

The relevance of glocal support for DEIB: a mixed-method approach

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Abstract

Purpose – In today’s globalized landscape, organizations face the challenge of expanding their reach while maintaining their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). This study employs an exploratory sequential and participative mixed-methods approach to investigate the concept of “glocal” support for DEIB—the evolving interplay of global and local processes, transforming through iterative adaptations, that enhance the DEIB over time—within a global organization operating across eight offices on three continents.

Design/methodology/approach – To gain a deeper insight into this emerging concept, I conducted a sequential exploratory with components of participative mixed-method inquiry to understand the interplay between local and global support for DEIB within a non-profit global organization spanning eight countries and three continents. Rather than isolating these two support levels, this study explores their intersection by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach permits an initial exploration of the nature of glocal support and subsequently facilitates an empirical evaluation of the predictive influence of glocal support beyond other DEIB-related factors. The paper presents the outcomes of two distinct phases: (1) A focus group comprising key employees from eight different offices to elucidate the concept of glocal support and DEIB work. (2) A comprehensive survey probing glocal support in contrast to individual, team, and organizational practices.

Findings – Study 1 ($N = 62$) identifies three key components of glocal DEIB support: fairness in decision-making, leadership modeling of DEIB values, and ongoing DEIB dialogue. Study 2 ($N = 264$) quantitatively assesses glocal support’s impact on DEIB outcomes, revealing its predictive strength above and beyond individual, team, and organizational factors. Notably, organizational accountability emerges as key to successful DEIB work, while evidence shows glocal support for DEIB shows to be the most significant driver of DEIB initiatives.

Originality/value – This paper emphasizes the significance of these characteristics within a DEIB framework and offers a method to assess an organization’s position, aiding targeted DEIB culture enhancement efforts. Despite certain limitations, this research advances the discourse on DEIB within global organizations. It illuminates the intricate relationship between local and global support structures, contributing to developing a glocal DEIB support framework. The implications of this work extend to various industries and offer a foundation for the pursuit of enhanced DEIB initiatives globally.

Keywords Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Glocal, Support, Belonging

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I have all the privilege of White people here [in this country], but when I speak to the global team, I feel like a second-class citizen (Executive Director of a Global Organization, personal communication, February 8, 2021)

In a recent conversation with a prominent global leader, the quoted sentiment struck a resonant chord, shedding light on a pivotal motive for delving deeper into the realm of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) within their organization. In an era where technology both transcends borders and erects barriers, being part of a global organization has grown equally prevalent and perplexing (Caligiuri and Stroh, 1995; Edwards *et al.*, 2022). Individuals inhabit multiple spheres, underscoring the contextual nuances of their interactions (Leung *et al.*, 2005;

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Martins *et al.*, 2003). Within this intricate reality, employees strive to express themselves through diverse avenues (Lavelle *et al.*, 2010). For instance, one may experience a heightened sense of psychological safety within their immediate workgroup but encounter disconnection and difficulty in voicing concerns when contemplating their role within the broader organizational context.

The amalgamation of individuals from diverse countries can unlock a wealth of fresh perspectives and knowledge (e.g. Chen and Liang, 2016), thus conferring a competitive edge (e.g. Meyer and Bromley, 2013). Nevertheless, the variance in backgrounds, viewpoints, and other cultural facets can also sow seeds of misunderstanding and suboptimal performance, should organizations fail to judiciously allocate their resources (e.g. Reinwald *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, organizations have begun to prioritize DEIB as a means to harness the full potential of their global operations. By leveling the playing field across employees, collaborative efforts span intra- and inter-cultural divides, transcending borders. Nevertheless, many offices are embedded in distinct cultural, historical, and social contexts, giving rise to markedly different interpretations of DEIB. Consequently, delivering a uniform message of support for DEIB becomes increasingly challenging as individuals are nested within diverse subgroups (e.g. department, regional office, global organization), each with its unique experiences and priorities about this mission.

Despite the growing acknowledgment of the importance of DEIB work (Iyer, 2022; Mullin *et al.*, 2021), it still lacks a robust theoretical and empirical foundation when applied to global organizations. The intricate nature of defining diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging for a highly diverse workforce renders it a formidable task. This domain resides at the juncture of local and global influences, transcending conventional management paradigms (Edwards *et al.*, 2022). This is opposed to what the vast majority of the diversity management literature offers as either pointing to a global mindset where headquarters provide top-down standardized policies or a multi-domestic approach in which regional-level business define their own policies (Nishii and Ozbilgin, 2007). However, when confronted with this global-local conundrum, glocal frameworks emerge as a solution across contexts, including education (e.g. Medvide, 2021), migration (e.g. Mihr, 2019), and global studies (e.g. Roudometof, 2015). The term *glocal* can be defined as the balancing of what is essential from the local context to what is unfolding at other scales up to the planet (Bastardas-Boada, 2012). Consequently, it is not hard to see the need for more glocal-driven policies related to DEIB initiatives as either certain local norms or global context can pose substantial challenges for the standardization of policies. For example, the practice of implementing quotas to recruit individuals from marginalized backgrounds serves as a counterbalance to systemic biases ingrained in the selection process. However, quotas are unlawful in certain countries, such as the United States, where many multinational corporations are headquartered. Accordingly, research highlights the gap in finding ways to embrace DEIB while working with a cross-cultural and global workforce (Raimi *et al.*, 2022). The discrepancies between local and global priorities call for a much more flexible set of policies that incorporate what DEIB is domestically and globally.

Furthermore, the substantial impetus stemming from Western societies (e.g. #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, etc.) has led to the formulation of frameworks and policies that may not be well-suited to many cultures. This has even prompted some to categorize DEIB work as an exclusively “American” endeavor (Pride, 2021). Exceptions do exist, such as an ethnographic field study of Danish expatriates working in a Saudi Arabian office, which vividly illustrates local adaptations to diversity practices (Lauring, 2013). In parallel, a substantial number of global organizations have identified DEIB as a key area for human resource development, linked to corporate social responsibility and sustainability initiatives (Jang and Ardichvili, 2020). Nonetheless, these organizations underline the divergence in the broad versus narrow interpretations of DEIB held by these firms. Although the idea of integrating human resources to harmonize local and global norms has long been proposed as a means to cultivate social capital (e.g. Gomez and Sanchez, 2005), the ever-evolving landscape of DEIB worldwide presents an ongoing challenge to adopt a truly glocal framework. Recognizing that

exclusionary behaviors are pervasive globally, we must establish a foundation for aligning global and local support for DEIB, taking into account the perspectives of employees around the world.

The primary constraint of previous research is its Western-centric orientation and, more crucially, the tenuous link to DEIB work itself. For too long, many have argued the idea of equality through a *colorblind*, also understood by the metaphor of a *melting pot*, ideology, where we try to minimize demographic differences (Kafka, 2023; Leslie et al., 2020). This work stopped many Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) employees from feeling like themselves at work. But, also, assuming that diversity is about race everywhere is limiting their impact (Nishii and Ozbilgin, 2007). Existing literature on DEIB work predominantly focuses on conceptualizing DEIB, often overlooking its practical implementation (Gagnon et al., 2022). Consequently, this work is set to bridge this gap in the literature with three main contributions. First, this paper seeks to comprehensively grasp what glocal support for DEIB looks like at different levels (e.g. local and global). Second, drawing the integration of participative and sequential exploratory mixed-method designs, this paper offers results that are both action-oriented as Lewin's (1946) research and pluralistic, allowing for multiple truths (Olson, 2013). This aligns with recent recommendations of studying DEIB as a complex and pressing grand challenge (Kim and Tan, 2023). Third, a quantitative analysis shows the extent to which glocal support and other factors can drive DEIB work within a non-profit global organization spanning eight countries and three continents, as reported by employees. This approach permits an initial exploration of the nature of glocal support and subsequently facilitates an empirical evaluation of the predictive influence of glocal support beyond other DEIB-related factors.

In the subsequent sections, I delve into the intricacies of glocal support for DEIB, giving voice to the experiences of employees in Study 1. Subsequently, I develop hypotheses that explore potential drivers of DEIB work in global organizations in Study 2. Finally, I synthesize the findings from these two studies, reflecting on their implications and providing avenues for future research.

Theoretical background

To affect real change in DEIB, a combination of global and local support, known as “glocal” support, is essential for global organizations. Because glocalization of policy is not an easy to develop system (Bechtel and Urpelainen, 2015), it is imperative that strong theoretical and research methods are applied. First, theoretical frameworks provide a foundation for conceptualizing how global and local dynamics interact to influence diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. They offer a lens to examine not only individual experiences but also how organizational structures and cultural contexts shape DEIB efforts. For example, theories like Optimal Distinctiveness and Sensemaking, help unpack how employees interpret and navigate the interplay between global belonging and local distinctiveness, offering insights into the psychological and social mechanisms underpinning glocal DEIB support. Together, they offer an integrative theoretical motivation that allows us to create a robust framework for addressing the grand challenge of achieving equitable and inclusive practices in globally diverse organizations.

Glocal support for DEIB

The glocal terminology is not new as it was coined over 30 years ago (Roudometof, 2015). Since then, many have applied this social and cultural phenomenon to balance local and global perspectives in education, education, language, migration, or mostly products (e.g. Bastardas-Boada, 2012; Holt et al., 2004; Liu and Li, 2019; Medvide, 2021; Mihr, 2019). Theoretically, a glocal typology views globalization as a self-limiting process, that is mutually constituent between the global and local practices, with more creative hybrid cultures that occur in a new social space (Roudometof, 2015). Definitions of glocal include “a joint, multilevel,

stakeholder governance and policy endeavor” (Mihir, 2019, p. 45) or the “blending, mixing, and adapting of two or more processes, one of which must be local” (Roudometof, 2015, p. 78). Consequently, glocalization goes beyond the global perspective and can attain more positive results (Liu and Li, 2019). This is particularly true when individuals identify highly with local and global cultures (Holt et al., 2004).

Although promising in many sectors, little is known about the development and endorsement of glocal policies as they apply to the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging arena. Globally, DEI has become a focal point of social justice movements and organizational practices, particularly within multinational enterprises (MNEs), where DEIB efforts often aim to improve performance while struggling to tackle deep-rooted structural inequities (Vangeli, 2024). Effective DEI strategies extend beyond demographic metrics to create cultures of inclusion, empower employees from diverse backgrounds, and provide equitable opportunities for advancement (Ely and Thomas, 2020; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Locally, organizations can embrace diversity by encouraging cultural equity and the active participation of underrepresented voices in decision-making and creative expressions (Cornfield et al., 2024). Such initiatives contribute to healthier environments that can tackle discrimination, which particularly benefit employees from marginalized groups (Maroof and Kapate, 2023). Taken together, DEIB support at both local and global levels is integral to fostering equitable workplaces and communities, ensuring the representation and inclusion of underrepresented groups, and addressing systemic inequalities.

Ultimately, DEIB is not just a set of organizational practices but a guiding principle for navigating global complexities and fostering innovation, resilience, and inclusivity in education, workplaces, and society at large (Claville, 2024; DesRoches, 2022). Consequently, many of the generic global frameworks may not seem applicable across regions or the very nuanced and tailored programs cannot be understood globally. Only one exception was found in which research argued for the inclusion of a glocalized model to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities as part of diversity management (Migliaccio, 2015). Knowing that to achieve sustainable DEIB practices requires robust leadership frameworks, proactive policies, and culturally responsive programs tailored to diverse contexts (Sreedhar and Nayak, 2024; Kim and Tan, 2023). Adapting from Robertson’s (2020) definition, I propose the definition of glocal support of DEIB as *the evolving interplay of global and local processes, constantly transforming through iterative adaptations, that enhance the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging over time*. However, in practice, attaining such balance is challenging and often results in trade-offs between global and local approaches (Sippola and Smale, 2007). The most successful glocal policies will emerge from the development and revision of its components (Medvide, 2021). Achieving truly effective glocal policies requires an iterative process of collaboration, reflection, and adaptation, ensuring that both global and local needs are dynamically aligned and mutually reinforced. Next, we will elaborate on the theoretical lenses of this work.

Integrating optimal distinctiveness and sensemaking theories

As per Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991), individuals not only need to belong within a particular subgroup but also need to feel a sense of uniqueness. This interplay between belonging and uniqueness can be linked to global and local forces, respectively. Global practices tend to be more standardized and broader, while local ones are more proximate. Employees can simultaneously develop an identity with both global and local contexts. From an individual-level perspective, scholars have looked at global acculturation and identified four types: marginal (low global identity and low local identity), local (low global identity and high local identity), global (high global identity and low local identity), and glocal (high global identity and high local identity; Shokef and Erez, 2006; Harush et al., 2016). Accordingly, studies have shown that identifying with subgroup (local) and subordinate (global) identities can have a powerful and combined influence on significant outcomes, such as the novelty of

ideas in diverse teams (e.g. [Salazar et al., 2017](#)). When these identities are not properly managed, employees operating in a global organization may feel torn between conforming to global norms (belonging) and maintaining their local cultural identities (distinctiveness). Consequently, glocal support for DEIB would create an environment in which individuals feel both recognized for their subgroup (local) identity as well as their superordinate (global) identity.

With this more structural and context-focused phenomenon, individuals navigate the tension between their global and local identities through interpretive processes. Consequently, sensemaking theory ([Weick, 1995](#)) provides the mechanism by which employees reconcile their need for belonging within a global organization with their desire for distinctiveness rooted in local cultural contexts. By engaging in sensemaking, individuals can interpret and negotiate the meanings of global support of DEIB initiatives and adapt them to align with local practices, creating a cohesive narrative that satisfies both global and local (i.e. glocal) identity needs. This dynamic interplay ensures that employees feel both globally connected and locally authentic, fostering an inclusive environment that respects diverse perspectives. Sensemaking is considered as the process through which people assign meaning to issues or events that cause the current state of the world to be different from the expected state. Sensemaking theory provides a powerful lens for understanding the challenges and opportunities of glocal DEIB support. It emphasizes the dynamic, interpretive processes through which employees and organizations reconcile global initiatives with local realities, ultimately fostering inclusive practices that are contextually relevant and globally consistent.

In summary, optimal distinctiveness and sensemaking theories provide compelling frameworks for understanding how employees balance, interpret, and navigate the complex and often ambiguous nature of glocal DEIB initiatives. These lenses can provide the best way to understand how employees across the global can reconcile the glocal support.

Exploratory sequential and participative mixed-method research

Exploratory sequential mixed-method design is a two-phase design in which either one starts with quantitative then moves to a qualitative data collection, likely to contextualize unexpected quantitative results, or the reverse order (i.e. starting with qualitative then moving into quantitative data collection) which is mostly used in developing constructs that are not so well-defined in the literature yet ([McBeth, 2022](#)). Consequently, with the attempt to refine glocal support of DEIB, the latter is more appropriate. However, we complement this approach with participative action research. This design highlights two effectual components of this research: (1) fostering open and honest dialogue with stakeholders, and (2) encouraging research that is more practical and application-focused ([Lewin, 1946](#); [Kim and Tan, 2023](#)). However, there is a main concern with participative mixed methods research which is that it may be too context-specific ([Martin and Sherington, 1997](#)). To counter this, we draw from employees at different countries and different levels in addition to the sequential nature that allows us to better interpret, develop, and generalize our findings.

The current research

The current research presents a mixed methods design study focused on establishing a baseline for understanding what *glocal* support for DEIB would look like in organizations that span across regions. To gain a deeper insight into this emerging concept, I conducted a sequential exploratory with components of participative mixed-method inquiry to understand the interplay between local and global support for DEIB within a non-profit global organization spanning eight countries and three continents. Rather than isolating these two support levels, this study explores their intersection by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach permits an initial exploration of the nature of glocal support and subsequently facilitates an empirical evaluation of the predictive influence of glocal support beyond other DEIB-related factors. The paper presents the outcomes of two distinct phases.

- (1) A focus group comprising key employees from eight different offices to elucidate the concept of glocal support and DEIB work.
- (2) A comprehensive survey probing glocal support in contrast to individual, team, and organizational practices.

Study 1

With many recent political and business-driven decisions made organizations question DEIB efforts (Sitzmann *et al.*, 2024), more clarity and a continuous practice-scholar push in this are needed (Prasad and Sliwa, 2024). As per the earlier proposed definition, glocal support of DEIB would present the interplay between global and regional processes that can aid in leveraging differences, fostering an inclusive environment, and allowing everyone to succeed in their own way. The concept of “glocal” DEIB support embodies creating spaces where individuals feel valued for both their local cultural identity and their global organizational role. Navigating these dual identities often involves sensemaking (Weick, 1995), a process by which employees interpret and adapt global DEIB initiatives within local contexts. Building on Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991), individuals strive to balance two fundamental needs: a sense of belonging within a subgroup and a desire for uniqueness. This tension reflects broader global and local dynamics—global forces often being standardized and far-reaching, while local influences are more immediate and specific. Furthermore, through sensemaking, employees reconcile the expectations of global frameworks with the nuances of local realities, crafting a cohesive narrative that satisfies both their belonging and distinctiveness needs. This iterative process fosters inclusive practices that respect diverse perspectives while maintaining global consistency. By examining how individuals construct meaning in this dynamic interplay, sensemaking offers critical insights into the challenges and opportunities inherent in glocal DEIB support. While the theoretical premise of glocal DEIB support appears intuitively promising, the practicalities of achieving this balance remain elusive. To advance the scholarship and practice of DEIB, it is essential to examine how global and local forces intersect to foster inclusion and leverage differences effectively. Hence, this study poses the following primary research question.

RQ1. What does DEIB glocal support look like from employees’ perspectives at different offices?

Method

Participants

In collaboration with organizational stakeholders, participants were recruited from various offices and roles across the global organization to ensure the representation of diverse perspectives. They were all full-time employees of the same global organization, a not-for-profit organization distributed across eight countries, including its headquarters in the United Kingdom. To gather diverse perspectives on DEIB and glocal support across the organization, nine focus groups and three one-on-one sessions were conducted, involving a total of 62 participants. These hour-long conversations were transcribed verbatim by an independent note-taker. The average group size ranged from 4 to 9 individuals, with an average of 7 participants. Though demographic data was not collected to protect confidentiality, recruitment efforts were made to involve employees from different offices, roles, and backgrounds, including efforts to balance gender and geographic representation. Selection of one-on-one interviewees was based on their leadership positions and potential to provide unique insights into DEIB from a strategic perspective, including the CEO, the Head of Finance and People in one of the main offices, and a board member.

Data collection

The virtual focus groups and interviews were conducted via Zoom, between January and February 2021. A trained facilitator, skilled in moderating DEIB-related discussions, led each

session using a semi-structured interview guide. This guide was developed and refined based on the feedback from leadership at the different offices to ensure clarity and cultural sensitivity. After an introduction by the facilitator, participants responded to questions such as: “What is the current state of DEIB work in [the organization] compared to what you would like it to be? How does DEIB relate to your work? How does global support for DEIB compare to local support?” Additional probing questions were posed to encourage deeper discussions, including the use of DEIB terminology, cross-cultural competence, and stakeholder engagement. The facilitator provided participants with the flexibility to explore the conversation as broadly or deeply as they wished, with the caveat that they remained focused on DEIB and glocal support topics. After each focus group or interview, the facilitator summarized key points to confirm the accuracy of the main points extracted, and participants were invited to provide feedback.

Data analysis

A bottom-up approach was employed to code the focus groups and interview notes due to the limited literature on glocal support for DEIB. To identify major themes, two individuals independently reviewed all the transcripts and reached a consensus together. The analysis process followed the six stages recommended for interview data analysis: (1) data familiarization, (2) initial code formation, (3) theme development, (4) reviewing of themes, (5) defining of themes, and (6) reporting the themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). More specifically, for the data familiarization stage, both coders independently reviewed the data and took notes. For the initial code formation, they first came up with codings based on the transcripts independently. For the theme development, both coders shared their initial codings and started to merge them into more meaningful categories or clusters (e.g. equity, pay, training, internships, mentoring). For the reviewing of themes, a more in-depth look was across levels (e.g. transcript extracts and codes). Here, we also looked at underreported themes that did not come up often (e.g. holidays, personality). We noted that some of the divergent original codes had already been collapsed into broader themes. For example, when participants talked about the inequity in pay and the need for clear promotion grids, coder 1 originally labeled this equity in decision making whereas coder 2 labeled this transparency in HR. Both of these are already categorized as *fairness of decision-making* themes. The defining of themes was the most participative and iterative process with stakeholders to ensure that the main themes were meaningful and appropriate to the organization. For the reporting of themes, we extracted the representative quotes from each of the main themes and related it back to the main research question of glocal support of DEIB. These main themes are discussed in the following sections.

The emerged features of glocal support for DEIB

In our effort to answer the research question, “What does DEIB glocal support look like from employees’ perspectives at different offices?” we extracted several key themes. These themes provide insights into how global organizations can effectively shape their DEIB initiatives through a combination of global and local (glocal) support.

Theme I: fairness in decision-making

Our qualitative analysis revealed that a significant part of the discussions in focus groups and interviews revolved around perceived inequities, exclusions, and a lack of diversity. Recruitment strategies, particularly reliance on “feeder schools” or referrals from existing employees, were pointed out as contributing to continued homogeneity in the workforce, particularly regarding race, gender, and socioeconomic class. An evident disparity emerged in the treatment and compensation of interns across different offices, given the varying costs of living in different cities. The global organization mainly offered unpaid or minimally

compensated internships, which had ramifications for global communication as only some were categorized as employees. To diversify the workforce, organizations need to provide paid internships to make them accessible to students from various backgrounds (Silva *et al.*, 2024). Transparency in the selection process is crucial to ensure that employees and candidates perceive it as fair (Ingram, 2009). Employees recognized the need for autonomy and flexibility in implementing DEIB policies, considering local market dynamics, legal regulations, and cultural components. For instance, some thoughts they shared:

Things should go hand in hand for local and global. Implementing policies in one region does not mean they will work in another.

If you have staff in different locations, then there needs to be autonomy and flexibility given to local staff to do stuff related to their region. They know the market better, and they should be a guide.

Therefore, fairness in decision-making does not imply identical procedures across all offices but rather entails global support, where global DEIB principles harmonize with local conditions to empower each office. When referring to fairness in resources, they did not expect the global organization to be dictating and implementing the same policies across all offices.

Theme II: leaders that model DEIB values

Leaders' engagement is pivotal for meaningful DEIB work. Employees exhibited a deep understanding of DEIB principles and the differences between concepts and their practical applications (Johnson, 2020). However, the same level of understanding was not consistently observed in upper management. Some leaders were perceived as resistant to DEIB initiatives, while others focused primarily on gender diversity. The observations revealed a significant gap in engagement and awareness among leaders. It was clear that the success of DEIB initiatives depended largely on what leaders valued and how they acted. Consequently, it was not surprising to hear statements such as:

I just want them to go away, practice; then come back.

The leadership team is not diverse, and conversations are not happening at that level.

They lack the knowledge and interaction with people different from them, so they do not know how to engage.

There are very different types of management in parts of the world, so they [global leaders] need to be aware of that.

It seems like 1/3 of our leadership is invested and wants to do this work. 1/3 more at a surface level, are supportive but do not know much about the issues. The last 1/3 (have) shown a lack of interest in these issues. We have mostly all white, all-male, board, and we are trying to change this. But it is obvious that there is a lack of support from some people.

More senior people, they do not care as much. Is it that they're not interested, or is it that they can't add this part?

Cultivating a DEIB-friendly culture requires leaders to set expectations and values that signal their commitment. It is through organizational leaders, whether formal or emergent, that folks from different offices can come together and interact positively (Hong *et al.*, 2011). Accordingly, the engagement of leaders across different levels, from local offices to the global level, was seen as essential. Employees looked to leadership for education and delivery of DEIB work, and they were eager for leaders to take the initiative.

Theme III: continuous discussion of DEIB

Another prominent theme was the importance of continuous DEIB discussions. Providing the space for dialogue, especially with DEIB-focused managers, enhances the engagement of

those from marginalized identities (Sreedhar and Nayak, 2024). Recognizing that employees have varying needs and expertise is essential for effective, practical training. Some offices displayed a strong dedication to DEIB work, fostering dialogue and rich discussions among all employees. For instance, an employee described a recent event they had about DEIB:

Rather than having speakers, we had a keynote listener. We mostly talked, and had a rich dialogue with each other, while the keynote listener played a small role. Then, the keynote listener chimed in at the end summarizing what they heard.

In contrast, other offices struggled to navigate cultural differences, making it challenging to create a message that resonated with everyone simultaneously:

It's hard to integrate these ideas when cultures are so different, even with technology, when we have this discussion with the HR offices and everyone. Hard to have a message that resonates with everyone at the same time while paying attention to local contexts.

However, this is exactly the kind of work that would show glocal support for DEIB—not necessarily having employees highlight the need for facilitating discourse, especially across different levels, and understanding cultural differences to ensure meaningful DEIB discussions. To enhance cross-cultural collaboration, empathy, and emotional management strategies were suggested. Global organizations can create a more inclusive environment by applying these strategies and engaging in open communication. Ultimately, glocal DEIB support goes beyond obligatory actions; it becomes an integral part of all discussions and is translated into budget allocations. Employees expressed a strong desire to participate in events where DEIB issues are discussed, and resources are allocated, emphasizing the importance of glocal support:

Sometimes feels like senior management does not have enough of an insight into (how) staff feel. There is often a transmit and not receive. So many questions may not be answered. So, there is a misunderstanding from the management of what transparency looks like. We need more of a feedback loop. Maybe there should be more blank agendas to talk about more things.

Highlighting the different working cultures in different countries is super important. This is related to project implementation; we need to understand the typical work cultures.

In summary, these themes shed light on the multifaceted nature of glocal support for DEIB in global organizations. The evolving interplay of global and local processes can be specified now as: fairness in decision making, promotion of leadership engagement, and continuous dialogue about DEIB across different levels. To truly drive DEIB progress, we must constantly transform these processes through iterative adaptations, that enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging over time. This qualitative analysis lays the foundation for understanding the complex web of factors that drive DEIB initiatives in diverse offices, a crucial aspect of promoting equity and inclusion in the global workplace. The findings from this study, in conjunction with existing literature, provide a comprehensive perspective on the dynamics of glocal support and other drivers of DEIB work at various organizational levels.

Study 2

With a qualitative understanding of the components of glocal support for DEIB established, the next critical step is to quantitatively measure this construct and examine its predictive power in fostering meaningful DEIB outcomes. Beyond the importance of glocal support, DEIB work itself is shaped by an interplay of factors at various contextual levels, including national, organizational, and team dynamics. Farndale *et al.* (2015) highlight these nested levels of analysis, each presenting unique challenges and influencing how DEIB initiatives are conceptualized and operationalized. For example, national contexts may shape normative expectations for diversity, organizational cultures may prioritize specific inclusion strategies,

and team dynamics may determine how well inclusion is enacted in practice. These distinctions are vital for understanding how DEIB work is sustained across levels.

While existing models of global diversity management (e.g. [Nishii and Özbilgin, 2007](#)) emphasize leadership and organizational culture as primary drivers, they often overlook the multifaceted, dynamic nature of DEIB efforts across contexts. Drawing inspiration from frameworks like the Cultural Mosaic Theory ([Chao and Moon, 2005](#)), which conceptualizes individuals as embodying multiple intersecting cultural identities, DEIB work must similarly be seen as a phenomenon influenced by multiple, interwoven factors across levels. For instance, [Joshi and Roh \(2009\)](#) have identified diversity dynamics across industry, occupation, and team levels, underscoring the need for deeper contextual understanding.

Glocal support for DEIB, as a construct, captures the nuanced interplay between global consistency and local responsiveness, creating an inclusive environment that values both organizational alignment and cultural distinctiveness. To advance this understanding, we must determine whether glocal support offers unique explanatory power beyond other established factors that influence DEIB work. Specifically, this study aims to examine whether glocal support predicts DEIB effectiveness above and beyond factors such as comfort with dissimilarity, team trust, and accountability—elements previously linked to successful DEIB initiatives. For example, while comfort with dissimilarity highlights the inclusivity of specific practices, trust facilitates open communication and collaboration, and accountability ensures individuals and teams take responsibility for DEIB initiatives. Glocal support for DEIB may uniquely go beyond these elements for more effective DEIB work.

Individual characteristic: comfort with differences

Given the diversity of interactions people have with DEIB, certain individual characteristics can make some individuals more receptive to building deep and meaningful relationships with people from different backgrounds. The theory of generative interactions ([Bernstein et al., 2020](#)) highlights the importance of adaptive cognitive processing and skill development in fostering interactions that challenge exclusionary dynamics. One such key characteristic is being comfortable with differences. This is an attitudinal construct that refers to an individual's ease and openness in forming connections with others who differ from them ([Sanger et al., 2015](#)). Embracing the complexity of DEIB topics, even when uncomfortable, is a fundamental step in achieving progress. When recognizing this complexity, someone questioned the approach of talking about each category separately:

[These are] difficult topics for me, even though these topics are fundamental, I find that the breaking down of all kinds of categories, I'm not sure where that leads us.

This aligns with the concept of a global mindset, where individuals value cultural diversity and incorporate it into their core work and mission ([Paul, 2000](#)). Openness to new approaches and solutions is also essential in diverse workplaces ([Brunton and Cook, 2018](#)). To foster a more inclusive environment and engage in meaningful communication, activities that encourage discomfort in the face of dissimilarity can be implemented ([Ang et al., 2007](#)). One's easiness and openness to form ties with dissimilar others is distinct from the broader outcomes of DEIB work, which focuses on fostering equity, inclusion, and belonging at structural and organizational levels. While DEIB initiatives aim to create systems and cultures that support these outcomes, comfort with dissimilarity functions as an individual-level enabler that facilitates participation in and contribution to these initiatives. By hypothesizing a relationship between comfort with dissimilarity and DEIB work, we acknowledge that individuals who thrive in the face of difference are better positioned to engage with and support DEIB initiatives. Thus, we hypothesize that comfort with dissimilarity will positively correlate with DEIB work.

H1. Comfort with dissimilarity will be positively related to DEIB work

Team characteristic: team trust

Team characteristics significantly impact DEIB work, as team composition can sometimes create disparities, especially for members from marginalized backgrounds who may face tokenization. This over-reliance on underrepresented individuals not only places undue pressure on them but also highlights a broader structural issue in fostering a sense of belonging within teams. As one employee insightfully noted:

People in the [specific type of] industry are sometimes tokenized, though. How do we start to build a community because there are not enough people to be these people?

To counteract this, building a sense of community within a team must be a shared responsibility. Central to this effort is team trust, which is foundational to team effectiveness and becomes even more critical in multicultural or diverse settings (Feitosa *et al.*, 2018). Trust allows team members to rely on one another, promotes psychological safety, and enables individuals to feel comfortable being vulnerable—a crucial element for equitable collaboration (Meyerson *et al.*, 1996). Efforts to build trust and a global sense of community within teams can take many forms, including both formal and informal initiatives. For instance, an employee suggested simple yet effective approaches to fostering connections in a dispersed or global context:

Thinking about what other ways online that we can create a global community is great. Global quizzes, social hours, getting together for fun ways to get to know each other.

However, community-building efforts must extend beyond surface-level interactions, such as quizzes or social hours. It requires creating an environment where team members feel genuinely supported, valued, and empowered to contribute. This is especially crucial in diverse settings, where dissimilarities may become more salient and could potentially lead to divisions (e.g. Lau and Murnighan, 1998; van Knippenberg *et al.*, 2020). In general, trust has been linked to better communication of DEI policies in other regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean (Labarca *et al.*, 2025). Trusting relationships act as a bridge, enabling diverse team members to overcome these divides and work collaboratively toward DEIB goals. Therefore, we hypothesize that team trust will positively correlate with DEIB work.

H2. Team trust will be positively related to DEIB work

Organizational characteristic: accountability

An organization's values and the signals it sends to its workforce play a pivotal role in shaping employee behaviors. While DEIB work itself often takes center stage, the mechanisms for accountability and transparency that underlie these efforts are equally critical in sustaining meaningful progress. Accountability frameworks and transparent operations are not merely supportive elements; they are foundational for fostering trust and driving engagement across organizations (Bernstein *et al.*, 2015; Mullin *et al.*, 2021). Employees consistently express the need for clarity and updates on organizational efforts, often voicing frustration when these mechanisms are absent or insufficiently visible, echoing:

I want to know exactly what we are doing to fix this [lack of DEIB work] and prevent it from happening again. There is no pathway for the desired outcome. It is not acknowledged that this happens and what is happening. There are no updates about the changes. There is no asking for consultation. It is like a black hole. This is very reactive, and not transparent.

These frustrations point to the broader importance of organizational accountability mechanisms, which not only enable tracking and assessment of DEIB initiatives but also motivate ongoing commitment and trust among employees. As highlighted by Washington (2023), accountability mechanisms transform diversity-valuing behaviors from perceived liabilities into performance assets, ensuring that DEIB strategies are seen as integrated and

impactful rather than superficial or reactive. Similarly, [Johnson and Lin \(2024\)](#) emphasize that transparency in DEIB work fosters alignment between organizational actions and employee expectations, ensuring clarity in metrics, measures, and progress reporting. Accordingly, accountability mechanisms within an organization enable learning, assessment, and continuous motivation to engage in DEIB work. Accountability and conscientious actions against issues like racism are closely linked ([Seijts and Milani, 2022](#)). An employee mentioned dissatisfaction with being kept in the dark regarding the initiatives related to DEIB:

I have not heard much and there should be more visibility internally and progress reports about where EID work is going.

This highlights the critical need for organizations to move beyond isolated DEIB efforts toward a structured and transparent approach to accountability. Proactively sharing goals, measures, and progress builds not only employee trust but also the momentum required for sustained, systemic change. Given the central role of accountability and transparency in fostering effective DEIB environments, we hypothesize the following.

H3. Organizational accountability will be positively related to DEIB work

Glocal support for DEIB

Incorporating the concept of glocal support, which encompasses fairness in decision-making, leadership role modeling, and fostering DEIB-related dialogue within global organizations, represents a crucial driver of DEIB work. Glocal support reflects the dynamic interplay between global and local mechanisms that collectively create the conditions necessary for meaningful DEIB initiatives to thrive. By establishing this foundation, glocal support enables the adoption of DEIB behaviors, including bias reduction, formalizing equitable procedures, and engaging in active allyship, while also contributing to the development of organizational social capital (e.g. [Gomez and Sanchez, 2005](#)). One employee eloquently describes the challenges of fostering equity within the organization:

Engaging with them [the headquarters] on issues of racial and social equity, within the organization and our work feels like a tone deafness compounded by a total lack of vision and understanding that this is an opportunity to think about the kind of organization we should be building and the work we should be doing. Not because it's a "nice to have" or "required by law" but because quite literally it is what is going to be the future of this organization. We need to move away from certain ways of doing business where there is no accountability, transparency, and lack of equity. There needs to be serious self-reflection to realize the opportunity of DEIB in the work. I do not see it reflected in the budget and priorities of the offices, outside of [our office] who had to push the headquarters into doing this. Who is going to step up at headquarters to do this? When it is going to be too late?

This statement underscores the critical need for coordinated efforts between global and local teams to address systemic inequities and embed DEIB work into the organization's fabric. It highlights that progress requires more than local initiatives—it depends on the interplay of glocal support mechanisms. These mechanisms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing: fairness in decision-making, leadership role modeling, and spaces for dialogue. Accordingly, [Nishii and Ozbilgin \(2007\)](#) emphasize the importance of global management of diversity in improving employee engagement, performance, and innovation. However, achieving these outcomes requires the systemic integration of global and local support structures. Without glocal support for DEIB, any of the DEIB efforts risk becoming fragmented, reactive, or superficial, limiting their impact.

Moreover, as DEIB priorities evolve across global contexts, organizations must adapt to ensure sustained progress. [Thoroughgood et al. \(2021\)](#) argue that dismantling systemic inequities demands dual accountability at both global and local levels. This dual accountability ensures that DEIB work is not siloed but instead embedded into organizational strategies, policies, and day-to-day operations. In essence, glocal support serves as a vital enabler,

bridging the gap between strategic vision and practical implementation. It aligns global priorities with local realities, ensuring that employees feel supported as part of a unified mission. By fostering fairness, role modeling, and dialogue, glocal support creates the conditions necessary for DEIB work to flourish and drive meaningful change. Taken this together, we now hypothesize.

- H4. Glocal support for DEIB will be positively related to DEIB work, above and beyond (a) comfort with differences, (b) team trust, and (c) accountability.

Methods

Participants and procedure

A kick-off virtual meeting was held to introduce phase II of the research project, provide the researcher's contact information, ensure participant anonymity, and convey the project's overarching purpose beyond the specific hypotheses. Employees were invited to participate in the survey by the global human resources director, and two reminder messages were sent to encourage participation. Notably, 264 out of the 419 eligible employees completed the survey, resulting in an impressive 63% response rate. All offices, except two, met the 50% response rate requirement for interpreting regional data. These two offices were retained in the dataset as we eventually decided against segmenting the data by region.

A breakdown of demographic information is presented in [Table 1](#). The majority of participants self-identified as White (50.4%), female (56.4%), not part of the LGBTQ + community (75.4%), without a disability (77.7%), holding a Master's degree (54.2%), not being first-generation college attendees (69.3%), without children (65.5%), and not part of the leadership team (66.3%). The average age of participants was 33.76 years, and they had been with the company for an average of 2.49 years.

Measures

Confirmatory factor analysis. To gain more confidence in our measurement, a confirmatory factor analysis was applied to examine the factor structure of the study variables. The overall model fit for the measurement analysis was evaluated using χ^2 statistic, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), as well as the RMSEA confidence interval. Specifically, following these recommendations: (1) a non-significant χ^2 but now without considering the number of observations as this index is highly sensitive to sample size (Jöreskog, 1969; Quintana and Maxwell, 1999), (2) CFI higher than 0.90 for good fit, and above 0.95 for excellent fit, and (3) RMSEA lower than 0.06 for excellent, and below 0.08 for acceptable fit, as well as (4) a confidence interval with lower bound equal or less than 0.05 (Byrne, 2006; Hu and Bentler, 1999; MacCallum *et al.*, 1996). Accordingly, the CFA results confirmed the existence of six separate factors: DEIB work, comfort with differences, team trust, organizational accountability, and glocal support for DEIB; $\chi^2(314) = 572$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.057 (0.049–0.064), whereas the one-factor structure with all items of the study showed poor fit according to all the criteria aforementioned: $\chi^2(324) = 1943$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.43, RMSEA = 0.140 (0.134–0.146). Although the χ^2 is significant in both models, it is recommended to rely on more reliable indices for the reasonableness of the proposed model fit (Feitosa *et al.*, 2017; Ponterotto *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, the six-factor structure of the hypothesized variables is much superior, with CFI showing a good, RMSEA showing excellent fit, and the lower bound meeting the lower bound at less than 0.05.

DEIB work. The outcome measure assessing perceptions of DEIB work was developed through a participative process involving stakeholders from across the organization. This approach ensured that the items were contextually relevant and representative of employees' experiences. Additionally, the development process included a review and

Table 1. Demographic information of Study 2

	Frequency	Percent
Office location		
Headquarter	120	45.5
North America	54	20.5
Europe	18	6.8
Latin America	25	9.5
Hong Kong	10	3.8
Beijing/China	8	3
Japan	7	2.7
India	22	8.3
Racio-ethnicity		
White	133	50.4
Black	4	1.5
Asian	50	18.9
Latinx	11	4.2
Other	34	12.9
Gender identity		
Female	149	56.4
Male	83	31.4
Non-binary/Gender queer/Gender Fluid	3	1.1
Self-disclosed	1	0.4
Part of the LGBTQ + Community		
No	199	75.4
Other/Maybe/Kinda	7	2.7
Yes	29	11
Disability or long-term health condition		
No	205	77.7
Yes	28	10.6
Religion		
Christianity	52	19.7
Hinduism	18	6.8
Buddhism	16	6.1
Atheism	78	29.5
Judaism	9	3.4
Islam	5	1.9
Spiritual	3	1.1
No religion	13	4.9
Other	21	8
Agnostic	11	4.2
Highest degree of education		
High school or equivalent	7	2.7
Some college coursework completed	3	1.1
Associate degree	1	0.4
Bachelor's degree	72	27.3
Master's degree	143	54.2
Doctorate (academic or professional)	10	3.8
First generation in college		
No	183	69.3
Yes	45	17
Marital status		
Single	109	41.3
Widowed	2	0.8
Married	78	29.5
Unmarried partner	39	14.8
Legally separated	2	0.8
Registered domestic partner	2	0.8

(continued)

Table 1. Continued

	Frequency	Percent
Children		
No	173	65.5
Yes	56	21.2
Other caring responsibilities	5	1.9
Job category		
Employee	175	66.3
Management	39	14.8
Director	15	5.7
Executive Team	7	2.7
Job tenure	$M = 2.49$	$SD = 2.95$
Age	$M = 33.76$	$SD = 9.43$
Note(s): $N = 264$ employees		
Source(s): Author's own creation		

adaptation of items from existing validated measures, such as Taormina's (1994) Organizational Socialization Inventory, Ang *et al.*'s (2007) Cultural Intelligence Scale, and instruments assessing global mindset behaviors. Sample items included "We have structured opportunities for sharing and self-disclosure (e.g. affirming pronouns, accommodation needs) across our offices," "We demonstrate flexibility for differing needs and preferences around the globe," and "We explain the unwritten rules (e.g. video call etiquette, dress code) to new employees." The resulting measure demonstrated strong internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$). The removal of each item showed a slightly lower Cronbach's alpha, indicating that each item contributes positively to the reliability of the scale and the model fit confirms the appropriateness of the single factor structure $\chi^2(9) = 8.63$, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.000 (0.000–0.071). Therefore, this data provides initial evidence for the reliability and validity of these items.

Comfort with differences. An item from the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (M-GUDS)-S (1999) on comfort with differences was used and adapted to make it more specific. We have replaced culture in this item "It's really hard for me to feel close to a person of another culture" to read race, age, gender identity, religion, mental ability, physical ability, socioeconomic status, or nationality. This eight-item comfort for differences measure did not show significant differences across the diversity categories, justifying its analysis as a cluster (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$).

Team trust. To assess team trust, we utilized three items from de Jong and Elfring's (2010) trust in team scale. Sample items include: "I can count on my team members for help if I have difficulties with my job" and "I am confident that my team members will take my interests into account when making work-related decisions" (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$).

Organizational accountability. To assess organizational accountability, we used a 4-item measure including "My organization has effective mechanisms for staff accountability around DEIB, such as formal grievance/complaints process and clear disciplinary outcomes" and "My organization has a clear response to all forms of violence in the workplace including verbal, physical, or sexual harassment" (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.77$).

Glocal support for DEIB. Based on employee perspectives, a glocal support measure was developed to capture the three previously mentioned components: fairness in decision-making, leadership role modeling behavior, and the presence of space for DEIB dialogue within a global organization. The items and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results for the glocal measure are provided in Table 2. The analysis indicated that a two-factor model, differentiating between local and global support, was more suitable based on better model fit indices and higher factor loadings. These two dimensions, local (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74$) and

Table 2. Glocal measurement details

Items	Factor loadings		
	Two-factor	One factor	
Local support			
1. My local office's senior leaders model DEIB values in their work	0.79	0.75	
2. At a local level, [our organization] has regular discussions about furthering DEIB within the organization and its work	0.64	0.53	
3. At a local level, [our organizational] leaders are fair when it comes to decision-making (e.g. hiring, promotion, etc.)	0.73	0.69	
Global support			
1. My global office's senior leaders model DEIB values in their work	0.73	0.70	
2. At a global level, [our organization] has regular discussions about furthering DEIB within the organization and its work	0.59	0.56	
3. At a global level, [our organizational] leaders are fair when it comes to decision-making (e.g. hiring, promotion, etc.)	0.54	0.53	
	χ^2 (df)	CFI	RMSEA
Two-factor	81.4 (8)*	0.86	0.194 (0.157; 0.233)
One factor	91.9 (9)*	0.84	0.194 (0.159; 0.231)
Note(s): $p < 0.001$			
Source(s): Author's own creation			

global (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74$), were combined by summing their squared values. This approach assigns more weight when both local and global support align with each other, yielding the final score.

Study 2 results and discussion

Study 2 empirical findings are presented stepwise (see [Table 3](#) for a summary). Contrary to our [Hypothesis 1](#), the comfort with dissimilarity was not significantly related to DEIB, $\beta = 0.00$, $p > 0.05$. One potential explanation for the lack of support for this hypothesis might stem from individuals reporting more comfort than they really feel in reality ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.49$). In contrast, we found support for [Hypothesis 2](#) as team trust was positively related to DEIB work, $\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$. Greater trust in teammates, the belief that they can count on each other, and a willingness to be vulnerable were linked to a more prominent presence of DEIB-related

Table 3. Stepwise regressions related to DEIB work

Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Comfort with dissimilarity	0.00	−0.04	−0.03	0.00
Team trust		0.24**	0.10	0.01
Org. accountability			0.42**	0.17*
GLOCAL support for DEIB				0.56**
df	232	231	230	229
R^2	0.00	0.06	0.22	0.44
ΔR^2		0.06**	0.16**	0.23**
F	0.001	6.755**	20.967**	45.595**
Note(s): $N = 264$; Entries represent standardized regression weights				
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$				
Source(s): Author's own creation				

actions in the organization. We also found support for our [Hypothesis 3](#), as organizational accountability was positively related to DEIB work, $\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$. Effective mechanisms for staff accountability, grievance processes, and responses to workplace violence were associated with the emergence of DEIB opportunities and behaviors.

Most notably, we found substantial support for [Hypotheses 4a-4c](#) as glocal support was positively related to DEIB work, $\beta = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$. Specifically, glocal support proved to be positively related to DEIB work above and beyond other factors like comfort with differences ($\beta = 0.00$, $p > 0.05$), team trust ($\beta = 0.01$, $p > 0.05$), and accountability ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.004$). [Figure 1](#) shows a summary of these findings in the context of the overall study. Accordingly, these findings underscore the significance of glocal support in influencing DEIB outcomes, emphasizing the importance of addressing the interplay between local and global dimensions. Organizational accountability is identified as a central element in driving DEIB work. Notably, within the final step of the model, the strength of the relationship between glocal support and perceptions of DEIB work is evident. This suggests that investing in illustrating glocal support, as opposed to focusing solely on individual, team, or organizational practices, can yield substantial benefits.

General discussion

To answer the need to understand the nested influence of supportive activities for DEIB, this study extends our understanding of what propels DEIB outcomes in global organizations and defines glocal (e.g. local and global) support for DEIB through employee perspectives. This study built from the dual challenge of transcending borders and addressing local nuances in global organizations ([Caligiuri and Stroh, 1995](#); [Edwards et al., 2022](#)) to the intricate balance needed for effective DEIB work through three components: fairness in decision-making, leadership role modeling, and continuous dialogue. These themes highlight the necessity of tailoring global DEIB principles to local contexts. Our qualitative findings resonate with the notion that fairness in decision-making extends beyond standardization ([Ingram, 2009](#); [Silva et al., 2024](#)), the potential gap between employees' understanding of DEIB principles and upper management's engagement with these activities ([Johnson, 2020](#)), and the importance for fostering a DEIB-friendly culture, particularly through space for dialogue ([Hong et al., 2011](#); [Sreedhar and Nayak, 2024](#)). Fairness in hiring, pay equity, and resource allocation across locations addresses both local equity concerns and aligns with global DEIB goals. Although this is not new advice that employees want autonomy and flexibility ([Thomas and Protas,](#)

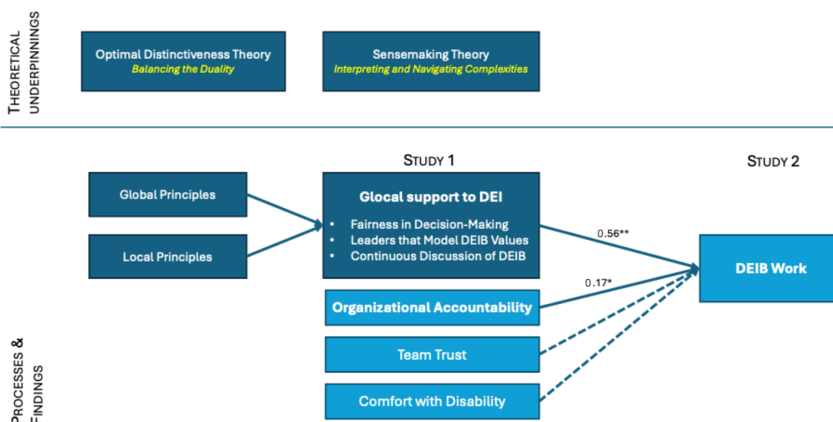


Figure 1. Illustration of study theories and results. Note. $^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.001$. Source: Author's own creation

2006), this need reflects the importance of locally adapted practices that still align with an overarching DEIB mission rather than a top-down global policy that regions have to follow. It is important to acknowledge the variation in DEIB engagement among leaders and how this, ultimately, affects the broader organizational culture. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of ongoing DEIB discussions as part of glocal support. The continuous dialogue fosters a culture of inclusion, where employees feel heard and engaged. There is true value in more culturally sensitive communication strategies to overcome barriers to participation across various regional offices. Therefore, results show the need for globally informed, locally adapted leadership training that emphasizes empathy and cultural awareness. Together, this work then calls for more context-sensitive adaptations that reflect diverse cultural, economic, and legal environments, enabling employees to feel a sense of belonging and equity.

With the Optimal Distinctiveness and Sensemaking theories lenses, we can best understand employees' navigation of global and local identities and how these mechanisms manifest. Examples of local adaptations to DEIB practices (Lauring, 2013) and the tension between global and local norms (Nishii and Ozbilgin, 2007; Mihr, 2019) serve as interpretive anchors for explaining results tied to regional variations. In continuing to understand how employees balance, interpret, and navigate the complex and often ambiguous nature of glocal DEIB initiatives, the quantitative phase of this study validated the pivotal role of glocal support for DEIB as it emerged as the strongest predictor of DEIB work. This construct outperforms other drivers like comfort with dissimilarity, team trust, and organizational accountability. Consequently, this brings glocal support for DEIB to the forefront as organizations face unique challenges and complexities in creating DEIB initiatives that resonate across diverse cultural and organizational contexts. Study 2 findings demonstrated that organizational accountability mechanisms significantly predicted DEIB work. This reinforces prior research linking accountability structures—such as grievance processes and anti-harassment policies—to positive DEIB outcomes (Ingram, 2009). Additionally, team trust emerged as a critical factor, underscoring the role of psychological safety which is also related to team reflexivity and constructive dialogue in enabling teams to engage in meaningful DEIB work. These findings align with theories of team dynamics, which suggest that trust (De Jong *et al.*, 2016, Feitosa *et al.*, 2020) and accountability (e.g. O'Connor *et al.*, 1997; Marx and Squintani, 2009), are foundational to effective collaboration and innovation. Contrary to expectations, comfort with dissimilarity did not significantly predict DEIB work. This surprising result may reflect social desirability bias, as participants reported higher comfort levels than they might genuinely experience. Alternatively, it may suggest that while comfort with differences is valuable, it is insufficient in isolation to drive DEIB initiatives. It may even be related to the power and status of participants in which those who are more comfortable with dissimilarities may not have access to DEIB work available. Taken together, the empirical work emphasizes the strong link between glocal support for DEIB and DEIB work itself, above and beyond any of the other factors discussed. This further reinforces the importance of aligning global and local practices (e.g. Bastardas-Boada, 2012; Roudometof, 2015) as predicted.

Connecting the two studies, one may say that through leadership engagement, team trust and organizational accountability may indirectly increase, which in turn would lead to more DEIB work. These results suggest that leaders who model inclusive behaviors foster environments where trust and accountability flourish, creating a fertile ground for DEIB initiatives. Both studies revealed significant gaps in leadership engagement by emphasizing that while employees demonstrated a deep understanding of DEIB principles, inconsistent commitment among leaders hindered progress. These insights echo Johnson's (2020) call for leadership accountability in driving DEIB initiatives and suggest that global organizations must prioritize leadership development programs to enhance cultural competence and DEIB literacy. Accordingly, effective DEIB strategies must be embedded in a transparent system of policies and practices, coupled with regular communication and progress updates to stakeholders. Without such systems, DEIB work risks being perceived as hollow or

disconnected from broader organizational goals. Importantly, the results challenge the notion of a “one-size-fits-all” strategy. As employees highlighted, effective DEIB work requires empowering local offices to adapt global policies while maintaining alignment with overarching organizational goals. This iterative process fosters cultural competence and enhances the legitimacy of DEIB efforts in diverse settings. The study addresses gaps stemming from Western-centric approaches to DEIB (Nishii and Ozbilgin, 2007; Pride, 2021) and emphasizes context-specific needs or culturally adaptive practices. The action-oriented and pluralistic nature (Lewin, 1946; Kim and Tan, 2023) of this topic calls for more discussion of the practical and theoretical insights of this work.

Implications

As organizations continue to push boundaries, it becomes crucial to understand the components and the nomological network of glocal support for DEIB. Study 1, as demonstrated, highlights the invaluable insights provided by employees in delineating what support entails. The three components of glocal support have now been qualitatively and quantitatively defined. This study emphasizes the need for flexible and inclusive DEIB policies that align global and local priorities (Raimi *et al.*, 2022) while being adaptable to the unique cultural, social, and legal contexts of different regions. Study 2 underscores the predictive power of glocal support across regions, surpassing other characteristics. This work emphasizes the significance of glocal support in DEIB while also shedding light on the ongoing importance of other characteristics. Organizational accountability, in particular, emerges as an aspect that organizations should prioritize to ensure effective DEIB work. The mechanisms of accountability for DEIB are more influential than individual and team characteristics such as an individual’s comfort with diversity and their level of trust in their team members. Consequently, this advances not only the conceptualization but also the operationalization of this construct.

From a practical perspective, there are three main takeaways for organizations. First, it is worthwhile the investment in glocal support, particularly as it applies to DEIB. Organizations should prioritize resources including training to empower their local offices to adapt and influence global DEIB principles in a more symbiotic manner. This will foster more alignment and engagement across regions. Second, other factors that are yet heavily linked to glocal support and DEIB work is team trust and organizational accountability. Consequently, implementing some robust accountability structures and initiatives can also build team trust and create the conditions necessary for sustainable DEIB work. Last but not least, the development of inclusive leadership should be an emphasis for all team leaders and executives. There are important baseline knowledge and skills that one must have to hold space, serve as a role model, and facilitate conversations, including cultural competence, active listening, and inclusive behaviors to bridge the gap between policy and practice. These leaders can spearhead regular opportunities for cross-cultural discussions and feedback loops which in turn can deepen employees’ engagement with DEIB initiatives. Hence, these findings are pivotal in comprehending glocal culture from both a top-down and bottom-up approach.

Limitations and future research

This study is not without limitations. While extensive effort was made to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from full-time employees, it remains a self-report study. Given the sensitive nature of the DEIB topic, it would be hard to gather data more objectively, as employees’ perceptions of whether a policy is fair or not hold greater significance than external ratings or other quantifications of such statements. However, common method bias still exists and has the potential to inflate results. Future research could introduce alternative measures, such as faultlines or turnover rates, to explore the consequences of glocal support beyond mere perceptions. Relatedly in exploring the validity of these constructs, future research should provide further evidence for the validation of the

glocal support for DEI and DEI work measures. Also, it would be beneficial to examine the longitudinal effects of glocal support on DEIB outcomes and explore mechanisms for mitigating resistance among leaders.

The results presented here pertain to glocal support in a not-for-profit global organization, and there is a need to explore whether similar components and nomological networks emerge in other industry types. Furthermore, while the glocal support for DEIB measure was developed for this study, further validation is warranted. More indicators for each component could be designed, and reliability and confirmatory factor analysis results may improve. Furthermore, although we did not find a lot of discrepancy in the quantitative results across local and global support, this is an avenue for future research as others have shown that employees' experiences, for instance, of psychological safety vary across local and global contexts (Lavelle *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, broadening the contextual and measurement boundaries based on the findings here can lead to novel territory.

An additional limitation is the lack of detailed exploration of differences within regions. Although overall descriptive statistics indicate no statistically significant differences across the main constructs, other global organizations may exhibit more variability across their offices. It would be interesting to dive into the role of cultural differences in shaping perceptions of fairness, accountability, and trust. In cases where employees encounter significant differences in climate and culture, a more thorough examination of local characteristics would be beneficial.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on DEIB in global organizations by elucidating the multifaceted role of glocal support. The broader grand challenge of fostering equitable and inclusive practices globally (Kim and Tan, 2023) drives the importance of understanding and applying this evolving interplay of global and local processes to enhance DEIB over time. By bridging global and local dimensions, organizations can foster inclusive environments that resonate across diverse contexts. To accomplish this, an exploratory sequential and participative mixed-methods design that went from a qualitative study to a quantitative one, underscores the importance of iterative, context-sensitive approaches to DEIB work, offering a roadmap for organizations seeking to navigate the complexities of the global workplace. Drawing from optimal distinctiveness and sensemaking theories, these lenses provide us with a better understanding of how employees balance, interpret, and navigate the complex and often ambiguous nature of glocal DEIB initiatives. Overall, the findings outline the components of glocal support, including fairness in decision-making, leadership role-modeling behavior, and providing space for DEIB dialogue. Moreover, glocal support for DEIB emerges as a powerful predictor of DEIB work, surpassing comfort with dissimilarity, team trust, and organizational accountability. By examining these two forces (i.e. local, global) concurrently, the paper develops a framework for understanding glocal support for DEIB and discusses the key implications of these findings.

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