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Organisational Climate, Diversity Climate and Job Dissatisfaction: A Multi-Group Analysis of High and Low Cynicism

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Abstract: Existing literature reported a shared awareness about the effects of the organisational climate (OC). The promotion of a positive OC, and a supportive and fair diversity climate, affected the workforce's behaviour, especially performance and satisfaction. Scholars stated that the way employees respond to dissatisfaction could be explained through the EVLN (Exit, Voice, Loyalty, Neglect) model. Two main aims were examined in our study: investigating the role of diversity climate in the mediation between the OC and all the dissatisfaction outcomes; and analysing the moderating effect that cynicism could have in this assumed model. Seven-hundred and twenty-one participants were enrolled to participate in this study. A structural equation model and multigroup analyses were used to test the hypotheses. Results showed that the diversity climate mediated the effect of OC on outcomes variables, both in negative and positive terms. Consistent with the literature, fairness and inclusion emerged as central in the impact that organisational policies could have on employees' Loyalty and desire of Exit and Neglect. Moderation results indicated that high cynicism facilitated employees' perception of exclusion and fairness towards their organisation, while low levels promoted Loyalty. Thus, the OC aimed at implementing a tolerance and sustainability culture is a core predictor variable.

Keywords: organisational climate; diversity climate; cynicism; multigroup analysis; job dissatisfaction



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1. Introduction

In the last three decades, scholars paid much attention to the issue of organisational climate and possible multiple climates, identifying their fundamental role in developing and maintaining employees' well-being. In recent times, the call for sustainable development of the whole society has also contributed to motivate companies to change their models and strategies, focusing their resources and efforts on enhancing human capital [1,2]. The challenge for contemporary organisations, then, has become to find a way to achieve social sustainability in their organisation, while fully meeting the objective of promoting and achieving decent and sustainable work—a current problem and a very worthy objective, in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda [3,4]. The nexus between sustainability and management practices became evident around the 1980s with the issue of diversity, mainly due to the influence of some managers who felt a pressing need to handle the differences in their workforce, and it is still in vogue today with the constructs of diversity climate and organisational climate.

The term Diversity Management has been used to describe personnel management and development policies aimed at enhancing the different needs and expectations of people working in an organisation, with a view of improving the company's overall performance [5]. Diversity Management practices have various definitions, and, summarising all the main approaches, they could be expressed as an approach in human resources management, an internal process within the organisation involving all employees, but also

as a policy that the organisation might adopt by implementing specific actions involving all its stakeholders. In recent decennia, managing cultural diversity has been recognised as a key challenge for modern organisations, especially because of the important competitive advantage it may lead to.

Many studies reported that diversity could have both beneficial and detrimental effects on organisational effectiveness [6,7]. The positive outcomes of the diversity management are described as higher knowledge sharing, flexibility, creativity and better team-performance. However, many studies reported that the categorisation into cultural sub-groups leads to negative outcomes. A lower social cohesion, less organisational commitment and a high chance of poor communication and conflicts [8], are just some of the potential threats. The contemporary organisations, thus, need to find a way to mitigate these unfavourable outcomes, while maintaining the benefits and competitive advantage of diversity.

Diversity climate has been shown to have a positive impact on the outcomes at individual, group and organisational levels [7,9]. However, the mechanisms through which diversity climate improved outcomes remain largely unknown [10,11]. This paper aims to examine this construct and its possible relationship and effects.

Given this premise, the present research contributes and adds to the current literature by (a) clarifying the role of the organisational climate in predicting and affecting diversity climate and some of the negative outcomes related to the employees' dissatisfaction; (b) investigating the role of the diversity climate as a mediator in the relationship between the organisational climate and the employees' dissatisfaction and (c) examining the impact of cynicism in diversity policies, and describing its moderator impact in this assumed model. Therefore, the present study aims to examine how using organisational policies towards employees at any level could avoid dysfunctional behaviour, demonstrating how the promotion of a culture of diversity contributes to the satisfaction of the employees, less levels of cynicism, and stimulates a greater sense of belonging, commitment, engagement and trust.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

2.1. *The Pattern of Multiple Organisational Climates: The Construct of Organisational Climate and Diversity Climate*

Managing diversity in the workplace is a mandatory challenge that stakeholders, customers, regulators and shareholders must face in the modern era. As a result of increasing societal pressures on diversity, organisations have formally integrated diversity into their corporate policy and strategy, embedding diversity as a distinctive element of organisational identity [12]. This reflection highlights the important supportive role that the organisation has in promoting a positive and fruitful diversity climate. However, this success depends not only on the commitment that the organisation has made, but also on its own ability to involve and empower all the organisation's members; the valorisation of human resources and diversity must indeed have a domino effect on all the organisation's levels [13,14].

It is in this framework that the construct of climate is inserted: the domino effect occurs when the organisation is simultaneously committed on putting its support and worth towards diversity into practice, and employee perceptions reflect an awareness of this focus and commitment [15]. Several studies confirmed how perceived efforts to support diversity and the organisational value of diversity could act as predictors to the diversity climate, which, in turn, lead to important results for the employees, such as job satisfaction and organisational identification.

The construct of organisational climate is a multidimensional construct based primarily on a set of individual and shared evaluations and perceptions of the work environment [16]. These evaluations cover a broad spectrum of variables: general dimensions such as leadership, job roles and communication [16] and specific dimensions such as diversity climate, safety climate or customer service climate. These perceptions are crucial as they could affect

interactions between individuals, attitudes towards rewards, and in general, the emotional response and attachment to the work environment [17–19]. Furthermore, the organisational climate had a significant effect on the individual's motivation to achieve work results. The general organisational climate has also been found to influence awareness, knowledge and skills by enhancing the participation in activities such as training [18,19].

In this paper, the construct of organisational climate is investigated as proposed by Baptista and colleagues [20] and by Platania and colleagues [21], in their study on the construction and validation of an instrument that measures the organisational and safety climate. Within this instrument, organisational climate covered four content dimensions: support, goals, rules and innovation.

Diversity climate instead is a specific form of the organisational climate and it has been defined as a set “of perceptions of a set of diversity practices aimed at providing fair and equal opportunities to all employees” [22] (p. 663); but also according to Mor Barak and colleagues [23] is the “employee behaviors and attitudes that are grounded in perceptions of the organisational context related to women and minorities” (p. 83); and according to McKay and colleagues [24] is “the degree to which a firm advocates fair human resource policies and socially integrates underrepresented employees” (p. 352). Diversity climate has become increasingly significant over time, because of its impact on individual outcomes and organisational effectiveness. Two important models contributed to the comprehension of this phenomenon: Cox's [25] model (Interactional model of cultural diversity, IMCD) and Mor Barak's bi-dimensional model [26]. In Cox's [25] model diversity climate has been explained into three different levels: (1) individual level; (2) group and inter-group level; and (3) organisational level. At the personal level, the diversity climate is investigated using four distinct components: identity structures, prejudice and discrimination, stereotypes and prejudiced personality. The group and inter-group levels are explored with three distinct factors: cultural differences among groups, ethnocentrism and intergroup conflict. Organisational level factors are analysed by four elements: organisational culture and cultural interaction, structural integration, non-formal integration and corporate prejudice. In the Mor Barak's model [26], four constructs are covered in the concept of diversity climate: (1) Organisational Fairness, i.e., management's fairness in policies and procedures; (2) Organisational Inclusion, i.e., the structural inclusion or exclusion of people from different backgrounds; (3) Personal Diversity Values, i.e., the personal perspective of the significance of diversity; (4) Personal Comfort, i.e., the personal comfort and openness towards diversity.

2.2. The Hypothetical Link among Organisational Climate and Diversity Climate

Existing literature reported a shared awareness of the existence of several climates in the organisation, pertaining to distinct dimensions (such as diversity climate or safety climate). It is also suggested that global climate (i.e., organisational climate) and specific climates (i.e., safety climate, diversity climate) could show potential reciprocal influences [21,27–29]. Considering the theoretical models proposed above, it is possible to hypothesise a relationship between the organisational and diversity climate.

Furthermore, the theoretical basis for the connection between organisational climate and diversity climate could be explained through the Signalling Theory, which postulates that employees' perceptions of an organisation's goals and attributes, including policies, practices and routines, are shaped by the organisation's signals [30]. These signals are related both to the experiences of the employees and to the voluntary messages from the organisation [31]. Even when such information is incomplete, employees shaped their perceptions based on what is visible and perceptible. Even for the construct of diversity this theory is applicable. Indeed, on the one hand, employees received signals from the organisation about their commitment to supporting diversity and the organisational value towards diversity; on the other hand, they attributed significance to the organisational events, practices and procedures they experienced. Consequently, they concluded with

opinions about the priorities and values upheld by their own organisation, including the issue of diversity [17].

Starting from the model chosen for the organisational climate and its four dimensions, it is possible to anticipate and link the effects and outcomes on the individual and group levels and on the diversity climate.

The implementation of diversity practices and the organisation's commitment acted as signals of its efforts to support and care for all employees, regardless of their diverse backgrounds [32]. Several studies confirmed that this perceived support had a direct influence on the diversity climate. Herdman and McMillan-Capehart [16] for example, stated that HR policies and practices, which include diversity programmes, constitute not only a specific characteristic of an organisation, but also influence the diversity climate. Avery and colleagues [31] also supported this hypothesis, arguing that an organisation's investment in diversity demonstrated its support and commitment to improving and promoting diversity and its employees.

Diversity training programs [33], mentoring programmes for women and minorities, not only communicate the organisation's commitment, but also contribute to the perception of the organisation as a fair, genuine and supportive environment [34–36]. For these reasons, the factors that support the goals and rules of organisational climate appear to predict, or nonetheless have a positive effect on, diversity.

Furthermore, as suggested by Cox [25], organisations that create a climate in which all employees are supported and have equal opportunities succeed in achieving greater competitive advantage. This perception also affected innovation, personal development and improvement, directly increasing the number of more creative and motivated employees. They, perceiving respect for diversity and fairness, produced a positive effect for the organisation, increasing productivity and efficiency. In addition, as evidenced by the study carried out by Chrobot-Mason and Aramovich [22], a work environment focused on respect for diversity allowed employees to have more initiative, pro-activity and a greater autonomy in decision-making, resulting in them feeling encouraged to develop innovative solutions.

Therefore, based on these investigations, we expect the following (see the Figure 1):

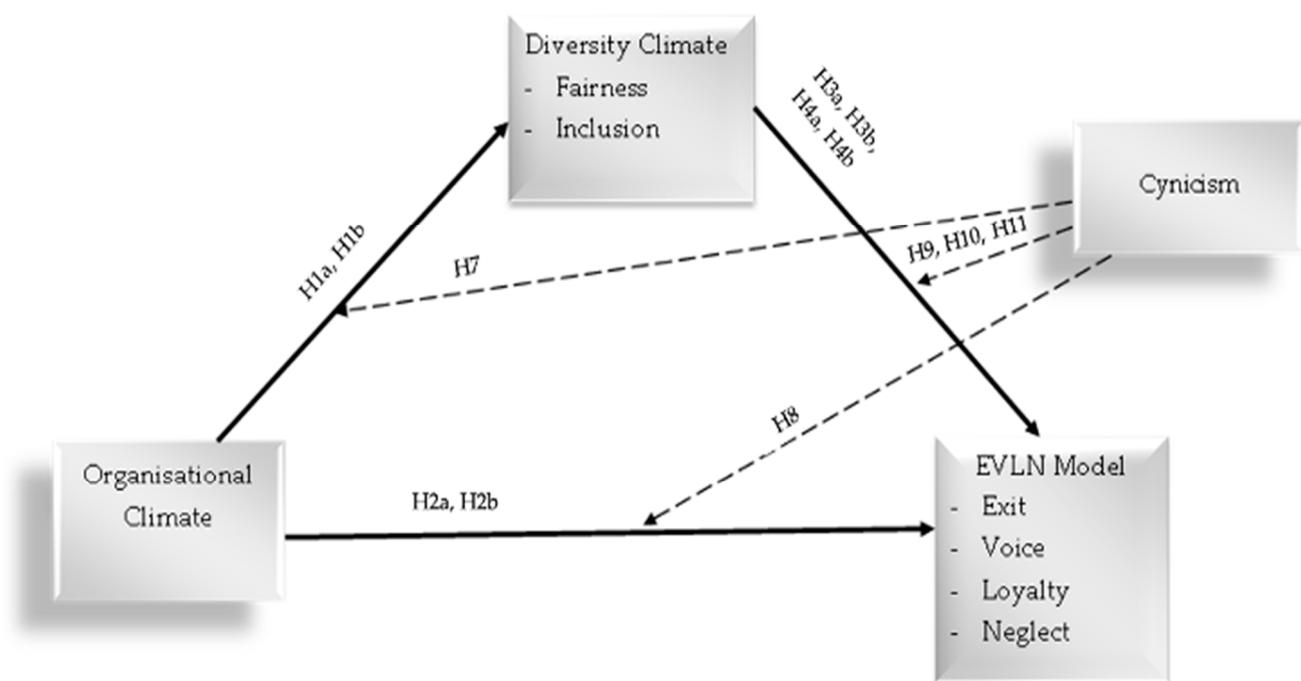


Figure 1. Theoretical model.

H1a. *Organisational climate will significantly predict the employees' perception of Diversity Inclusion.*

H1b. *Organisational climate will significantly predict the employees' perception of Diversity Fairness.*

3. Diversity Climate and Job Dissatisfaction through the EVLN Model

The relationship between diversity climate and job satisfaction has been investigated by some scholars, e.g., [37,38]. In general, the main findings revealed that a favourable diversity climate can improve the job satisfaction of diverse workers in organisations [39,40]. The organisations that integrate a diversity climate tended to have employees who were satisfied with their jobs. The more the organisation discourages discrimination, encourages diversity and cares about their well-being as well as their growth and development, the more employees' satisfaction and performance will be enhanced [41,42].

Literature stated that how employees react to dissatisfaction in the workplace could be explained by the EVLN (Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect) model. The EVLN paradigm, first proposed by Hirschman [43] and broadened by other authors [44,45], explains how some strategic and communicative behaviours, including Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect, are often enacted as a result of work problems or unsatisfactory situations. These behaviours play the role of internal feedback, as they provide the organisation with an assessment of its performance and help to modify paths for better implementation [46].

Thus, as a strategic communication response, Exit refers to the painful and difficult decision made by the individuals to leave or switch their organisation [43] (p. 83), or with the simple thought of wanting to leave the job, look for a different job or think about relocation [45] (p. 601). Voice involves constructively and actively trying to change "an objectionable state of affairs" [42] (p. 30). The construct "Voice" refers to the constructive and active attempt to change "a questionable state of affairs" [42] (p. 30). Voice is the effort to pursue an improvement in personal conditions, by implementing strategies, such as discussing problems with a supervisor or colleagues, suggesting solutions, or looking for help from an external agency such as a trade union, or preferring to report [45] (p. 601). Loyalty, on the other hand, describes a patient but optimistic attitude of waiting for the organisation, offering a kind of public and private support, and expecting and hoping for improvement by practising good citizenship behaviour [45] (p. 601). Finally, Neglect behaviour covered the passive condition of putting in reduced interest and effort, chronic lateness or absenteeism, using company time for personal business, increasing errors and risks [45] (p. 601).

Furthermore, to deepen the comprehension of EVLN model as responses to dissatisfaction, it is indicated two different aspects: (1) constructivity vs. destructivity of the impact on employee–organisation relations and (2) activity vs. passivity [44]. In the constructivity vs. destructivity dimension, Exit and Neglect are perceived as more destructive, while Loyalty and Voice are seen as more constructive because employees try to gain or maintain satisfying conditions. As for the active vs. passive dimension, Exit and Voice are perceived as more active mechanisms for dealing with dissatisfaction, while Loyalty and Neglect are perceived as more passive. Several researches have investigated these unsatisfactory behaviours, applying the EVLN paradigm to various organisational contexts. Several antecedents of these strategic behaviours have emerged from these studies including employee absenteeism, turnover, commitment and retention [47], attitudes towards colleagues [48], psychological contract [49], organisational climate (general and specific) [50], organisational dissent, organisational justice, organisational politics [50] and role conflict and autonomy [51].

Given that, the hypotheses are the following (see the Figure 1):

H2a. *Organisational climate will significantly affect employees' behaviour of Voice and Loyalty.*

H2b. *Organisational climate will significantly affect employees' behaviour of Exit and Neglect.*

H3a. *Diversity Inclusion will significantly affect employees' behaviour of Voice and Loyalty.*

H3b. *Diversity Inclusion will significantly affect employees' behaviour of Exit and Neglect.*

H4a. *Diversity Fairness will significantly affect employees' behaviour of Voice and Loyalty.*

H4b. *Diversity Fairness will significantly affect employees' behaviour of Exit and Neglect.*

3.1. *The Mediator Role of Diversity Climate between Organisational Climate and Job Satisfaction*

Few studies examined diversity climate, particularly at the individual level, as a mediator [52]. As observed by several findings, employees' perception of the firm's practices and policies (whether they are fair and inclusive) are likely to mould climate perceptions and subsequent outcomes, such as job satisfaction [25,53,54]. As stated by the social exchange theory [55], there was a link between individuals' and organisations' practices. The theory posits that the perception of the employers' support and commitment leads to an implied obligation in employees that results in a positive mutual benefit that benefits both the organisation and the employees [56]. Consequently, the promotion of a positive organisational climate, and even more of a supportive and fair diversity climate, affected the behaviour of the workforce, especially in terms of performance and satisfaction [57,58].

Based on the integration of these considerations, we argue that diversity climate will provide a mechanism through which it is the mediator of, or the relationship between, all the dimensions of the organisational climate and the outcomes, including job satisfaction and the different behaviours of the EVLN model. Thus, it is hypothesised (see the Figure 1):

H5. *Diversity Inclusion will mediate the relationships between organisational climates and outcomes (EVLN model: Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect behaviours).*

H6. *Diversity Fairness will mediate the relationships between organisational climates and outcomes (EVLN model: Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect behaviours).*

3.2. *The Impact of Cynicism in the Political of Diversity*

The employees' impact and perception of the diversity climate is not expressed equally for all individuals, who, on the contrary, reveal different behaviours and attitudes [58]. Some individual characteristics, such as personality, norms, values and beliefs, perception and experience may indeed moderate the impact of institutional factors on employees' behaviours and attitudes [59], directly influencing their performance and satisfaction. Aqueveque and Encina [60], for example, noted that some employees tend to have more favourable attitudes and responses towards the organisation, both based on their specific individual characteristics and in response to the recognition of positive organisational actions.

It is within this conceptual framework, that the construct of organisational cynicism was considered in our study, in its specific moderating action in the relationship between the diversity climate and subjects' behaviours and attitudes (job satisfaction and EVLN model). A scan of extant literature for the term organisational cynicism reveals various definitions. Among the most widely recognised definitions, Dean and colleagues [61] interpreted organisational cynicism as a situation in which employees have feelings of contempt for the organisation, blaming the management for being selfish, and acting negatively on a relational and behavioural level. Bernerth and colleagues [62], on the other hand, defined organisational cynicism as a condition in which many employees share a basic distrust of the organisation they work for. According to another definition, organisational cynicism is also a state in which individuals believe that their organisation lacks moral integrity and fails to meet principles such as honesty and sincerity [62].

This construct has been studied since the late 1980s–1990s and many antecedents and consequences have been investigated [63]. Among the consequences that have been reported: job dissatisfaction, decreased commitment to companies, sabotage, theft, fraud, increased downsizing in organisations, increased employee turnover rate, decreased workforce performance, increased layoff rates, alienation from work and decreased organisational performance [64–68].

Along with the exploration of the consequential effects of organisational cynicism, the predictors and specific organisational experiences that contribute to cynicism have also been studied and described over time. What is certain is that this construct is primarily based on the employee–manager and employee–organisation relationship and therefore the predictors should also be researched following this paradigm [69]. For example, among the most important antecedents contributing to the development of organisational cynicism are: psychological breach of contract, e.g., [65,68], organisational change and the organisational experiences lived, e.g., [70]. Specifically, the situational factors affected the development of cynical attitudes. Although it is true that dispositional variables as the negative affectivity play a role in the formation of such attitudes, other studies supported the importance of situational factors. Indeed, several studies confirmed that organisational support, or the perception of a good organisational climate, is a strongly impactful element [71].

Considering this, it seemed appropriate to use this construct in our study and in detail to hypothesise that (see the Figure 1):

H7. *Organisational cynicism will moderate the relationship between organisational climate and diversity climate.*

H8. *Organisational cynicism will moderate the relationship between organisational climate and the factors of the EVLN model.*

H9. *Organisational cynicism will moderate the relationship between diversity climate and the factors of the EVLN model.*

H10. *There is a significant difference between high and low cynical employers toward the effect of diversity climate on Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect.*

H11. *In the group of high cynical employers, the effect of organisational and diversity climate on EVLN model is significantly stronger in all present relationships.*

4. Methods

4.1. Participants and Procedure

The study involved 721 public administration employees (females were 55.8% of the total sample), of different levels (47% employer, 25% supervisor, 15% middle managers, 13% executive). Their age ranged between 22 and 61 ($M_{age} = 44.6$, $SD = 12.6$). For the educational level, 69.7% had achieved a minimum of 17 years of school. Research participants had an average seniority of 12.7 ($SD = 3.6$). Participants were enrolled from different Italian regions (north, 58%; central, 21%; south, 21%). A total of 970 questionnaires were administered with a response rate of 74.33%. Most of the workers were employed in the central administration of the company (63.6%), while almost all (97%) had a permanent contract. A convenience sampling technique was used for enrolling the participants of the study. The companies were contacted by written communication; when approval was obtained from the HR department, a link to the survey was posted in the companies' social media groups (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter) and they were also approached by written correspondence (e.g., email or invitation to participate by letter). All participants received a survey package including the questionnaire with scales, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and a consent form emphasising that participation was anonymous and voluntary. Questionnaires required approximately 20 min to complete. The study was carried out in conformity with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was also authorized by the Internal Ethics Review Board of the Department of Educational Sciences (Section of Psychology) of the University of Catania (Prot. No. Ierb-Edunict-2022.010.13/3). The data were collected between January 2021 and November 2021 and all the research procedures followed all the indications provided by the guidelines of the AIP (Italian Association of Psychology) and its Ethical Council.

4.2. Measure

4.2.1. OSCI-Organisational Climate Questionnaire

Two scales composed the OSCI [27], Italian version by Platania and colleagues [21]: the Organisational Climate Questionnaire and the Safety Climate Questionnaire. Both the scales showed excellent psychometric properties in terms of construct validity, reliability and predictive validity.

For the aims of this study, only the Organisational Climate Questionnaire was used, to examine the organisational climate. Thirty items were adopted for the investigation, using a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = “Not important at all” to 7 = “Extremely important”; e.g., “To what extent is it important in your company... the use of written instructions for carrying out the work”). The scale analyses the subjects’ perceptions of the norm and the values for the content sub-dimensions: support, objectives, rules and innovation of the organisation. A strength index was developed for the Organisational Climate Questionnaire corresponding to the average of all dimensions. Support referred to the attention paid by the organisation to human resources, and more specifically to teamwork and participation (seven items). The sub-dimension of objectives focused on competitiveness and market advantage (nine items). Rules were characterised by a focus on controlling the internal environment, thus revealing a great emphasis on hierarchical power and stability (seven items). The sub-dimension of innovation referred to the emphasis on personal and organisational development (seven items).

4.2.2. Diversity Climate Questionnaire

In order to investigate the construct of diversity climate, the Diversity Climate Questionnaire was used [23], (Italian validation, 71). The questionnaire by Mor Barak and colleagues [23], in the Italian short version, consists of nine items, whose answers measure the degree of agreement through a 6-point Likert scale ranging from “Absolutely disagree” to “Completely agree” (e.g., “The company spends enough money and time on diversity awareness and related training”). Unlike the Mor Barak’s model [26], a three-factor solution (without the Personal Comfort factor) resulted in the best fit for the Italian sample. The diversity climate is in fact analysed through three factors: Organisational Fairness (three items; management’s fairness in policies and procedures), Organisational Inclusion (three items; the structural inclusion or exclusion of people from different backgrounds) and Personal Diversity Value (three items; the personal perspective of the significance of diversity).

4.2.3. EVLN Model

The strategic and communicative behavioural manifestations of Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect were measured with self-descriptive items proposed by Hagedoorn and colleagues [72]. From the reference model EVLN [41,50], these dimensions were explored through a questionnaire consisting of 20 items, whose answers measured the degree of agreement through a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Completely disagree” to “Completely agree”. Exit (five items, e.g., “I consider the possibility of changing job”), referred to the individual’s willingness to change jobs and looking for another one [44]. Voice (five items, e.g., “I try to formulate solutions from which the organisation can benefit”), relates to employees’ attitudes towards the possibility of expressing their opinion in order to improve their working conditions. Loyalty (five items, e.g., “I trust the organisation’s decision-making process without interfering”), referring to the process of trusting the company, but without actively contributing to the promotion and development of this process. Neglect (five items, e.g., “I take sick leave because I don’t like the work”), refers to the implementation of disinterested and neglectful behaviour exemplified by delay and absenteeism.

4.2.4. Organisational Cynicism

The contributions of Rusbult and colleagues [44] and Naus et al. [50] suggested that the EVLN model could be extended to provide a more comprehensive framework to dissatisfaction incorporating the construct of organisational cynicism (OC). Thus, to measure

cynicism, six items were used to investigate negative attitude towards the organisation in which the employee was working: reflecting behavioural expressions of cynicism in the workplace, such as lack of trust, frustration, despair, disillusionment or contempt [64,65]. All items were measured on a 7-point scale from “Completely disagree” to “Completely agree” (e.g., “I shrug my shoulders at what management requires me to do”). It embraced three dimensions: (1) belief that the organisation has lost its integrity, (2) negative affection towards the organisation, (3) disparaging and critical behaviour towards the organisation [61], but also had a unique composite score.

4.3. Data Analysis

Primarily, descriptive statistics, discriminant validity, reliability and correlations between variables were calculated [73]. We tested the reliability for the construct of multiple indicators, as the use of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is limited [74,75]. To overcome the alpha limits, we added the McDonald’s omega index which corrects the underestimation bias of α when the tau-equivalence hypothesis is violated, if omega and alpha produce the same result, it means that the alpha assumptions are not violated by the data. Furthermore, to complete the reliability analyses, convergent validity was added by calculating the extracted mean variance (AVE) and construction reliability (CR). The AVE must be >0.50 [76] and the CR > 0.60 . To test the differences between the groups and provide evidence of the discriminant validity of the scales between unconstrained (baseline) and constrained models, a significant chi-squared difference test was conducted.

Other well-known analytical tools such as correlations were also used, which were implemented using SPSS 270.0 and AMOS 260.0 [77]. We tested mediation in which two regression models were applied simultaneously, assuming that the total effect of the dependent variable on the independent variable is different from the direct effect of the variable. The indirect effect was tested using a bootstrap estimation approach on 2000 samples and a percentile method corrected for 95% bias [78]. Furthermore, for estimating the moderating effect of cynicism we applied invariance tests and multigroup analyses. To achieve this we used the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation methods, adapted the model individually to each group in order to eliminate the elements that did not contribute to the quality of regulation and then we tested for model estimation between groups, in particular to test the moderating effect, two groups of cynicism (high vs. low) were created by a median split, and were then used to examine the moderator role of this variable [79].

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistic, Correlation, and Reliability

The data in Table 1 show descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for the study variables. The results of correlation showed that: the Organisational Support correlated positively with Diversity Inclusion ($r = 0.38, p < 0.001$) and Diversity Fairness ($r = 0.44, p < 0.001$); the Organisational Innovation correlated with Diversity Inclusion ($r = 0.47, p < 0.001$) and Diversity Fairness ($r = 0.51, p < 0.001$); and the Organisational Goal correlated positively with Diversity Inclusion ($r = 0.48, p < 0.001$) and Diversity Fairness ($r = 0.56, p < 0.001$) (H1a, H1b).

Table 1. Descriptive statistic, correlation and reliability.

	M	SD	α/ω	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. OS	5.62	1.13	0.89	0.78	0.92	-										
2. OG	5.43	1.24	0.76	0.60	0.81	0.78 **	-									
3. OI	5.44	1.34	0.91	0.76	0.95	0.67 **	0.78 **	-								
4. OR	5.51	1.01	0.92	0.66	0.84	0.76 **	0.94 **	0.95 **	-							
5. SOC	5.63	1.07	0.93	0.75	0.97	0.93 **	0.92 **	0.87 **	0.94 **	-						
6. DCF	4.26	1.12	0.91	0.76	0.96	0.44 **	0.56 **	0.51 **	0.56 **	0.54 **	-					
7. DCI	4.05	1.15	0.90	0.74	0.95	0.38 **	0.48 **	0.47 **	0.50 **	0.47 **	0.71 **	-				
8. Exit	3.51	0.84	0.85	0.68	0.86	-0.11 *	-0.17 **	-0.12 *	-0.15 *	-0.14 **	-0.20 **	-0.12 *	-			
9. Voice	5.28	0.89	0.79	0.69	0.89	0.24 **	0.28 **	0.30 **	0.31 **	0.29 **	0.39 **	0.28 *	0.16 **	-		
10. Loyalty	4.61	0.97	0.81	0.65	0.86	0.49 **	0.42 **	0.39 **	0.43 **	0.49 **	0.26 **	0.28 **	-0.11 *	0.16 **	-	
11. Neglect	2.34	0.61	0.90	0.73	0.94	-0.25 **	-0.25 **	-0.23 **	-0.25 **	-0.27 **	-0.33 **	-0.15 *	0.26 **	-0.61 **	0.04	-
12. Cynicism	3.22	0.79	0.69	0.63	0.82	-0.03	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.12	0.25 **	0.18 **	-0.06	0.14 *

Note: OS = Organisational Support; OG = Organisational Goal; OI = Organisational Innovation; Organisational Rules = OR; SOC = strength organisational climate; DCF = Diversity Climate Fairness; DCI = Diversity Climate Inclusion; *p* scores: * <0.05, ** <0.001.

Furthermore, strength organisational climate (SOC) correlated significantly and positively with Diversity Fairness ($r = 0.54, p < 0.001$) with Diversity Inclusion ($r = 0.47, p < 0.001$), with Voice ($r = 0.29, p < 0.001$), with Loyalty ($r = 0.49, p < 0.001$), and negatively with Exit ($r = -0.14, p < 0.001$) and Neglect ($r = -0.27, p < 0.001$) (hypothesis 2). Confirmation of hypotheses 1a and 1b supported the theory that the organisational climate is related to diversity policies and asserted itself as an antecedent. Moreover, cynicism negatively correlated with Diversity Inclusion ($r = -0.12, p < 0.05$) and positively with Exit ($r = 0.25, p < 0.001$), Voice ($r = 0.18, p < 0.001$) and Neglect ($r = 0.14, p < 0.05$).

To verify the convergent validity we tested the composite reliability and the average variance extracted, the results were: CR 0.92, AVE 0.78 for Organisational Climate Support; CR 0.81, AVE 0.60 for Organisational Climate Goal; CR 0.95, AVE 0.76 for Organisational Climate Innovation; CR 0.84, AVE 0.66 for Organisational Climate Rules; CR 0.97, AVE 0.75 for strength organisational climate; CR 0.96, AVE 0.76 for Diversity Climate Fairness; CR 0.95, AVE 0.74 for Diversity Climate Inclusion; CR 0.86, AVE 0.68 for Exit; CR 0.89, AVE 0.69 for Voice; CR 0.86, AVE 0.65 for Loyalty; CR 0.94, AVE 0.73 for Neglect and CR 0.82, AVE 0.63 for cynicism. Finally, the analysis of the two coefficients Cronbach’s alpha (α) and McDonald’s omega (ω) also strengthens the validity; both revealed identical values, and when the factor loads are not the same but rather high, alpha generally leads to a similar reliability value compared to omega. If omega and alpha produce the same result, it means that the alpha assumptions are not violated by the data. Together with CR and AVE, they indicated a good overall internal consistency of the scale [80].

5.2. CFA to test the Model

According to Harman’s single-factor test a Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted to diagnose the extent to which common-method variance was a problem [81]. In order to confirm the goodness-of-fit of our model, a comparison between two different models was performed. The first model provided a better fit for the data across all CFA fit measures. CFA was performed using robust maximum likelihood estimation to examine the structure of the constructs. We compared our model with organisational climate as a single factor antecedent, diversity climate with two factors (Inclusion and Fairness) and with four outcome variables (Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect) with a model with one factor (with all items loading on a unique factor). The results revealed that the first model included seven factors provided a reasonably good fit to the data: $\chi^2 (291, n = 721) = 7980.329, p < 0.001, \chi^2/df = 20.74, RMSEA = 0.06 (C.I. = 0.063-0.071), CFI = 0.95, GFI = 0.95, SRMR = 0.05$. Moreover, the AIC and BIC values were 111.075 and 148.821.

The second CFA model included the same factors but considered all scales with a single-factor structure, in which all indicators loaded onto a single factor. The results of this model provided a worse fit to the data ($\chi^2 (301, n = 721) = 856.763, p = 0.035, \chi^2/df = 2.85, RMSEA = 0.95 (CI = 0.076-0.113), CFI = 0.88, GFI = 0.87, SRMR = 0.06, AIC = 341.603; BIC = 422.325$).

This second model fit the data significantly worse than the first, both in terms of fit indices and in the difference test χ^2 ($\Delta\chi^2(10) = 58.434, p < 0.001$). According to these results, no evidence of common method bias was found in the data.

5.3. Structural Model

Multiple mediation analysis was conducted using AMOS software, version 26.0 [77]. The effects of multiple mediator variables could be tested individually and simultaneously [82]. The variables of the EVLN model (Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect) were therefore entered as the dependent variable, while organisational climate was the independent variable; diversity inclusion and diversity fairness were entered as mediators. All variables were entered as latent constructs, with the exception of variables of the EVLN model, which were entered as an observed construct. The bootstrapping method (i.e., 2000 samples) was used with bias-corrected (BC) confidence intervals to obtain more powerful confidence interval limits for indirect effects (95% CI) [83].

5.4. Directed Effect

In Figure 2, the results show that there was a positive direct effect of organisational climate on Diversity Inclusion ($\beta = 0.26; p < 0.001$), and on Diversity Fairness ($\beta = 0.25; p < 0.001$). Moreover, organisational climate had a positive direct effect on Voice ($\beta = 0.09; p < 0.05$) and Loyalty ($\beta = 0.12; p < 0.01$), while it had a negative direct effect on Neglect ($\beta = 0.20; p < 0.001$). Diversity Fairness had a positive direct effect on Voice ($\beta = 0.40; p < 0.001$) and on Loyalty ($\beta = 0.11; p < 0.01$), while it had a negative direct effect on Exit ($\beta = -0.22; p < 0.001$) and on Neglect ($\beta = -0.42; p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Diversity Inclusion had a positive direct effect on Voice ($\beta = 0.10; p < 0.01$) and on Loyalty ($\beta = 0.20; p < 0.01$), while it had a negative direct effect on Exit ($\beta = -0.09; p < 0.05$) and on Neglect ($\beta = -0.16; p < 0.01$). The proposed structural model explained a significant amount of variance in each construct. Specifically, the model explained 37% of the Diversity Fairness, 25% of the variance in Diversity Inclusion, 27% in Exit, 33% in Voice, 32% in Neglect and 23% of the variance in Loyalty.

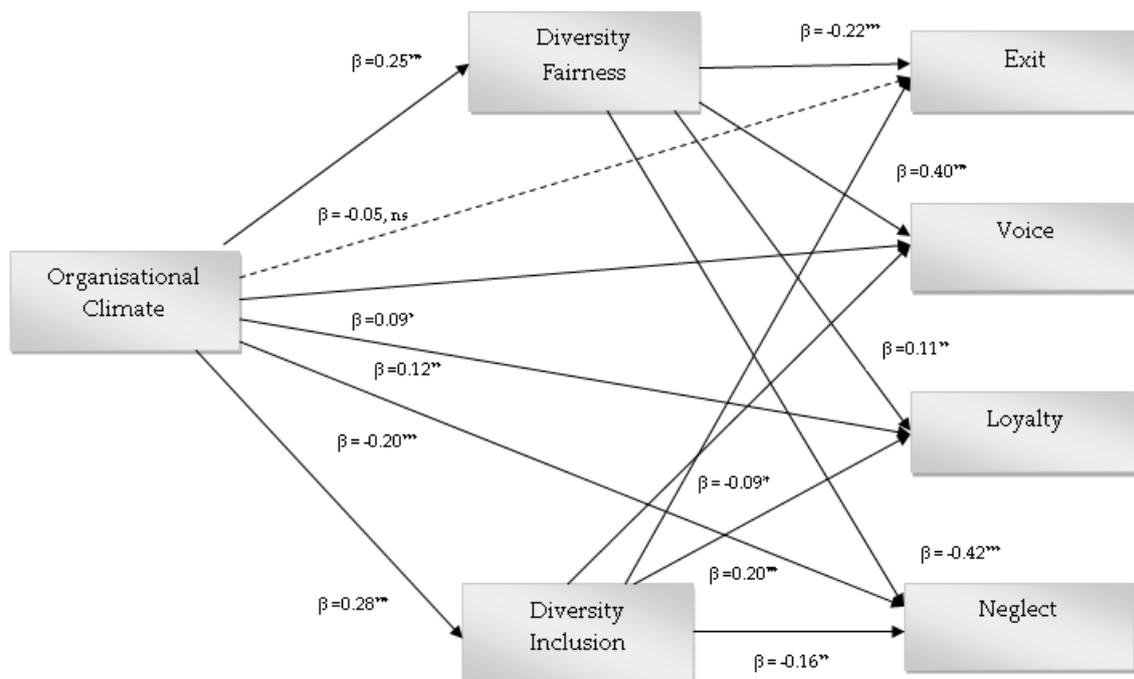


Figure 2. Structural model *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

5.5. The Mediation of Diversity Climate

To determine whether indirect effects were present in this study, the procedure, as explained by Hayes and Scharkow [78] was used. Bootstrapping was used to construct two-sided bias-corrected 95% CIs to evaluate indirect effects. As presented in Table 2, the bootstrap CIs do not cross zero.

Table 2. Standardized indirect effects from organisational climate to ELVN through diversity climate.

Predictor	Mediator	Outcome	β	SE	BC 95% CI	
					LL	UL
Organisational climate →	Diversity Fairness →	Exit	0.07 ***	0.06	−0.084	−0.018
Organisational climate →	Diversity Fairness →	Voice	0.06 ***	0.03	0.055	0.486
Organisational climate →	Diversity Fairness →	Loyalty	0.04 **	0.03	0.062	0.218
Organisational climate →	Diversity Fairness →	Neglect	0.07 ***	0.05	−0.100	−0.038
Organisational climate →	Diversity Inclusion →	Exit	0.04 **	0.02	−0.061	−0.013
Organisational climate →	Diversity Inclusion →	Voice	0.09 ***	0.07	0.069	0.137
Organisational climate →	Diversity Inclusion →	Loyalty	0.08 ***	0.05	0.050	0.110
Organisational climate →	Diversity Inclusion →	Neglect	0.06 ***	0.04	0.162	0.258

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Results indicated that Diversity Fairness mediated the effects of Organisational Climate on Voice ($\beta = 0.06$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [0.055, 0.486]), Loyalty ($\beta = 0.03$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [0.062, 0.218]) and Neglect ($\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [−0.100, −0.038]) (H6). Moreover, there was a total mediation of Diversity Fairness of the effect that the organisational climate has on Exit. ($\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [−0.084, −0.018]).

Hypothesis 5 was confirmed. The results showed that the Diversity Inclusion mediated the effects of organisational climate on Exit ($\beta = 0.04$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [−0.061, −0.013]) Voice ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.001$, 95%, CI [0.069, 0.137]), Loyalty ($\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.001$, 95%, CI [0.050, 0.110]), and Neglect ($\beta = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$, 95%, CI [0.162, 0.258]).

5.6. Multigroup Analysis

To test the moderating effect, two groups of level of cynicism (high vs. low) were created by a median split and were then used to examine the moderator role of this variable. To verify these group differences, it must establish that differences exist between these groups and that these differences are derived from structural differences in the path coefficients across group. Specifically, before any evidence bearing on equality of the structural paths was evaluated (i.e., a test of structural invariance), it is important to check whether the measurement parameters operate in the same way for both groups (test of measurement invariance). Multigroup analysis was used to assess measurement invariance across high and low cynicism groups, using chi-square difference tests for a set of nested models.

The first step of data analysis was testing the invariance of the measurement model across the two groups by comparing the unconstrained model (i.e., with all parameters free) to the model with measurement weights constrained. The results indicated that the measurement model presented adequate fit indices in the multigroup (Table 3).

Table 3. Multigroup analysis: Testing for measurement invariance across high and low cynicism groups ^a (N = 721).

Measurement Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Multigroup model for the total sample	7980.73	208	-		0.91	0.94	0.057
Unconstrained model	829.60	216	30.87	8	0.90	0.94	0.052
Measurement model	866.71	229	67.87	21	0.90	0.94	0.052
Structural model	883.12	236	84.39 ***	28	0.90	0.94	0.052

*** $p < 0.05$; ^a NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSE = root mean square error of approximation.

The test showed a good fit of the model for both groups, however a significant increase in chi-squared in the structural model indicated that there was a moderating effect of the variable that defined the groups ($\Delta\chi^2$ ($\Delta df = 28$) = 84.39, $p < 0.001$) and that the structural relationships between the three latent factors would vary according to the impact (high vs. low) that cynicism had on the relationship between diversity climate and EVLN [84].

Next, after confirming the group-invariance of our measurement model we had to estimate separate structural models for each group to verify if there were any substantive differences in their structural relationships. The results are shown in Table 4. As for the fit indexes, both models displayed identical or nearly equivalent values model.

Table 4. Multigroup analysis: Testing for path coefficients invariance across high and low cynicism groups (N = 721).

Structural Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Model 1: Baseline model	866.74	256	-	-
Model 2: Factor loadings and all path coefficients invariant	915.23	274	48.49 **	18
Model 3: Path coefficient OC → DF	907.16	273	8.07 **	1
Model 4: Path coefficient OC → DI	910.54	273	4.69 *	1
Model 5: Path coefficient OC → Exit	913.31	273	1.92	1
Model 6: Path coefficient OC → Voice	912.41	273	2.82	1
Model 7: Path coefficient OC → Loyalty	906.84	273	8.39 **	1
Model 8: Path coefficient OC → Neglect	904.81	273	10.42 **	1
Model 9: Path coefficient DF → Exit	905.63	273	9.60 **	1
Model 10: Path coefficient DF → Voice	913.12	273	2.11	1
Model 11: Path coefficient DF → Loyalty	910.50	273	4.73 *	1
Model 12: Path coefficient DF → Neglect	909.57	273	5.66 *	1
Model 13: Path coefficient DI → Exit	917.38	273	2.15	1
Model 14: Path coefficient DI → Voice	914.52	273	0.71	1
Model 15: Path coefficient DI → Loyalty	905.62	273	9.61 **	1
Model 16: Path coefficient DI → Neglect	916.98	273	1.75	1

** $p < 0.001$. * $p < 0.05$.

Purposefully, to identify the nature of the interactions, the regression model was plotted at two levels of the moderating variable (e.g., one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean). A graphical representation of the estimated structural model is provided in Figure 3. Figure 3 shows that in structural relationships the overall patterns between the constructs are generally consistent between the two groups, the strength and significance of the path coefficients for the relationships in which the moderating influence of cynicism has been hypothesised are actually different between the groups. When cynicism is low, the effects of the organisation on Loyalty increase as well as those of the DF and DI. While higher levels of cynicism indicate higher negative effects of DF and DI on Exit and Neglect. The lack of a sense of fairness and exclusion from organisational life leads to the worker showing cynicism and disaffection towards the organisation, which leads to the desire to leave the organisational context and to neglect work.

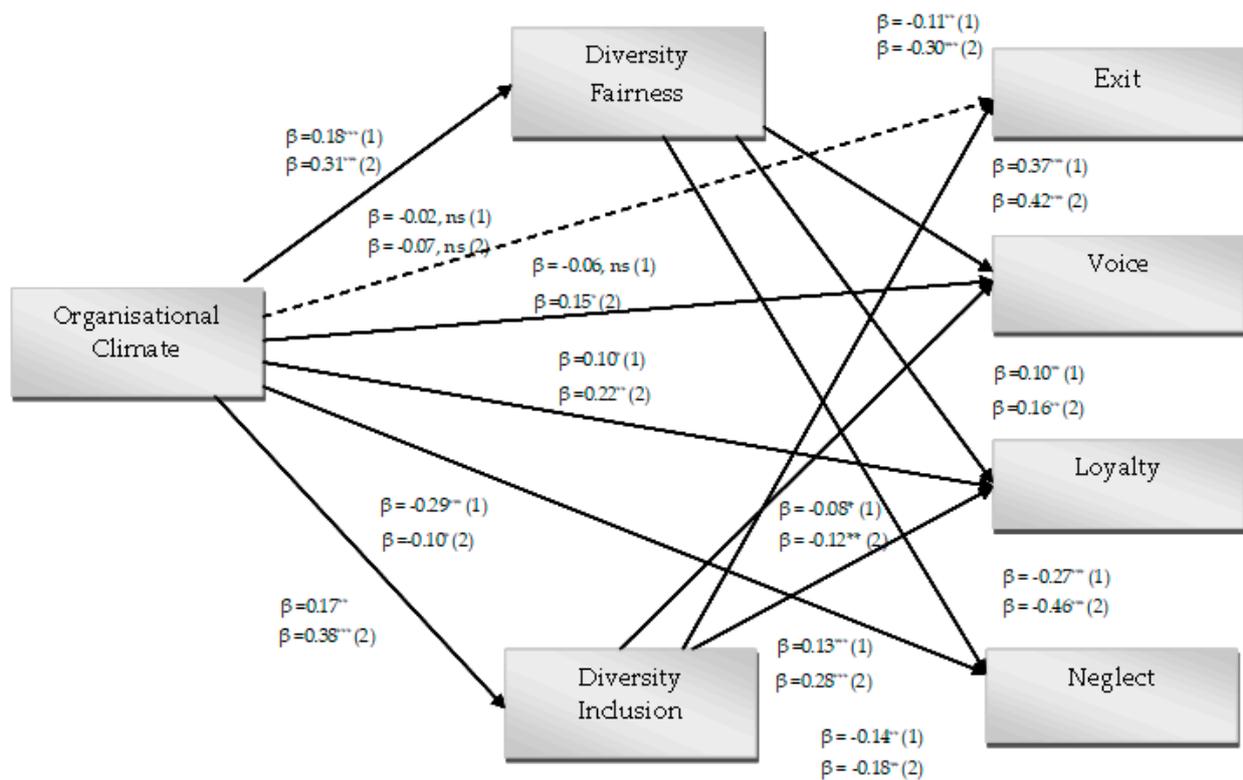


Figure 3. Multigroup analysis for high and low cynicism *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; (1) high cynicism (N = 350); (2) low cynicism (N = 371).

6. Discussion

In recent decades, several studies have been conducted to verify the impact that the climate of diversity has on organisational effectiveness [6,85]. However, the results are not ambiguous as the very concept of organisational diversity needs to be further clarified. Cultural diversity refers to the coexistence of people representing different group identities within the same organisation [86]. The development of a tolerant culture within the organisation requires that the worker be enabled to best express their abilities without any obstacles regarding their ethnicity, religion, name, sex or other. In this sense, Cox [25] affirmed that the management of the various cultural groups within organisations leads both in terms of individual level (involvement, well-being and job satisfaction, remuneration, etc.) and on an organisational level (presence, turnover, cynicism, performance and consequently profit) results.

While diversity is considered a value that could enrich work groups within organisations, on the other hand, if poorly managed, it could be considered an obstacle and induce the worker to adopt negative behaviours towards the organisation, manifesting feelings of rejection or disaffection such as cynicism. Organisational cynicism manifests itself as a series of recurring attitudes of distrust that workers express because they believe that the organisation does not apply policies of transparency, equity and inclusion. This leads to feelings of mistrust, hopelessness and insecurity [87]. Nafei and Kaifi [88] have argued that cynicism has provided the interpretation of many organisational phenomena such as organisational psychological retreats; the loss of the employee's mental and physical commitment from job duties and the desire to leave the organisation.

On the basis of the main reference literature, two main objectives were developed in our study: (1) to test the mediating effects of the climate of diversity in relation to the direct effect that the organisational climate will have on some fundamental aspects concerning organisational life (Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Negligence); (2) investigate the effect of moderation that cynicism might have on this relationship through a multigroup analysis.

With regard to the first objective, the results showed that the climate of diversity is able to mediate the effect of the organisational climate in relation to the outcome variables, and this was deduced in both negative and positive terms. In particular, both equity and inclusion have proved to be fundamental in the impact that organisational policies could have both in positive terms with a greater impact on Loyalty; and in negative terms resulting in the organisation's desire for abundance. This corresponds to what has already been defined in the literature; if the organisation does not implement a correct culture of diversity, the differences will become insurmountable leading the employee to neglect or leave the workplace. Environments conducive to diversity can promote effective management of the multicultural workforce by improving their job satisfaction intrinsically and extrinsically [39]. Job satisfaction reflects the degree to which the individual likes the job; it is a pleasant or positive feeling about one's work resulting from the evaluation of one's work. Negative effects of management ineffectiveness, and therefore of organisational policies and practices on diversity, can lead to dissatisfied employees with high turnover intentions, low productivity and reduced organisational commitment and identification [89]. According to the theory of social exchange, the relationships between organisations and employees are bilateral and reciprocal [90], if the organisation transmits positive signals in the form of appreciation of diversity, they contribute to increasing the sense of mutual positive exchange behaviour in the form of greater job satisfaction and organisational identification by lowering levels of cynicism.

Regarding the moderating effect of cynicism, the results indicated that high cynicism facilitates the sense of exclusion and fairness of the worker towards their organisation, while low levels of cynicism facilitate the sense of Loyalty. In this sense, the organisational climate aimed at implementing a culture of tolerance and sustainability proves to be a fundamental predictive variable.

The climate of diversity in organisations can be defined as practices, policies and procedures aimed at creating inclusion and favourable climate for various workers [89,91].

Our study responds to the need to enhance the effects of management in correspondence with a culture of diversity in the company in order to avoid negative behaviours that induce unpleasant outcomes in workers deriving from job dissatisfaction in terms of Exit and Neglect.

7. Conclusions, Limitations, Implications, and Future Research

The results of this study highlighted the importance of developing a culture of diversity within organisations. The growing interest in the diversity climate since the term first appeared in 1990 to today is due to diversity being an inevitable phenomenon that exists in human nature—the difference is in the way of handling it. Our research explored the effects of the organisational climate on two possible manifest behaviours on the part of workers: approach and exclusion from the organisation. The mediating effect of the diversity climate already presented several times in the reference literature proved to be fundamental. In addition to this, another variable was taken into consideration: organisational cynicism. In this case we verified that organisational policies towards employees at any level are essential to avoid dysfunctional behaviour on the part of workers. Although the variables of our research design have been dealt with other times, very few researches support them. In this sense, our study contributes to providing greater awareness of the phenomenon, both at a theoretical level and in possible and decisive intervention practices.

As with all studies, this study has some limitations. First, the climate diversity study should be longitudinal to test the effects of practices on diversity over time, so in our study we could only measure indirect relationships between variables.

Furthermore, a limitation is the common method bias, based on dependence on self-assessment data. Dependence on self-assessment data has been criticised in the literature as it increases the likelihood of social desirability and the common method bias [89]. Furthermore, using cross-sectional data to test mediation models is a major constraint on results. Its use is therefore recommended in place of longitudinal data in future studies.

Finally, a further limitation was the convenience sample, which limited the validity of the results, the external totality of which was made up of public administration employees. The distribution of the sample by age and region of the country was not balanced, even though almost all Italian regions were represented in the sample.

Our results confirmed that the diversity climate had a key role in the success of diversity management in organisations.

Despite these limitations, the significant results suggest some important implication for practice.

The promotion of a culture of diversity in employees could develop a stronger organisational culture, and above all, could stimulate a sense of belonging and greater trust on the part of the employees. By increasing employee visualization skills, their cultural heritage in the workplace and promoting the perspective of value in diversity, levels of cynicism will decrease, and job satisfaction will increase, thus ensuring greater work-related outcomes, more innovation and fairer hiring policies [92–94].

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