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15. Diversity and Inclusion in Workplaces: A Review and A Framework for Future Research

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Abstract:

The discussion of diversity has shifted in recent years from one of exclusion to one of inclusion. While there is a wealth of research in the field of diversity, inclusion has only recently become a focus of attention. Given the many different ways that the terms are used and understood, it is time to compare and contrast the two bodies of literature in order to provide a more thorough and nuanced understanding of their conceptualizations. In an effort to achieve the same, this paper looks at the interactions between leadership and diversity and inclusion and provides suggestions for furthering the research.

Keywords:

Diversity and inclusion, Dimensions, Employee performance, Workforce Diversity Management, Social Sustainability.

15.1 Introduction:

Prior to 2009, the majority of diversity research was devoted to addressing the "problems" that diversity raises, such as bias, discrimination, affirmative action, and tokenism (Shore et al., 2009). This corpus of research has produced and is still producing numerous insightful hypotheses and empirical studies (Jackson & Joshi, 2011). But given the diversity as the subject has developed, academics have been more interested in how diversity may improve Workflows and organisational structures that support diversity's potential benefits (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; Homan, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, van Knippenberg, Ilgen, & 2008 (Van Kleef). Researchers are looking for strategies to integrate various people into organisations, which is in line with the ideas advanced by Cox (1991) in his study of the multicultural organisation (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Making work environments where diverse employees feel included is one research field that is developing in this area (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; Roberson, 2006).

Since a decade ago, the organisational literature has only just begun to explore the idea of inclusion (Roberson, 2006), but similar study lines in social work date back further (cf. Mor Barak, 2000) also to social psychology (see Brewer, 1991). Even while this idea has received more attention lately, there is still no agreement on the specifics of this architecture or its theoretical foundations, therefore inclusion is still a relatively new idea. The usefulness of inclusion is hampered by this lack of agreement, both conceptually and practically.

As a result, we first propose a definition of inclusion in this review using Brewer's optimum distinctiveness theory (ODT), and then we examine the inclusion and diversity literatures using this framework as our lens. We next go over our framework's implications as a roadmap for further study and application. We opt to emphasise the uniqueness of the person inside the group in our theoretical development of inclusion. We are particularly curious about employee perceptions about workplace inclusiveness. This focus aligns with ODT's emphasis on a person's needs being met in a group setting and is consistent with numerous diversity studies that have demonstrated the significance of group referents for the experience of diverse people in work organisations (cf. Parks-Stamm, Heilman, & Hearns, 2008). The structure of our paper is as follows. We go over ODT's main principles in the part after that. Next, we summarise the rising literature on inclusion with a focus on how certain features are present in this literature that are consistent with our definition. Finally, we describe our inclusion definition and framework.

The exploration of our framework's similarities and differences from other models and theories in the diversity literature can be found in the section that follows. Finally, in order to direct future study and thought in the fields of diversity and inclusion, we suggest potential contextual elements and outcomes related to inclusion.

15.2 The Inclusion Literature's Organizing Framework: Optimal Distinctiveness Theory:

The importance of identification in the formation of in-groups and out-groups has been extensively discussed in the diversity literature (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). According to Roccas & Brewer (2002: 89), identification with social categories, such as those found in the diversity literature, is "based on symbolic attachment to the group as a whole." Because of their shared affiliation with the social group, individuals feel emotionally bonded to one another as a result of social identification.

Identity also includes a personal component, which entails establishing oneself as an individual, in addition to this social component (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Because people incorporate group characteristics into their self-concepts, social identities lead to reduced individuation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The tensions between "human needs for validation and similarity to others (on the one hand) and a countervailing need for uniqueness and individuation (on the other)" are explained by ODT (Brewer, 1991: 477).

According to Brewer, people try to strike a balance between these two requirements by participating as fully as possible in the groups they are a part of. People adopt social identities with certain groups and work to be accepted into such groups in order to satisfy a basic human desire for belongingness (defined as the need to develop and sustain strong, stable interpersonal relationships; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Acceptance and the sense of community it fosters prevent isolation, which can happen if one develops a strong sense of self (Pickett, Silver, & Brewer, 2002). Pickett, Bonner, and Coleman (2002) claim that people choose to socially identify with a certain group when it satisfies their desires for uniqueness and belongingness. ODT tests indicate that although though both requirements are crucial, there are times when only one of them is felt (Correll & Park, 2005; Pickett & Brewer, 2001).

As a result, the significance of the demand for uniqueness or belongingness might vary depending on the situational environment in which a person finds themselves. In situations where one of these demands is triggered by environmental factors connected to a specific social identity, that social identity may become more prominent. A single Asian American working in a team of Caucasians, for instance, can experience her need for belongingness being triggered if her ideas are publicly rejected and she links the rejection to her race (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999).

According to ODT studies, people will make efforts to find the balance they desire when their demands for connection and individuality are threatened. Self-stereotyping, intergroup differentiation, and giving a particular social identity more importance are ways to restore the balance when people's needs for belongingness or uniqueness are activated (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Pickett, Bonner, et al., 2002; Pickett, Silver, et al., 2002). These studies demonstrate how strongly individuals are driven to maintain the highest possible degree of pleasure for both needs. Diversity scholars have argued for the significance of organisational environments where "diversity is pervasive and part of an overall perspective and strategy that is inclusive of all employee differences, and these differences themselves are considered opportunities for both individual and organisational learning" (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002: 324). This is due to the ongoing struggle for women and minorities to succeed.

15.3 Considering Belongingness and Uniqueness as Parts of Inclusion:

We define inclusion as the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness. Building on ODT, this definition departs from existing inclusion research by explicitly focusing on both belongingness and uniqueness. In particular, we argue that even though the themes of belongingness and uniqueness are apparent in the diversity and inclusion literature, as yet, research has not focused on the necessity of balancing these two needs in order to foster inclusion.

Inclusion Framework

In Figure 1, we present a 2 × 2 framework of inclusion in which we propose that uniqueness and belongingness work together to create feelings of inclusion. Specifically, we argue that uniqueness will provide opportunities for improved group performance when a unique individual is an accepted member of the group and the group values the particular unique characteristic ("Inclusion" cell in Figure 1). For example, an employee who is older than other work group members may have knowledge of the company and its industry that is potentially valuable to the group. If treated as an insider with highly valued knowledge, then the older employee will have a strong sense of inclusion and the group will be able to benefit through improved performance. There is support in on the other end of the spectrum is the low-belongingness/low-uniqueness combination that we have labeled exclusion. This is where the individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group, but there are other employees or groups who are considered insiders. When the need for belongingness is thwarted, there can be harmful cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and health outcomes (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005; Blackhart, Nelson, Knowles, & Baumeister, 2009; DeWall, Maner, & Rouby, 2009). Hitlan, Clifton, and

DeSoto (2006) found that workplace exclusion (rejection by coworkers and the supervisor) was particularly detrimental to the work attitudes and psychological health of men as compared with women. While prior exclusion research has focused on social rejection, thus emphasizing belongingness needs, we argue that working with colleagues who treat unique characteristics (e.g., perspectives, knowledge, or information) as unimportant or irrelevant should contribute likewise to feelings of exclusion. Consistent with this perspective, recent research on women executives in top management teams suggests that, while women have a positive impact on firm performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005), they leave their firms at a higher rate than male executives do. This is due partially to their relatively lower power in the top management team but also to the greater recognition of their unique human capital in the marketplace (Krishnan, 2009).

15.4 Our Inclusion Framework and The Diversity Literature Review:

15.4.1 Differences Between Our Inclusion Framework and Diversity Theories and Models for Sustainability.

One of the differentiating features of our inclusion framework is the idea that people desire to feel a sense of belonging as well as respected for their unique characteristics.

Some diversity theories and constructs (for example, demographic similarities) connected with them emphasise the benefits of resemblance, emphasising on the belongingness theme rather than the individuality theme. For example, the most commonly used theoretical perspectives in the diversity literature (relational demography, social identity theory, and the similarity-attraction paradigm) argue that people seek to belong to groups and treat people in their in-groups more favourably than those in out-groups (Byrne, 1971; Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Riordan & Weatherly, 1999). Empirical evidence based on these diversity theories are frequently presented to support the claim that individuals who are similar to their work groups express good sentiments owing to this sense of belonging. For example, racial similarity has been associated with greater liking and satisfaction, higher interview ratings, and better communication behaviour and with reduced relationship conflict, intention to leave, and turnover (Buckley, Jackson, Bolino, Veres, & Feild, 2007; Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998; Chattopadhyay, 1999; Godthelp & Glunk, 2003; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992; Wiersema & Bird, 1993).

Furthermore, gender similarity has been found to be positively connected to trust, LMX, group cohesion, perceptions of competence, psychological attachment, and intent to stay (Mellor, 1995; Pelled & Xin, 2000; Shapcott, Carron, Burke, Bradshaw, 2003; Shapcott, Carron, Burke, Bradshaw, 2003). As our framework shows, in order for work groups to foster perceptions of employee inclusion, belongingness should be coupled by being valued for one's uniqueness. Such views should have more consistent effects on outcomes relevant to individuals in work groups, such as pro-organizational attitudes and behaviours, by meeting human demands for belongingness and uniqueness. Other ideas in the diversity literature on individuals in groups define different individuals' experiences as negative as a result of their dissimilarity to other group members. Tokens (those with qualities shared by 15% or fewer of the group members) have been described as having issues, such as feeling pressured to perform and feeling self-conscious about being visible inside the group

(Kanter, 1977; Pollak & Niemann, 1998). from others might trigger stereotypes, emotions of exclusion, or the fear of being treated unfairly based on negative stereotypes, which can exacerbate the experience of feeling different from others (Pelled et al., 1999; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Similarly, research based on the attraction-selection-attrition model and organisational fit theories has found that African American managers are less fit with their organisations than White managers (Lovelace & Rosen, 1996).

However, the results of tokenism have not always been unambiguous. For example, women in male-skewed departments (men made up 92% of department members) did not feel more visible or had worse job satisfaction than males in male-tilted academic departments (men made up 73% of department members) (Hewstone et al., 2006). While many diversity theories and empirical investigations emphasise the benefits of similarity, there is an assumption of symmetrical effects, which states that dissimilarity causes hate and negative impacts.

Several scholars, however, point out that this assumption is not consistently supported. Brewer (2007: 729) contends and gives evidence that in-group positivity does not imply out-group derogation (the "out-group hostility principle").

Similarly, Pittinsky and Simon (2007) assert in their two-dimensional model of intergroup attitudes that group members may have positive attitudes towards an out-group and that the bases for positive and negative attitudes towards the same out-group are distinct and serve distinct functions.

15.4.2 Diversity in Groups Literature on Which Our Inclusion Framework Is Based:

While our inclusion framework departs from the literature on group diversity in certain ways, as previously explained, it also expands on it by clearly addressing aspects that are implicit in some of the work in this field. The integration-and-learning perspective (also known as the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm) entails acknowledging and valuing differences among people, which are reflective of the uniqueness theme in our definition of inclusion (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Ely, 1996).

At the same time, belongingness is an important component of the integration-and-learning viewpoint since it supports incorporating diversity into the functioning of a work group or organisation. Employees in the firm where an integration-and-learning perspective was prevalent reported common experiences such as placing a high priority on explaining different points of view so that all employees could learn from one another (suggestive of uniqueness) and feeling valued and respected by colleagues. (Indicates a sense of belonging; Ely & Thomas, 2001). In comparison to the two views studied by Ely and Thomas (access-and-legitimacy and discrimination-and-fairness), the integration-and-learning perspective was found to be very beneficial in delivering high-quality work and allowing employees to develop on their capabilities. Homan and her colleagues (2008) used the integrationand-learning viewpoint in a study of gender-diverse teams.

15.5 Perspective on Future Work:

Despite the vastness of the diversity study literature, much more research is required to understand how organisations might establish inclusive environments that provide opportunity for the diverse people who work together in our global economy. "After more than two decades of diversity research, four decades of antidiscrimination legislation, and extraordinary media attention to diversity, discrimination and exclusion in organisations persist," writes Bell (2007: 3).

As a result, in this essay, we argue for the need of developing the construct of inclusion in order to inspire research that improves both theory and practise.

In the next section, we describe an early-stage model of the antecedents and effects of inclusion that is designed to guide future study and thought in the fields of diversity and inclusion rather than to offer a fully developed model with thorough discussion of its components.

15.6 Factors Contributing to Inclusion:

We propose contextual factors that may influence perceptions of inclusion. While this is not an entire list of potential future study avenues, we feel that these issues will serve as a starting point for promoting research in this interesting area. Contextual factors are elements of the environment that give stimuli to persons and are utilised to understand information at work (Mowday & Sutton, 1993; Weick, 1979).

Climate that is welcoming. According to diversity experts, a diverse climate contributes to beliefs that the organisation values all employees' contributions (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Leslie & Gelfand, 2008; McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2009; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Thomas & Ely, 1996). "Diversity climate is related to the inclusion or exclusion of people from diverse backgrounds (Mor Barak et al., 1998), and... to justice-related events pertinent to the balance of power and relations across social groups (Kossek & Zonia, 1993)," Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009: 25) write.

Recent research reveals that aggregated justice views at the work group level are significant for predicting important outcomes such as commitment, customer service, organisational citizenship behaviours, and turnover intentions (Ehrhart, 2004; Simons & Roberson, 2003). generated, processed, and received," is a key component of an inclusive atmosphere because it creates a setting in which fair treatment can occur at numerous levels, including individuals and groups (Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 1992: 13).

As a framework for managing diversity, Hayes, Bartle, and Major (2002: 450) proposed a "climate for opportunity" approach. They defined opportunity climate as "an individual's overall perception of the organization's fairness in terms of the management processes used to allocate opportunities, including interpersonal treatment and the distribution of opportunities in the organisational context." Chrobot-Mason and Thomas (2002) claimed that both individuals and organisations have a racial identity and that these identities might result in four different forms of employer-employee relationships.

15.6.1 Leadership That Is Inclusive:

Recruiting and hiring diverse people has been the traditional way to achieving diversity and inclusion goals (Jackson, 1992; Shore et al., 2009). However, until recently, very little research had been conducted on the internal organisational mechanisms that create inclusion, as opposed to mere numerical representations of diversity. Researchers have begun to establish the significance of top management diversity and equal employment opportunity philosophy and values (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Tonidandel, 2007; Gelfand, Nishii, Raver, & Schneider, 2005; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Scheid, 2005; Wasserman et al., 2008).

Such beliefs can have a direct impact on the types of practises used in work groups to promote or hinder inclusion (Reskin, 2000). Future study on inclusive leadership may benefit from the group value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988).

According to the paradigm, leaders' procedurally fair treatment communicates to individual members that they have a respected role in the group. Members can be proud of their group membership when fair procedures are followed regularly. Unfair treatment, on the other hand, conveys to group members that they and/or their group are being disrespected, which has been linked to psychological disengagement and low identification with the group or organisation (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

Direct supervisors can have a significant impact on employees' experiences in a work group, particularly in a diverse work group where different values and opinions may coexist.

15.6.2 Practices That Are Inclusive:

While there has been a great deal of speculation and research into workplace practises that encourage prejudice (Dipboye & Colella, 2005), considerably less attention has been paid to workplace practises that facilitate inclusion in work groups. Several types of practises emerged as likely to improve inclusion in this review, including information access and decision-making participation (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Nishii, 2010), conflict resolution procedures (Roberson, 2006), communication facilitation (Janssens & Zanoni, 2007), and freedom from stereotyping (Bilimoria et al., 2008). While these studies provide a useful beginning point for understanding the impact of work group practises in increasing perceptions of inclusion, much more research is certainly required, particularly in this area which is logically supported.

We propose that future study should focus on practises that improve the satisfying of belongingness and uniqueness demands. For example, research on practises that promote group cohesion, which is a reflection of belongingness, suggests that giving groups difficult tasks and greater autonomy improves cohesion (Man & Lam, 2003), and that smaller group size and greater group interdependence lead to stronger associations between cohesion and performance (Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon, 2003). Similarly, research on creativity (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004) indicates that environments with high job complexity (Tierney & Farmer, 2002) and supportive supervisors and coworkers (Shalley et al., 2004) enhance innovation.

15.7 Inclusion's Resulting Outcomes:

As our examination of the inclusion literature revealed, there is a relatively little amount of previous work on the outcomes of inclusion. Except for empirical evidence that inclusion is positively related to job satisfaction (Acquavita et al., 2009) and exclusion from decision making is a predictor of intention to leave (Mor Barak et al., 2006), most other work in this area has been theoretical or produced results that did not consistently support the hypotheses (Findler et al., 2005; Mor Barak, 2000).

However, we assume that this is due to a less thorough elaboration of the concept of inclusion than is described in the current review. In this section, we identify a few of the numerous potential effects of inclusion that appear to have promise for further investigation. These outcomes (presented in Figure 2) are advised to stimulate future research.

Individuals have status features connected with their social categories derived from culture (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation; Turner, Stets, Cook, & Massey, 2006). When there exist status discrepancies within a group, high-status members have been shown to have significant influence over low-status members. Low-status group members frequently withhold opinions, conform to the opinions of high-status group members, and refrain from directive behaviour, resulting in the value of their membership in the group never being fully realised (e.g., Asch, 1955; Earley, 1999; Freese & Cohen, 1973; Johnson, Funk, & Clay-Warner, 1998).

Inclusion could entail removing perceived status distinctions so that group members can be themselves and express their thoughts freely. Furthermore, based on status characteristics theory (which holds that high-status group members are perceived to be more competent than low-status group members), inclusion may level the playing field in terms of group members' perceptions of competence (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972). There is some evidence that inclusion is related to both job happiness and intention to leave. Acquavita et al. (2009) found that perceptions of inclusion and exclusion were important predictors of job satisfaction among social workers in a study.

Prior research on inclusiveness and job satisfaction by Mor Barak and Levin (2002) and Mor Barak et al. (2006) supports this finding. In terms of turnover intentions, Avery et al. (2008) discovered that perceived inclusion was positively connected to willingness to stay. They also suggested that employees who feel more socially integrated have higher degrees of organisational identification and connection and are less likely to leave. Mor Barak et al. (2006) found that inclusion was associated to job satisfaction, which was related to turnover intentions in their research of child welfare employees. To summarise, it appears that, while there isn't a lot of research on these two outcomes, there is some evidence that both work satisfaction and turnover intentions are viable consequences of perceived inclusion.

Interpersonal justice frameworks, such as social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), provide a foundation for forecasting the impacts of inclusion. Justice is connected with high-quality social exchange interactions that involve mutual investment by both parties (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002).

15.8 Conclusion:

Despite the increasingly diverse workforce, there is still evidence that success is often equated with diversity characteristics, such as sex and race/ethnicity. Weinberg (2007) used U.S. Census Bureau data to compare the earnings of men and women and found the ratio was .77 in 2005 for full-time workers. A recent study (Hansen, 2008) presented evidence that even when women and minorities have the same starting salaries and comparable performance ratings, their merit increases are smaller than those awarded to their White male counterparts. Likewise, heterosexism results in fewer promotions (Ragins & Cornwell, 2001) and is associated with lower compensation in the case of gay men (Badgett, 1995; Berg & Lien, 2002; Black, Makar, Sanders, & Taylor, 2003; Blandford, 2003; Brown, 1998; Clain & Leppel, 2001). n light of the extensive research on diversity and the many articles arguing for the valuein- diversity perspective (Ely & Thomas, 2001), it is surprising that more progress has not been made in understanding and promoting inclusion in the workplace. However, we believe that our inclusion framework provides a basis for stimulating research on diversity that is focused on capitalizing on the unique value of diverse individuals. Such research has the potential to provide important benefits to individuals, groups, and organizations.

We noted in our review that it is not clear from past research on inclusion how and why inclusion has beneficial consequences. We therefore advocate more theoretical development of mediating mechanisms between inclusion and outcomes. We argue that the kind of treatment that creates perceptions of inclusion is the type that is afforded to valued members of the group. Such value and the associated status it afford provide a platform for greater employee contributions. Building on ODT (Brewer, 1991) and associated reviews of the inclusion and diversity literatures, our primary goal has been to propose a conceptualization of inclusion that will guide future research on diversity in work groups. Examining the relevant diversity literature through the lens of our inclusion framework suggests that the mixed results of diversity on performance (e.g., Mannix & Neale, 2005) may be due to the lack of consideration of the joint roles of belongingness and uniqueness across many studies. In a similar vein, solely highlighting the value of individuals' uniqueness (e.g., differentiation) can lead to interpersonal interactions involving segregation and an overreliance on stereotypes (Ely & Thomas, 2001). We propose that jointly considering both belongingness and uniqueness through inclusion promises to advance research and practice in the area of diversity.

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