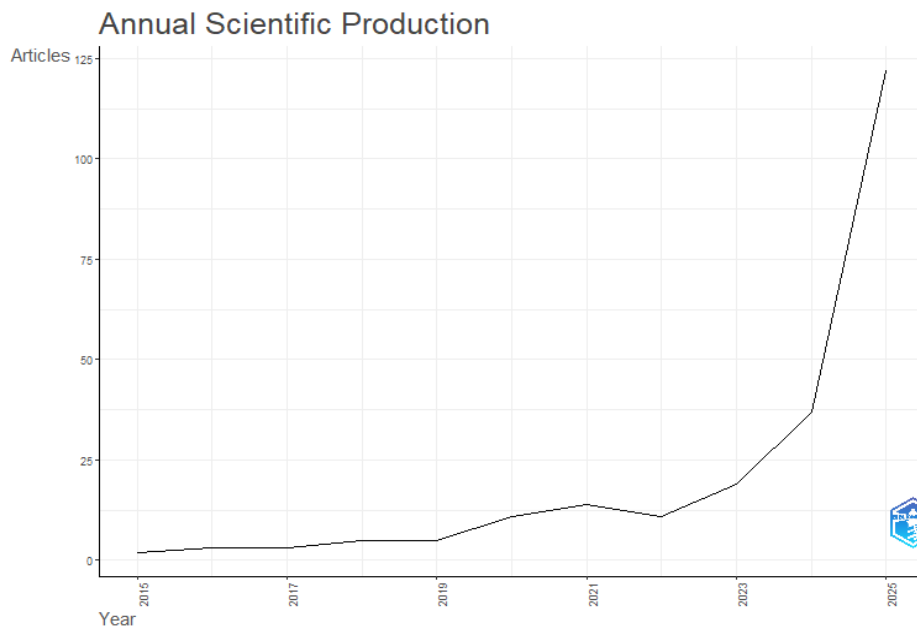
Figure 2 shows annual data from 2015 to 2025 on the intersection of workplace diversity and inclusion research focused on LGBTQ+ employees. Data show increasing publication rates for this type of research, particularly from 2018 and especially from 2020. The highest number of publications for this research was noted in 2025.

This increase in publication rates likely denotes the growing view of workplace diversity and inclusion beyond a compliance or human resource focus. The growing focus on (DEI) and the increasing institutional concern for the safety, psychological wellbeing, and sense of belonging of employees has increased the academic focus on LGBTQ+ employees. There is parallel organizational awareness that workplaces having a focus on inclusion support and advance innovation,

engagement, and the sustainability of the organization in the long term, and positively retain employees. This has further stimulated research in this area (Jonsen et al., 2021; Okpaegbe et al., 2025).

The significant rise in publications after 2020 might connect to publications' social and institutional contexts. The rise in the articulation and recognition of LGBTQ+ rights, the commitment by corporations to diversity and inclusion, and the rise of the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) phenomena in the corporate world have made the inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons in the workplace a legitimate research issue. Concurrently, equitable work practices have become a focus of international organizations, the policy world, and multinational corporations, thus, creating research opportunities on LGBTQ+ work issues in a variety of international organizational settings.

**Figure 2:** Annual Scientific Production (2015-2025)



**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

From a bibliometric standpoint, the sharp and sustained increase in scholarly publications indicates that the workplace diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons has become a significant research area and a rapidly expanding interdisciplinary research field. An increase in scholarly publications in management, organizational behavior, human resource management, psychology, sociology, and public policy indicates the great importance and relevance the diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons in the workplace has for contemporary organizations. This phenomenon further indicates the level of research has become more specialized and that new research themes and interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration are bound to emerge.

### Country Analysis

Table 2 illustrates scientific publications and citations on workplace diversity and inclusion on LGBTQ+ employees from different parts of the world. Results show the United States leads the field with the most publications and citations in the study period. The evidence supports the argument that the United States is the primary country for the development of workplace LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion research. The United States supports a range of research funding on the study of diversity and inclusion. The well-developed research and higher education institutions, and the developed legal and organizational framework for workplace equality and inclusion support offer the United States an advantage in the study of LGBTQ+ workplace issues.

The United States is the most developed country for the study of workplace LGBTQ+ issues. The United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and other developed countries have a notable impact in research and citations on workplace diversity and inclusion research. The publications of these countries may not be

as exemplary as that of the United States, but the countries have ample research on workplace diversity and inclusion. These countries have legal frameworks and workplace inclusion and diversity policies that facilitate research and practice collaboration among universities and industries.

The bibliometric assessment shows increasing publications from India, China, Japan, and Spain. These publications illustrate that the interest in workplace diversity and LGBTQ+ issues is beginning to shift beyond the Western-centric research paradigm. While the volume of publications from these countries is still relatively low, their presence marks the beginning of an international research forum that is analyzing workplace diversity from different culturally and contextually diverse settings. With the increased scope of globalization and international employment, the focus of research is beginning to shift to understanding the social inclusion of diverse work environments from a multitude of different social and cultural contexts.

While the number of publications from the aforementioned countries continues to grow, there remains a disparity in the number of publications from various countries. The bulk of workplace diversity publications are from North America, Western Europe, and Australia, while many emerging economy countries have little to no contributions. This disparity in publications show that Western cultures dominate the research and theories that are currently available for use in organizational practices. Consequently, workplace diversity and LGBTQ+ issues in emerging economies should become a focus of research, particularly where organizational cultures, practices, and social attitudes diverge from those in Western countries.

**Table 3:** Most Influential Countries in Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Research

| Country      | Total Publications | Total Citations |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| USA          | 344                | 654             |
| Australia    | 74                 | 135             |
| Canada       | 68                 | 149             |
| UK           | 46                 | 144             |
| India        | 31                 | 49              |
| Italy        | 23                 | 3               |
| Netherlands  | 15                 | 83              |
| Spain        | 12                 | 6               |
| China        | 11                 | 22              |
| <i>Japan</i> | <i>11</i>          | <i>23</i>       |

**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

These findings open a pathway for future research in several directions. First, bibliometric and empirical research within the Global South would provide a more comprehensive perspective on workplace diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the inclusion of Global South-focused workplace research would enhance current theories and create context-centered workplace standards and public

policies that consider the various experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in different cultures and institutions.

#### Source Analysis

The analysis identifies key journals that have contributed data to the research of workplace diversity and inclusion pertaining to LGBTQ+ individuals.

**Table 4:** Most Productive Sources/Journals in Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Research

| Journal/Source                                                    | Number of Publications |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sustainability (Switzerland)                                      | 10                     |
| International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health | 6                      |
| Journal of Business Research                                      | 5                      |
| Journal of Cleaner Production                                     | 4                      |
| Technological Forecasting and Social Change                       | 3                      |
| SAGE Open                                                         | 3                      |
| Frontiers in Psychology                                           | 3                      |

**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

The data suggests that the research on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion is not concentrated on a specific academic discipline or journal, but is rather published in a variety of journals.

The most cited journals range from human resource management, organizational behavior management, psychology, sociology, sustainability, public health to the social sciences.

This pattern of journal citations aligns with the multidimensional/interdisciplinary nature of workplace diversity and inclusion research and shows that workplace issues of LGBTQ+ people are increasingly valued in multiple domains of scholarship.

The strong representation of management and human resource management journals shows that the workplace diversity and inclusion research community is arguably viewing workplace diversity and inclusion issues more from a management perspective. Social justice/equality perspective is becoming less dominant.

The strong representation of psychology and sociology is showing that the dominant individual identity, psychological, social, and experiential aspects of inclusion, as well as of the discrimination that LGBTQ+ people face in the workplace, is still very important. That sustainability and public policy are represented is showing that workplace diversity and inclusion are increasingly concerned with the social and environmental corporate and organizational sustainability as well as the

social equity aspect of employment practices.

The increasing number of publications on LGBTQ+ workplace issues across various academic disciplines shows the developing intricacy of this area of research. Fields such as organizational behaviour, psychology, sociology, leadership, human resource management, and public policy are slowly being incorporated.

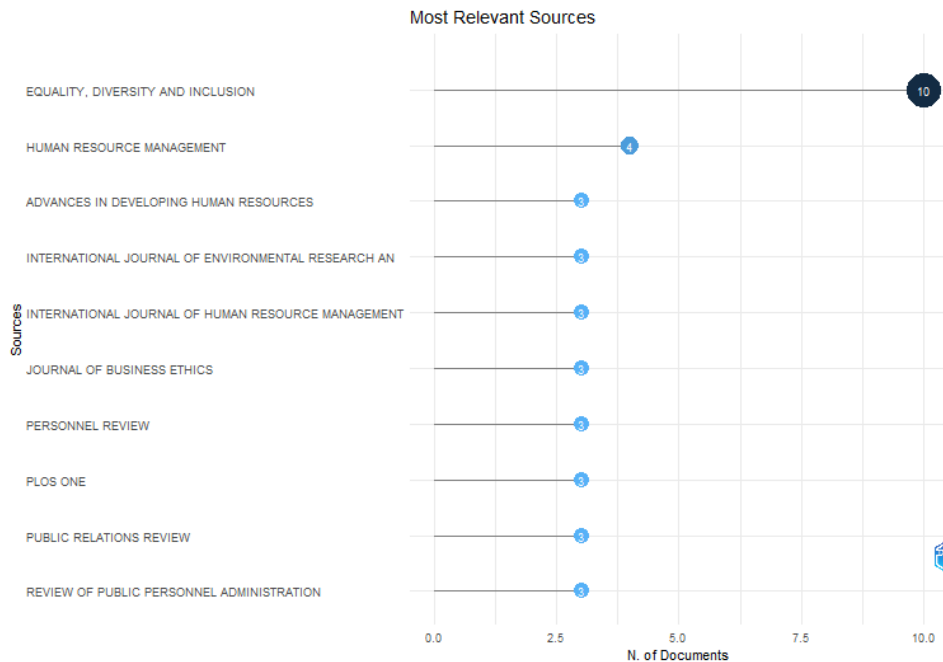
This combination expands the understanding of workplace diversity and inclusion and improves engagement between disciplines.

From a bibliometric standpoint, the variety of publication channels shows that research on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion has reached a level of maturity and international acceptance.

An emphasis on the publication of this research in a variety of prestigious, high-impact journals indicates that the research is being recognized more within an academic framework and that diversity, inclusion, and belonging are becoming increasingly salient within contemporary organizational research.

This will lead to an increase in interdisciplinary research and a growing body of research that focuses on LGBTQ+ issues within workplace environments.

**Table 2** and **Figure 3** present the most productive publication sources contributing to LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research during the study period.

**Figure 3:** Source Analysis of Most Relevant Journals

**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

## AUTHOR ANALYSIS

The author analysis presents the results of the LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion scholarship on researcher productivity and their results. The most productive authors are shown in Figure 4, whereas Figure 5 describes the author productivity distribution of Lotka's Law. The results describe a largely decentralized authorship structure with a small number of researchers who have continuously published, whereas the majority of authors have published only a single article or a handful. This describes Lotka's Law, where scientific productivity is concentrated on a small number of researchers and the occasional author is what constitutes the majority of the field.

The lack of a single dominant author shows that research on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion is

highly collaborative and decentralized. The research is not the result of a few pioneering scholars, but a multitude of authors from Human Resource Management (HRM), Organizational Behavioral Studies (OBS), Psychology, Sociology, Gender Studies, Public Policy, and other fields. The integration of a plurality of theories and a multitude of diverse methods in the workplace diversity and inclusion studies is the result of this collaborative scholarly integration.

The productivity trends indicate that the field continues to grow rather than center around a few established research groups. The large segment of occasional contributors shows the increasing interest in the academic study of LGBTQ+ workplace issues. This interest is seen among researchers who are related to this study and include diversity and inclusion in their research. Simultaneously, the presence of consistently productive authors shows that there are researchers who comprise the core of the field and

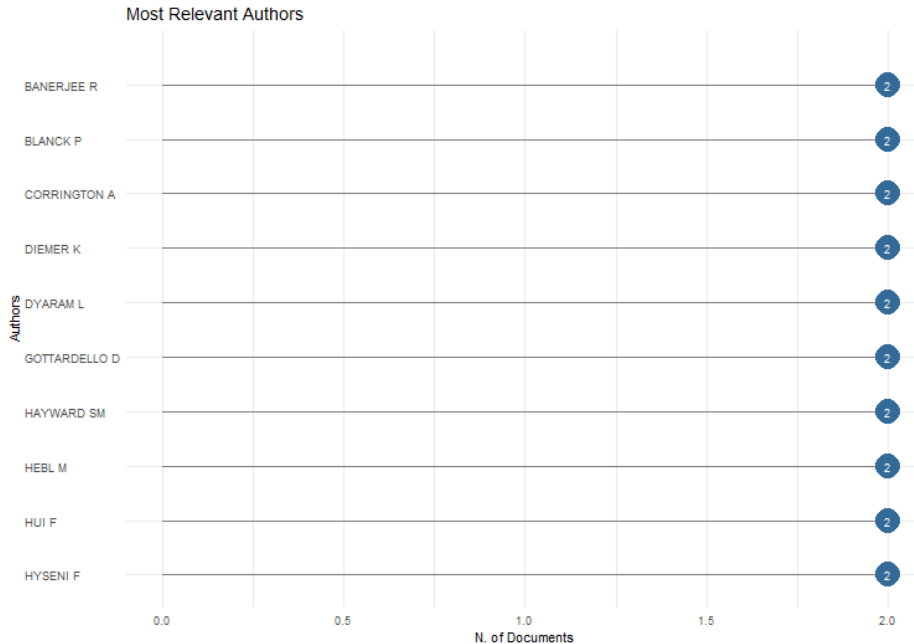
who are interested in pursuing and maintaining research in the area.

The authors most cited in studies are still located in North America, Western Europe, and Australia, even with the findings showing more researchers working together. North America, Western Europe, and Australia are further removed from the other regions, and so are the other findings from this study, showing that Western regions are still putting out most of the academic research. This has created an absence of developing regions and has brought attention to the need for more international research

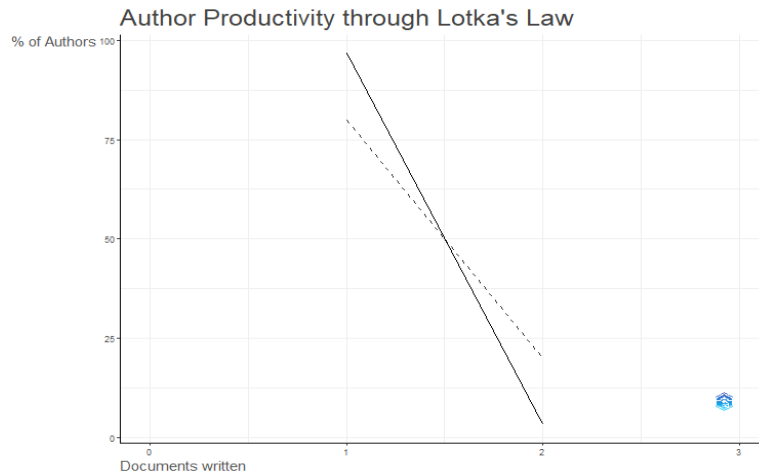
collaborations to include developing regions and to fill the research gap for LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion and diversity studies.

In bibliometric terms, the authorship shows the study area has moved from a newly focused study area to a more expanded, interrelated, and established area of study. More international collaborations will develop LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research focused on varying workplaces and more international research collaborations.

**Figure 4: Most Relevant Authors**



**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

**Figure 5:** Author Production Through Lotka's Law

**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

### Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis (Including Thematic Map)

Analysis of keyword co-occurrence illuminates the structure and salient themes in LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research. Keywords that were most frequently cited in the bibliometric dataset are depicted in Figure 6. Co-occurrence analysis revealed the most frequent terms were 'workplace,' 'diversity,' 'inclusion,' 'human,' 'female,' and 'male.' Most of the articles were concerned with issues of workforce diversity and inclusion and the diversity of employees. The overwhelming presence of these keywords indicates workplace diversity and inclusion research seeks to understand the demographic and social identities of employees and the effects these identities have on employees and organizations.

The analysis moves beyond the foundational concepts of workplace

diversity and inclusion and shows the presence of a number of diverse keywords related to gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as leadership, inclusion, and belonging, along with workplace culture, psychological safety, satisfaction, and wellbeing. The presence of all of these keywords indicates that research in LGBTQ+ workplaces has advanced beyond the study of (dis)equal employment opportunities and discrimination to include (and perhaps dominate) the (organizational) psychological and behavioral aspects of workplace inclusion. This indicates that inclusion cannot be achieved by simply implementing diversity initiatives. Rather true inclusion requires relational aspects and cultural elements of an organization as well as psychological safety and a sense of belonging.

The keyword network shows that workplace diversity and inclusion research is broadening with the inclusion of intersectionality, equity, and psychological safety and belonging.

While the traditional management of diversity focuses on accommodating individuals based on one or more of their social identities, inclusion of psychological, social, and organizational dimensions of diversity is a hallmark of contemporary inclusion research. The keyword network shows that these dimensions of diversity management are being increasingly recognized on a global scale.

The diversity of keywords also shows that researchers are using a broad spectrum of empirical methods for the study of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion. The mention of methods such as surveys, questionnaire, and mixed methods, shows that researchers are using a broad spectrum of empirical methods for the study of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion. This diversity of methods has allowed researchers to cover the diversity of workplace outcomes, as well as LGBTQ+ employees' lived experiences, and their

degree of satisfaction with workplace inclusion.

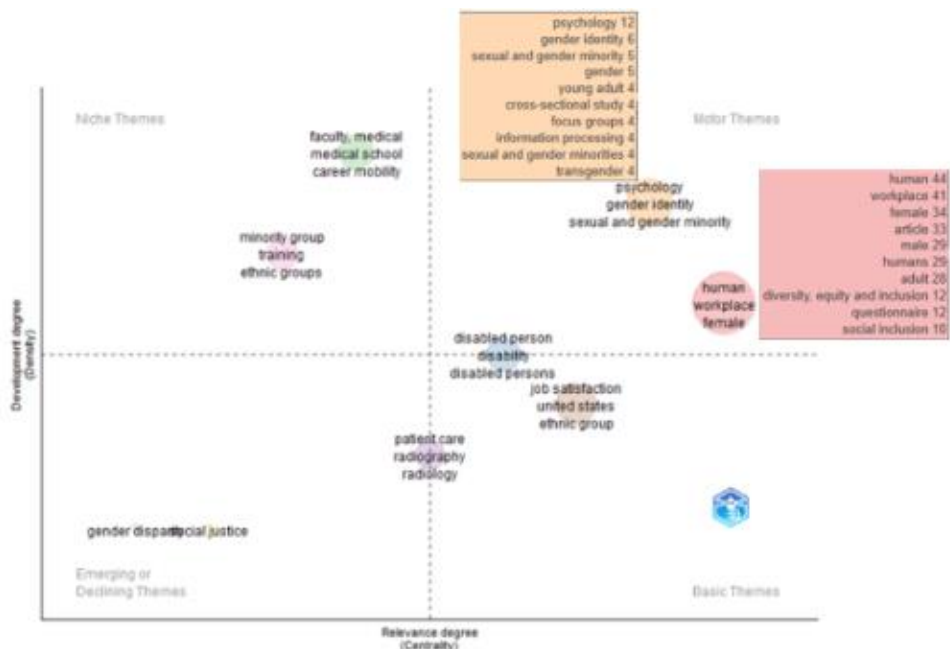
The keyword co-occurrence analysis shows that research on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion has developed into a conceptually rich, interdisciplinary field of research. The combination of concepts from different disciplines shows that the focus and complexity of the field is moving towards integrated research of workplace diversity and inclusion.

### Figure 6: Keyword Cloud



**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

**Figure 7: Thematic Map of LGBTQ+ Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Research**



**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

Figure 7 locates LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research on a thematic map. The map indicates the maturity of major themes in the context of LGBTQ+ workplace research. The map organizes themes in four quadrants based on centrality and density. The Motor Themes quadrant includes fully developed and influential themes in the realm of workplace diversity and inclusion research, such as the psychology of gender identity, sexual and gender minorities, and transgender. These themes are fully developed and are likely to be influential in research.

The Basic Themes quadrant includes relevant but less developed themes, such as workplace, diversity, equity and inclusion, and social inclusion. The Basic Themes of this map represent the foundation of the research and indicate that workplace diversity and inclusion are the focus of current research. The Niche Themes and the Emerging and/or Declining Themes quadrants include fully developed orientated themes and social justice and mobility, among others. These themes are somewhat specialized and indicate a need for more research. The map indicates that research on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion has developed a core foundation of research and has expanded into various new and interdisciplinary fields of research.

### Three-field Plot Analysis

The Analysis of the three-field plot offers a framework for interpreting the relationships of authors, countries, and research themes within the LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion literature. As shown in Figure 8, the analysis reveals the main players in the field and shows how the main countries and the main researchers are related to the main research themes. This method is useful for the organization of the literature because it shows how the geographic and thematic the scholarly contributions are.

The results show that the United States is the most powerful player, has strong relationships with the major research themes of workplace diversity, inclusion, leadership, organization culture, intersectionality, and employee wellbeing, and is the most powerful. This corresponds with the country analysis provided earlier and shows how North American countries are the most powerful players in the research game of workplace diversity and inclusion. Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom contribute greatly to the field, particularly in relation to inclusive leadership and workplace practices, and the psychological safety and wellbeing of employees. The research output of these countries indicates a close relationship with the countries that have workplace diversity initiatives, legal frameworks and protections, and institutional support for LGBTQ+ employees.

The Author-keyword relationships indicate that the diversity of partnerships within the field is a hallmark of the discipline. Rather than working on single topics in solitude, many prominent researchers are prolific across numerous themes. This suggests that diversity and inclusion in the workplace research has begun to synthesize human resource management, organizational behavior, psychology, sociology, leadership, and public policy. This interdependence demonstrates the positive state of the field and ongoing cross-discipline collaboration.

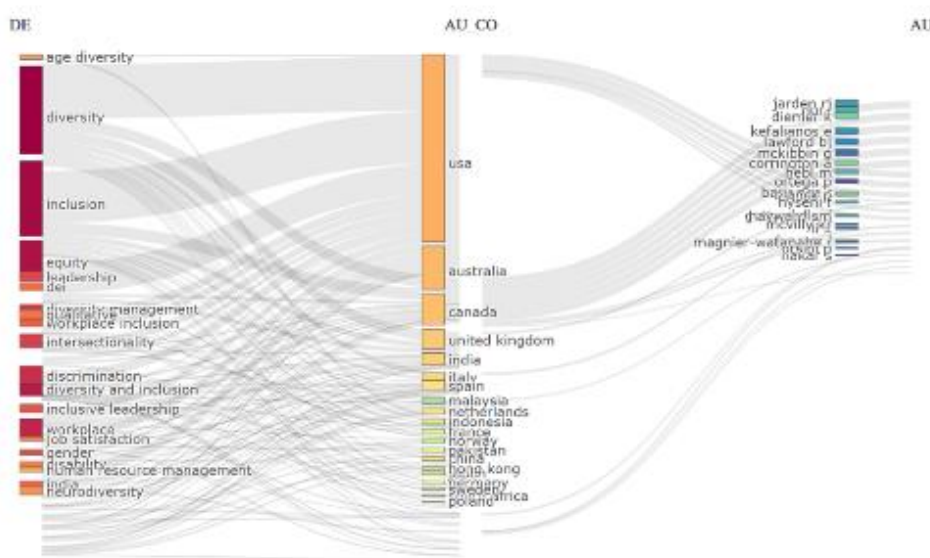
Though the three-field plot illustrates an increase in global participation, research remains dominated by Western nations. In contrast, developing countries have fewer partnerships, and as a result, the bulk of research is conducted within a Western framework of business, law, and social cohesion. This presents a challenge for researchers to address the geographic imbalance and provide research within a local context to the countries that have

been neglected. This would enhance the international perspective of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

The three-field plot has established that LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research has an international,

multidisciplinary framework. However, global participation has yet to be achieved, and within the framework of this research, diversity is represented by the numerous organizational and cultural settings in which the inclusion of the workplace is realized.

**Figure 8:** Three-Fields Plot of Authors, Countries, and Keywords



**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

### Diversity Visualization Analysis

The use of the density visualization method in this study documented the concentration of intensity of research within workplace diversity and inclusion studies of the LGBTQ+ community. In Figure 9, warmer colored areas depict research topics that have been covered in greater depth, while cooler colored areas depict topics that remain less studied. Hence, the density map constructs a picture of the existing structural frameworks of research and where there may be new, unexplored opportunities in the field of study.

The analysis indicates a high concentration of research around

workplace diversity and inclusion, culture, and leadership, and around the employment and participation of employees. These areas of high concentration suggest that research has been primarily directed toward the role of leadership and the role of the organization in the inclusion and participation of employees. These areas are primarily indicative of the role that the fields of employment, organizational behavior, and human resource management have in the organization's strategy focus that is directed toward the enhancement of employees' well-being and the organization's performance and that offers the organization a sustainable competitive advantage.

Sexual orientation, gender identity, and LGBTQ+ themes appear on the map in

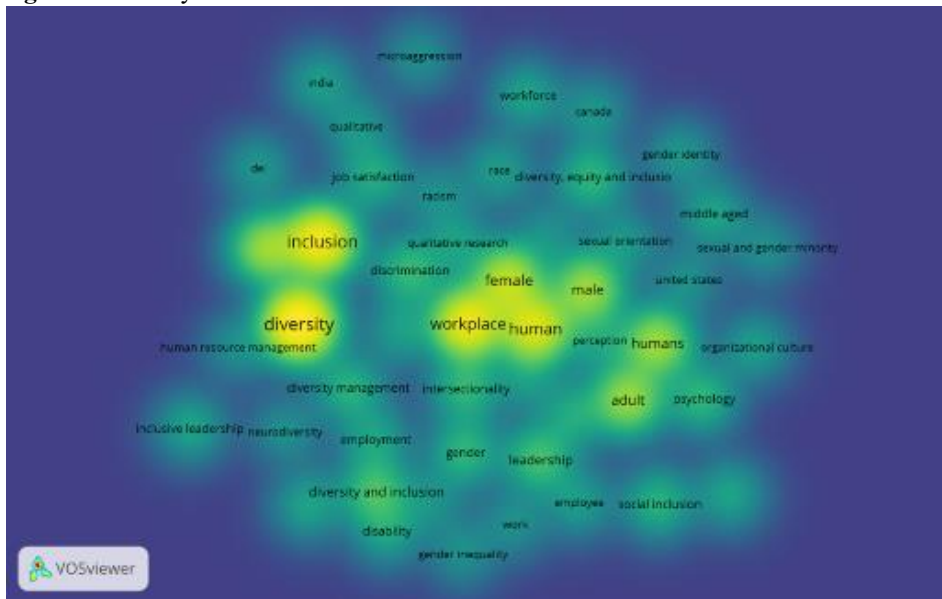
areas that reflect lower density of available research. While the last decade has seen an explosion of interest in LGBTQ+ workplace research, these findings suggest that research on the lived experiences of particular sexual and gender minorities is somewhat more limited compared to the extensive research on workplace diversity. This suggests that the majority of the LGBTQ+ literature is focused on workplace diversity and the level of workplace diversity and the specific challenges LGBTQ+ employees face is largely unaddressed.

The density visualizations appear to show more unexplored themes such as microaggressions, intersectionality, disability, neurodiversity, and the combination of different marginalized identities. The low density of research in these areas signals potential avenues for future research. As the workplace

continues to see and study the complex nature of employee identity, research must catch up to study the psychological effects of this identity on inclusion, safety, and belonging at work in diverse contexts and organizations.

From a bibliometric perspective, the density visualizations seem to display a field where the foundational work is being solidified at the same time that new areas of study are being opened. The continued presence of established themes of workplace organization alongside new and emerging themes of identity within the workplace continues the study of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion. It is safe to assume that future research will focus more on studies that explore inclusion within culturally diverse workplaces and the impact of workplace inclusion on employee wellbeing and workplace diversity and organizational effectiveness.

### Figure 9: Density Visualization Research Themes



**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

### Thematic Cluster Analysis

Network analysis of keyword co-occurrence identified four interrelated

clusters that form the intellectual framework of workplace diversity and inclusion study for LGBTQ+ persons. As shown in Figure 10, clusters indicate an

evolution in focus in the reference literature from diversity and discrimination in the workforce to a more inclusive view of workplace integration, including organizational functions, the wellbeing and safety of employees, and their identity-related experiences. The clusters, taken together, build the framework of the field and indicate the principal pathways that have dominated modern research in the area.

#### **Cluster 1: Workplace Identity and Employee Experiences**

The first cluster examines workplace identity as well as the psychological, cultural, and interpersonal experiences of employees. Key issues include identity disclosure, authenticity, belonging, and psychological safety, as well as leadership and relationships at work. These issues relate to the understanding that the inclusion of employees in the workplace encompasses much more than demographic representation and the official diversification of the workplace. Contemporary scholars appreciate the lived experiences of employees more, and understand that the authenticity, trust, and sense of belonging at work that LGBTQ+ employees require, are built on the foundation of involved leadership and an inclusive culture. This represents the transition from compliance diversity to the employee inclusion model.

#### **Cluster 2: Diversity Management and Organizational Practices**

The second cluster addresses the organizational strategies for diversity, human resource management, inclusive leadership, governance of diversity, and the frameworks for workplace inclusion. This cluster indicates that research has concentrated more on the ways in which organizations are committed to the employment of diversity and the creation of an inclusive workplace culture. This has resulted in organizations

understanding diversity and inclusion as priorities beyond the legal and compliance frameworks. As a result, more of the newer studies focus on the relationships among leadership, human resource management, and organizational culture as the means of creating an inclusive workplace for LGBTQ+ employees.

#### **Cluster 3: Social Identity and Minority Experiences**

Cluster 3 focuses on findings that incorporate gender identity, sexual orientation, minority stress, social and systemic discrimination, and inclusion. This group has the most research on marginalized groups of employees, especially on LGBTQ+ employees. This type of research has increased rapidly in the last ten years. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that most of the existing studies still focus on Western workplaces. The concentration of studies in these geographic areas implies that the LGBTQ+ employee experiences in the Global South, as well as in workplaces with multiple cultures, have not been researched. This presents some significant and important avenues for future research.

#### **Cluster 4: Employee Wellbeing and Organizational Outcomes**

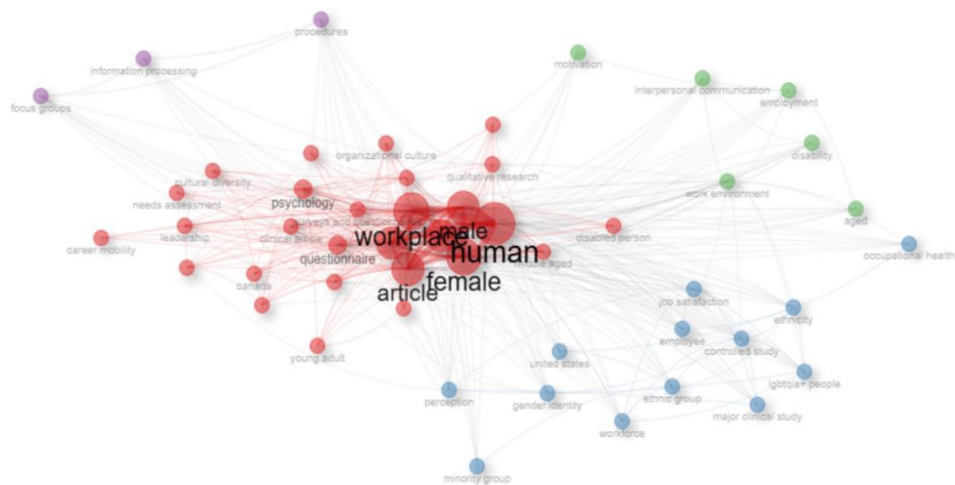
Cluster 4 incorporates employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, occupational wellbeing, and inclusion in the workplace. This research shows that an inclusive workplace is crucial for employee wellbeing, psychological safety, and commitment to the organization, whereas an exclusive workplace is correlated with employee stress, discontent, and a desire to leave the organization. This cluster supports the consensus that workplace inclusion, more than an ethical or moral issue, is vital to the advancement of organizational success and sustainability.

The four thematic clusters show how far LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and

inclusion research has come as a multidimensional and interdisciplinary area of study. Earlier research conditions focused primarily on diversity representation and discrimination within the workplace. More contemporary studies move beyond these conditions toward the inclusion, belonging, psychological safety, and wellbeing and

the inclusive leadership that comprise the overall effectiveness of an organization. The results indicate a need for more studies on the inclusion of global south countries, intersectionality, and multiculturalism within the workplace, which offers many opportunities for future research.

**Figure 10:** Keyword Co-occurrence Network



**Source:** Authors' compilation using Biblioshiny and VOSviewer.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Discussion of Key Findings

The bibliometric analysis illustrates the changing nature of the LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion and diversity. The rapid increase in workplace LGBTQ+ diversity study publications from 2015 to 2025 indicates the importance of organizations prioritizing LGBTQ+ workplace diversity beyond a legal, human resources, or compliance obligation. Advocacy and organizational practices aimed at the diversity, equity, and inclusion of psychological safety and

wellbeing, as well as the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) psychological and organizational safety, have made workplace LGBTQ+ diversity scholarship and practice important and requisite fields of study and practice.

Based on the geographical distribution of publications, the intellectual development of workplace LGBTQ+ diversity scholarship has been the domain of North America, Western Europe, and Australia. Very few countries possess highly recognized, effective research, legal, and diversity and inclusion practice infrastructures as do these North American, Western, and Australian countries. Even though countries like

India, China, Japan, and Spain have started to diversify the scholarship, research from emerging economies is lacking. The other countries in the world do not have highly effective diversity and inclusion practices and scholarship. Because of this, highly diverse scholarship is needed.

Examination of source, authorship, and collaboration provides evidence that the study of workplace diversity and inclusion in relation to LGBTQ+ communities is now a multidisciplinary field. The distribution of publications across management, human resource management, psychology, sociology, public policy, and organizational behavior indicates multiple theories and methods are used to study the field. Unlike the earlier stages of the field dominated by a few researchers and journals, the breadth of scholarship in the field is a sign of its conceptual maturity and its relevance in practice.

Keyword searches along with the clustering of themes show a significant change in conception in workplace diversity and inclusion research. Traditionally, workforce diversity studies focused on issues surrounding workforce representation, discrimination, and the availability of equal employment opportunities. The new focus has shifted to the presence of psychological safety, feelings of belonging, inclusive leadership, and organizational culture, as well as issues of intersection and employee wellbeing. This shift illustrates that the field of workplace inclusion understands the multiplicity of organizational processes that transcend demographic diversity and include social relationships and identities.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

This study provides several important theoretical contributions to workplace diversity and inclusion scholarship. First,

this study provides one of the first comprehensive bibliometric reviews of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion scholarship by employing a combination of performance analysis and science mapping. Previous narrative and systematic reviews focused primarily on the synthesis of empirical data. This study maps the intellectual and conceptual framework and the thematic structure of the scholarship on workplace diversity and inclusion. This study also identified the key knowledge domains contemporary workplace diversity and inclusion scholarship has offered.

Second, the scholarship on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion has shifted from the dominate traditional frameworks of diversity management to more integrated frameworks and theories of workplace psychology, organizational behavior, management, and sociology. From the scholarship, the concepts of belonging and psychological safety, and of leadership and inclusive intersectionality, suggest that the theories of the scholarship will be integrated and employee focused.

From a practice standpoint, the shift in the scholarship provides guidance for workplace leaders and policy makers. Inclusion of the constructs of leadership, workplace culture, and the psychological wellbeing of employees denotes that the absence of diversity frameworks and policies of inclusion means that the workplace cannot be truly inclusive. The integration of diverse workplace initiatives, inclusive leadership, equitable practices, and the psychological and emotional safety of employees will facilitate a culture of equity and belonging, enhanced employee engagement and innovation, improved staff retention, and enhanced organizational performance.

### Future Research Directions

The bibliometric results show ample opportunity for additional research. First, the workplace diversity and inclusion research gap for less-developed and more culturally diverse settings needs to be addressed. The over-reliance on Western scholarship creates issues for the LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion research for those working in different legal, institutional, and socio-cultural frameworks.

Second, newer workplace concepts, i.e., intersectionality, neurodiversity, and inclusion and belonging, as well as psychological safety, are starting to emerge, but are markedly under-researched and unexplored. Third, inclusion and belonging needs to be researched using diverse methodologies, especially as the field is dominated by surveys and qualitative methodologies. A more longitudinal, cross-cultural, and multi-level research design would help to understand workplace inclusion and belonging in the different workplace contexts over time.

Lastly, the rapid changes in the workplace due to hybrid working, digital workplaces, AI, and ESG reporting will help to research the interplay of changing workplace practices on LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion and belonging, as well as workplace diversity.

The research on workplace diversity and inclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals has matured, yet is still a developing field. Expanding the field will require different research methods, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a broader geographic focus.

### CONCLUSION

This research analyzes LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion and diversity literature published from 2015 to 2025. The objective is to identify and describe

the major themes and topics associated with the progression and expansion of this literature on a global scale. This study is based on 232 journal articles published in peer-reviewed journals and indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. Using the techniques of science mapping and performance analysis, this research identifies leading journals, top authors, most productive nations, centers of research collaboration, and research topics in the field of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion. Employing multiple bibliometric techniques, this research offers a comprehensive view of the scholarship on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion for the last 10 years.

The results show that, with the growing acknowledgment from scholars and practitioners, the inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace is starting to be recognized as a significant issue, transcending legal and representational inclusion, and is starting to be viewed as an issue of workplace inclusion and diversity. The bibliometric data show that the field has expanded from traditional views of diversity and inclusion to include psychological and emotional wellbeing, and safety and inclusion at work as well as leadership, and organizational culture and intersectionality. The analysis is indicative of an emerging field of scholarship; however, the Western worldview continues to dominate the field. The contributions of the Global South and of culturally diverse organizational contexts are extremely limited.

This research makes several notable contributions to the existing body of literature on LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion. First, it offers one of the most detailed bibliometric mappings of LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion research through the combination of performance metrics and science mapping. Second, it describes

the main intellectual roots, themes, and the weaving of networks in this area. Third, it describes the research gaps associated with the geographic voids, intersectionality, and changing work practices, and it offers the possible directions for research that may follow.

There are a number of shortcomings that must be acknowledged. First, the research was restricted to journal articles in English that were published between 2015 and 2025 and that are included in Scopus and Web of Science. Consequently, all relevant papers published in other journal repositories, in other languages, as conference papers, books, and as gray literature were excluded. Like all bibliometric mapping studies, this research is also a product of the coverage and inclusion policies of the databases used.

Future research should examine LGBTQ+ workplace diversity and inclusion in the Global South and in non-Western culturally rich organizational settings. Also, intersectionality, and other themes, such as neurodiversity and the psychological impacts of hybrid work, should be researched. It is also important to study the impacts of digital tools, and AI, on workplace inclusion. Finally, bibliometric methods should be combined with systematic literature reviews and empirical research in order create a synthesis of the intellectual research in this area and the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ employees.

The study confirms that the diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace has become a rapidly growing field of research with both theoretical and practical implications. As organizations attempt to manage a more diverse and global workforce, the future of this research is critical to developing better workplace strategies for inclusion and equity of LGBTQ+ people.

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