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Developing a Scale of Leader Inclusivity

The concept of inclusion has had broad appeal across academic disciplines, including medicine (e.g., Smith, 2020), education (e.g., Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018), political science (e.g, Stolle & Hooghe, 2011), sociology (e.g., Allman, 2013), and anthropology (e.g., Rawal, 2008). A culture of inclusion within an organization has been defined as one that "allows people with multiple backgrounds, mindsets and ways of thinking to work effectively together and to perform to their highest potential in order to achieve organizational objectives based on sound principles" (Pless & Maak, 2004: 130). Cultivating inclusion in organizations is important because it is purported to improve job attitudes, increase the availability of developmental and promotion opportunities in organizations, and decrease turnover (Shore et al., 2018; Holmes et al., 2021). An increasing number of organizational leaders installed to champion inclusion at work indicates that organizations are facing increasing pressure to attend to these issues and/or are recognizing the need for such roles. For instance, the number of Chief Diversity Officer roles tripled between 2016 and 2019 (Paikeday, Sachar & Stuart, 2019) and the number of leaders with "diversity and inclusion" in their title has more than doubled since 2015 (Tonneson, 2020).

Yet, *how* to enact more inclusive organizations remains elusive. Indeed, scholarship exploring inclusive organizations is predominantly conceptual in nature (e.g., Ferdman et al., 2020; Shore et al., 2018). In recent years, organizational scholars have become increasingly interested in leader inclusivity (e.g., Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Randel et al., 2018) - widely considered the fulcrum of greater inclusion for employees (Ferdman, 2020), as a key mechanism for driving inclusion at work. Empirical research on leader inclusivity has just started to emerge. However, as scholars seek to define leader inclusivity, there remains an underlying, but not fully recognized, tension in the research concerning who leaders are hoping to include. On the one hand, a tradition in inclusion research is to define leader inclusivity using a universalism principle - in this approach, leader inclusivity involves building inclusion for *all* members in organizational life. For instance, Randel et al. (2018) define inclusive leadership as "leader behaviors that respond to group members' needs for belongingness and uniqueness within a work group" (p. 192), asserting that "encouraging inclusive leadership behaviors holds promise for improving the work experience of all work group members" (p. 201). On the other hand, some scholars implore theory and research on inclusion to amplify voices and perspectives of particular people - that is, those who suffer from discrimination and oppression at work. (e.g., Roberts, Mayo, & Thomas, 2019; Kossek, Lobel & Brown, 2006). More specific to leader inclusivity, scholars have suggested that researchers recognize "the importance of understanding how others who may have inclusive leadership 'done' to them observe, understand, and also proactively manage or reconstruct experiences relating to inclusive leadership" (Atewologun & Harman, 2020, p. 99). In the current literature, this perspective remains highly underexplored.

In order to address this gap, over the past several years, I have been conducting qualitative research funded by the National Science Foundation (Science of Organizations grant). Through interviews with 47 high-ranking minority-identified leaders, we uncovered the behaviors inherent

in inclusive leadership through their lens, by asking interviewees to describe how leaders had behaved inclusively toward them over the course of their careers. Our findings reveal that leaders' inclusivity work takes four forms, and spans organizational, team, interpersonal, and individual levels: (a) creating equity in systems and providing equal access, (b) championing followers, (c) challenging stereotypes and instilling confidence, and (d) recognizing blind spots and enhancing D&I knowledge. At the most macro level, participants reported that inclusive leaders worked to revamp organizational systems (e.g., recruitment, selection, advancement), ensuring that these systems were operating equitably. At the meso level, inclusive leaders advocated for minority followers to advance throughout the organization and to gain access to "insider" information – opportunities that they may have otherwise lacked. And at the interpersonal level, inclusive leaders challenged stereotypes in their workplaces by calling out bias and addressing it head on. They also got to know minority followers as individuals to avoid applying stereotypes themselves and built their confidence based on the unique talents and skills they brought to the table. Finally, at a micro level, inclusive leaders continuously educated themselves about diversity, equity and inclusion, frequently asking for feedback from minority followers about how to improve.

The current work converts these four dimensions of leader inclusivity work into a measure of leader inclusivity. This measure can be used to determine the level of leader inclusivity that is present in teams and organizations, as well as to determine the antecedents and outcomes associated with this form of leading. This project is important because organizations can leverage the measure to drive meaningful change in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. I also anticipate that this scale could be used as a developmental, instructional tool in classrooms, allowing students to understand their own inclusive leadership and to better understand how to improve their inclusivity moving forward.

To create the scale, using the 4 dimensions of leader inclusivity that emerged from our qualitative study, we generated 85 items that comprehensively reflected the content domains we uncovered. We labeled these content domains as: "Reimagining inequitable organizational systems and norms"; "Creating greater information support"; "Building deep-level relationships"; and "Seeking understanding of lived experiences". Next, we conducted a Q sort for item reduction ($N = 17$). Seventeen context experts (89% with Doctoral or Master's degrees) completed a sorting task to support the content validity of the scale items. Out of the original 85 items, 29 items were correctly classified with at least 70% agreement (6 items for "Reimagining inequitable organizational systems and norms"; 13 items for "Creating greater information support"; 2 items for "Building deep-level relationships"; 8 items for "Seeking understanding of lived experiences"). Four items were incorrectly classified as "Building deep-level relationships" with at least 70% agreement; these items were intended for the "Seeking understanding of lived experiences" category and removed from the list of items. An additional three items were created as potential items to be included in the "Building deep-level relationships" subscale for the next data collection.

Moving forward with our 29 remaining items and additional 3 newly generated items (total of 32 items), we conducted an exploratory factor analysis, and preliminary convergent and discriminant validity analyses, in a sample of employed individuals via Prolific (2 waves; $N = 333$). The data collection for this study consisted of two waves gathered one week apart in June 2022. Participants were required to be at least 18 years of age and currently employed. The initial survey at Time 1 included 397 participants. Following data quality best practices, we examined

participants' responses to the attention check items (two per survey; e.g., "To ensure you're paying attention, please mark "Disagree" for this statement") and an honesty item (single question at the end of each survey; e.g., "Are the responses you've provided honest and accurate? You will still be paid regardless of your response. We appreciate your honesty!"). Participants identified as careless responders (e.g., provided incorrect answer to attention check items; N = 8) were removed. None of the participants answered "no" to the honesty question. We also checked the time duration of each response; participants who completed the survey in less than four minutes were removed (N = 11). The Time 1 sample resulted in 378 participants.

The 378 participants from Time 1 received the Time 2 survey one week later. We followed the same data quality checks for Time 2. A total of 341 participants completed the Time 2 survey (response rate = 90.21%); we removed 4 participants for time duration, 3 for careless responding, and 1 for not responding to the honesty item. Thus, the final sample of paired data from Time and Time 2 used for analyses was N = 333. The participants on average were 36.62 years of age (SD = 10.92) and reported a tenure of 6.36 years (SD = 5.75). Regarding gender identity and race, the sample consisted of 40.84% white men, 27.93% white women, 20.72% men of color, and 8.71% women of color. Two-thirds (67.87%) of the participants held a 4-year college degree or higher (21.32% high school or less, 10.51% 2-year college degree). The sample also included participants that identified as nonbinary (1.20%) and transgender (.30%). A little less than half of the participants held non-management roles (45.05%), while the remaining participants indicated their organizational rank as line management (i.e., supervising non-management personnel; 27.03%), middle management (i.e., managing managers; 24.92%), and senior/executive management (2.40%). Lastly, the sample represented a wide range of industries. The top five industries were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (15%), Healthcare (12%), Retail Trade (11%), Finance and Insurance (9%), and Manufacturing (9%).

Prior to testing an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), we examined the factorability of the 32-item Inclusive Leadership Scale. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .97, well above the recommended threshold of .6 (Kaiser, 1974), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi 2$ (496) = 3911.36, $p < .001$). The results of these indicators suggest that a factor analysis was suitable for the 32 items. We conducted an EFA (principal axis factoring) with an oblique rotation (promax) to examine factor structure and consider item reduction. The EFA supported a four-factor structure among the 32 items. The four factors explained 78 percent of the total variance. However, three items (22, 23, 24) cross-loaded onto two factors (2 and 4); we opted to remove these three items from the overall scale for improved clarity. The remaining 29 items grouped as expected with their intended subdimensions:

Building deep-level relationships with members of marginalized groups (5 items)
1. Takes the time to get to know marginalized employees as individuals, rather than putting labels on them.
2. Takes the time to learn about the individual career goals of marginalized employees.
3. Sets aside time to provide encouragement and support for marginalized employees in their career goals
4. Creates bonds with marginalized employees that boost their confidence in achieving goals
5. Promotes the confidence of marginalized employees to achieve career goals

Creating greater information support for marginalized employees' professional advancement (13 items)

6. Promotes the visibility of marginalized employees by connecting them to top leaders.
7. Actively involves qualified marginalized employees on "high visibility" projects at work.
8. Gives qualified employees from marginalized groups opportunities to make presentations to high-level leaders at work.
9. Connects employees from marginalized groups with individuals who can help their careers at work.
10. Works to ensure qualified employees from marginalized groups obtain highly-visible job opportunities.
11. Creates opportunities for employees from marginalized groups to show their skills to top leaders.
12. Provides marginalized employees the opportunity to showcase their skills in important meetings with leaders.
13. Actively supports marginalized employees in showcasing their skills in meetings involving top leaders.
14. Advocates for qualified marginalized employees to obtain highly visible job roles at work.
15. Offers a platform for marginalized employees to display their skills in meetings involving top leaders.
16. Creates opportunities for marginalized employees to display their skills in meetings with top leaders.
17. Provides marginalized employees "insider" knowledge about internal politics in the organization.
18. Shares information about internal company politics with employees from marginalized groups.

Reimagining inequitable organizational systems and norms (3 items)

19. Works to ensure that selection procedures do not advantage members of majority groups.
20. Ensures methods used to make promotion decisions do not privilege members of majority groups.
21. Seeks to change promotion practices that privilege members of majority groups.

Seeking understanding of lived experiences (8 items)

22. Seeks to understand the systemic barriers that members of marginalized groups encounter in their lives.
23. Actively seeks out knowledge about the systemic nature of prejudice in society.
24. Steps outside of their own perspective to consider how marginalized employees might experience their work environment.
25. Considers what it would be like to be in the "shoes" of marginalized employees at work.
26. Seeks knowledge about the challenges faced by members of marginalized groups in society.

27. Attempts to better understand systemic biases that employees from marginalized groups encounter.
28. Tries to take the perspective of marginalized employees at work.
29. Thinks about how they might perceive their work environment differently if they were a member of a marginalized group.

Finally, the scale was statistically distinct from the following conceptually similar constructs: perceived supervisor support (Eisenberger et al., 2002; $r = .70$), work group inclusion (due to leader; adapted from Chung et al., 2020; $r = .69$), leader-member exchange (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; $r = .65$), leader inclusiveness (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; $r = .64$), inclusive leadership (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010; $r = .63$), psychological safety (Liang, Fahr, & Fahr, 2012; $r = .51$), and diversity climate (McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2008; $r = .62$). Further, the scale significantly correlated ($p < .01$) in the expected direction with the following constructs: high quality relationships (Fernet, Gagne, & Austin, 2010; $r = .52$), overall justice (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; $r = .51$), job satisfaction (Camman et al., 1979; $r = .51$), engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006; $r = .51$), affective commitment (Meyer, Allen, & Gallatly, 1990; $r = .50$), voice (van Dyne & LePine, 1998; $r = .44$), helping behavior (Podsakoff et al., 1990; $r = .42$), and work group identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; $r = .39$).

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