Breaking the Invisible Wall: Barriers to DEI Program Implementation

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Abstract

Many organizations acknowledge the importance of creating inclusive workspaces but struggle with implementing effective DEI initiatives. The purpose of this study is to uncover the internal organizational barriers to effective DEI program implementation in organizations. The researcher conducted a comprehensive database search and quality appraisal for the best available data resulting in the inclusion of 13 high-quality articles. Synthesis of evidence that emerged from inductive thematic coding of the 13 articles yielded findings of this study which are—DEI solutions not aligned with organizational DEI needs, no pre-mortem to minimize implementation challenges, and organizational culture at odds with DEI strategy. A limitation of this study is the small number of articles synthesized so the study may not have addressed all the contexts related to this study. This study highlights the importance of hiring a DEI consultant to help organizations navigate the DEI initiatives implementation process, conducting a DEI audit to understand the DEI status of the organization and existing gaps, setting DEI goals based on existing gaps and incorporating metrics to track and measure success. This study provides a good starting point for organizations looking to implement DEI initiatives effectively.

1. Introduction

The workforce demographics are becoming increasingly more diverse making it crucial to recognize and address workplace inequities. Since the death of George Floyd in 2020, there has been increased attention on the lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. In response to the public outcry for more

diverse, equitable, and inclusive workspaces, DEI, which was once considered a sub-function of the human resources department, has now evolved into a core business function that both large and small businesses aggressively invest in (Arif et al., 2022). The demand for equitable work environment has led to the rapid expansion of corporate DEI programs.

Though most organizations are currently placing more emphasis on DEI, the concept of DEI is not new. Prior to the mid-1960s, many companies had documented histories of racial and gender discrimination, as well as a lack of cultural diversity, with no protocols, training, or reprimands (Levine, 2021). The introduction of affirmative action and equal employment laws in the mid-1960s marked the beginning of a call to action for more diverse, equitable and inclusive workspaces, hence the origin of DEI (Lawrence et al., 2022). DEI programs were implemented to improve employee experience in the workplace and creating a more inclusive organizational culture. However, decades-long efforts have not produced equity or inclusivity in the workspace (Baum, 2021). Buttner and Lowe (2017) note that a gap exists between what organizations claim to offer and the employees' actual experience. While organizations have increased their DEI efforts, DEI programs have struggled to produce significant improvement in equitable workplaces, leaving diverse employees unsatisfied and disenfranchised (Lawrence et al., 2022). Consequently, most organizations continue to lag in diverse representation at the leadership level, and the hiring, promotion, and retention of minority employees (Kraus et al., 2022).

There is a growing recognition of the importance of DEI in the workplace. The benefits include increased organizational productivity and reputation, employee performance and creativity, talent retention, broader perspectives and understanding of the customer base, etc. (Levine, 2021). In addition, Arif et al. (2022) noted that DEI programs promote collaboration among individuals of various backgrounds and fight against prejudice and discrimination. On the other hand, organizations with unsuccessful DEI programs face challenges that include loss in productivity, creativity, talent, and team performance (Wijeratne et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to understand the obstacles organizations face when implementing DEI programs and how to overcome them.

The format of the paper includes a literature review of the phenomena under consideration to get a better understanding of the management problem, how organizations handle change initiatives, a literature review of the theoretical lens through which the phenomena will be explored, a detailed explanation of the methodology for transparency and replicability, an analysis of the results and detailed discussion on the findings. Recommendations for practitioners are based on the findings and areas for future research are suggested.

This research is important because it helps organizations understand the internal factors that create barriers to DEI program implementation and how to overcome them. Organizations can use this study's results as a foundation of a successful DEI program implementation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs

Many organizations have incorporated diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs as part of their strategic imperative and a comprehensive approach to creating a more equitable and inclusive work environment. According to Green (2022), the goal of a DEI program is to equip the organization with tools and resources needed to support the needs of underrepresented employees. DEI programs aim to create an organizational culture that addresses systemic inequities, values individuals from all backgrounds, and ensures all employees have equal opportunities to thrive in the workplace (Velasco & Sansone, 2019). Through DEI programs, organizations can reevaluate their policies, procedures, and processes to identify and correct systems that allow racism and other forms of discrimination to occur. According to Servaes et al. (2022) diversity refers to all facets of social identities, individual, and group differences not limited to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and abilities. (Mccoy, 2021) defined equity as the fair treatment of all individuals by providing resources according to their unique needs to have equal outcomes while inclusion refers to a culture where everyone feels valued, respected, recognized, accepted, and can fully participate in all aspects of the organization.

DEI programs are becoming more widely recognized as crucial for increasing diversity of talent recruitment and retention, while boosting employee engagement. DEI programs involve implementing policies, initiatives, practices, and programs with the objective of promoting diversity, ensuring equity, and fostering inclusivity. The components of DEI programs include but are not limited to:

- Policy and procedure review to identify any hidden biases that could lead to discrimination and ensure practices are equitable (Mccoy, 2021).
- Training programs that educate employees on inclusive behaviors, awareness of unconscious biases, and how to become allies to minorities and individuals from disadvantaged groups (Mccoy, 2021).
- Employee resource groups consisting of voluntary members who share common interests or backgrounds and meet periodically to discuss and act on issues pertinent to their group (Cenkci et al., 2019).
- Recruitment and retention strategies aimed at hiring and developing diverse talent into leadership roles (Cenkci et al., 2019).
- Community engagement activities connecting the organization to the broader community because failing to acknowledge and engage in the inequities that impact the community may negatively impact the organization in the long run (Mmeje et al., 2020).
- Leadership accountability strategies to ensure DEI goals are incorporated into the performance objectives of leaders responsible for championing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the organization and all employees in general (Christopher, 2021).

- Data collection and analysis to understand existing gap, track progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure accountability (Williams & Dolkas, 2022).

Velasco and Sansone (2019) noted that organizations with successful DEI programs, a diverse workforce, and inclusive culture have higher profits and increased innovation compared to heterogeneous organizations. Organizations that have successfully implemented DEI programs also have a higher talent retention, employee engagement, organizational reputation, and reduced burnout (Levine, 2021; Ponce et al., 2023). As the workforce becomes more diverse, DEI programs become a crucial component of building a strong, sustainable, and competitive organization with engaged employees.

While organizations have made their DEI programs more robust, it has not always resulted in creating an equitable and inclusive environment. Many organizations with DEI programs find building an inclusive culture challenging (Nerenz et al., 2019). Organizations continue to lack diversity in management roles, hire diverse employees at a lower rate into management roles, find that diverse employees are more likely to receive a poor performance rating, and have a higher attrition rate (Mccoy, 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023). Velasco and Sansone (2019) also found that while 71% of North American companies aspire to build inclusive work cultures, only 11% were successful. The low success rate of DEI implementation illuminates the need for research to understand the barriers to DEI implementation in organizations and what organizations can do to overcome the uncovered barriers.

2.2. Managing Organizational Change

Organizations that want to remain competitive must be prepared to adapt and evolve their business strategy in line with changes in the global environment. Like people, organizations can resist change (Van Dijk & Van Dick, 2009). The inability to adapt or evolve in a changing marketplace can lead to the demise of an organization (Van Dijk & Van Dick, 2009). Implementing change at an organizational level can be challenging. Prihatini et al. (2022) noted that organizational change has a high probability of failure when not properly managed and could create more problems. Some of the challenges of change implementation include resistance, poor communication, poor strategy, rigid culture, and unrealistic expectations (Prihatini et al., 2022).

While change can benefit the organization, failure to plan for unforeseen difficulties can derail change implementation (Watts, 2019). An organization seeking to implement change successfully must create an environment that allows the change initiative to be successful (Hughes & Bousquet, 2021). A successful change environment allows for diverse opinions and perspectives while making room for concerns to be addressed (Hughes & Bousquet, 2021). Preparation before implementation is an important change strategy. Kozcu et al. (2021) noted

that it is crucial to first determine what change needs to occur, understand why it is critical, effectively communicate the change to stakeholders to get their buy-in, and ensure access to necessary tools and resources before implementing change.

The change process does not end with implementation. Organizations should continue to track metrics and outcomes that indicate either the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the implemented change to understand what needs to be positively reinforced or where adjustments need to be made.

2.3. Problem Statement and Research Question

Many organizations desire to build a diverse workplace with an inclusive culture and view the implementation of DEI programs as a means of doing so. However, most organizations have not achieved a diverse and inclusive work environment, possibly due to their failure to implement effective DEI programs. Most employees feel that the presence of DEI programs in the organization has not resulted in a positive impact (McCoy, 2021). The mere presence of DEI programs does not guarantee a diverse employee base and inclusive work culture. Therefore, the research question that guides this study is—What are the internal organizational barriers to effective DEI implementation in organizations? This study is significant because it contributes to both theoretical and practical knowledge. The findings of this study will support organizational efforts to create an effective DEI program that results in an inclusive environment where an engaged workforce can thrive.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical lens guiding this study is Kurt Lewin's theory of change management. This theory was appropriate for this research because it presents a simple and practical approach to managing the change process using a straightforward and useful model. The Lewin change theory was developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s and was widely adopted because of its simplicity (Roşca, 2020). Lewin's change theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the individuals impacted by the change and their environment to predict a successful change implementation (Woody, 2020). Kristiansen and Bloch-Poulsen (2017) noted that Lewin's change model not only empowers employees to participate in the change process by communicating the why behind the change but carries employees along the change process through constant and consistent communication.

The Lewin change model is great for organizations looking to avoid misperceptions and false narratives during change implementation. The model also identifies the need to reward employees for adapting to change by making the change process simple and collaborative while addressing resistance (Crosby, 2022; Tracy, 2020). A successful change implementation requires understanding the factors that cause resistance and creating strategies to overcome them before

initiating the change (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2017). Lewin's change theory is ideal for businesses going through change because it is applicable to different situations, easy to implement, allows individuals to understand the need for change, reduces resistance to change, and promotes long-lasting change by gradually building momentum to gain employee buy-in (Thi Tran & Gandolfi, 2020).

Based on Lewin's change theory, organizational change can be broken into three stages—unfreeze, change or movement, and refreeze (see **Figure 1**). The unfreeze stage occurs at the beginning of the change process and involves analyzing the current processes to determine what needs to change and effectively communicating the necessary change to all stakeholders involved (Bakari et al., 2017). The change or movement phase is the implementation stage and involves all stakeholders while continuously communicating the benefits of change while the refreeze phase is the time to evaluate the results and celebrate success (Tracy, 2020). Lewin's change model was chosen for this research study because it allows organizations and employees to understand the change that needs to occur, strategize, implement, and adjust to the change in a sustainable way and flexible time frame.

In the unfreezing stage, organizations realize the need for a DEI program due to gaps in existing practices and employee experience. In response to the acknowledged gap (movement stage), organizations roll out a series of DEI training which all employees are mandated to take. Employee resource groups and diversity councils are created with voluntary membership. The refreezing stage happens when the organization expects employees to adopt inclusive behaviors after having undergone DEI training and expect a cultural shift to a more inclusive workspace because of the presence of employee resource groups and diversity councils. The current approach to DEI program implementation is yet to yield the desired result.
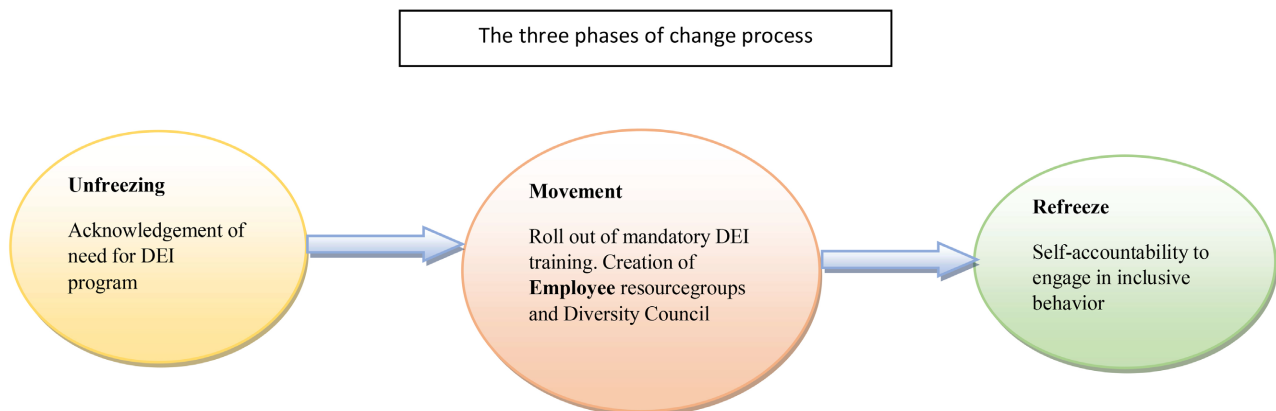

Figure 1. Initial *conceptual framework* of the Lewin change theory for DEI program implementation. Note: Adapted from "Planning and executing change effectively," (n.d.). https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_principles-of-management-v1.1/s11-05-planning-and-executing-change-.html in the public domain.

3. Method

This research aimed to gather the best available evidence through a comprehensive analysis of high-quality research articles on DEI program implementation, synthesize the evidence gathered through the lens of Lewin's change theory, and summarize the data synthesis into findings. The methodology used to achieve this goal was to conduct a rapid evidence assessment (REA), an abbreviated version of a systematic review. A systematic review which could take months to complete, involves the synthesizing of evidence gathered from a comprehensive and rigorous review of critically appraised and relevant primary studies on a specific topic (Monroe et al., 2019), while the REA presents a structured, balanced, and rigorous process of evidence collection and synthesis that is not as exhaustive and comprehensive as a systematic review but completed in a shorter time frame (Barends et al., 2018). An REA is appropriate for this study because of the limited amount of time needed to complete this research. Using an REA allows for an accelerated resource-efficient review of the high-quality evidence that will be synthesized to inform the research question— *What are the internal organizational barriers to effective DEI implementation in organizations*?

The literature search was conducted on the University of Maryland Global Campus Onesearch database aggregator and ABI/Inform Collection because these databases include a wide range of databeses focused on management-related topics. The snowballing method was also used to source data. Snowballing is a research technique that allows for additional data to be sourced using information from a primary data source (Baltar & Icart, 2012). To ensure transparency and replicability, inclusion and exclusion criteria were set as confounders to determine the limit of synthesis (Barends et al., 2018). **Table 1** shows the search strings used along with the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 1. Data search string.

Database Search Strings and Results				
Database	String	Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	Initial Results	Final Results
One Search	(diversity n3 (equity OR equality) n3 inclusion) n10 (program* OR train* OR instruct* OR educat* OR teach*) n10 (barrier* OR challenge* OR obstacle* OR hurdle* OR hinder* OR hindrance* OR obstruct* OR oppos* OR problem* OR difficult* OR complicat* OR imped* OR deter* OR prevent* OR block* OR resist* OR preclud* OR inhibit* OR thwart*)	**Inclusion:** • Full text, • Peer reviewed, • Academic journal, • Published from 2018 to 2023 • English **Exclusion:** • Not management related • Not in English language • Magazines • Trade journals • Conference papers	24,967	1892
ABI/Inform collection	Diversity management challenges	• Systemic reviews • Dissertation • Duplicates Articles published before 1970	3631	366

The researcher used the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) tool to detail the flow of articles. The PRISMA flow diagram enables researchers to transparently show an in-depth representation of the complexity of the article source and selection to enable replication (Rethlef-sen & Page, 2021). The rigorous process of article selection resulted in 27 articles that were critically appraised for this study out of which 13 were selected for synthesis. **Figure 2** shows the PRISMA diagram used in this study.

Critical Appraisal

Assessing the quality of evidence is important in research. The quality appraisal tool utilized in this study was TAPUPASM, an acronym for transparency, accuracy, purposivity, utility, propriety, accessibility, specificity, and modified objectivism (Long et al., 2005). TAPUPASM is a framework used to assess the quality of a research paper based on eight criteria and focuses on practical rather than philosophical perspectives (Ryan & Rutty, 2019). TAPUPASM can be used to critically appraise documents in different fields making it appropriate for this research.
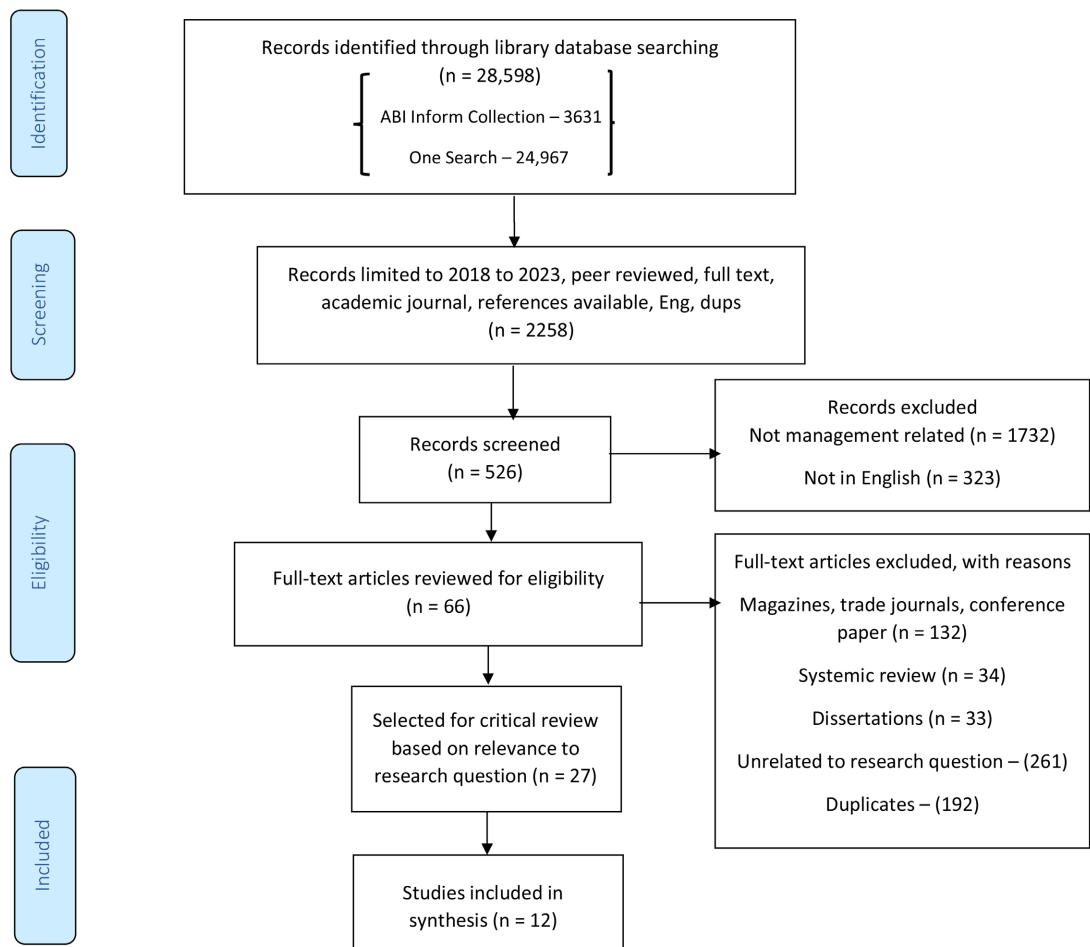

Figure 2. PRISMA diagram.

Barends et al. (2018) noted that evidence used in research must be valid, reliable, and relevant to the research question. Transparency in weighing evidence is important, however, the lack of set standards in weighing the strength of evidence presents a challenge in research (Boeije et al., 2011), leaving researchers to make their own decision on how evidence will be weighed (Gough, 2007). The selected articles in this research were rated from one to four, one being the lowest quality and four being the highest quality. A quality appraisal was conducted on all 27 articles selected for this study. For transparency, the researcher has included all 27 articles and the scoring in **Appendix C**. Articles with a cumulative score of 8 - 17 were rated as low-quality articles, 18 - 27 medium-quality articles, and 28 - 32 high-quality. The researcher used only articles that scored high in this study. It is important for researchers to set a baseline that ensures only high quality articles are included in the research. The baseline threshold set in this research ensured that low quality articles were not included for synthesis in this research. Articles that did not meet the threshold were reviewed again to ensure relevant articles were not dropped. After critical appraisal, 13 articles scored high and were included in the study. Table 2 shows the 13 articles used in the study.

Table 2. 13 articles used in the study.

Title	Author	Year
A survey of diversity and inclusiveness initiatives at Carnegie Doctoral Research Institutions libraries	Regina Koury, Jenny Lynne Semenza and Sandra Shropshire	2019
An Empirical Test of Diversity Climate Dimensionality and Relative Effects on Employee of Color Outcomes	E. Holly Buttner, Kevin B. Lowe, Lenora Billings-Harris	2012
An examination of the barriers to leadership for faculty of color at U.S. universities	Freeman Jr., S., Krier, K., Al-Asfour, A., & Thacker, R. S.	2019
Are we just engaging "the usual suspects"? Challenges in and practical strategies for supporting equity and diversity in student-staff partnership initiatives	Mercer-Mapstone, L., Islam, M., & Reid, T.	2022
Attitudes towards diversity, equity, and inclusion across the CTSA Programs: Strong but not uniform support and commitment	Duong, J., McIntosh, S., Attia, J., Michener, J. L., Cottler, L. B., & Aguilar-Gaxiola, S.	2023
Diversity management as navigation through organizational paradoxes	Nadiv, R., & Kuna, S.	2020
Diversity Management in the Public Sector for Sustainable, Inclusive Organizations: Ideals and Practices in Northwest Florida	Atkinson, C. L., Alibašić, H., & Nyarko, E. K.	2022
Implementation of diversity in healthcare practices: Barriers and opportunities	Celik, H., Abma, T. A., Widdershoven, G., Van Wijmen, F. C. B., & Klinge, I.	2008
Systemic Workplace Barriers for Academic Librarians with Disabilities	Oud, J.	2019
Understanding inclusion in the retail industry: incorporating the majority perspective	Cassell, C., Watson, K., Ford, J., & Kele, J.	2021
Why do EDI policies fail? An inhabited institutions perspective	Milian, R. P., & Wijesingha, R.	2023
Resistance to Diversity and Inclusion Change Initiatives: Strategies for Transformational Leaders	Velasco, M., & Sansone, C.	2019
Organizational Change and the Chief Diversity Officer: A Case Study of Institutionalizing a Diversity Plan	Stanley, C. A., Watson, K., Reyes, J., & Varela, K. S.	2019

The 13 articles selected for synthesis were coded using ATLAS.ti.23, a software used to code and analyze research articles (Ronzani et al., 2020). The coding of data is crucial in research and should be done with rigor and transparency because codes allow researchers to organize, structure, and interpret their observations of primary data into meaningful findings (Romano et al., 2003). Nishant and Ravishankar (2020) described codes as symbolic words or labels used to summarize a chunk of data. The researcher used a combination of a-priori and *in-vivo* codes in the analysis of evidence from the 13 selected articles. A-priori codes are pre-developed codes used to review the data while in vivo codes are codes derived from the data being analyzed (Saldaña, 2016). Codes from the first cycle were grouped into categories (second cycle), and then categories into themes. Analytic memoing was used to capture the researcher's reflections during data analysis.

The first round of coding involved a combination of 25 a-priori and 10 *in vivo* codes generating a combined 35 codes. The second round of coding was based on patterns and trends observed from the 35 codes, of which six categories emerged. These categories were grouped into three themes based on their similarities and relationship. Table 3 below summarized the codes, categories, and themes of the study's findings, which are discussed in detail in the next section.

Table 3. Summary of codes, categories, and themes.

Findings/ themes	DEI solutions not aligned with organizational DEI needs		No pre-mortem to minimize implementation challenges		Organizational culture at odds with DEI strategy	
Categories	Lack of preparation	No diverse perspective	No strategic focus	No clear guidance	Maintain status quo	Power and priviledge dynamics
Codes	fatigue	lack of influence	Employee experience	complexity	cliques	backlash
	Insufficient training	lack of representation	lack of metrics	Inconsistent messaging	culture	bias
	lack of engagement	Perception	lack of planning	lack of clarity	fear	conflict of interest
	lack of knowledge	Undermining	Limited budget	lack of transparency	Inequitable policies	leadership support
	tension	Unwilling to learn	strategy		Lack of commitment	limited sponsorship
					Not a priority	Loss of power and privilege
					Racism	
					Resistance	
					rigidity	
					status quo	

4. Results

Data from the 13 high-quality selected articles were synthesized to answer the research question—*What are the internal organizational barriers to effective DEI implementation in organizations*? Three themes emerged from the analysis and synthesis of primary data. The themes were: 1) DEI solutions not aligned with organizational DEI needs; 2) No pre-mortem on DEI strategy to minimize implementation challenges; and 3) Organizational culture at odds with DEI strategy. The findings are addressed in detail as follows.

4.1. Finding 1: DEI Solutions Do Not Align with Organizational DEI Needs

This finding was supported by 12 of the 13 articles analyzed. Often, organizations rush to implement DEI programs in response to internal and external pressures, without investing time to understand the current state of DEI in the organization and the areas of opportunity (Buttner et al., 2012; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020; Oud, 2019). As a result, organizations often resort to popular interventions like DEI training, DEI events with motivational speakers, and investment in minority communities which usually does not yield the desired inclusive work environment (Freeman Jr. et al., 2019; Koury et al., 2019; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023). Designing and implementing programs that do not align with the DEI needs of the organization often leads to employee frustrations, diminished trust, backlash, resistance, and failure (Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). Providing a solution before understanding the problem does not often yield effective results.

Before DEI program implementation, organizations need to invest in a comprehensive review of their current DEI status and the structures that have contributed to the current state (Celik et al., 2008; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). A comprehensive review of the current DEI status allows the organization to see what is lacking, what needs to be improved and what needs to stop so the organization can tailor their DEI strategy to specific needs that create targeted benefits. In addition, it is essential to understand the existing structures that created the current inequities because failure to address these structures may lead to failure of the new initiatives (Buttner et al., 2012; Duong et al., 2023; Freeman Jr. et al., 2019; Oud, 2019). The identified gaps will avoid duplication of efforts and allow the focusing of resources where needed (Buttner et al., 2012; Duong et al., 2023). Armed with information on current DEI status, organizations can create programs that meet their specific needs and develop benchmarks and metrics that will allow them to track progress and measure success (Cassell et al., 2021; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020). Organizations are also better positioned to craft effective communication on their findings and next steps to ensure all employees stay engaged in the process (Koury et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2019).

To identify current gaps, organizations can review DEI data including workforce demographics, retention rate, attrition rate, promotion rate, hiring, employee engagement scores, and pay equity across diverse groups (Koury et al. 2019; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Stanley et al., 2019). Organizations should ensure employee input is included in the review, as they are the primary reason DEI initiatives are being implemented. The current DEI status of the organization provides evidence and data that can be used to design an evidence-based strategy that will not only be effective but more likely to be successful (Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Freeman Jr. et al., 2019; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020). Employees are more likely to be accepting and trusting of DEI initiatives that are grounded in evidence-based gaps in the organization over initiatives that appear to be arbitrary (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Stanley et al., 2019). Milian and Wijesingha (2023) noted that implementing targeted DEI initiatives does not automatically imply that inclusivity has been achieved. It is vital for organizations to periodically review the DEI status to ensure progress is being made and challenges are being addressed.

4.2. Finding 2: No Pre-Mortem on DEI Strategy to Minimize Implementation Challenges

This finding was supported by 12 of the 13 articles selected. Pre-mortem involves intentional identification of the obstacles that could be detrimental to the successful implementation of DEI initiatives and developing counter measures to guard against them, before launching the DEI initiatives (Milian & Wijesingha, 2023). DEI initiatives can create conflict in the workplace because they challenge employees' assumptions, make employees vulnerable, and sometimes force employees to have uncomfortable conversations (Atkinson et al., 2022; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Koury et al., 2019; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020; Oud, 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). DEI initiatives cause employees to be intentionally considerate of others even when it goes against their personal values, norms, and beliefs (Oud, 2019). However, a challenge of DEI implementation is getting the buy-in of all employees which is critical to success because employee behavior drives inclusivity (Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). DEI implementation can create tension between people who want things to change and those who want things to remain the same (Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Stanley et al., 2019). When not managed, these tensions can become detrimental to the implementation of DEI initiatives.

Organizations often implement DEI policies without considering the challenges that could derail the initiatives and how to overcome them. Pre-mortem is important because it aims to detect vulnerabilities in the DEI plan, allowing for those weaknesses to be addressed before implementation. Addressing potential pitfalls before they arise increases the chances of a successful DEI implementation. Some of the potential pitfalls of DEI implementation include a lack

of leadership commitment, a lack of funding for the program, resistance from employees, ineffective communication, over reliance on diverse employees to lead DEI efforts, and relying on the wrong metrics (Atkinson et al., 2022; Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019). Not managing unforeseen fallouts during the DEI implementation phase can derail DEI efforts (Atkinson et al., 2022; Celik et al., 2008; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019). Recognizing these potential pitfalls allows the organization to build mitigation strategies into the DEI plan leading to a more successful, resilient, and sustainable implementation.

With the understanding of factors that could get in the way of a successful DEI implementation, organizations can determine the budget allocation, appropriate time frame, most viable process, and the level of expertise required for a successful implementation in a way that increases employee engagement (Celik et al., 2008; Koury et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2019). Organizations are also better positioned to bridge the disconnect between what the organization claims to offer and the actual employee experience by minimizing ambiguity from miscommunication, inefficiencies, and unintended consequences of an inadequately planned DEI implementation (Atkinson et al., 2022; Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Koury et al., 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019). Pre-mortem allows the organization to have candid conversations and mitigate the obstacles that could derail DEI implementation before launch so organizations can have a more successful DEI implementation.

4.3. Finding 3: Organizational Culture (OC) at Odds with DEI Strategy

All 13 articles synthesized contributed to this finding which is not surprising given how critical organizational culture is to DEI implementation. Organizational culture (OC) refers to the values, philosophy and norms that guide the behavior of employees in an organization (Celik et al., 2008; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020; Oud, 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). Factors that shape OC include leadership style, the organization's mission statement, vision statement, values, communications, policies, procedures, degree of hierarchy, degree of collaboration, degree of control, performance management, work environment, career development, cultural expression, power structure, rewards, and recognition (Atkinson et al., 2022; Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Freeman Jr. et al., 2019; Koury et al., 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). OCs have a direct influence on what is considered acceptable or unacceptable employee behavior (Atkinson et al., 2022; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Freeman Jr. et al., 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019;

Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). OCs that prevent organizations from evolving in line with market demands and competition can lead to their demise (Atkinson et al., 2022; Cassell et al., 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019). Therefore, organizations must make strides to ensure that their culture is flexible enough to leverage the changes necessary to remain competitive.

DEI initiatives do not exist in isolation and are rooted in employee behavior, employee interaction, and the consequences of unacceptable behavior. DEI programs aim to create and reinforce an OC where all are respected, valued, and accepted (Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019). OC directly influences DEI implementation and can determine its success or failure (Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). OC can positively or negatively affect an organization's change management process. OCs with rigid policies, processes, and practices that are not inclusive, and resistant to change will have difficulties implementing DEI (Atkinson et al., 2022; Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Freeman Jr. et al., 2019; Koury et al., 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). The opposing culture will eradicate or minimize the impact of inclusive behavior.

Regardless of the intention and aspirations of the organization, if the OC is at odds with DEI initiatives and there is no accountability for anti-DEI behavior, then DEI implementation will become the mere fulfillment of a requirement and will not create an inclusive work environment (Atkinson et al., 2022; Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Freeman Jr. et al., 2019; Koury et al., 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020; Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). Often, organizations want to implement DEI initiatives but are unwilling to change their current practices to accommodate the desired change (Atkinson et al., 2022; Buttner et al., 2012; Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023). Such attempts will result in frustration, resistance, lack of trust, and eventual failure of DEI initiatives (Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Koury et al., 2019). Successful DEI implementation will require a willingness to review the organizational culture and make changes to practices, processes, and policies that pose a threat to DEI (Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Oud, 2019; Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). An updated conceptual framework that incorporates the findings is detailed in Figure 3.

In the unfreezing stage, the organization analyzes the current workforce data to determine the extent of change needed. Based on gaps uncovered, goals are established, DEI initiatives are developed to target the identified gaps, metrics are put in place to measure success, and an implementation plan is put in place to track execution. The organization then performs a pre-mortem analysis to uncover potential risks that could derail DEI implementation and a strategy is developed to mitigate any uncovered potential risk. With the findings of the
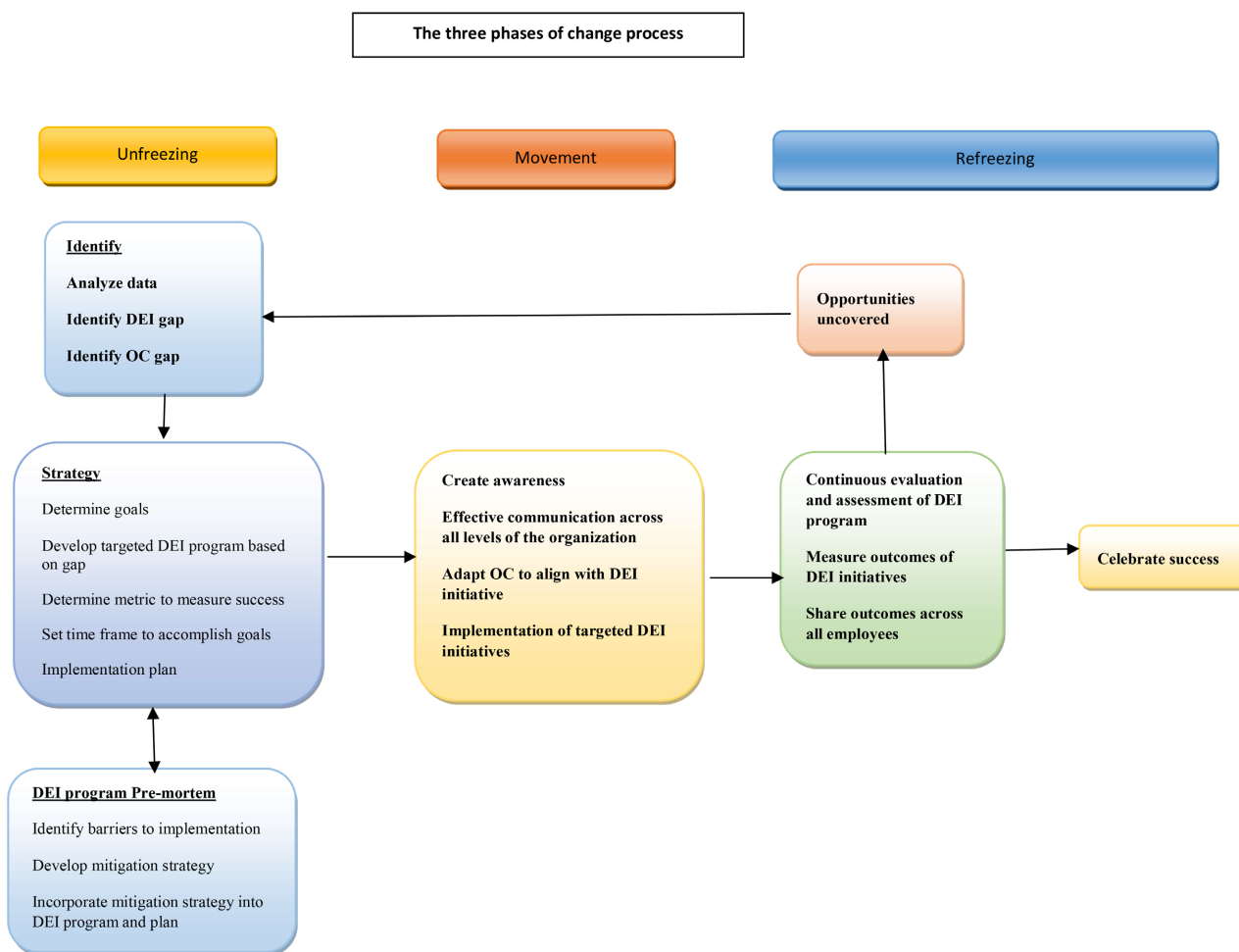
The three phases of change process

Figure 3. Revised conceptual framework of the Lewin change theory for DEI program implementation. Note: Adapted from "Planning and executing change effectively," (n.d.)
https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_principles-of-management-v1.1/s11-05-planning-and-executing-change-.html in the public domain.

pre-mortem analysis incorporated into the strategic plan, the organization is ready to move to the second phase.

In the movement phase (second phase), the organization rolls out the DEI program beginning with communication across all levels on what gaps were identified, the DEI implementation plan, and the employees' role in the successful implementation of the plan. Organizational cultures that get in the way of a successful DEI implementation are reviewed, and changes are made in line with the desired outcome. Program roll-out is prioritized according to changes with the most significant impact.

In the refreezing phase (final phase), the organization measures the outcome of the DEI initiatives to see what is working and what needs to be adjusted or changed based on set goals. Areas of improvement are reviewed following the unfreezing phase process while successes are celebrated. It is important to note that DEI initiative implementation is not static. As employees' expectations and

the business environment evolve, so should DEI initiatives. Organizations should periodically review and refocus their DEI initiatives to ensure they are meeting the needs of their employees and other stakeholders.

5. Discussion

As the workforce becomes more diverse, creating an environment where all can thrive becomes more crucial and pressing. While the importance of DEI is widely acknowledged, most organizations struggle with successfully implementing DEI initiatives. The purpose of this study was to understand the internal organizational barriers to effective DEI implementation in organizations. The findings of this study point to important factors that pose a barrier to effective DEI implementation. These findings highlight the work done at the unfreezing stage (Lewin's theory of change) as a critical factor in a successful DEI initiatives implementation. This study reveals that one of the barriers to DEI implementation is launching DEI initiatives that do not align with organizational DEI needs. Often, organizations launch a series of DEI initiatives like mandatory DEI training without understanding the current DEI gaps (Atkinson et al., 2022; Buttner et al., 2012). Arbitrary DEI initiatives that do not address the needs of employees will not be well received and will result in resistance rather than acceptance making it more challenging to create an inclusive environment. The identification of DEI gaps occurs during the unfreezing phase of Lewin's change implementation theory. In this phase, the organization's DEI needs are identified through a combination of workforce demographics data analysis and employee surveys (Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). Based on established needs, organizations can set goals and priorities on what they want to accomplish. The goal of DEI initiatives is to create inclusive workspaces. Isolated DEI initiatives that are not tied to any specific DEI gaps in the organization and not measured for success may be detrimental to the needs of minority employees who rely on inclusive workspaces to thrive. Random DEI initiatives create an illusion of inclusivity but have no real impact because they are not designed to address minority employee issues.

Another finding of this study was the lack of pre-mortem on the DEI strategy to minimize implementation challenges. Pre-mortem analysis allows organizations to detect the potential risks that could derail the implementation of DEI initiatives and use that knowledge to design a more resilient and impactful DEI initiative (Velasco & Sansone, 2019). Pre-mortem also offers a different perspective of the implementation plan that might have been overlooked during the planning process. Not everyone is open and accepting of DEI initiatives (Stanley et al., 2019). Pre-mortem analysis allows the organization to turn potential weaknesses into strengths by incorporating factors that will increase engagement and followership into the DEI plan before the plan is launched. Incorporating the findings of pre-mortem analysis into the DEI strategy increases employee engagement and participation in the DEI initiatives.

The research also indicates the importance of ensuring that OC aligns with the DEI strategy. OC guides the behavior of the employees and determines what is acceptable or not. Rolling out DEI initiatives that the OC does not supported will create conflict and resistance (Duong et al., 2023; Oud, 2019). OC poses a barrier when it is at odds with the DEI strategy. For example, if an organization is unwilling to amend its inequitable policies, mandating all employees to take unconscious bias training will not override the negative impact of the inequitable policies. OC cannot be isolated from the DEI strategy as it is the foundation on which DEI strategy is built. Organizations must ensure that factors impacting OC are reviewed and amended to allow the DEI initiatives to thrive.

5.1. Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to literature by extending the knowledge of barriers to DEI program implementation. While existing knowledge on barriers to DEI program implementation often focus on factors that hinder the success during the implementation phase, this study highlights critical barriers that should be considered prior to implementation. This study offers a glimpse at the complex nature of the unfreezing stage of Lewin's change implementation model and how the success of change implementation is closely aligned to the organization's level of preparedness for the change process.

Furthermore, this study adds to literature by providing insight to the impact of organizational culture on DEI program implementation. By drawing attention to the barriers to DEI implementation, the findings of this study expand on the importance of working with DEI experts to create DEI programs that address the needs of the organization within an organizational culture that is open to change.

5.2. Practical Significance

The findings of this study suggest that organizations have to prepare for change before implementation. Implementing DEI programs successfully goes beyond introducing various DEI programs with the expectation that all employees will participate and adjust their behavior accordingly. Organizations must be cognizant of the current state of DEI and the culture that allowed the current state to exist. Organizations should consult with experts in DEI as opposed to adopting popular DEI programs or expecting human resource professionals without DEI knowledge to manage the effort. DEI program implementation should not be handled as a singular project but should be handled as an inclusive change process that eventually shapes the culture of the organization and creates an environment where all forms of diversity can thrive.

6. Recommendations

The barriers to DEI implementation make it difficult for organizations to create an inclusive work environment. To help organizations overcome the barriers to

effective DEI initiatives, the researcher recommends the following based on the findings of the study:

- Hire a DEI consultant to provide expert guidance to the organization on how to craft and effectively navigate the implementation process of a DEI plan. A DEI consultant will perform an objective qualitative and quantitative assessment of the organization's current DEI data, policies, practices, and culture to provide the organization with a detailed and holistic outlook of its current DEI status (Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). A DEI consultant will also support the organization in its efforts to operationalize the DEI plan and provide intervention strategies to counter resistance and backlash.

- Conduct a DEI audit. A DEI audit evaluates the existing workplace data, policies, OC, and practices to identify existing DEI gaps and systemic issues that created or contributed to the gap (Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Oud, 2019). Organizations can use information gathered from the DEI audit to create a targeted plan to address the organization's DEI issues for a more impactful outcome. The knowledge uncovered can be used to create DEI goals, design a DEI plan, and determine metrics for tracking and measuring success. A DEI audit can also uncover if any existing DEI policies are effective and what needs to change. It is important to know that DEI audits are not one-off events. DEI audits should occur periodically to ensure the organization is accomplishing its DEI targets and keep the organization accountable for its DEI commitments (Atkinson et al., 2022). Should the organization lack the expertise to conduct a DEI audit, a DEI consultant can help them accomplish this.

- Set DEI goals based on the DEI audit discoveries. DEI goals should reflect what the organization is looking to accomplish and will also ensure the organization is purposeful and focused on its efforts to achieve the desired inclusive workspace (Milian & Wijesingha, 2023; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020). DEI initiatives should be designed to center around the organization's DEI goals so that activating the initiatives would accomplish the organization's desired outcomes.

- Build an internal web page dedicated to communicating all DEI-related activities and data for easy employee access. Transparency in communicating DEI information allows all employees to learn more about the importance of DEI, the existing gaps, organizational goals, and employee expectations (Cassell et al., 2021; Celik et al., 2008; Duong et al., 2023; Stanley et al., 2019; Velasco & Sansone, 2019). Employees can also ask questions, seek more information, express concerns, and provide feedback. Open and transparent communication will allow organizations keep a pulse check on employee experience and increase employee engagement. Employees will be more open to DEI initiatives if they understand the reasons behind it and have input in the process.

These recommendations are not exhaustive of all that is required to overcome the barriers of DEI implementation, but they represent a good start.

7. Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations to this study so organizations should be cautious when applying these findings. A potential limitation of this study is that relevant articles may have been missed while completing this research. The limited time frame may have resulted in a search that was not as wide-ranging and caused the omission of relevant data, which have introduced bias in the findings or resulted in missing evidence. Only documents written in English were reviewed, so relevant information from studies written in other languages was not included in this study. Due to the small number of articles synthesized in this study, other compelling interventions relevant to this research may not have been investigated.

This study highlighted some critical barriers to effective DEI implementation. There are many variations of diversity including gender, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, disability, culture, and sexual orientation. For this study, all variations were considered under the umbrella of diversity. Though minorities often share similar experiences of marginalization, variations of diversity have their own unique experiences and need different levels of accommodation to feel included. It would benefit scholars and practitioners for future research to focus on understanding the unique barriers experienced by each unique variation of diversity.

8. Conclusion

DEI initiatives are necessary to create an inclusive workspace where all employees regardless of their ethnicities, abilities, and affiliations can thrive. The research question focused on uncovering internal organizational barriers to effective DEI implementation. Through the lens of Lewin's change theory, this research uncovered some barriers to effective DEI implementation that organizations should note. The barriers to an effective DEI implementation include a lack of alignment between DEI initiative and organizational DEI need, a lack of consideration for the factors that could derail DEI initiatives implementation, and a lack of alignment between OC and DEI strategy. These barriers are foundational, and leaders must address these barriers before DEI initiatives can be successfully deployed. Launching isolated DEI initiatives without consideration for the implementation barriers will not yield the desired inclusive work environment and may create more harm than good.

Acknowledgements

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank my family Rita Nwoga (mom), Jayson Osondu, Jayden Osondu, Dr. Chinyere Nwoga, Dr. Kachi Nwoga, Engr. Chi Nwosu, Engr. Chidiebere Nwoga, Dr. Chioma Anokwuru, Dr. Chiehiura Akpan, Ms. Florence Nwoga-Okafor, Dr. Joseph. Nwoga, for their support throughout this project. I would not have accomplished this without you all.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Appendix A: Breakdown or Articles Contributing to Each Theme

	Finding 1	Finding 2	Finding 3
	DEI solutions not aligned with organizational DEI needs	No pre-mortem to minimize implementation challenges	Organizational culture at odds with DEI strategy
A survey of diversity and inclusiveness initiatives at Carnegie Doctoral Research Institutions libraries by Koury et al. (2019)	x	x	x
An Empirical Test of Diversity Climate Dimensionality and Relative Effects on Employee of Color Outcomes by Buttner et al. (2012)	x	x	x
An examination of the barriers to leadership for faculty of color at U.S. universities by Freeman Jr. et al. (2019)	x		x
Are we just engaging "the usual suspects"? Challenges in and practical strategies for supporting equity and diversity in student–staff partnership initiatives by Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2021)	x	x	x
Attitudes towards diversity, equity, and inclusion across the CTSA Programs: Strong but not uniform support and commitment by Duong et al. (2023)	x	x	x
Diversity management as navigation through organizational paradoxes by Nadiv and Kuna (2020)	x	x	x
Diversity Management in the Public Sector for Sustainable, Inclusive Organizations: Ideals and Practices in Northwest Florida by Atkinson et al. (2022)		x	x
Implementation of diversity in healthcare practices: Barriers and opportunities by Celik et al. (2008)	x	x	x
Systemic Workplace Barriers for Academic Librarians with Disabilities by Oud (2019)	x	x	x
Understanding inclusion in the retail industry: incorporating the majority perspective by Cassell et al. (2021)	x	x	x
Why do EDI policies fail? An inhabited institutions perspective by Milian and Wijesingha (2023)	x	x	x
Resistance to Diversity and Inclusion Change Initiatives: Strategies for Transformational Leaders by Velasco and Sansone (2019)	x	x	x
Organizational Change and the Chief Diversity Officer: A Case Study of Institutionalizing a Diversity Plan by Stanley et al. (2019)	x	x	x

Appendix B: TAPUPASM Scoring Criteria

Score	Grade	Implication
4	Excellent (E)	Research has a well-developed focus, includes a broad integration of literature, conceptual knowledge, and skills. Descriptions are clear, detailed and show a high-level understanding of concepts and use of a wide array of literature. Insights are supported by academic literature. Ideas and concepts are narrated in a logical pattern. Methodology is appropriate, data analysis is fully presented and accurate. Findings answer the research question.
3	High (H)	Research focus is clear and substantiated by academic literature. Conceptual knowledge is adequate and explained. Methodology is detailed and accurate. Data analysis is appropriate. Background information demonstrates above average understanding of concepts. Assertions and insights are supported by sufficient academic literature.
2	Moderate (M)	Research demonstrates inadequate understanding concepts and has noticeable focus. Makes use of academic literature but integration is often unclear. The background is mostly clear however presented with limited explanations. Data analysis is missing some key information and results are not fully explained.
1	Low (L)	Research lacks focus. Ideas do not follow a logical pattern and concepts are not explained. The background is unclear, and research question lacks merit. Methodology is not clear, and results are unrelated to research question. Research does not add to existing knowledge concepts are not clear

Appendix C: Data Extraction and TAPUPASM Scoring

Title	Author	Journal	Publication Year	Sample Population Description	Method	T	A	P	U	P	A	S	M	Total
A survey of diversity and inclusiveness initiatives at Carnegie Doctoral Research Institutions libraries*	Regina Koury, Jenny Lynne Semenza and Sandra Shropshire	Library Management	2019	324	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
An Empirical Test of Diversity Climate Dimensionality and Relative Effects on Employee of Color Outcomes*	E. Holly Buttner, Kevin B. Lowe, Lenora Billings-Harris	Journal of Business Ethics	2012	662	Quantitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
An examination of the barriers to leadership for faculty of color at U.S. universities*	Freeman, S., Krier, K., Al-Asfour, A., & Thacker, R. S.	Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology	2019	19	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Are we just engaging "the usual suspects"? Challenges in and practical strategies for supporting equity and diversity in student-staff partnership initiatives*	Mercer-Mapstone, L., Islam, M., & Reid, T.	Teaching in Higher Education	2022	8	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Attitudes towards diversity, equity, and inclusion across the CTSA Programs: Strong but not uniform support and commitment*	Duong, J., McIntosh, S., Attia, J., Michener, J. L., Cottler, L. B., & Aguilar-Gaxiola, S.	Journal of Clinical and Translational Science	2023	796	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Diversity management as navigation through organizational paradoxes*	Nadiv, R., & Kuna, S.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal	2020	30	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31

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Diversity Management in the Public Sector for Sustainable, Inclusive Organizations: Ideals and Practices in Northwest Florida	Atkinson, C. L., Alibašić, H., & Nyarko, E. K.	Public Integrity	2022	37	qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Implementation of diversity in healthcare practices: Barriers and opportunities*	Celik, H., Abma, T. A., Widdershoven, G., Van Wijmen, F. C. B., & Klinge, I.	Patient Education and Counseling	2008	9	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Systemic Workplace Barriers for Academic Librarians with Disabilities*	Oud, J.	College & Research Libraries	2019	10	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Understanding inclusion in the retail industry: incorporating the majority perspective*	Cassell, C., Watson, K., Ford, J., & Kele, J.	Personnel Review	2021	89	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Why do EDI policies fail? An inhabited institutions perspective*	Milian, R. P., & Wijesingha, R.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal	2023	23	Qualitative	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	31
Resistance to Diversity and Inclusion Change Initiatives: Strategies for Transformational Leaders*	Velasco, M., & Sansone, C.	Organization Development Journal	2019	7	Qualitative	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	30
Organizational Change and the Chief Diversity Officer: A Case Study of Institutionalizing a Diversity Plan*	Stanley, C. A., Watson, K., Reyes, J., & Varela, K. S.	Journal of Diversity in Higher Education	2019	15	Mixed method	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	29

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Title	Authors	Journal	Year		Type									
"Always a glass ceiling." Gender or autism; the barrier to occupational inclusion	Susan M. Hayward, Keith R. McVillya, Mark A. Stokesb	Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders	2022	83	Quantitative	2	2	4	1	4	2	4	4	23
Employment integration barriers: experiences of people with disabilities	McKinney, E. L., & Swartz, L.	International Journal of Human Resource Management	2021	72	Qualitative	4	3	3	1	3	4	1	4	23
Learning Without Limits: Identifying the Barriers and Enablers to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in IS Education	Wijeratne, D., Dennehy, D., Quinlivan, S., Buckley, L. A., Keighron, C., & Flynn, S.	Journal of Information Systems Education	2022	464	Qualitative	2	3	4	2	4	4	1	3	23
Managing Racial Diversity: Matching Internal Strategies with Environmental Needs	Amirkhanyan, A. A., Holt, S. G., McCrea, A. M., & Meier, K. J.	Public Administration Review	2019	725	Qualitatitve	4	2	3	2	4	3	1	4	23
Towards Making an Invisible Diversity Visible: A Study of Socially Structured Barriers for Purple Collar Employees in the Workplace	Ullah, Z., AlDhaen, E., Naveed, R. T., Ahmad, N., Scholz, M., Hamid, T. A., & Han, H.	Sustainability	2021	363	Quantitative	4	3	4	1	3	3	1	4	23
Structuring local environments to avoid racial diversity: Anxiety drives Whites' geographical and institutional self-segregation preferences	Anicich, E. M., Jachimowicz, J. M., Osborne, M., & Phillips, L. T.	Journal of Experimental Social Psychology	2021	307	Quantitative	2	2	4	2	4	4	1	3	22
What's In It for You? Demographics and Self-Interest Perceptions in Diversity Promotion	Gardner, D. M., & Ryan, A. M.	Journal of Applied Psychology	2020	481	Quantitative	4	3	3	1	3	3	1	4	22

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Barriers to intergenerational learning: a case of a workplace in Turkey	Polat, S., & Yilmaz, Y.	Organization Development Journal	2020	61	Qualitative	3	2	1	2	4	4	1	4	21
The EThIC Model of Virtue-Based Allyship Development: A New Approach to Equity and Inclusion in Organizations	Warren, M. A., & Warren, M. S.	Journal of Business Ethics	2021	25	Qualitative	4	2	3	1	3	4	1	3	21
What really works?! Evaluating the effectiveness of practices to increase the managerial diversity of women and minorities	Schoen, C., & Rost, K.	European Management Journal	2021	710	Quantitative	4	2	3	1	3	3	1	3	20
Workforce diversity policies in practice: drivers and barriers in local administrations	Lang, C.	Ethnic and Racial Studies	2020	60	Qualitative	2	2	3	1	3	3	2	4	20
Transphobia in the Workplace: A Qualitative Study of Employment Stigma	Mizock, L., Riley, J. M., Yuen, N., Woodrum, T. D., Sotilleo, E. A., & Ormerod, A. J.	Stigma and Health	2017	45	Qualitative	2	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	19
Fostering diversity work as a process of lifelong learning: A partnership case study with an immigrant services organisation	Shan, H., Cheng, A., Peikazadi, N., & Kim, Y.	International Review of Education	2021	29	Qualititive	1	2	1	1	3	4	2	4	18
Change without an agent: What happens when change agents leave?	Wynn, A. T.	Organizational Dynamics	2019	55	Qualitative	2	3	2	2	4	1	1	1	16

Note: *denotes one of the thirteen articles synthesized in this study.