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Diversity Intelligence for Inclusive Leadership: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract- Diversity management training is not performing well to render the desired outcomes. Diversity management should focus on an inclusive working environment where a diverse workforce feels valued for their uniqueness. Leaders recognition of the value of a diverse workforce is crucial to make an effective decision for achieving organizational goals. To enhance the maturity of leaders understanding for inclusive leadership, new diversity knowledge is mandatory. Otherwise, they will fail to utilize the full potential of a diverse workforce. Diversity intelligence is a new idea that can help in inclusive leadership practice. Human Resource Development practitioners should use diversity intelligence as a powerful tool to enhance leadership capability for inclusive and not-discriminated working environment. The article tries to develop a conceptual framework on the contribution of Diversity Intelligence in inclusive Leadership practice through addressing some similarities related to the diversity intelligence and inclusive leadership behaviors and establishing an interface between them.

Keywords: *diversity, diversity intelligence, inclusive leadership.*

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Diversity Intelligence for Inclusive Leadership: A Conceptual Framework

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I. INTRODUCTION

Diversity is the power, rather than a problem to the organizational success and groups compose with diversified background members can contribute more than groups with similar background members. Leaders who undermine diversity cannot ripe the full potential of the followers. Organizations are selecting a diverse workforce for the shake of legal compliance and image building. Besides this, they are investing in diversity management training to avoid lawsuits, but diversity management training is not working because it is categorizing employees depending on their differences and stereotyping their differences as limitations. Therefore, diversity training doesn't extinguish prejudice. It promotes it (Bregman, 2012). Acknowledging that there is diversity in the workplace and ensuring awareness through diversity and sensitivity training initiatives is not enough (Dobbin et al., 2011). Though diversity exists in the workplace, yet the intelligence to achieve inclusion and equity for all employees is lacking. Diversity intelligence (DQ) is the capability of individuals to recognize the value of workplace diversity and to use this information to guide

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thinking and behavior. Thus, because there is diversity in many workplaces, DQ needs to be integrated alongside intellectual, emotional, and cultural intelligence to be more effective (Hughes, 2018b).

In Inclusive leadership, practice leaders are showing altruistic behavior to ensure employees feelings of belongingness and valued with uniqueness (Prime & Salib, 2014). Knowledge of diversity intelligence helps them not only to focus on inclusion but also to create a sense of belongingness among employees while respecting the uniqueness as strength of organizational success.

II. OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study is to build a conceptual relationship of diversity intelligence with inclusive leadership practice. For this purpose, the paper outlines other specific objectives as follows

- To understand what is diversity intelligence.
- To comprehend inclusive leadership with its detailed behaviour.
- To find out how the behavior of leaders with diversity intelligence shapes and supports inclusive leadership practice.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study has used secondary data sources. Since diversity intelligence is a new concept, there is a lack of research in this area. Available Journals, reports, and books have used to contribute to the present study. The literature review helps the study to develop a conceptual framework related to the topic. Lack of empirical evidence in the literature is the main limitation of the study.

IV. WHAT IS DIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE?

Diversity Intelligent (DQ) is the capability of individuals to recognize the value of workplace diversity and to use this information to guide thinking and behavior (Hughes, 2018). Diversity intelligence (DQ) values the differences in employees without attempting to make everyone alike. DQ helps organizational leaders to interact with the changing demographics of the workforce by embracing differences as strengths rather than weaknesses. (Hughes, 2016, as cited in Hughes, 2018 b).

Without effective DQ, adverse relationships between and among employees occur, and the effectiveness and productivity of employees are lessened (Hughes, 2016 as cited in Hughes, 2018a). To be effective in leadership and management, DQ needs to integrate with intellectual, emotional, and cultural intelligence. DQ is the knowledge to understand employees with protected class and the laws related to their protection (Hughes, 2014a, 2015a&b, 2016 as cited in Hughes & Brown, 2018).

Leader's ability to examine their preconception and views of normative behavior is the base for the operations of Diversity intelligence where leaders champion the rights of those who are different from them by accepting, valuing, and motivating protected class members. Besides these leaders communicate with and manage the performance and career of their protected class employees and become aware of the legal background associated with diversity intelligence and the history of the disadvantages experienced by protected people. Leaders with superior diversity intelligence can recognize and reject stereotypes; interact with protected class individuals based upon the

quality of their work, and enhance individuals and organizations by embracing the diverse learning and work styles of their employees. Diversity intelligence skilfulness further benefits individuals and organizations because these leaders are more likely to avoid lawsuits and scandal because they act based upon the letter and spirit of the law. (Sims, 2018)

DQ deficiencies trigger some leaders to apply passive-aggressive behaviors as a coping mechanism which can lead to a toxic and hostile work environment as evidenced through high attrition, unrealized productivity, feelings of frustration, fear, disappointment, resentment, among other adverse responses from both leaders and employees (Hughes & brown 2018).

DQ has the potential to reduce or eliminate the uncertainty that leaders feel when interacting with protected class employees. Open discussion of DQ alongside IQ, EQ, and CQ may increase awareness and understanding of leaders' protective class status alongside their employees. They will also be able to broaden their employees' thoughts and actions toward their protected class peers (Hughes & brown 2018).

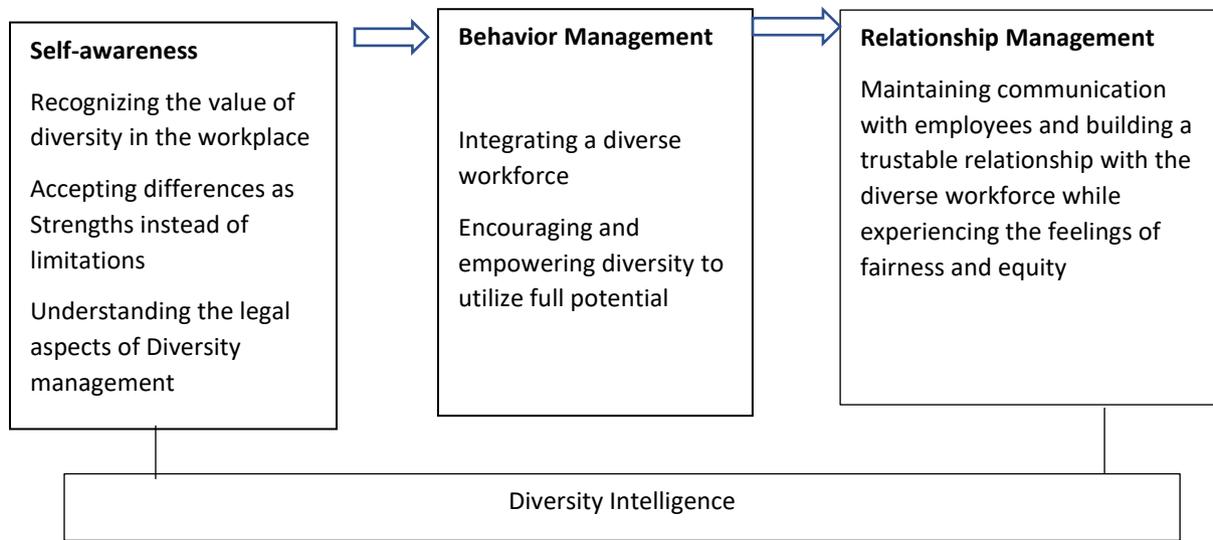


Figure 1: Diversity Intelligence Paradigm

V. HOW DIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE ACTS FOR AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

In order to achieve complete involvement of diverse individuals in the workplace with full potential researchers and practitioners have increasingly emphasised on inclusive workplace where employees perceiving them as esteemed members of a workgroup or organization as a result of treatment that satisfies belongingness and uniqueness needs (Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, & Singh, 2011).

Diversity intelligence is the knowledge that HRD professionals and researchers can use it to transform organizations by creating a culture of inclusion and equity enjoyed by all. (Sims, 2018).

Organizational leaders and employees, who establish a foundation based on diversity intelligence, create a culture of trust. Such a culture enables employees to bring their whole selves to work and share their unique talents, insights, and problem-solving approaches. When employees feel validated on the job and can contribute without hesitation, and when leaders get to know the individuals, they employ based upon who they are, not caricatures and stereotypes, then organizations can reap the benefits of their greatest assets—their employees.

Diversity intelligence primes leaders to act with compassionate love, which transforms us by tapping into the humanity within each of us. Diversity intelligence knowledge results in our ability to enact compassionate

love servant leadership where we do the right thing at the right time because it is justified and beneficial to all (Sims, 2018).

When given responsibility for diversity, individuals who possess higher diversity intelligence competencies are more likely to enact leadership practices that advance organizational inclusion and equity. Besides, one may conclude that it might be more fruitful to select for diversity intelligence than to solely rely upon leader diversity development efforts (Hughes, 2016; Kaley et al., 2006; Narvaez & Hill, 2010).

Hughes (2016, as cited in Sims, 2018) indicates that a protected class member working in an impoverished diversity intelligence environment over time may find his or her "sense of self ability, capability, and confidence" (p. 67) diminished. Thus, given an environment rich in diversity intelligence, protected class members will view themselves as capable-experience inclusion, enhanced work identity, and interpersonal skills-and I propose, realize increased well-being.

In short, followers in a diversity intelligence environment can increase their competencies, intuition, and creativity, thus experiencing optimal human functioning (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Many protected workers remain underutilized or marginalized in the workplace. Leaders' unfamiliarity with these workers leads to their inability to harness protected employees' talents for the good of their organizations. Implementing DQ can effect the necessary change

a) *Inclusive Leadership*

Inclusive leadership as a set of positive leader behaviors that facilitate group members perceiving belongingness in the workgroup while maintaining their uniqueness within the group as they fully contribute to group processes and outcomes (Randel et al., 2018).

Winters, M. (2014) defines inclusion as creating an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences, to allow all to reach their potential and result in enhanced organizational success. Inclusion has to be driven both by top-down leadership and bottom-up engagement. Inclusion will sustain when all of the elements are working synergistically, both at the micro (intercultural competence and emotional intelligence) and macro (systems and values) levels.

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 workgroups, 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 workgroup members and the effectiveness of their groups and organizations (Randel et al., 2018).

b) *Inclusive Leader behavior*

Leader pro-diversity beliefs, humility, and cognitive complexity increase the propensity of inclusive leader behaviours (Randel et al., 2018). As noted by Winters (2014, p. 206) "perhaps the most salient distinction between diversity and inclusion is that diversity can be mandated and legislated, while inclusion stems from voluntary actions." 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 workgroups, 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 workgroup members and the effectiveness of their groups and organizations (Randel et al., 2018).

According to Prime & Salib (2014), altruistic leader behaviors such as empowerment, humility, courage, and accountability are vital in shaping employee perceptions of inclusion. They defined the altruistic leader behavior components in the following ways:

- Empowerment-Enabling employees to develop and excel.
- Humility-Encouraging constructive criticism and focus on change management. Focus on performance and contributions rather than limitations.
- Courage-Forgo personal interest in achieving group interest. Convictions and principles are base for decision making instead of private benefits and risk.
- Accountability-Make employees responsible for what they have controlling power to demonstrate performance confidently.

Diversity management could be successful when employees with diverse background have the feeling of belongingness, and 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 (Randel et al., 2018).

Supporting group members involves leaders making members feel comfortable through communicating the message that leaders are working for the best interests of group members. To accomplish this, inclusive leaders create a convenient environment and exert influence by helping members with their needs and expressing support for them and their opinions (Randel et al., 2018).

By demonstrating fair treatment through justice and equity, inclusive leaders show full respect to the individual group members and proactively consider how decision making could unintentionally create a lack of

equity. Therefore, inclusive leaders understand the limitations and hard situations of group members and instead of taking policies that highlight stereotypes, they try to make decisions that make all members similar and facilitates equal participation(Lind & Tyler, 1988; Sabharwal, 2014; as cited in Randel et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011;).

Moreover, inclusive leaders empower group members by allowing them to participate in decision making as the members with the diversified background can think the effects of decision from different perspectives and creating a sense of responsibility among the group members to contribute in proper decision making and achieving objectives (Randel et al., 2018).

Although diversity and inclusion management experts have tended to emphasize more on belongingness, than uniqueness, leader behaviors indicating value for distinctiveness. Therefore, encouraging diverse contributions to the workgroup and 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 through which group members could experience a sense of self -worth and self-identity as a strength for organizational success (Randel et al., 2018). Encouraging diverse contributions is significant to creating a sense that uniqueness is valued (e.g., Mor Barak & Daya, 2014; Shore et al., 2011; Winters, 2014).

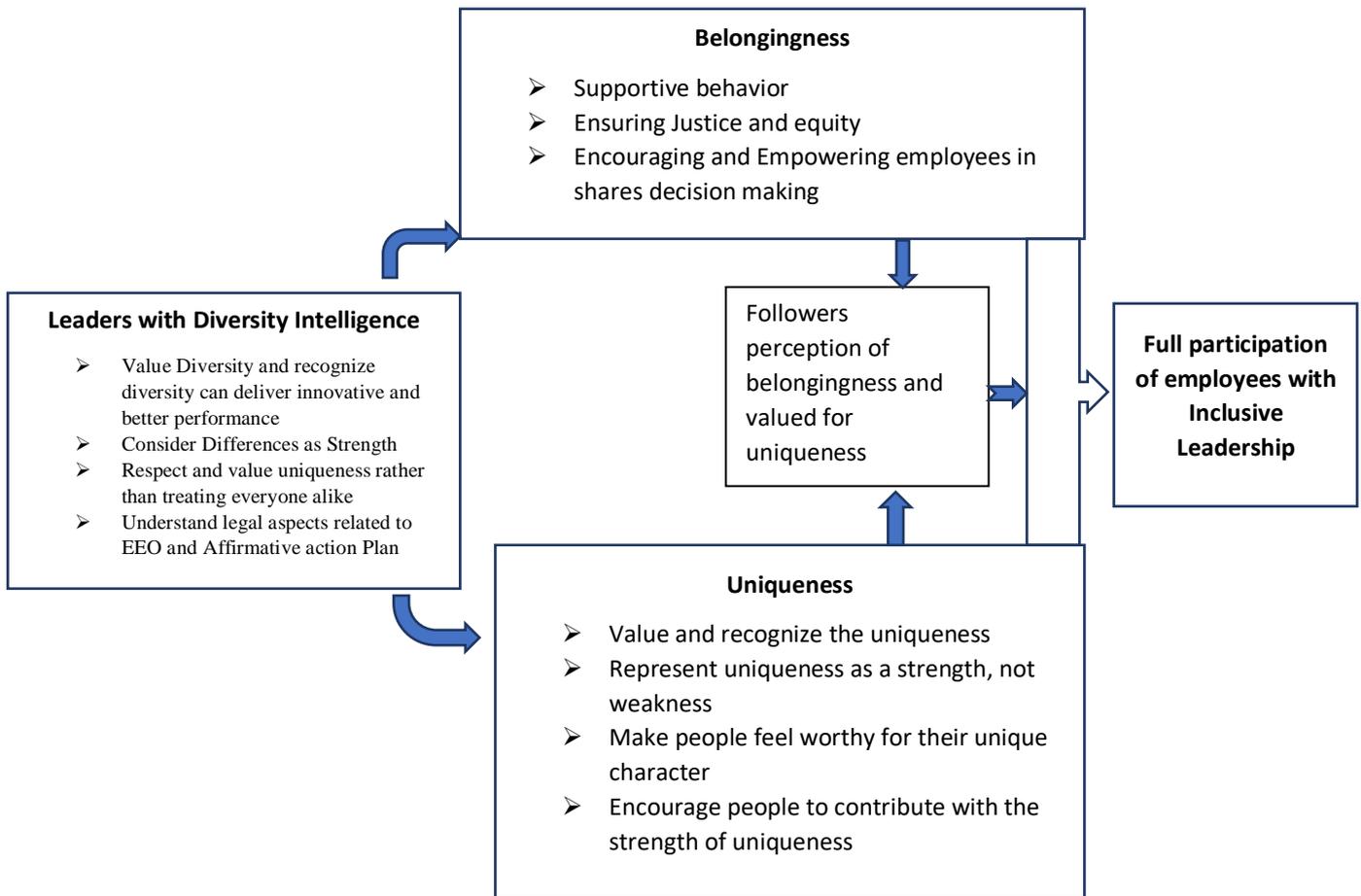


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Diversity Intelligence for Inclusive Leadership

With a clear understanding of Diversity Intelligence and Inclusive leadership behavior, it is clear that leaders with the knowledge of DQ can show inclusive leadership behavior through creating the perception of belongingness and valuing uniqueness. Diversity Intelligence is the cognitive power through which leaders must be able to recognize differences between themselves and others without considering the dissimilarities as an impediment to performance. Moreover, DQ helps them to accept difference as

strength and valuing uniqueness for organizational achievement. In addition to this with Diversity, Intelligence leaders understand and recognize the requirements and significance of law to protect the interest of the disadvantaged group and to act with empathic behavior for the protecting class employees.

Therefore, the knowledge and understanding of diversity intelligence control leaders' behavior that creates the feeling of belongingness and recognizing uniqueness as a strength for organizational success.

Thus, these kinds of attitude lead to an inclusive organization by ensuring full participation of followers while considering them worthy to organizational success through inclusive leadership practice. Hence Diversity Intelligence Shapes Inclusive leadership behavior. Therefore, leaders with DQ able to show inclusive leadership behavior through followers' support and confidence, where followers enjoy a sense of belongingness and worth ful for their unique characteristics.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Diversity management training can create a feeling of stereotypes among leaders and other employees about the limitations of protected class employees and sometimes leaders passive-aggressive behavior highlights the differences of employees as a hindrance for achieving organizational objective rather than accepting the difference as strengths. That may undermine the potential and confidence of protected class employees. Therefore, leaders failed to utilize a diverse workforce for creativity and innovative decision making. Diversity intelligence is the knowledge that helps leaders to understand people and value their differences as a unique contribution to organizational success. Diversity intelligence supports leaders to practice integrated decision making where every member feels a sense of belongingness and respected for their valuable role. Through diversity intelligence, leaders can establish a trustable relationship with the followers and make them confident to contribute fully for organizational betterment. Therefore, diversity intelligence supports leaders to exhibit inclusive leadership behavior.

Along with intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and cultural intelligence, diversity intelligence should integrate into leadership and career development plan. Leaders need to develop diversity intelligence to understand who are protected class employees and their value in organization otherwise many protected class employees remain underutilized or marginalized in the workplace and leader's failure to harness the talent of all employees including protected class employees can deteriorate organizations' competitiveness. Human Resource Development programs need to incorporate diversity intelligence as a piece of valuable knowledge to cultivate the DQ inside the learner's minds. In case of recruitment and selection practice, human resource managers should focus on DQ as a new competency for evaluation because leaders with DQ can make an inclusive organization with the full participation of workforce and developing committed employees.

Future research should focus on determining the measurement of diversity intelligence of leaders and

with empirical evidence show the robust relationships between DQ and inclusive leadership practice.

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