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## Inclusive workplaces: A review and model

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### ABSTRACT

Organizations continue to be challenged and enriched by the diversity of their workforces. Scholars are increasingly focusing on inclusion to enhance work environments by offering support for a diverse workforce. This article reviews and synthesizes the inclusion literature and provides a model of inclusion that integrates existing literature to offer greater clarity, as well as suggestions for moving the literature forward. We review the inclusion literature consisting of the various foci (work group, organization, leader, organizational practices, and climate) and associated definitions and how it has developed. We then describe themes in the inclusion literature and propose a model of inclusion. Finally, we end by discussing theoretical and practical implications.

### 1. Introduction

Global demographic trends and forecasts worldwide of increasing diversity in the workforce highlight the importance of examining approaches to improving workplace inclusion. Evidence continues to point to social exclusion and economic inequality in the workplace (Mor Barak, 2005; Mor Barak, Findler, & Wind, 2001). The U.S. has a history of discrimination against specific racial/ethnic groups, women, disabled individuals, and older workers that has contributed to the enactment of legislation that protects these groups. However, recognized aspects of diversity continue to increase and in many cases, there are no laws that provide protection in the U.S. Employees who are members of social identity groups that have a history of discrimination (women, people of color, LGBTQ, individuals with disabilities, older adults, religious minorities, immigrants, people with accents, etc.) may experience exclusion from valued opportunities including jobs, promotions, information networks, decision making, and human resource investments (Mor Barak, 2005). A continued expansion of social categories leading to exclusion in the workplace has led to new and broader conceptions of workforce diversity. As stated by Mor Barak (2014, p. 136) “Workforce diversity refers to the division of the workforce into distinction categories that (a) have a perceived commonality within a given cultural or national context and that (b) impact potentially harmful or beneficial employment outcomes such as job opportunities, treatment in the workplace, and promotion prospects—irrespective of job-related skills and qualifications.” Throughout this article, we refer to workforce diversity with this definition in mind. Likewise, Ferdman's (2017, p. 235) broad definition of inclusion is consistent with our perspective: “In inclusive organizations and societies, people of all identities and many styles can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective, as valued and full members.” Note however that in the review below we focus on the inclusion experiences of current employees in their employing organizations.

Exclusion can have negative effects on psychological and physical health, whether it occurs as an overt (i.e., acts of prejudice) or a subtle form of discrimination (ambiguous in intent to harm the recipient; Jones, Peddie, Gilrane, King, & Gray, 2013). While overt

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forms of discrimination can be addressed legally for some social categories of workforce diversity, subtle forms are much less likely to be viewed as legitimate or requiring resolution even though these subtle forms occur more frequently and perpetuate fewer opportunities for individuals who belong to social categories that are targets of discrimination (Sue et al., 2007).

While legislation around the world has focused to some extent on decreasing discrimination against women and other marginalized social categories (i.e., depending on the types of categories that exist in a given nation; Cleveland, Shore, Anderson, Huebner, & Sanchez, *in press*), what is less clear is whether organizations are proactively creating inclusive organizational environments that ensure improved prospects for these individuals after they are hired (Holvino, Ferdman, & Merrill-Sands, 2004). Without such efforts, the recruitment and hiring of individuals who are members of marginalized social categories is not likely to ensure success once those individuals are employed. Thus, inclusion in the work place has gained increasing attention in both the scholarly and practitioner literatures (Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005) in efforts to improve the experiences of employees whose membership in particular social identity categories increase the likelihood of discrimination (c.f., immigrants, Ponsoni, Ghorashi, & van der Raad, 2017; the disabled, Folguera, 2014, Kulkarni, Boehm, & Basu, 2016; transgender employees, Ozturk & Tatli, 2016).

The objective of this article is to provide a review and an integration of ideas pertaining to inclusion that are discussed in the literature. While we focus primarily on the U.S. context, many of the ideas pertaining to inclusion are relevant to other nations. As part of that integration, we present a model of inclusive organizations which argues that inclusive treatment of employees at all organization levels with associated opportunities to advance to mid- and upper levels of the organization is critical for establishing a truly inclusive organization. Finally, we discuss needed developments among both scholars and practitioners.

## 2. Workplace inclusion

With growing diversity in work organizations, organizational leaders have increasingly become aware of the importance of creating inclusive environments (Nishii & Rich, 2014). At the same time, scholarship focused on inclusion is still in the initial stages. Mor Barak and her colleagues in the social work field were the first to systematically research inclusion in work organizations (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998). More recently, researchers have sought to clarify that inclusion is important to everyone, but especially to those who have been excluded historically (Ferdman, 2014; Winters, 2014). As described by Nishii (2013) “In inclusive environments, individuals of all backgrounds-not just members of historically powerful identity groups-are fairly treated, valued for who they are, and included in core decision making” (p. 1754). Mor Barak and Daya (2014, pp. 393–394) indicated that “an exclusionary workplace is based on the perception that all workers need to conform to pre-established organizational values and norms (determined by its “mainstream”), the inclusive workplace is based on a pluralistic value frame that respects all cultural perspectives represented among its employees.” In sum, inclusion involves equal opportunity for members of socially marginalized groups to participate and contribute while concurrently providing opportunities for members of non-marginalized groups, and to support employees in their efforts to be fully engaged at all levels of the organization and to be authentically themselves.

### 2.1. Inclusion versus diversity

The terms diversity and inclusion are often treated as interchangeable, with many companies using the title of Chief Diversity Officer, others Chief Inclusion Officer, and still others Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. But in all cases the main charge is to manage diversity and inclusion practice. Lack of advancement of historically underrepresented groups continues to be a diversity challenge. Several explanations have arisen for this disparity in advancement opportunities, such as prototypical leadership qualities perceived necessary for upward progression that are associated with White males (Sy et al., 2010). For women, work-family demands (Ryan & Kossek, 2008) and associated departure from work by some women (Byron, 2005; Hewlett & Luce, 2005) have been suggested as reasons for fewer advancement opportunities than for men. However, these explanations cannot account for the continuing disparity in salary and advancement opportunities for women and people of color.

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 described above, inclusion requires a leveling of the playing field and providing opportunities through organizational and managerial practices that offer real prospects of equal access to valued opportunities for employees who belong to social identity groups that experience greater discrimination (Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard, & Sürgevil, 2011; Roberson, 2006).

While diversity management practices have focused chiefly on bringing women, people of color, and members of other marginalized groups into the workplace, inclusion practices have sought to create equal access to decision-making, resources, and upward mobility opportunities for these individuals. Likewise, many diversity and inclusion scholars and practitioners have sought to emphasize the value that people with a variety of differences bring to the organization (Ferdman, 2014), and not just the “rightness” of supporting equal opportunity. However, diversity does not always bring beneficial results to organizations (c.f., Jackson & Joshi, 2011; Mannix & Neale, 2005), and can in fact increase conflict and turnover, and lower cohesion and performance. Hence, the focus on inclusionary practices can promote the potential advantages and opportunities of having a diverse workforce.

There are increasing efforts in recent years to clarify the distinctions between “diversity” and “inclusion” by both academics and practitioners. In the US in 2011, Executive Order 13583 was passed and required the establishment of a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the Federal workforce. The Office of Personnel Management developed a strategic plan to help agencies follow the EO. In that plan, diversity was broadly defined as (Office of Personnel Management, 2011,

p. 5) “characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structures. The concept also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences.” This is a substantially expanded definition of diversity to include areas of difference that are not protected in US law, but is consistent with academic treatment of diversity as involving both visible and invisible difference, and surface and deep-level diversity. Interestingly, this same plan (Office of Personnel Management, 2011, p. 5) defines inclusion “as a culture that connects each employee to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.” Likewise, Hays-Thomas and Bendick (2013, p. 195) define diversity as “the mixture of attributes within a workforce that in significant ways affect how people think, feel, and behave at work, and their acceptance, work performance, satisfaction, or progress in the organization.” In contrast they point out that inclusion “focuses new attention on the policies, practices, and climate of the workplace—the workplace culture—that shapes the experiences of employees with those characteristics.”

In sum, the inclusion literature is seeking to establish ways in which organizations can create inclusionary environments and invoke practices such that diversity is not a disadvantage, and can in fact provide an organizational advantage. Diversity of a workforce only provides the opportunity for greater innovation, but without inclusion such a benefit is unlikely (Offerman & Basford, 2014). As pointed out by Winters (2014), diversity is much more easily achieved than inclusion.

## 2.2. Inclusion constructs

Several different inclusion constructs have been presented and discussed in the literature, consisting of work group inclusion, leader inclusion, perceived organizational inclusion, organizational practices inclusion, and inclusion climate. Below is a description of each of those constructs and a review of relevant literature. To some extent, the literature on each of the inclusion constructs has developed somewhat independently, but there are themes across constructs and studies that become apparent through this review. After summarizing the literature, we discuss these emergent themes and implications going forward.

### 2.2.1. Work group inclusion

Most studies of work group inclusion focus on the experience of the individual within the group (i.e., the employee perceives that they are included; Shore et al., 2011; Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, & Jans, 2014), but there has also been some preliminary conceptual work on group inclusion in the aggregate (Ferdman, Avigdor, Braun, Konkin, & Kuzmycz, 2010). Following is a summary of the research on individual-level experiences of work group inclusion.

Shore et al. (2011) built on Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT; Brewer, 1991) to synthesize the inclusion literature and to provide a framework for defining inclusion in the work group. ODT posits that individuals seek to strike a balance between the need to find similarity and belongingness with others while also maintaining a unique identity. They argue that the inclusion literature reflects themes of belongingness (e.g., insider, decision making participation, information sharing) and uniqueness (e.g., welcomes different approaches, respects all cultural perspectives). Shore et al. (2011) proposed in their conceptual model that belongingness and uniqueness are both key elements of inclusion in work groups, and, that inclusion leads to high quality relations with the supervisor and group members, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, OCBs, job performance, and well-being. In subsequent empirical studies testing some elements of their model, Chung et al. (2016) concluded that uniqueness and belongingness are distinct elements of work group inclusion, and that inclusion is associated with supervisory ratings of creativity and job performance. Another study (Ehrhart, Chung-Herrera, Randel, Dean, & Shore, 2014) showed that the positive effect of work group inclusion on health is stronger when individuals are in the numerical minority in their work group in terms of gender and in terms of race.

Sessler, Bernstein, and Bilimoria (2013) examined the inclusion experiences of ethnic minorities on non-profit boards. They found that Ely and Thomas's (2001) integration-and-learning perspective was strongly related to inclusion experiences which was operationalized as consisting of feeling comfortable voicing ideas, opinions, and discussing issues of diversity, feeling valued and encouraged to be themselves by other board members, and feeling they had the same opportunities as others for leadership and officer positions.

### 2.2.2. Leader inclusion

A great deal has been written about leadership, but only recently has attention been paid to inclusive leadership (Boekhorst, 2015; Booyens, 2014; Gallegos, 2014; Henderson, 2014). Cottrill, Lopez, and Hoffman (2014, p. 276) stated “Leaders of diverse and inclusive organizations must model comfort with diversity, alter rules for acceptable behaviors to ensure wide application, create opportunities for dialogue about and across differences, demonstrate an interest in learning and be authentic about their own challenges and triumphs to encourage authenticity in others.”

Most leader inclusion research focuses on the inclusiveness of the immediate supervisor or manager as perceived by individual employees. One of the earliest empirical studies was conducted by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) in which they found that leader inclusiveness helped cross-disciplinary medical teams deal with status differences effectively. Studies of leader inclusion in relation to outcomes have found positive relationships with psychological safety (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010; Hirak, Peng, Carmeli, & Schaubroeck, 2012; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), employee involvement in creative work (Carmeli et al., 2010), work engagement (Choi, Tran, & Park, 2015), and enhanced unit performance (Hirak et al., 2012).

Four empirical studies focused on the impact of inclusive leadership in relation to diversity. First, Randel, Dean, Ehrhart, Chung, and Shore (2016) compared the interactive effects of leader inclusion and psychological diversity climate on helping behavior for

men and women, and for Whites and people of color. A positive psychological diversity climate enhanced helping behavior toward both the work group and the leader by the employee. In addition, when leader inclusiveness was high this was adequate for encouraging leader-directed helping behavior among men and Whites even when psychological diversity climate was not positive; however, women and racial/ethnic minorities lowered their leader-directed helping behavior when the leader was inclusive and the diversity climate was not positive. This suggests the importance of consistency in support through a positive diversity climate and inclusive leadership for women and people of color.

Second, in a somewhat different approach, Nishii and Mayer (2009) operationalized inclusive leadership at a group level as involving a high group mean on leader-member exchange (LMX) and low LMX differentiation (low variability). They found that the relationship between demographic diversity and turnover was negative when groups experienced high leader inclusion. However, diversity and turnover was most positive when mean LMX was high and differentiation was high. That is, the highest turnover occurred when only some, and not all members of diverse work groups had a high-quality relationship with the manager. This study suggests the importance of consistently positive relations between the leader and followers in diverse teams.

A third study examined inclusive leadership and professional diversity (Mitchell et al., 2015). In this study, 75 professionally diverse health care teams working in hospitals in Australia were examined over a 12-month period. The relationship between leader inclusiveness and team performance was mediated by team identity and perceived status differences. This suggests that inclusive leaders enhance identification with the team which in turn improves team performance. In addition, leader inclusion lowers the perception of status differences, which allows for improved team performance. Furthermore, professional diversity moderated the relationship between perceived status differences and performance, supporting the view that inclusive leaders are important for facilitating performance in teams like those in hospitals where professional status differences of members are likely to exist.

In a fourth study, Zheng, Diaz, Zheng, and Tang (2017) examined leader inclusion in China and found that inclusion moderates the relationship between deep-level similarity between the supervisor and subordinate (personality, interests, and values) and taking charge (a form of OCB). Specifically, leader inclusion was especially important when deep-level similarity was low.

While initial research on inclusive leadership shows generally positive results, much more work is needed especially in understanding the experiences of women and people of color (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008). Specifically, research is needed that more clearly describes the leader behaviors that are interpreted by employees as inclusive, and that have positive influences on employee perceptions of work group and organizational inclusion. The immediate manager plays a critical role in creating experiences of inclusion, especially in the case of employees who are members of social categories that are more likely to be excluded or when similarity among team members or between the employee and supervisor is low. Consistency in positive signals from the leader and organization also seem particularly important for members of these groups (Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Randel et al., 2016).

### 2.2.3. Perceived organizational inclusion

Perceived organizational inclusion refers to individual-level perceptions of an employee's inclusion in the organization (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Volpone, 2008; Pearce & Randel, 2004; Pelled, Ledford, & Mohrman, 1999). Mor Barak and her colleagues have done quite a bit of work focused on perceived organizational inclusion, both conceptual and empirical, that has yielded the large body of empirical research showing the value of perceived organizational inclusion. Mor Barak and Cherin (1998) developed a measure of inclusion-exclusion that consisted of three components; involvement in work groups, participation in the decision-making process, and access to information and resources. Building on these ideas, Mor Barak (2000) further advanced a theoretical model of inclusion in which she argued that diversity and organizational culture would contribute to perceptions of inclusion-exclusion, which would then lead to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, individual well-being, and task effectiveness.

A number of studies have tested elements of Mor Barak's model. Mor Barak et al. (2001) compared inclusion in the US and Israel in two information technology companies, and found some similarities and some differences in diversity effects on inclusion. Specifically, in both samples men and older employees felt more included, but ethnicity, job type, and education were only related to inclusion in the US sample. However, their conceptual model of inclusion was supported in both the U.S. and Israeli samples, suggesting cross-cultural relevance. Findler, Wind, and Mor Barak (2007) established that support for a link between inclusion and diversity was rather mixed, with gender showing the only consistent link to information networks and decision-making (women reported lower levels of inclusion than men). In their study though, inclusion did not lead to commitment and satisfaction. Acquavita, Pittman, Gibbons, and Castellanos-Brown (2009) indicated in a study of social workers that inclusion-exclusion was associated with job satisfaction. In a study of Korean employees, Cho and Mor Barak (2008) found that older employees, men, and employees holding management roles in the organization were more committed to the organization, and that inclusion had a significant impact on organizational commitment and job performance. In a study of diversity in groups, Bae, Sabharwal, Smith, and Berman (2017) found that gender dissimilarity with the group was negatively associated with perceived organizational inclusion and that the negative relationship was stronger for men than for women. Interestingly, tenure dissimilarity with the group was positively related to perceived organizational inclusion and this positive relationship was stronger for those with longer tenure than for those with shorter tenure.

Several studies added to the original Mor Barak model by including measures of withdrawal. Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly, and Lane (2006) found that exclusion from decision-making was a predictor of intention to leave among child welfare workers. Younger workers and those with lower tenure also perceived higher rates of exclusion from information networks and decision-making. Hopkins, Cohen-Callow, Kim, and Hwang (2010) found that inclusion in decision making increased withdrawal of child welfare workers, and suggested this counter-intuitive result may be due to dissatisfaction with the decision itself. Hwang and Hopkins (2012) concluded that the negative relationship between inclusion and turnover intention was mediated by organizational commitment in a sample of child welfare workers. In a follow-up study, Hwang and Hopkins (2015) established that inclusion was associated with

higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and that organizational commitment lowered turnover intentions.

Three final studies used Mor Barak's measure but studied different variables than her original conceptual model. Cottrill et al. (2014) found that inclusion mediated the relationship between authentic leadership and self-rated OCB and that organization-based self-esteem mediated the relationship between inclusion and self-rated OCB. Waters and Bortree (2012) conducted a study on the impact of inclusion on the retention of library volunteers and found that social group inclusion and overall participation in organizational events were the strongest predictors of female volunteers' intentions to volunteer in the future while event participation, being included in the organization's information network, and participating in decision making were the strongest predictors for male volunteers. Finally, Brimhall et al. (2017) utilized a three-wave longitudinal design to examine the relationship between LMX and inclusion, and found that high quality leader-member exchange relations between the supervisor and employee at time 1 are associated with increased feelings of inclusion 6 and 12 months later (times 2 and 3). This suggests the criticality of good exchange relations with the leader for the employee to experience perceived organizational inclusion.

In sum, Mor Barak's model of inclusion has generally been supported, with evidence linking inclusion to increased diversity climate perceptions, increased leader-member exchange, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and well-being, as well as decreased stress and turnover intentions (Brimhall et al., 2017; Findler et al., 2007; Hopkins et al., 2010; Hwang & Hopkins, 2012; Mor Barak et al., 2006). Associations with diversity characteristics is somewhat less clear as results vary based on the samples, though generally women appear to feel included less often than men.

#### 2.2.4. Organizational inclusion practices

There has been some discussion in the literature about the role of senior leadership in establishing and supporting best practices to enhance inclusion. Offerman and Basford (2014) propose that there are several best practices that increase inclusion. First, leaders should work to develop a pipeline of diverse talent. They point out however that retention of diverse talent is often the bigger challenge, and requires supportive practices such as sponsorship by higher-ups and recognizing accomplishments. Second, they should confront subtle discrimination such as “microinequities” (Rowe, 1990) and “microaggressions” (Sue, 2010). These can be verbal, behavioral, or environmental treatment that communicate a devaluation of an individual's contributions, and can be intentional or unintentional. Third, they should leverage diversity to increase business performance. Employee resource groups (ERGs) were originally designed to increase socialization and networking opportunities for members of underrepresented groups, but now are being viewed as strategically important by creating greater understanding and connections with customers and communities. Fourth, they should develop accountability systems for inclusion that are embedded within the organization's performance management system. Fifth, they should train employees and managers to develop the skills needed to carry out behaviors that are critical for such efforts. Sixth, it is important that leaders use peer support for inclusion efforts, so that the culture itself is inclusive.

Roberson (2006) conducted a qualitative study followed by an empirical study to develop scales that distinguished between diversity and inclusion practices, and reported that the latter consisted of collaborative work arrangements and conflict resolution procedures, which were created to involve employees who are members of marginalized identity groups in decision-making processes. Likewise, Tang et al. (2015) conducted interviews with managers and employees of 12 Chinese companies to contextualize Shore et al.'s (2011) conceptual framework to a Chinese context. They identified seven inclusion management practices, consisting of team-building activities involving information sharing and diverse thinking, provide mechanisms for voice and communication and sharing within the workgroup, participation in decision making and group discussion, fairness systems, caring and support from the direct supervisor, tolerating different points of view and mistakes, and employee adaptation to the organization. Tolerance was viewed by the authors as a uniquely Chinese practice, “because Chinese culture emphasizes social harmony at the system as well as the interpersonal levels” (Leung, Koch, & Lu, 2002, p. 868). In a conceptual paper, Tang, Zheng, and Chen (2017) incorporated unique cultural and diversity aspects of inclusion in China, further contextualizing the inclusion literature.

Sabharwal (2014, p. 198) defined organizational inclusion behaviors as “(a) commitment from top leadership to foster inclusion, (b) ability of employees to influence organizational decisions, and (c) fair/equitable treatment from management.” While the first dimension focused on the organization as a whole, the latter two dimensions asked about the behavior of the supervisor. She found that commitment from top leadership and ability of employees to influence organizational decisions influenced organizational performance. Interestingly fair and equitable treatment did not influence organizational performance. She concluded that diversity management is not adequate for improving organizational performance, and that leaders must also engage in organizational inclusionary behaviors. Similarly, Daya (2014) sought to understand the areas that need to be managed to increase perceptions of inclusion in the South African workplace. She found that senior leadership, organizational climate, organizational belonging, communication, and transparent recruitment, promotion, and development were perceived as key inclusion elements for the organization. Tremblay (2017) examined the effects of leader humor climate on organization inclusion perceptions and found that an offensive humor climate undermined feelings of inclusion by contributing to an atmosphere of disrespect, and that inclusion was related to OCB. In a qualitative study in Belgium, Janssens and Zanoni (2008) determined that inclusive work contexts involve practices encouraging the same treatment of employees while simultaneously acknowledging individual differences.

Gallegos (2014) has several suggestions for organizational leaders to foster a culture of inclusion. She suggests that leaders need to explicitly describe the boundaries and rules for suitable behavior. Rules of engagement can build a foundation for respectful and inclusive treatment. Another suggestion is to create environments where differences can be explored and understood. Leaders should also model behavior that shows comfort with and support of differences. Finally, when organizational leaders are authentic and strategically monitor patterns of hiring, promotions, and resignations of women and racial/ethnic minorities with the goal of being inclusionary, this can help to support a culture of inclusion. Gotsis and Grimani (2016) proposed a model of inclusion in which servant leadership leads to inclusive organizational practices then to workgroup climate for inclusion, leading to outcomes for

minority and marginalized employees consisting of organizational identification, OCB, and psychological well-being. Most of the inclusive organizational practices in their model focus on ways to enhance the insider status of historically marginalized social identity groups. Both Gallegos' and Gotsis and Gremani's points are consistent with a theme in the literature that diversity management emphasizes tracking outcomes which is necessary but not sufficient for inclusion. Inclusion focuses on practices and treatment that build an organization environment that is experienced as inclusionary by all employees and not just those who are members of privileged groups.

In sum, the research on organizational inclusion practices emphasizes the role of top management in building and supporting an environment in which members of all social identity groups can be authentic while also being treated fairly and respectfully. A key role for organizational leaders which is emphasized, involves addressing discrimination issues in the organization while also supporting and building a pipeline of talent among members of marginalized social groups through inclusive practices.

#### 2.2.5. Inclusive climate

The research literature has recently started to examine the concept of an inclusive climate and its elements. The focus on inclusive environments reflects an increasing recognition in organizations that diversity brings potential problems such as conflict and turnover that need to be addressed at a broader organizational level (Guillaume et al., 2014; Holvino et al., 2004). Below we summarize studies of inclusive climate spotlighting the positive effects especially in work settings with diversity among employees.

Nishii and Rich (2014, pp. 332–335) presented the elements of the organizational context that are needed to have an inclusive climate. First, to “establish a level playing field” so that the organization does not perpetuate societal biases and status differentials accorded some identity groups and not others. Second, for the organization to implement an “integrations strategy” involving adaptation from all groups, and not just historically lower status groups, so that individuals are able to preserve their cultural identities. Third, the adoption of methods that “facilitate inclusive decision making” in which all employees, not just those belonging to favored groups, are involved. Downey, Van der Werff, Thomas, and Plaut (2014) examined the moderating effects of inclusion practices (e.g., influencing decisions, being listened to) on relationships among diversity practices, trust climate, and engagement. They found that inclusion practices engender a climate of trust and that diversity practices only engender trust when inclusion practices are also present. This study suggests the important interplay between diversity and inclusion practices.

Mor Barak et al. (2016) conducted a meta-analysis and concluded that diversity representation alone in human service organizations is not adequate as an effective human resource management strategy. Diversity management efforts that increase a climate of inclusion are consistently related to positive outcomes. Ashburn-Nardo, Morris, and Goodwin (2008) argue that an inclusive climate can only be created when discrimination is confronted and addressed in organizations, called the Confronting Prejudiced Responses (CPR) Model. They point out the prejudiced responses are often not recognized by members of groups who historically have not experienced discrimination, making it difficult to address instances of discrimination even if the organization has a zero-tolerance policy. They recommend a 5-step process beginning with detecting discrimination and ending with taking action to confront discrimination. Li, Lin, Tien, and Chen (2015) examined the moderating effects of inclusion climate on creativity using 57 teams and three waves of data collection. They found that when cultural diversity was high in the team, that a high inclusion climate enhanced team information sharing and employee information elaboration. However, when inclusion climate was low in multicultural teams, both of these behaviors were very low. Importantly, team information sharing was associated with team creativity, and employee information elaboration was related to individual creativity, suggesting the importance of an inclusive climate in culturally diverse team settings. In sum, these studies suggest the value of inclusive practices and climates for employees working in diverse group settings.

While diversity climate contains some elements that overlap with inclusive climates, there are also significant differences between the two. Volpone, Avery, and McKay (2012) define psychological diversity climate as “an individual assessment of the extent to which an employee perceives that his or her organization maintains an inclusive environment committed to providing equal opportunity to all employees” (p. 255). In contrast, inclusive climate is a *collective perception* that there are expectations and norms that allow employees to behave in a manner that is consistent with aspects of their self-concept together with the various identities that they hold, and that they are included in decision making and supported in sharing views that are not part of the status quo (Nishii, 2013). Psychological diversity climate is measured in a manner that is consistent with diversity management practices with items such as “recruiting from diverse sources” “offer equal access to training” and “open communication on diversity” (Volpone et al., 2012). In contrast, inclusion climate is measured via questions focusing on the unit that encourage employee experiences of inclusion such as “this unit provides safe ways for employees to voice their grievances” “this unit is characterized by a non-threatening environment in which people can reveal their ‘true’ selves” and “in this unit, everyone's ideas for how to do things better are given serious consideration” (Nishii, 2013). Note however, that both measures have content pertaining to fairness consistent with the view that both diversity management and inclusion emphasize equal access among all employees but especially those who belong to lower status groups to fair treatment and to opportunity.

Nishii (2013, p. 1754) defined inclusive climates as “characterized by a collective commitment to integrating diverse cultural identities as a source of insight and skill” and argued that such a climate would lower the level of relationship conflict in gender diverse teams. She found that climate for inclusion had a significant moderating effect such that units with higher gender diversity and a low climate for inclusion had higher relationship conflict, while units with a high climate for inclusion found that gender diversity was negatively associated with relationship conflict. She also reported that climate for inclusion significantly moderated the relationship between gender diversity and task conflict such that in units characterized by a high climate for inclusion, the negative relationship between gender diversity and task conflict became nonsignificant. Inclusive climate was also examined as a buffer in a recent study of differences in disability status in supervisor-subordinate dyads (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016). They examined whether

these differences influence leader–member exchange quality, and found that incongruence is associated with lower LMX quality and lower subsequent performance, particularly when the supervisor is disabled and the subordinate is not. They also reported that an inclusive climate at the unit level moderated the negative effect of the disability incongruence on LMX. These studies suggest that inclusion climate can serve as a buffer when there are group or dyadic differences that can affect relationship quality and performance.

Mor Barak et al. (1998) found that White men had the most positive perceptions and women of color had the least positive inclusion climate perceptions. Andrews and Ashworth (2014) studied 97 UK Civil Service organizations, and found that greater gender representativeness and ethnic minority representativeness were related to perceptions of a more inclusive work climate. Böehm, Kunze, and Bruch (2014) examined inclusion in 93 German companies by studying links that age-inclusive HR practices had with employees' shared age-diversity climate perceptions, subsequent shared social exchange perceptions, and firm performance and collective turnover intentions. They found support for their model, and suggest the importance of inclusive HR practices for developing pro-diversity climates with associated benefits for organizations. Likewise, Nishii and Langevin (2009) studied three forms of inclusion as possible contextual factors related to the experience of older workers, inclusiveness of the unit's climate, inclusion in the manager's in-group (LMX), and age similarity with the work unit. They found that older workers experienced less age discrimination when they worked in an inclusive climate and when they were included in the manager's in-group. As a whole, these studies suggest the benefits of an inclusive climate both at the organizational and work unit levels.

Two very different approaches to creating and enhancing inclusion climate are discussed in the literature. One is to increase commitment to, and enactment of practices that eliminate status differences through inclusion in decision making, equitable employment practices, and integration of differences. The other makes the assumption that discrimination will occur and needs to be addressed. These approaches are complementary in that they incorporate positive practices while recognizing the need for institutional mechanisms for addressing instances of discrimination and prejudice that occur. These same two approaches are highlighted in the section above on organizational inclusion practices, suggesting that inclusion practices alone are not adequate for creating equal opportunities, but that the enactment by senior management of policies and practices of zero tolerance for discrimination are key to the success of inclusion efforts.

### 2.2.6. Summary

The literature on inclusion has increased rapidly in recent years. Many studies have built on Mor Barak's ideas, expanding upon and testing out elements of her framework. Likewise, Ferdman and his colleagues (c.f., Ferdman, 2010; Ferdman, 2011; Ferdman et al., 2010) have written extensively on the value of inclusion and the importance of inclusionary practices. Recently, there has been an explosion of ideas as to what specific practices and behaviors contribute to inclusionary experiences at work. As yet, many of these ideas have not crystallized into a clear and well-defined set of constructs with associated empirical testing. Such work is needed to advance inclusionary goals for organizations, and to enhance experiences of inclusion among employees.

It is also important to note that many of the studies on inclusion have been conducted in the US, though the summary provided of empirical studies on inclusion in Table 1 show that there were 17 quantitative empirical studies outside of the US, 28 US based studies, and Hwang and Hopkins' (2012) study with 23 countries. In order to understand inclusion globally, more studies are needed pertaining to all the inclusion concepts reviewed in this paper (Stoermer, Bader, & Froese, 2016). This is especially important considering the varied legislative, social, and historical contexts in which inclusion can occur in various nations, making it important to study both general aspects of inclusion as well as localized approaches to inclusion (Kulkarni et al., 2016).

An examination of Table 1 also shows that the occupations, industries, and organizational level of participants was quite variable in studies of inclusion. While both managers and non-managers participated in these studies, it is unclear as to whether there are differences between these groups. It could be argued that managers should experience more inclusion considering their greater responsibility and influence in their employing organizations, but as yet there are not published studies that compare managers and non-managers, nor theorizing about their potentially different experiences and views on inclusion. Such research would be very valuable in furthering understanding of inclusionary experiences and practices.

## 3. A model of inclusive organizations

While many ideas have been put forth in the inclusion domain, both from scholars and practitioners, more integration of these ideas is needed. Building on Ferdman's (2014) thematic depiction of the inclusion literature, we expand upon his ideas for a more fully developed framework that can be useful for theory building, empirical testing, and practical application. The first theme is "feeling safe," and refers to the psychological and physical safety associated with sharing different opinions and views from others (Carmeli et al., 2010; Hirak et al., 2012; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Such safety can be for the individual or for the identity groups of some employees (e.g., women). So, for example, a woman who expresses views that are associated with her female identity (e.g., the need for equal pay for men and women) would feel safe in doing so. More subtle expressions could involve for an African-American in a Caucasian-dominated team to comfortably express views that differ from others in the team.

A second theme is "involvement in the work group" and refers to feeling like an insider and access to critical information and resources. This theme is one of the most commonly cited aspects of inclusion, starting with Mor Barak and Cherin's (1998) early work on access to information and Shore et al.'s (2011) work group inclusion model element of belongingness. An example of this element is an academic department dominated by tenure track faculty that supports the full sharing of information to full-time clinical faculty.

"Feeling respected and valued" is a third theme and involves being treated as an appreciated and esteemed member of the group and organization. This respect can be for the individual or for an important identity group (e.g., Latinos). This is a common element of

**Table 1**  
Description of empirical studies of inclusion.

Article	Study sample	Country	Industry	Focal group	Occupations	Construct	n
Andrews & Ashworth, 2014	Non-managers	UK	Civil services	Gender & ethnicity	Varied	Inclusive climate	325,119
Avery et al., 2008	Varied	US	Varied	Tenure	Varied	Inclusive climate	1880
Sample 1							
Sample 2	Varied	US	Varied	Tenure	Varied	Inclusive climate	917
Sample 3	Varied	UK	Varied	Tenure	Varied	Inclusive climate	916
Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016	Non-managers	Germany	Federal agency	Disability	Varied	Inclusive climate	1253
Janssens & Zanoni, 2008	Non-managers, mid-managers & upper-managers	Belgium	Call center	Ethnicity	Telemarketers	Inclusive climate	160
Sample 1							
Sample 2	Non-managers	Belgium	Food manufacturing	Ethnicity	Food packaging & transportation	Inclusive climate	97
Sample 3	Non-managers & Mid-managers	Belgium	Logistics	Ethnicity	Warehouse workers & managers	Inclusive Climate	540
Sample 4	Non-managers	Belgium	Construction	Ethnicity	Construction workers	Inclusive climate	75
Li et al., 2015	Non-managers	Taiwan	High-Tech	Ethnicity	Engineers	Inclusive climate	384
Mor Barak et al., 1998	Varied	US	Electronics	Ethnicity, gender	Varied	Inclusive climate	2686
Nishii, 2013	Non-managers	US	Biomedicine	Gender	Varied	Inclusive climate	1324
Nishii & Langevin, 2009	Varied	US	Construction	Age	Varied	Inclusive climate	4625
Carmeli et al., 2010	Non-managers	US	Information technology	–	Product developers	Leader inclusion	150
Choi et al., 2015	Non-managers	Vietnam	Services industry	–	Varied	Leader inclusion	246
Hirak et al., 2012	Non-managers	Israel	Medical	–	Doctors & nurses	Leader inclusion	277
Mitchell et al., 2015	Non-managers	Australia	Healthcare	Professional role	Hospital teams	Leader inclusion	346
Nemhard & Edmondson, 2006	Non-managers & Mid-managers	US & Canada	Medicine	–	Healthcare professionals	Leader inclusion	1440
Nishii & Mayer, 2009	Non-managers	US	Supermarket	Ethnicity, gender, age & tenure	Sales employees	Leader inclusion	348
Randel et al., 2016	Varied	US	Varied	Ethnicity & gender	Varied	Leader inclusion	534
Zheng et al., 2017	Non-managers	China	Varied	Deep-level similarity	Varied	Leader inclusion	193
Billmorra et al., 2008	Mid-managers & upper-managers	US	Education	Gender	University faculty	Organizational inclusion practices	54
Böehm et al., 2014	Non-managers, mid-managers & upper-managers	Germany	Varied	Age	Varied	Organizational inclusion practices	14,260
Daya, 2014	Non-managers	South Africa	Consumer goods	–	Varied	Organizational inclusion practices	425
Downey et al., 2014	Non-managers	US	Healthcare	–	Varied	Organizational inclusion practices	4597
Roberson, 2006	Mid-managers	US	Varied	–	Human resource managers	Organizational inclusion practices	51
Study 1							
Study 2	Varied	US	Varied	–	Organizational level	Organizational inclusion practices	186
Study 3	Varied	US	Varied	–	Organizational level	Organizational inclusion practices	330
Sabharwal, 2014	Non-managers & mid-managers	US	Government agencies	–	Varied	Organizational inclusion practices	198
Acquavita et al., 2009	Non-managers	US	Social services	Race	Social workers	Perceived organizational inclusion	119
Bae et al., 2017	Varied	US	State agencies	Gender & tenure	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	455
Brimhall et al., 2017	Mid-managers & Upper-managers	US	Child welfare	–	Welfare workers	Perceived organizational inclusion	133
Cho & Mor Barak, 2008	Non-managers & mid-managers	Korea	Multinational corporation	Gender, age, education, position	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	381

(continued on next page)



Table 1 (continued)

Article	Study sample	Country	Industry	Focal group	Occupations	Construct	n
Gottrill et al., 2014	Non-managers	US	Varied	–	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	325
Findler et al., 2007	Non-managers	Israel	Information technology	Gender, immigrant status, age, tenure	Social workers	Perceived organizational inclusion	114
Hopkins et al., 2010	Varied	US	State government	Gender, age, race, education, tenure	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	544
Hwang & Hopkins, 2012	Non-managers, mid-managers & upper-managers	23 countries	Child welfare	–	Welfare workers, supervisors & administrators	Perceived organizational inclusion	601
Hwang & Hopkins, 2015	Non-managers, mid-managers & upper-managers	US	Child welfare	–	Welfare workers, supervisors & administrators	Perceived organizational inclusion	544
Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998	Non-managers	US	Education	–	Working master's students	Perceived organizational inclusion	158
Mor Barak et al., 2001 Sample 1	Varied	US	Information technology	Ethnicity, gender, age, education, job type	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	350
Sample 2	Varied	Israel	Information technology	Ethnicity, gender, age, education, job type	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	114
Pearce & Randel, 2004 Sample 1	Non-managers & mid-managers	US	Aerospace	–	Engineers & supervisors	Perceived organizational inclusion	126
Sample 2	Non-managers & Mid-managers	US	Education	–	Non-faculty managers & professionals	Perceived organizational inclusion	166
Pelled et al., 1999	Non-managers	US	Food manufacturer	Ethnicity & gender	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	345
Tang et al., 2015	Non-managers & mid-managers	China	Varied	–	Varied	Perceived organizational inclusion	54
Tremblay, 2017	Non-managers	Canada	Financial organization	–	–	Perceived organizational inclusion	225
Waters & Bortree, 2012	Non-managers	US	Library	–	Volunteer coordinators	Perceived organizational inclusion	471
Ehrhart et al., 2014	Varied	US	Varied	Gender, race	Varied	Work group inclusion (individual)	725
Jansen et al., 2014 Study 1	Non-managers	Holland	Education	–	Undergraduate students	Work group inclusion (individual)	277
Study 2	Varied	Holland	Varied	–	Varied	Work group inclusion (individual)	468
Sessler et al., 2013	Upper-managers	US	Nonprofit	Ethnicity	Board members	Work group inclusion (individual)	403
Shore et al., 2014 Sample 1	Varied	US	Varied	–	Varied	Work group inclusion (individual)	437
Sample 2	Varied	US	Varied	–	Varied	Work group inclusion (individual)	397
Sample 3	Varied	US	University	Gender	Faculty, staff, administration	Work group inclusion (individual)	160

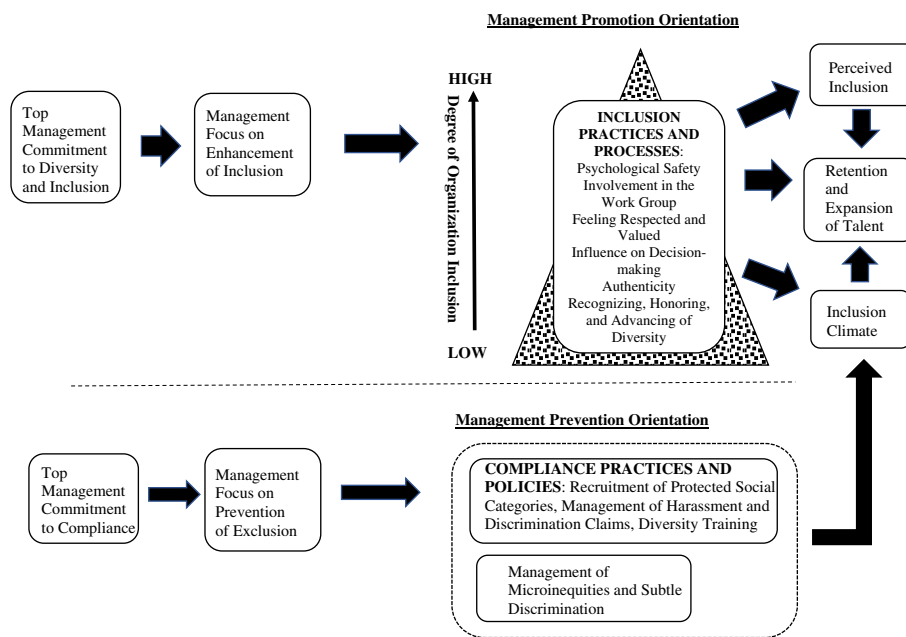


Fig. 1. A model of inclusive organizations.

inclusion (Nishii, 2013; Sabharwal, 2014; Tang et al., 2015). As an example, when disparaging remarks are made about “illegals” by coworkers, Latinos may view this as a sign of disrespect toward a key identity group.

A fourth theme, “influence on decision-making,” occurs when employees believe that their ideas and perspectives are influential, and that they are listened to. This is often cited as a key component of inclusion (see for example, Mor Barak et al., 1998, Mor Barak & Daya, 2014, Nishii, 2013, and Sabharwal, 2014).

“Authenticity” is a fifth theme that describes organizational support of transparency and sharing of valued identities. This is like the uniqueness component of Shore et al.’s model whereby employees can share valued identities that may differ from dominant organizational culture or employee lifestyles without repercussion. A high-level manager who is gay and brings his partner to organizational events is modeling the authenticity element for lower level employees who might fear sharing their own deep-level identities otherwise. Another example of this inclusion theme is when religious minorities are given the opportunity at work to wear clothing and engage in practices that reflect their affiliation.

“Recognizing, honoring, and advancing of diversity” is a sixth theme which occurs when there is fair treatment, sharing of employee differences for mutual learning and growth, and top management showing their value for diversity through words and actions (Sabharwal, 2014). As an example, when managers encourage the sharing of cultural traditions and approaches at work and show appreciation for cultural diversity, this contributes to an organizational climate that respects and honors the differences among employees. This theme also refers to the elimination of impediments to upward mobility, including equitable salary and advancement opportunities for members of historically marginalized identity groups at work (in the US, those who do not fit the White male managerial prototype).

An inclusive organization is one in which the inclusion practices and processes that form the core in Fig. 1 are consistently shown at all organizational levels and manifested in all aspects of inclusion (inclusive climate, inclusion practices, perceived organizational inclusion, leader inclusion, and work group inclusion). Building on regulatory fit theory (Higgins, 1998), we argue that organizations have two potential processes that contribute to the goal of perceived organizational inclusion, management prevention orientation and management promotion orientation. With a prevention orientation, managers focus on averting exclusion as a means of striving for the safety and security of the organization. Through a commitment to compliance of laws by applying relevant practices, management can prevent lawsuits and other damaging activities. Management of microinequities and subtle discrimination, while less clearly illegal, also supports the prevention of potential exclusion practices that may occur at multiple levels of the organization. The practices and policies described in the management prevention orientation activities provide a foundation for an inclusionary organization. However, if this is the only means by which the organization manifests commitment to diversity, then employees who are members of historically marginalized social identity groups will not experience inclusion.

In contrast, with a promotion orientation, managers strive for growth and accomplishment in the pursuit of the goal of an inclusionary organization. While the themes in the literature underscore the value of organizational commitment to inclusionary treatment of employees, the degree to which such treatment is enacted varies greatly across organizations. In Fig. 1, we depict the organizational hierarchy as a triangle with the fewest individuals holding top management positions. However, with a high commitment to inclusion practices and processes, it is expected that members of historically discriminated against social identity groups would be represented at all organizational levels. Likewise, the enactment of the practices and processes reflected in our inclusion

themes should contribute to a climate of inclusion, employee perceptions of inclusion, and to the retention and expansion of talent within the organization. Employee perceptions of inclusion can be focused on the work group, the leader, and/or the organization, depending on which of these the employee credits with the inclusionary practices and processes. By retention of talent, we mean not just lower turnover, but also include attitudes that precede that turnover such as higher commitment and lower turnover intentions (Allen, Shore, & Griffith, 2003; Hwang & Hopkins, 2012). Expansion of talent refers to the development and promotion opportunities that are created through inclusive practices and climates, as well as to the ability of organizations to attract a greater number of employees who are members of historically discriminated against social identity groups. In addition, inclusion practices and climates not only provide an environment which supports employee growth, but also promotes the psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2010; Hirak et al., 2012; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), that allows employees to engage in the type of experimentation that can result in creativity and innovation (Carmeli et al., 2010; Chung et al., 2016).

### 3.1. Conclusion

The model we have described in Fig. 1 provides a depiction of how organizations can increase inclusion for their members. A commitment to provide an inclusive climate by top management is manifested in inclusionary practices (Sabharwal, 2014) that in turn encourages employee contributions. Inclusion opportunities for members of marginalized social identity groups at all levels of organizations is critical to providing an environment in which they can contribute more fully. Such opportunities are crucial for organizations to operate effectively and to truly enhance organizational success through inclusion. Without a commitment to inclusion of diverse people, organizations will continue to lose valuable employees who are women, people of color, and sexual and religious minorities, at a high rate (Catalyst, 2002; Hom, Roberson, & Ellis, 2008; Laband & Lentz, 1998). In a world of increasing change and complexity, diversity provides the variety of perspectives and experiences that can benefit organizations and the communities in which those organizations reside.

Our model of inclusion needs to be tested empirically. Studying promotion and prevention orientations of management and their effects on inclusion experiences would be both theoretically and practically meaningful. In addition, our model should be examined from a global perspective. The national and cultural contexts in which diversity is studied has a significant impact on the diversity and inclusion practices that are applied by organizations (Farndale, Biron, Briscoe, & Raghuram, 2015). Research on diversity and inclusion, which considers the role of these contexts, and the level of inclusion occurring in a particular setting are critical to the advancement of this literature. Likewise, multinational organizations may bring policies and practices developed in their home country that conflict with the degree of inclusion development of the host country, adding to inconsistencies that may make diversity and inclusion practices ineffective. Global research that increases understanding and effective application of diversity and inclusion practices are clearly needed.

Interest in inclusion is increasing among scholars, but the literature is still in early stages. The empirical evidence thus far suggests the value of inclusion (Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Shore et al., 2011), but there are several areas of the literature that need development to aid in fully realizing the potential of inclusion. First, there are many ideas about and approaches to defining inclusion, but little consensus about how to proceed. Work group inclusion, leader inclusion, perceived organizational inclusion, inclusion climate, and inclusion practices are all evolving streams of literature. As yet, it is unclear if these foci are distinct, how they are related to one another, and if their conceptual framing reflects an underlying mechanism or set of mechanisms that contribute to employee experiences of inclusion. Our description of inclusion themes provides a basis for synthesis and continuity across foci, to emphasize the underlying themes and associated mechanisms that contribute to employee inclusion experiences.

Second, there is a need for validated, conceptually grounded measures for each of these inclusion foci. At present, there are many different measures available in the literature, but there is a lack of clarity about which may best reflect a particular inclusion theme or how valid each of the existing measures is. Research that tests for convergent and discriminant validity of these measures and conceptually similar measures is also needed. There are many measures that have been used successfully in the diversity literature, and inclusion measures need to be compared with these potentially similar concepts (Roberson, 2006).

Third, much more empirical research would be enlightening. Given the growth in the use of the term “inclusion” among practitioners, scholars need to test these ideas and build the body of knowledge that will inform organizational leaders and members so that they are better able to develop policies and apply practices that are conducive to inclusive workplaces. Without such scholarship, the inclusion literature will continue to grow and scholars will struggle with needed conceptual clarity.

There are many ideas in the literature that can be used to increase the experience of inclusion among employees. However, it is equally clear that much remains to be done. As stated by Mor Barak (2008, p. 240) “In recent decades, many countries around the world, including the US, have made significant progress, through legislation and public policy, toward creating a more equitable work environment (Mor Barak, 2005). The combination of antidiscrimination laws and affirmative action programs have helped more women, members of ethnic and racial minorities, gays and lesbians, older workers, the differently abled, and members of other marginalized groups become part of the labor force. Despite progress in increasing the representation of diverse groups in work organization, it is the exclusion of these groups from circles of influence in the organization that keeps them from fully contributing to, and benefiting from, their involvement in the workplace.”

Many organizations are seeking ways to increase the inclusion experience of employees as one way to address the challenges and enhance the opportunities that can be associated with increased diversity (Ely & Thomas, 1996; Jackson & Joshi, 2011). But, as pointed out by Nkomo (2014, p. 580), the concept of inclusion cannot merely “be a case of old wine in new bottles,” that is, a relabeling of long-established diversity management practices. Instead, she argues strongly for radical change in which organizations are no longer designed for males who hold traditional single-earner status (a quickly shrinking group), but for the increasingly diverse

people who populate organizations. Such a change would require a clear understanding of what inclusion consists of, and what leader behaviors and practices facilitate this experience. But it is also critical to recognize that the privilege of status afforded some and not others has the ability to railroad such inclusion efforts. Therefore, organizations that seek to enhance inclusion must have a strong and visible commitment among top managers who not only communicate support but “walk-the-talk.” They must know how to develop and promote the many types of people within the organization who have the capability to hold key leadership positions (Thomas, 1991). Inclusion must become part of the fabric of the organization in which the climate and practices reflect a value system that embraces equal opportunity at all organizational levels. While the goal of organization inclusion is clearly not an easy one to accomplish, it has the potential to make a difference to both individuals and to organizational success (Byron & Post, 2016).

A key issue in the diversity and inclusion literature is to increase understanding of the role of various HR practices in creating experiences of inclusion for employees. Many diversity management and inclusion practices, such as the recruitment and promotion of women, people of color, and ethnic minorities, training in diversity management, and affinity groups within the organization all have the potential to contribute to the perception of the organization as inclusive. However, such practices may not be adequate for creating these perceptions if people from historically excluded identity groups are not allowed to be themselves in terms of expressing their perspectives and being heard and respected for their differences. These latter practices of authenticity are hypothesized in the literature reviewed in this article as needed for contributing to the experience of inclusion. As yet, however, an examination of these somewhat different but often overlapping HR practices designed to promote a positive work experience for people who belong to historically excluded identity groups have not been examined empirically in large-scale studies. Such research is clearly needed in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of whether bundling of HR practices that are within the more traditional diversity management domain and the newer inclusionary practices sphere are complementary and contribute to an inclusive climate as argued here.

Never before has cooperative research been so necessary among scholars and practitioners as in the case of inclusion (Wooten, 2008). The greatest advances in our human resources practices have resulted from the joint activities of scholars and practitioners. Understanding and promoting inclusion will require such joint scholar/practitioner efforts involving a combination of (1) understanding of challenges associated with diversity that are facing practitioners in organizations, (2) conversations between scholars and practitioners for greater mutual insights and understanding, (3) research based on carefully designed studies, (4) organizations that provide research access for scholars to investigate inclusion, and (5) organizational leaders who are willing to proactively apply the knowledge that is gained through systematic research. Moving from legislation to diversity management and now to real and felt inclusion will require this multilevel synergy and collaboration. HR scholars and practitioners informed by previous research and practice on diversity management are already moving in this direction (c.f., diversity training effects, Kalinoski et al., 2012).

Armed with multiple perspectives, current HR practices can be a starting point for creating inclusion by providing the tools to shift our focus from surface level difference to addressing organizational, social, and global issues by listening collectively to relevant constituents and by applying accumulated knowledge. Diversity in the workplace is increasing on a global scale, and it is apparent that such diversity can create both challenges and opportunities. Ideas generated by scholars and practitioners on inclusion can be a starting point for addressing challenges and capturing strategic advantages. But much more collaboration is needed, and sooner not later.

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