Inclusive leadership: Realizing positive outcomes through belongingness and being valued for uniqueness☆

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ABSTRACT

We introduce a theoretically-grounded conceptualization of inclusive leadership and present a framework for understanding factors that contribute to and follow from inclusive leadership within work groups. We conceptualize inclusive leadership as a set of positive leader behaviors that facilitate group members perceiving belongingness in the work group while maintaining their uniqueness within the group as they fully contribute to group processes and outcomes. We propose that leader pro-diversity beliefs, humility, and cognitive complexity increase the propensity of inclusive leader behaviors. We identify five categories of inclusive leadership behaviors that facilitate group members' perceptions of inclusion, which in turn lead to member work group identification, psychological empowerment, and behavioral outcomes (creativity, job performance, and reduced turnover) in the pursuit of group goals. This framework provides theoretical grounding for the construct of inclusive leadership while advancing our understanding of how leaders can increase diverse work group effectiveness.

Diversity is thought of by many CEOs and business leaders to be a strategic priority that provides important contributions, including increased levels of creativity and innovation (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013). Although many organizations have added more diversity to their workforce, there has been increasing recognition that focusing on increasing diversity in organizations does not ensure the potential benefits or the retention and/or promotion of individuals from these groups to influential positions in organizations (Cook & Glass, 2014; Giscombe & Mattis, 2002; Hom, Roberson, & Ellis, 2008). Unfortunately, efforts to recruit, develop, and promote individuals from underrepresented groups do not guarantee that these individuals' abilities are fully utilized or that their voices and perspectives are fully heard and incorporated in organizational decisions in an advantageous manner. In many cases, managers may wonder why they worked to achieve diversity when they do not ultimately see an improvement in the performance of their teams and might be prone to feel that they have let down individuals for whom they sought to provide opportunities.

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In order to achieve more complete involvement of diverse individuals in the workplace and to provide the opportunity for all organizational members to reach their full potential, researchers and practitioners have increasingly looked to inclusion (employees perceiving that they are esteemed members of a work group or organization as a result of treatment that satisfies belongingness and uniqueness needs) as a route to accomplishing these goals (Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, & Singh, 2011). Although it is clear that experiencing inclusion in work groups holds promise, such experiences are dependent in part on effective leadership (Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman, 2014). Interestingly, while scholars have highlighted the leadership challenges associated with diversity in work groups (Chrobot-Mason & Ruderman, 2004; DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996), there is still limited research and theory focusing on leadership approaches that can address these difficulties by promoting employee experiences of work group inclusion (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Leaders who promote employee inclusion not only hold the promise of offering value by retaining diverse employees, but they interact with employees in ways that go beyond mere avoidance of bias and discrimination (cf., Simons, Leroy, Veronek, & Masschelein, 2015).

We propose that inclusive leadership enables the effective functioning of diverse work groups in ways that are not sufficiently addressed by other forms of leadership. Building on optimal distinctiveness theory and social identity theory, we conceptualize inclusive leadership as a set of leader behaviors that are focused on facilitating group members feeling part of the group (belongingness) and retaining their sense of individuality (uniqueness) while contributing to group processes and outcomes (Brewer, 1991; Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, & Ehrhart,, & Singh, G., 2011; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Richer, & Wetherell, 1987). Thus, inclusive leadership is beneficial for diverse teams through its focus on accepting women and minorities while simultaneously valuing all members for their unique attributes, perspectives, and contributions, ultimately leading to higher performance. While a number of existing leadership approaches have been established as effective, none has adequately addressed these fundamental needs of group members to belong and to be valued for uniqueness. Since belonging and being valued for uniqueness are fundamental human needs, inclusive leadership has the potential to be beneficial to diverse work groups while also being effective for more homogeneous work groups (Brewer, 1991; Shore et al., 2011).

Managers of work groups, and other individuals in formal leadership positions, are critical to creating inclusion since group members form perceptions of inclusion based on the treatment they receive at work (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Managers not only are responsible for many decisions that impact employees (e.g., resource allocation decisions and work task assignments), but they also hold a large degree of influence over the organizational environment in which inclusive treatment by others may occur (Nishii, 2013). For example, while Johnson & Johnson is a top-rated organization by DiversityInc. for its company-wide diversity practices, it is up to individual managers within Johnson & Johnson to play the key role of ensuring that all employees are fully included and engaged in the work being done in the various groups within the organization (DiversityInc., 2017). While it has been recognized in the literature that managers and other formal leaders can behave in ways that are more or less inclusive (e.g., Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Prime & Salib, 2014), much work remains to be done to advance theory related to our understanding of inclusive leadership.

Below we review previous work that has explored inclusiveness related to leadership. We present our conceptualization of inclusive leadership and illustrate how it builds on and adds to existing forms of leadership. We then propose a theoretical framework (see Fig. 1 below) in which individual differences (i.e., pro-diversity beliefs, humility, and cognitive complexity) contribute to inclusive leadership behaviors that facilitate group members' perceptions of inclusion, which in turn contribute to group members' work group identification and psychological empowerment and to behavioral outcomes.

Our framework makes several theoretical contributions to the literature. First, we provide a theoretically grounded model of inclusive leadership and propose directions for future research in an area of leadership research that has been gaining popularity without a clear theoretical foundation. Second, we provide theoretical distinctions between inclusive leadership and other forms of leadership both in terms of defining inclusive leadership and grounding our framework in a theory that is distinct from prior leadership theory. Finally, we contribute to theory on diversity and social identity by offering propositions that explain how diverse work groups can be led effectively, and by highlighting ways in which social identity theory can be augmented to realize positive outcomes within diverse work groups.

We limit our theorizing to the experiences of individuals within a work group and managers with formal leadership responsibilities over the work group, as inclusion research has tended to focus on the experience of inclusion within groups (e.g., Nishii, 2013; Nishii & Mayer, 2009). However, we acknowledge that inclusive leadership is likely relevant to other levels of the organization and to
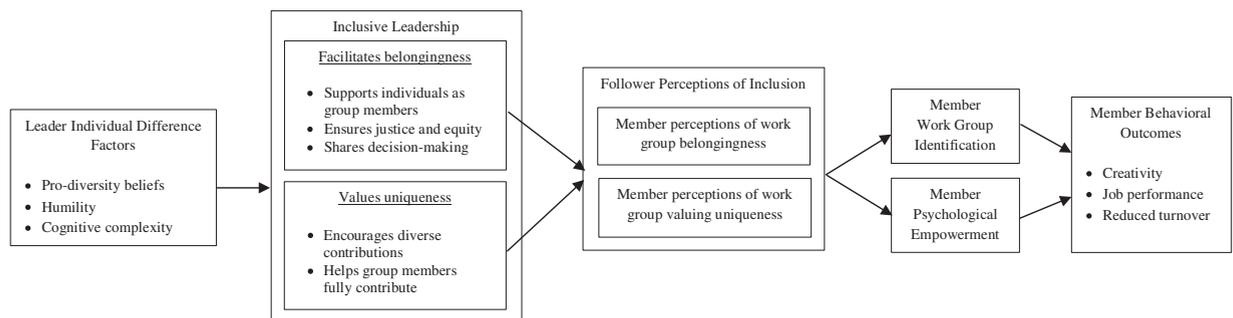

Fig. 1. Theoretical model of inclusive leadership.

other individuals in formal and informal leadership roles. We also acknowledge that inclusive leadership within a work group may be influenced by contextual factors outside of the group, such as top management's commitment to inclusion.

1. Inclusive leadership

Because the construct of inclusion is central to our theorizing regarding inclusive leadership, it is important to clarify what we mean by "inclusion." We build on the definition of inclusion proposed by Shore et al. (2011, p. 1265) 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." This definition is theoretically anchored by optimal distinctiveness theory, which is an extension of social identity theory (Brewer, 2012). Optimal distinctiveness theory argues that individuals have the need to be both similar and different from others simultaneously (Brewer, 1991). Shore et al.'s conceptualization of inclusion is distinct from other ways that inclusion has been viewed by stating explicitly that individuals' needs for belongingness (the need to develop and maintain robust and stable interpersonal relationships; Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and uniqueness (the need to preserve a distinctive sense of self; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980) both must be addressed in order to feel a sense of inclusion. This definition also explicitly refers to an individual's experience within a work group. Shore et al.'s (2011) view of inclusion captures several themes present in the inclusion literature, which has described being accepted (belongingness) as well as acknowledging individual talents and allowing individuals' voices to be heard and appreciated (uniqueness) (e.g., Mor Barak, 2000; Pelled, Ledford, & Mohrman, 1999).

2. Conceptualizing inclusive leadership

During the last decade, researchers have explored how leaders may act in an inclusive manner (e.g., Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Nishii & Mayer, 2009). However, there have been few efforts to clearly establish *inclusive leadership* as a style of leadership. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), who appear to have coined the term *leader inclusiveness*, defined it as "words and deeds exhibited by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions" (p. 947). They conceptualized it as capturing "attempts by leaders to include others in discussions and decisions in which their voices and perspectives might otherwise be absent" (p. 947), and as being similar to but also distinct from coaching behavior and participative leadership.

Later, Nishii and Mayer (2009) examined high-quality leader-member exchange at the group level and explored how this operationalization of leader inclusiveness might reduce turnover in diverse groups. Their core argument was that when leaders signal "their own acceptance of employees of various backgrounds through the establishment of high-quality relationships with them, group leaders can promote norms about equality and inclusion that will facilitate greater power sharing and improve reciprocal exchanges among group members" (Nishii & Mayer, 2009, p. 1413). Although they did not explicitly define what it means to be an inclusive leader, their research implies that leader inclusiveness might be about developing high-quality relationships with individuals who otherwise might be left out of such relationships (e.g., members of underrepresented groups).

In instances in which inclusive leadership has been explicitly discussed and/or measured as a specific approach to leadership (e.g., Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010; Hirak, Peng, Carmeli, & Schaubroeck, 2012; Mitchell, Boyle, Parker, Giles, Chiang, & Joyce, 2015), there has not been an attempt to comprehensively conceptualize or systematically compare inclusive leadership to other existing leadership styles. Authors have generally built upon Nembhard and Edmondson's (2006) definition of leader inclusiveness and conceptualized inclusive leadership as involving modeling openness and providing accessibility in interactions with followers (e.g., Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010; Hirak, Peng, Carmeli, & Schaubroeck, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2015).

We seek to provide a more comprehensive and fine-grained understanding of inclusive leadership by building on Shore et al.'s (2011) theoretical framework of inclusion and other approaches to understanding inclusive leadership (e.g., Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Our conceptualization of inclusive leadership explicitly revolves around leader behaviors that respond to group members' needs for belongingness and uniqueness within a work group; we argue that both needs must be addressed for group members to truly feel a sense of inclusion (Shore et al., 2011). As we will describe later, leaders engage in different behaviors to address belongingness versus value in uniqueness, although group members need to perceive that both needs are addressed within their experiences in the group for the leader to be a truly inclusive leader.

While other work on inclusive leadership has acknowledged the role of facilitating perceptions of belongingness through high-quality relationships and leader accessibility (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nishii & Mayer, 2009), our definition extends past theory and research in that it highlights the simultaneous need to facilitate perceptions that uniqueness is valued (i.e., such that group members perceive that they are valued for being unique as a result of leader behaviors in addition to perceiving that they belong). Nembhard and Edmondson's (2006) characterization of inclusive leaders as inviting and appreciating others' contributions implies a degree of value for uniqueness, but their emphasis is on leaders' efforts in overcoming status differences in cross-disciplinary teams such that group members feel comfortable speaking up. Our definition differs from theirs in that leaders' efforts are specifically focused on fostering group members' perceptions of both belonging and value for uniqueness as a group member. Further, we broaden the scope of inclusive leadership beyond speaking up in cross-disciplinary teams.

We also place an emphasis on the experience of group members in relation to the work group in our conceptualization of inclusive leadership. Inclusive leaders facilitate perceptions of inclusion not only by engaging in behaviors directed towards work group members, but also by serving as a role model and reinforcing such behaviors among group members. A group member perceives that a leader is inclusive not only by how the group member himself or herself is treated, but also by observations of how all group members are treated. Specific inclusive leadership behaviors that accomplish perceptions of inclusion among work group members are described in the next section.

3. Specifying inclusive leadership behaviors

We propose categories of inclusive leadership behaviors (three for belongingness and two for uniqueness), which we derived by reviewing and extending theory within the literature on inclusive leadership and on inclusion more generally. For each inclusive leadership behavior category, we consider how inclusive leaders can influence members directly as well as how inclusive leaders can create a context in which members experience a sense of inclusion.

3.1. Facilitating belongingness

Several specific leader behaviors are likely to facilitate belongingness: 1) supporting group members, 2) ensuring that justice and equity are part of each member's experience, and 3) providing opportunities for shared decision making on relevant issues.

Supporting group members involves leaders making members feel comfortable and communicating that they have the members' best interests in mind (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). To accomplish this, inclusive leaders create a comfortable environment and exert influence by helping members with their needs and expressing support for them and their opinions. Inclusive leaders also can role model support of members throughout the team such that other members replicate that care and acceptance in group interactions (cf., Nishii, 2013). When leaders put into place routines of inclusion through role modeling or by instituting inclusive practices, such as a time at the beginning of the day for the leader and members to check in with other group members or asking group members to verbalize what they have appreciated about being part of the group during group meetings, inclusive leaders create a sense of community that can propagate belongingness perceptions among group members.

Ensuring justice and equity allows inclusive leaders to demonstrate fair treatment of group members and thus to indicate to members that they are a respected part of the group (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Sabharwal, 2014; Shore et al., 2011). When inclusive leaders ensure justice and equity, they not only indicate respect for individual group members (for example, by seeking out every group member's preferences regarding group tasks), but they also proactively consider how decisions unintentionally could create a lack of equity across group members. For example, a leader who suggests that top managers strategize for an important meeting over drinks at a bar after hours could undermine perceptions of inclusion for someone whose religion does not allow him or her to drink alcohol or an individual with a physical disability who relies on limited public transportation scheduling. Similarly, conducting a last-minute weekend retreat to discuss a new strategic initiative, with the expectation that everyone would be available, could disadvantage members with weekend obligations, such as single parents who would likely struggle to find childcare on short notice. Creating systems that ensure justice and equity is one way in which inclusive leaders exert their influence at the group level. For example, leaders may put into place policies to provide fairness for group members and to ensure a lack of bias (such as a process involving checks and balances so that group members being considered for promotions or new job opportunities compete on an equal footing with one another). A specific practical illustration of facilitating equity and belongingness among group members could involve leaders finding opportunities to demonstrate that work group members with physical disabilities are not representative of stereotypes (e.g., helpless, unsociable, inferior) and that these individuals instead are similar to others in the group (Stone & Colella, 1996).

Finally, *shared decision-making* with an emphasis on sharing power, broadening consultation on decisions, and helping decide how work is conducted is also important to creating a sense of belongingness (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Nishii, 2013; Roberson, 2006). Inclusive leaders can, for example, ask for group-wide participation when making major decisions and give work group members opportunities to discuss how to integrate the perspectives offered. Alternatively, ensuring decision-making control is distributed over specified aspects of the work allows for inclusion across the group's tasks or responsibilities. Other practices could include instituting points in the group's process when group members share information and make decisions jointly on next steps, or developing a check list that ensures that participation in decision-making has been truly shared within or across tasks. By creating decision-making sharing practices that become a part of the group's norms, leaders can embed inclusion into the contextual make-up of the group.

3.2. Indicating value for uniqueness

Although the literature on inclusion has tended to emphasize belongingness more than uniqueness, leader behaviors indicating value for uniqueness (e.g., what an individual brings to the work group that others do not have in common with him/her, including identities and perspectives) are equally important. We propose that 1) encouraging diverse contributions to the work group and 2) helping group members fully offer their unique talents and perspectives to enhance the work of the group are central behaviors to indicating value for uniqueness. Indicating value for uniqueness provides group members not only with the opportunity for self-definition, but also with a sense of self-worth that otherwise is lacking when only encouraging perceptions of belongingness (Brewer, 1991; Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004).

Encouraging diverse contributions is important to creating a sense that uniqueness is valued (e.g., Mor Barak & Daya, 2014; Shore et al., 2011; Winters, 2014). By paying special attention to soliciting different points of view and approaches, inclusive leaders are able to support perspectives and orientations that are not the norm but that contribute to performance. For example, an older work group member who is new to the organization could be encouraged to offer a perspective on how similar work problems have been successfully dealt with in the past at his or her previous employers, such that his or her experience and perspective is introduced into a group's discussion. Such an approach increases uncertainty since a new or alternative way of doing things may not be successful and the process of questioning shared assumptions and norms may result in social rejection of either the leader or of individuals whose diverse contributions are voiced (Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2012). Thus, an inclusive leader must carefully consider how best to

support diversity while also constructively managing any conflict that may arise. In addition, an inclusive leader can encourage diverse contributions by creating "an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences" (Winters, 2014, p. 206). An inclusive leader can create such a welcoming environment by, for example, forming positive, individualized relationships with members and recognizing the way that each individual is able and willing to contribute, which should increase group members' comfort in providing diverse perspectives to the group.

Helping group members fully contribute indicates value for uniqueness by encouraging individuals who otherwise might not feel that their contributions are welcome (Roberson, 2006). For example, a leader might ask group members to write down ideas and share them one by one to ensure that all voices are heard, including those of members who are newer to the group, who are more introverted, and/or who would be less likely to speak up given their cultural background. Speaking with each group member privately to understand their strengths and preferences and then taking into account this knowledge would also help group members to fully contribute. Helping group members to fully contribute also could involve supporting those who may need to complete tasks in non-traditional ways due to disabilities or determining alternative approaches to reaching goals that recognize the different ways in which group members can contribute. Finally, it might also include leader efforts to ensure that group members perceive that they can bring their full selves to work and do not need to downplay or hide any differences that could ultimately add value and help drive the performance of the group. Thus, these two leader behaviors indicate value for uniqueness in distinct ways with the former ensuring that different points of view are represented while the latter involves making sure that group members do not hold back or encounter obstacles in contributing to the group.

4. Inclusive leadership vis a vis other leadership styles

Although several existing leadership styles have the potential to incorporate an inclusive component to facilitate buy-in and commitment to a common goal (Yukl, 2013), inclusive leadership both facilitates belongingness and indicates value for uniqueness in ways that are not fully addressed by other leadership styles. We highlight key points of comparison between inclusive leadership and other forms of leadership that could be seen as being conceptually related to inclusive leadership in Table 1 and below.

For example, transformational leaders may use their vision to enhance member commitment to shared organizational goals (Bass, 2008). Yet, transformational leadership is not necessarily inclusive in nature. For example, many leaders share visions that focus more on their greatness, charisma, and future success, and do not facilitate member perceptions of belongingness in an inclusive manner (cf., Galvin, Waldman, & Balthazard, 2010). Further, leaders' communication about their visions does not typically involve acknowledging members' uniqueness. Transformational leadership has a different focus than inclusive leadership in that it relies on the transformation of members to help them "transcend their own immediate self-interest for the sake of the mission and vision of the organization" (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 27). Although transformational leaders may value the individual, transformational leadership's ability to achieve outcomes relies on "continuous people improvement" and a degree of assimilation of the members into the collective through the leader's ability to "diagnose, meet, and elevate the needs" of the members to align with those of the collective (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 28). In addition, transformational leaders "wield much power and influence over their followers" through idealized influence (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 28). By comparison, inclusive leaders are likely to focus on facilitation and support of member perceptions of belongingness and uniqueness in order to allow group members to fully contribute to the success of the group. Unlike transformational leadership, inclusive leadership helps group members feel that they belong without changing key identities and that they can contribute their uniqueness to group efforts.

Empowering leadership, which can be defined as power sharing with followers to increase intrinsic motivation, can be manifested through role modeling, coaching, and willingness to provide explanations for the organization's rules and goals (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006). Empowering leadership focuses on facilitating members' control over their own decisions and goals, but does not involve behaviors that facilitate members feeling a sense of belonging within the work group as inclusive leadership does. It is interesting to note, however, that empowering leadership may achieve its aims more fully by incorporating inclusive leadership to help group members feel that their work is meaningful and encouraging member contributions (Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005).

Inclusive leadership also includes foci that are not fully addressed by servant leadership. Servant leadership has been conceptualized as a leadership style that deemphasizes the self-interests of the leader and instead focuses on the leader's moral responsibility to create success for the organization, members, and other stakeholders such as customers and the community (Ehrhart, 2004; Greenleaf, 1977). Although several of Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson's (2008) dimensions of servant leadership seem to imply inclusiveness (e.g., showing sensitivity), they appear to be more about developing and providing opportunities for members, rather than necessarily helping individuals feel a sense of belongingness or the ability to display their uniqueness while working on group tasks. For example, a young African-American woman and a middle-age White male might both receive mentoring and be provided with opportunities to develop and progress in their careers by their group leader who is sensitive to their needs and interests, which would likely be aligned with a servant leadership approach. However, the woman might never truly feel as encouraged to play a role in contributing to the work group while the ways in which the man is unique may not be valued and brought to light as would be the case with an inclusive leader. Both employees may feel that elements of their identity must be downplayed in order to be perceived as competent in their roles despite the other merits of a servant leadership approach. In addition, inclusive leadership is not explicitly focused on external stakeholders nor does it take on a necessarily moral perspective in the manner that servant leadership does.

Authentic leadership also may have some overlap with inclusive leadership, as well as having many aspects that are distinct (cf., Boekhorst, 2015). Authentic leadership has been defined as "behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of

Table 1
Inclusive leadership and other forms of leadership.

Leadership construct	Characteristics	Sample behaviors	Key differences with inclusive leadership
Inclusive leadership	Behaviors that collectively facilitate all group members' perceptions of belongingness to the work group and that encourage group members contributing their uniqueness to achieving positive group outcomes	- Supporting individuals as group members - Ensuring justice and equity within the group - Promoting individuals' diverse contributions to the group - Helping individuals fully provide their unique perspectives, and abilities to the work of the group	N/A
Transformational leadership	Influences members "by broadening and elevating followers' goals and providing them with confidence to perform beyond the expectations specified in the implicit or explicit exchange agreement" (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002: 735).	- Challenging member assumptions - Sharing compelling vision - Developing members - Establishing difficult goals (Bass, 2008; Dvir et al., 2002)	Transformational leadership is focused on motivating and developing members based on the organization's needs while inclusive leadership is focused on accepting members for who they are and allowing them to contribute their unique abilities and perspectives
Empowering leadership	"Behaviors whereby power is shared with subordinates and that raise their level of intrinsic motivation" (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006: 1240)	- Leading by example - Teaching how to solve problems - Coaching - Showing that he/she cares (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000; Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006)	Empowering leadership relies on the sharing of power, teaching and coaching, whereas inclusive leadership fosters belongingness and a sense that the individual can contribute based on what makes him or her unique
Servant leadership	Deemphasizes the self-interests of the individual in the leader role and instead is focused on the moral responsibility of the individual to create success for the organization, members, and other stakeholders such as customers, and the community (Ehrhart, 2004; Greenleaf, 1977)	- Behaving ethically - Putting members first - Helping members grow and succeed - Creating value for the community (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008)	Servant leadership focuses on developing and creating success for the members but not necessarily on tending to member needs for work group belonging or uniqueness
Authentic leadership	"Behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008, p. 94)	- Telling members the hard truth - Displaying genuine emotions - Making decisions based on core values - Listening carefully (Walumbwa et al., 2008)	Authentic leadership relies on authentic leader actions and behaviors. In contrast inclusive leadership is focused on ensuring the members experience acceptance and are able to contribute their unique talents and perspectives
Leader-member exchange	Explains that leaders form relationships with members that vary in quality, and that these relationships "reflect the extent to which the leader and subordinate exchange resources and support beyond what is expected based on the formal employment contract" (Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006, p 723)	- Helping members know where they stand with him/her - Understanding member problems and needs - Recognizing member potential - Helping member overcome problems (Scandura & Graen, 1984)	LMX is focused on facilitating the positive exchange of resources and support between leaders and members. In contrast, inclusive leadership creates feelings of belongingness and a sense that the individual's ability to contribute his or her uniqueness is valued and welcomed by the organization

Note. Potential moderators of the relationships are reviewed in the Discussion section of the manuscript.

information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008, p. 94). As is apparent from its definition, it is largely a self-based approach to leadership in that it hinges on the leader being authentic to who he or she is in his or her interactions with others (e.g., "makes decisions based on his/her core beliefs"), rather than focusing on allowing and/or encouraging authenticity in others (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008, p. 121). Thus, although a leader might engage in inclusive leadership in a way that is authentic, inclusive leadership focuses on facilitating a group environment in which members experience the fulfillment of belongingness and uniqueness needs within the work group whereas authentic leadership emphasizes a leader's behavior in relation to his or her true self.

Finally, inclusive leadership bears comparison with Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). LMX theory explains that leaders form relationships that vary in quality from one member to another (Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006). Measurement of LMX tends to focus on elements of the exchange such as level of understanding, willingness to help and/or defend one another, and effectiveness of the working relationship (e.g., Scandura & Graen, 1984). Although a manager who has a high-quality LMX relationship with all the members of his/her group might be thought to be inclusive (cf. Nishi & Mayer, 2009), a high-quality LMX relationship does not necessarily imply inclusive leadership. For instance, a manager could engage in behaviors that are core to a high-quality leader-member exchange, such as helping members of the work group to know where they stand with him/her, understanding their problems and needs, recognizing their potential, being inclined to help them work through problems, and having an

effective relationship (Scandura & Graen, 1984), and still not be engaging in inclusive leadership since these behaviors may not contribute to perceptions of belongingness to the work group or to feeling that differences are valued within the work group. Further, LMX focuses on the dyadic relationship between leader and member while inclusive leadership, as we conceptualize it, emphasizes the members in relation to the work group.

In sum, inclusive leadership has minimal overlap with existing conceptualizations of leadership and the key tenets of inclusive leadership are not fully captured by other leadership styles. Most notably among the differences discussed above, relative to inclusive leadership, other forms of leadership place much less emphasis on an individual's perceptions of belongingness and value for uniqueness specifically in relation to the work group via behaviors that incorporate all members within the work group and promote their diverse contributions and abilities.

5. Theory and propositions

In this section, we introduce propositions related to our theoretical model. First, we propose that several leader individual difference factors are related to inclusive leadership. We then present propositions related to outcomes of inclusive leadership and how those outcomes are related to member behavioral outcomes.

5.1. Leader individual difference factors

As shown in Fig. 1, we propose that there are individual difference characteristics that have the potential to increase an individual's propensity to engage in inclusive leadership behaviors. Specifically, pro-diversity beliefs, humility, and cognitive complexity should increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in inclusive leadership. As we explain further in the arguments preceding the propositions, social identity theory provides a theoretical grounding for these antecedents of inclusive leadership, as each of them focuses leaders' attention towards the group and its goals (Hirst, Van Dick, & Van Knippenberg, 2009; Hogg & Terry, 2000). At the same time, we extend social identity theory by indicating how it is possible to value individuals' uniqueness within the group while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of belongingness in the overall group. Although these three individual differences are distinct from one another, they share in common the tendency to perceive opportunities to increase a sense of belongingness among team members as well as to view uniqueness as having the potential for creating value even when the perspectives resulting from uniqueness may be counter to prevailing norms or the leader's own opinions.

First, we consider pro-diversity beliefs as a factor that increases the propensity for individuals to engage in inclusive leadership. Individuals hold varying views regarding the benefits and drawbacks of diversity in work groups (van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003). Some individuals perceive diversity as inherently positive to the functioning of work groups. They see diversity as creating value by adding richness through alternative insights, perspectives, and competencies (c.f., van Knippenberg, Haslam, & Platow, 2007). In contrast, other individuals may view diversity in a more negative light, as creating conflict, adding unnecessary complexity, challenging established group norms, and threatening shared group identities (c.f., van Knippenberg, Haslam, & Platow, 2007). Individuals who perceive diversity as being positive for group outcomes are thought to have pro-diversity beliefs (Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007). Beliefs regarding diversity are thought to stem from factors such as previous experiences (including socialization, education, exposure to other cultures, or involvement in tasks in which diverse perspectives are needed) and personality attributes (such as openness to experience and tolerance for ambiguity) (Hentschel, Shemla, Wegge, & Kearney, 2013; Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007; van Knippenberg et al., 2007).

Pro-diversity beliefs are grounded in social identity theory in that they provide a way for leaders to engage in pursuing a positive social identity for the group (Hogg & Terry, 2000). However, pro-diversity beliefs also recognize within-group differences of the individual group members. For individuals in leadership positions, pro-diversity beliefs should be positively associated with openness to diversity and a desire to incorporate diversity into their groups because of their perceptions that diversity will have a positive influence on group outcomes (c.f., Homan et al., 2007). This positive affect towards diversity should facilitate a mental openness towards diversity that will allow leaders to understand how to create a greater sense of belongingness in the work group and how to incorporate the many ways in which individuals are diverse, such as gender, racio-ethnicity, cultural background, and age, to name only a few (Stone-Romero, Stone, & Salas, 2003). It also should be associated with leaders valuing individuals' potentially unique contributions that are rooted in their diverse backgrounds and identities. This positive relationship should stem from leaders' desire to find opportunities where diversity exists and create avenues to integrate those opportunities into their work groups.

Proposition 1a. Leader pro-diversity beliefs will be positively related to inclusive leadership.

Leader humility also may increase the likelihood that an individual will engage in inclusive leadership. Humility has been described as a self-view that involves accepting that one is "not the center of the universe" in his or her relationships with others (Nielsen, Marrone, & Slay, 2010, p. 34). It has been conceptualized as involving a high level of clarity regarding one's identity, strengths, and weaknesses (Nielsen, Marrone, & Slay, 2010). It also is tied to positive tendencies, such as a high level of self-awareness, low self-focus, empathy, as well as an openness and appreciation for others (Davis et al., 2011; Ou, Tsui, Kinicki, Waldman, Xiao, & Song, 2014). Leaders with this self-view are likely to have a high awareness of others, which is consistent with social identity theory's emphasis on depersonalization such that the group (rather than the leader) is the focus of concern (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). At the same time, leader humility goes beyond social identity theory by highlighting that leaders recognize group members' uniqueness and do not see such uniqueness as a threat to themselves or to the group.

Humility should be positively associated with a propensity to engage in inclusive leadership as it involves leaders being likely to

be welcoming of others and see and appreciate the unique strengths of their members. Humble leaders will not be threatened by members' differences, or strengths and abilities that may be different from their own, and will therefore be likely to observe ways to integrate member uniqueness into the group. Humble leaders will be especially prone to see the needs of others and understand ways to incorporate others and the unique talents of individuals into the group's functioning because of their own self-awareness.

Proposition 1b. Leader humility will be positively related to inclusive leadership.

Finally, cognitive complexity should increase the likelihood that an individual would engage in inclusive leadership. Cognitive complexity describes an individual's ability to perceive the behavior and social information of others in a multidimensional manner (Bieri, 1955; Dierdorff & Rubin, 2007). People with a high level of cognitive complexity see individuals in groups as distinct, each possessing both positive and negative traits that make them different (Bieri, 1955). They are able to perceive people in this manner because of highly differentiated mental systems of dimensions that are cognitively available to categorize others (Bieri, 1955; Tripodi & Bieri, 1966). Social identity theory provides theoretical justification for this antecedent in that the underlying motivation involved in cognitive complexity is evaluating the social identity of the group in a positive manner (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Cognitive complexity offers an extension of social identity theory, however, by accentuating that group members do not need to adhere to a set group prototype, but instead may allow for positive evaluation of the group through qualities that are unique relative to other group members.

Leaders with high levels of cognitive complexity are likely to recognize member strengths even while perceiving limitations rather than applying a one-dimensional view that may minimize member abilities to contribute. Cognitively complex leaders will likely be sensitive to member desires and how the complexity associated with group dynamics may need to be managed in order to help members concurrently feel a sense of belongingness while allowing them to feel that they can retain what makes them unique. Such leaders also will tend to be able to perceive how complex social processes are likely to unfold over time, and how best to incorporate unique strengths and perspectives for the betterment of the group and the organization.

Proposition 1c. Leader cognitive complexity will be positively related to inclusive leadership.

5.2. Inclusive leadership behaviors and member perceptions of inclusion

When leaders engage in behaviors that facilitate belongingness and/or indicate value for uniqueness, members should perceive that they are included in their work group. From a social identity-based leadership perspective, members tend to feel a part of groups when leaders engage in behaviors that are group-oriented such as involving members and ensuring their perspectives are incorporated (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Leaders who engage in behaviors that signal concern with the group and its members not only suggest that the leader is one with the group, but also that members are esteemed themselves and thus perceive a sense of inclusion. In addition, social information processing theory suggests that perceptions of inclusion can occur as a result of work group members sharing with one another their experiences with their leader and consequently constructing a shared interpretation of their leader as acting inclusively (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Through repeated interactions with their leader which are relayed to fellow group members, work group members converge on a common understanding of their experience as involving efforts towards facilitating their belongingness and uniqueness needs. This common understanding of the leader is likely to result in members labeling their leaders' behaviors as inclusive, which creates the experience of feeling included for work group members (Lord & Maher, 1993).

The three leader behaviors proposed above that facilitate belongingness should contribute to satisfying members' need to belong and thus contribute to their perceptions of inclusion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). First, leaders who support individuals as group members (e.g., by providing assistance and backing ideas) make it clear that in drawing the boundaries of who is part of the group, these individuals belong to the group. This signals acceptance as a group member and provides individuals with a sense of belonging that is integral to perceptions of inclusion (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). Supporting individuals as group members contributes to members' perceived immersion within a group and thus to feelings of being a part of the group (Turner et al., 1987). Inclusive leaders' efforts to ensure justice and equity indicate to members that they are respected members by the group according to the group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Second, fair and equitable treatment by leaders communicates how members are connected to their group and thus contributes to a sense of belonging (Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996). Inclusive leaders also utilize shared decision-making, which has been found to increase members' sense of psychological ownership and consequently their sense of inclusion in the group (Liu, Wang, Hui, & Lee, 2012; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Finally, when members share in decision making, they experience interdependence with others in the group, which is an antecedent of feelings of belonging as posited by Easterbrook and Vignoles (2013).

Leader behaviors that emphasize value for uniqueness contribute to members' perceptions that they are valued for their unique qualities and perspectives, which should yield perceptions of inclusion. By encouraging diverse contributions from group members, leaders ask for information and perspectives that make group members unique and thus create perceptions that group members are valued for what makes them different from other group members. By facilitating a discussion of divergent viewpoints, inclusive leaders are able to encourage members' perception that unique perspectives are welcome (Kearney & Gebert, 2009). In addition, when leaders encourage member perceptions of uniqueness by helping individuals fully contribute, leaders get to know individuals so that they can facilitate their unique contributions. Group members take note of efforts made by leaders to get to know them as individuals; in fact, self-verification theory posits that individuals strive to be understood for what makes them individuals (Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004). Group members thus realize the goal of self-verification (having others see them as they see themselves) and perceive that their individual qualities are valued when leaders engage in behaviors that indicate value for uniqueness.

Proposition 2. Inclusive leadership (i.e., leadership that facilitates belongingness by supporting individuals as group members, ensuring justice and equity, and utilizing shared decision-making and that values uniqueness by encouraging diverse contributions and helping individuals fully contribute) will be positively related to member perceptions of inclusion.

5.3. Outcomes of perceptions of inclusion

Member perceptions of inclusion in a work group are likely to ultimately lead to positive outcomes that benefit the work group. However, we propose that the relationship between member perceptions of inclusion and positive behavioral outcomes is indirect. When members perceive a high degree of inclusion within their work group, they are likely to identify strongly with their work group and feel psychologically empowered (as shown in Fig. 1). Accordingly, inclusion (i.e., belongingness and uniqueness) should have a positive impact on work group identification and psychological empowerment, which in turn should lead to positive behavioral outcomes.

5.3.1. Work group identification

When individuals perceive that they belong in their work group and that their unique contributions are valued, they are likely to have strong relationships with their group members and ultimately these positive relationships should influence how they see themselves in relation to their work group. These feelings and associations with the work group should result in individuals incorporating the identity of the work group with their own identity (i.e., work group identification). Individuals who have strong work group identification have a perception of oneness with their work group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). They experience the successes and failures of the work group as their own (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Further, a high level of work group identification cultivates intergroup comparisons that result in favorable views of one's own group (and thus higher self-esteem for the individual) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Because individuals with strong work group identification wish to contribute to the group with which they identify, our model depicts work group identification as being positively related to creativity and job performance while being negatively related to turnover. Empirical support has been found for work group identification being positively related to creativity (Yu & Frenkel, 2013) and negatively related to turnover intentions (Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006; Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000). The focus that individuals with strong work group identification have on whether their group performs better than other groups also may stimulate a high level of performance and creativity (Kim & Glomb, 2014).

Proposition 3. Member perceptions of inclusion will be positively related to behavioral outcomes (e.g., creativity, job performance, and reduced turnover) indirectly through work group identification.

5.3.2. Psychological empowerment

Individuals who are psychologically empowered feel that they have an impact and that they have control over their activities (Spreitzer, 1995). Inclusive leaders indicate to group members that their perspectives are welcome and valued, thereby providing a sense that group members have both impact and control. This line of reasoning is consistent with research suggesting that experiencing influence in the workplace strengthens perceptions of competence and control (Boudrias, Morin, & LaJoie, 2014). When individuals hold perceptions of inclusion, the opportunities they have for expressing their opinions and offering contributions to work-related decisions provide for psychological empowerment.

Theorists contend that employees who feel empowered will show high levels of involvement with their jobs and will take initiative at work (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 2008). Thus, work group members who are empowered as a result of feeling included are likely to engage in behaviors that reflect involvement and initiative, ultimately improving performance. For example, employees who experience psychological empowerment have been found to engage in voice-related behaviors, such as identifying issues and providing constructive comments to improve the organization (Frazier & Fainshmidt, 2012; Raub & Robert, 2012). In addition, multiple empirical studies have shown that employees display high levels of creativity when they feel psychologically empowered (Pan, Sun, & Chow, 2012; Sun, Zhang, Qi, & Chen, 2012). For example, Zhang and Bartol (2010) found that psychological empowerment positively influenced creative process engagement, which then increased creativity. Furthermore, a consistent positive relationship has been obtained across studies between empowerment and employee job performance (Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007; Zhou, Wang, Chen, & Shi, 2012), including a study using a time-lagged design (Maynard, Luciano, D'Innocenzo, Mathieu, & Dean, 2014). Finally, empowerment has been shown to be negatively related to employees' voluntary turnover such that employees who felt empowered were more likely to stay with their team or organization for a longer period of time (Harris, Wheeler, & Kacmar, 2009; Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011), thus allowing for a greater likelihood for groups to glean performance benefits. Therefore, we propose:

Proposition 4. Member perceptions of inclusion will be positively related to behavioral outcomes (e.g., creativity, job performance, and reduced turnover) indirectly through work psychological empowerment.

6. Discussion

Our model expands theory and understanding of inclusive leadership in several ways, including identifying individual difference

characteristics associated with inclusive leaders and clarifying specific behaviors in which inclusive leaders engage. These specific inclusive leader behaviors are proposed to lead to member perceptions of inclusion (in terms of belongingness and being valued for uniqueness). In turn, inclusion perceptions lead to member work group identification and psychological empowerment and behavioral outcomes (e.g., creativity, job performance, reduced turnover). Our efforts extend theoretical work on inclusion in the domain of leadership and extend work on leadership by explicating more clearly how leaders can create inclusion in work groups.

6.1. Theoretical implications

We offer a model of inclusive leadership that provides theoretical grounding to the construct. Although the literature suggests that leadership can help diverse groups function more effectively (Homan & Greer, 2013), the mechanisms underlying leader behaviors that increase the likelihood of success among diverse groups have yet to be established. We believe that leader behaviors that ensure that group members perceive that they both belong and are valued for their uniqueness are what form the basis of positive leader effects on individual perceptions of work group inclusion and on the performance of diverse work groups. To date, there have been few attempts to define the role of the leader in facilitating the success of diverse work groups (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). We advance theory that not only delineates a leader's role with respect to diverse groups, but also is oriented towards ensuring the inclusion of all group members (both historically underrepresented members as well as those in the societal majority) in achieving a high level of performance.

Our model is grounded in optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991; an extension of social identity theory), but it also is suggestive of several ways in which social identity theory might be bolstered to assist leaders in maximizing inclusion within diverse work groups. Social identity theory highlights the importance of group members' similarity to a group prototype; future research could consider how flexibility with respect to the group prototype could be realized in order to maintain feelings of belongingness to the social identity of the group while also recognizing individuals' uniqueness (in terms of their personal identities). Our model demonstrates how distinctiveness within the group also could be beneficial beyond social identity theory's focus on intergroup distinctiveness. In addition, it is suggestive of how positive self-esteem, which is a motivating force in social identity theory, can be accomplished not only by feeling a sense of belonging to the group, but also by feeling valued for uniqueness. In this way, our model includes an emphasis on group members feeling valued for being unique relative to each other, which is not highlighted in social identity theory.

Our model contributes to theory on work group identification and empowerment by positing a linkage between these variables and inclusion. While the relationship between work group identification and belongingness has received some research attention (e.g., Richter, West, Van Dick, & Dawson, 2006), uniqueness has been examined far less frequently in relation to group identification. One exception is Hornsey and Jetten (2004) who theorized strategies for maintaining group identification while maximizing the distinctiveness of a group with an emphasis on structural strategies, such as identifying with groups that differ from the mainstream. We extend their work by proposing how fostering inclusion within a work group (with attention paid to both belonging and uniqueness needs) encourages work group identification with particular attention to the role of leaders in this process. The relationship between inclusion and psychological empowerment has not been theoretically advanced even though the inclusion literature has discussed participation in decision-making, which is conceptually related to empowerment (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Spreitzer, 1995). We not only suggest how inclusion and empowerment relate theoretically but also propose behaviors that leaders can engage in that can lead to empowerment through inclusion.

Research on inclusion has been on the rise in recent years as a means to better support individuals of a multitude of backgrounds as members of work groups and organizations (Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman, 2014; Nishii, 2013). The model proposed here contributes to this literature by providing a framework grounded in theory on inclusion (Shore et al., 2011) that applies specifically to leaders. One of the ways that this framework adds to theory on diversity and inclusion is by delineating antecedents to inclusive leadership in order to understand the role of leader individual difference characteristics in predicting inclusive leader behavior. The diversity and inclusion literatures have not adequately addressed how leaders' individual characteristics might impact their behaviors and contribute to leading diverse groups effectively.

The model proposed here also contributes to theory on work groups by suggesting specific leadership behaviors that can help to alleviate the double-edged sword involved in diverse work groups, which results from opportunities for creativity through different perspectives at the cost of group members finding it difficult to identify with the work group due to its diversity (Chi, Huang, & Lin, 2009; Milliken & Martins, 1996). Our framework suggests how leaders can increase group members' sense of belonging to the group (thereby remedying challenges to group identification that might be present) while simultaneously valuing diverse perspectives so that key personal identities are recognized. As inclusive leaders engage in these behaviors proactively and focus their attention on all members, their approach goes beyond diversity management by directing inclusion to every member of the group.

6.2. Practical implications

Our framework suggests that inclusive leadership occurs through specific behaviors that facilitate belongingness and indicate value for uniqueness. All five of the behaviors proposed in the framework are important, but the two behaviors that indicate value for uniqueness (encouraging diverse contributions and helping group members fully contribute) may require more effort and attention since leaders more commonly are trained to focus on pursuing collective goals (e.g., Carter, DeChurch, & Braun, 2015). Encouraging diverse contributions, for instance, requires seeking out divergent perspectives in ways that may be challenging (by involving a lengthier group process as uncommon views are solicited). It is critical that inclusion is supported at all organizational levels but

particularly by top management (Sabharwal, 2014). Inclusive leaders can serve as role models who mentor others in ways that facilitate inclusion experiences among organizational members. Leaders at all organizational levels can also directly reinforce behaviors that support inclusion experiences and contribute to a climate of inclusion.

It is important to note how managers might engage in inclusive leadership in ways that differ from diversity management, which tends to focus on legal compliance and enhancing representativeness of the work force. Unfortunately, many efforts in the name of diversity management have failed to reap the benefits of having diverse employees, especially as related to performance. Although women and minorities are in greater numbers at lower levels of organizations and that representation decreases at higher organizational levels (Catalyst, 2013), there are clear financial benefits, not to mention human benefits, of diversity that can be realized at all organizational levels. Simply placing individuals who differ from one another in a work group or promoting diverse individuals into leadership positions does not ensure positive outcomes. However, leader inclusion can help to support the benefits of diversity by building the capabilities of group members to work together successfully through contributing to inclusive organizational environments and group performance.

6.3. Research implications

6.3.1. Measurement of inclusive leadership

Future research efforts might develop a measure of inclusive leadership based upon the theoretical foundation presented here. A robust measure could be developed using our conceptualization of the inclusive leadership behaviors identified above. Such a measure would need to assess the leader's engagement in behaviors that facilitate belongingness and value uniqueness (e.g., supporting individuals as group members, ensuring justice and equity, sharing in the decision making process, encouraging diverse contributions, and helping group members to fully contribute). The core relationships in our model could be tested once a measure of inclusive leadership is empirically validated.

6.3.2. Contextual considerations

Future research could then investigate potential contextual influences on the strength of some of the relationships in our model. One such influence would be organizational climate, or "the shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they see being rewarded, supported, and expected" (Ehrhart, Schneider, & Macey, 2014, p. 2). For example, Apple's decision not to offer on-site daycare at its new headquarters could send the signal to employees that all employees are not in fact included, which could undermine the efforts of inclusive leaders within the organization (Locker, 2017). Future research could consider how an organizational climate for diversity and/or inclusion could influence the positive relationship between the proposed leader individual difference characteristics and inclusive leadership behaviors. Another possible role for organizational climate would be to enhance the impact of a leader's inclusive behaviors on member perceptions of inclusion because the value of inclusion would be communicated from multiple vantage points: the leader as well as the organization as a whole. This alignment between the leader's behavior towards the work group and the organizational climate for inclusion should maximize member perceptions of inclusion in that members would experience consistent messages encouraging inclusion.

Another potential contextual influence relevant to the relationships in our model could be the members themselves. That is, are there member characteristics that would enhance the impact of an inclusive leader? If members themselves hold pro-diversity beliefs, have high levels of humility, or are cognitively complex, for example, or if members are high on openness to experience, perhaps this would bolster the effect of a leader's inclusive behaviors (Moss, McFarland, Ngu, & Kijowska, 2007). In addition, research could look at the cascading effects of inclusive leadership (c.f., Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987) to see how inclusive leadership at the top of the organization, or the lack thereof, influences inclusive leadership at lower levels in the organization.

6.3.3. Challenges of inclusive leadership

There are numerous challenges that inclusive leaders face that should be investigated in future research. One is to empirically examine how belongingness and valuing uniqueness might have suboptimal consequences if they are not realized simultaneously. For instance, leaders who behave in a manner that solely promotes a sense of belongingness may in fact encourage conformity, which lowers the possibility of innovation. Likewise, if leaders encourage employees to display personal identities that make them unique without also engaging in activities that support social identification that enhances belongingness, little productive work that supports the group's goals may be enacted. In sum, leader behaviors that solely encourage fulfillment of needs for belongingness or needs for uniqueness have the potential to undermine the potential benefits of diversity in a work group (Shore et al., 2011). Future research could examine whether it is only when both belongingness and uniqueness are realized that inclusive leadership holds its maximum potential.

Another challenge for inclusive leaders is to balance the value of uniqueness with other values that might serve as homogenizing forces. For example, shared mental models (which involve group members holding common understandings of goals, tasks, and processes) offer performance advantages and appear to be beneficial for leaders to encourage (DeChurch & Mesmer-Magnus, 2010). However, shared mental models could be less than inclusionary with their emphasis on a uniform understanding. Exploring how leaders balance the desire for developing a common understanding among group members while exhibiting inclusionary leader behaviors is an interesting avenue for future research. Relatedly, future research might also look at how leaders balance belongingness and uniqueness in groups where inclusion on every dimension of difference may not be possible, such as within faith-based organizations, political organizations, or organizations based on beliefs that cannot be disputed by group members (such as values involving human rights). In such contexts, certain forms of uniqueness may be antithetical to the group's missions and aims.

Specifically, research could unpack how leaders navigate creating a sense of inclusion while maintaining core values and norms.

Another challenge for inclusive leaders that could be examined by researchers is how leaders (perhaps in collaboration with Human Resources) might balance demands for efficiency and equity across group members with demands for ensuring the full contribution of unique group members. Leader attempts to be more inclusive may result in equity concerns being raised on the part of less understanding group members and/or a sense that the performance of the group is being compromised. Relatedly, inclusive leadership involves behaviors that deviate at least somewhat from the agentic leadership qualities (being assertive or competitive) that often are associated with men and with successful leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Research is needed to determine whether men who engage in inclusive leadership are seen as less effective than those who are more stereotypically assertive and whether women who engage in inclusive leadership behaviors are liked due to adhering to communal gender roles but still are rated as less effective for not exhibiting stereotypical leadership behaviors (cf., Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011).

6.3.4. Inclusive leadership from sources besides formal leaders

Our model also can inform future research on inclusive leadership by informal leaders. Inclusive leadership behaviors may be exhibited by members as a result of observing such behaviors in either formal or informal leaders. Future research could explore factors that contribute to the spread of inclusive behaviors among members and how such behaviors influence both individual and group outcomes. Future research also might explore how informal leaders may be able to influence the group through the creation of group norms such that their inclusive leadership behaviors signal that inclusive behaviors are desirable within the group as a whole (Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004). Formal leaders' inclusive leadership also may be impacted by informal leaders such as when several board members at Ernst & Young took their CEO aside and pointed out that he had praised a male board member's idea when three female board members had been ignored when they mentioned the same idea earlier in the same meeting (Groysberg & Connelly, 2013). The CEO found that to be an important moment of learning that shaped his future leadership behavior.

6.3.5. Cross-cultural implications

It is well established that culture affects workplace processes, including leadership (Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, & Shore, 2012). While the needs for belongingness and uniqueness are considered universal (Gere & MacDonald, 2010; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), how these needs are fulfilled may vary according to culture (c.f., Song & Lee, 2013). Research is needed to examine the role of leaders in enhancing inclusion in various cultural contexts while reflecting cultural elements that are considered socially appropriate. Relatedly, a leader's cultural sensitivity or cultural intelligence should facilitate inclusion not only in organizations that operate in multinational contexts, but also potentially in domestic organizations that operate in a multicultural environment (c.f., Earley & Ang, 2003; Gelfand, Imai, & Fehr, 2008; Yates & de Oliveira, 2016).

7. Conclusion

As organizations become increasingly diverse, leaders need to understand how to perform their roles in ways that not only take advantage of this diversity and maximize the performance of their work groups, but that also realize these goals through behaviors that are inclusionary of all group members. Encouraging inclusive leadership behaviors holds promise for improving the work experience of all work group members and the effectiveness of their groups and organizations.

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