

INCLUSIVE LEADER BEHAVIOR IN A VIRTUAL CONTEXT:
A CAUSAL INVESTIGATION

by

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ABSTRACT

ADRIENNE MARIE UTZ. Inclusive leadership behavior in a virtual context: A causal investigation. (Under the direction of DR. GEORGE BANKS)

Despite the workforce in the United States becoming more diverse, there is still a lack of understanding of how leaders can create an inclusive work environment. Previous research has provided little evidence of which inclusive leadership behaviors (ILBs) cause outcomes within their followers, especially in a virtual context. Leaders need to be aware of how to create an inclusive environment but have struggled with how to do this. To offer guidance and knowledge for leadership to make an inclusive workplace, this research has reframed inclusive leadership behavior by applying a signaling theory perspective. I have broken this research down into two studies to advance the theoretical and practical conceptualization of inclusive leadership. Study 1 was an investigative study to identify what types of behaviors leaders exhibit to drive individuals to feel included (i.e., ILB). This involved the analysis of open-ended survey responses. Using a comparative approach and topic modeling, five ILBs were identified: 1. Statements that give validation, 2. Statements about the significance of employee experiences, 3. Statements about autonomy at work, 4. Statements about a communicative environment, and 5. Statements about acceptance. In Study 2, these verbal behaviors were then experimentally manipulated to evaluate the extent to which employees evaluated a leader as inclusive using ILBs.. The results of the experimental manipulation provided evidence that the five ILBs do cause evaluations of inclusion ($t(126) = -14.19$; $p < .000$; Cohen's $d = 2.51$). I conclude with recommendations for theory and practice.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, and two amazing grandparents Lola and Lolo, who have always supported and encouraged me to reach higher in my academic studies and my life, for teaching me the value of hard work and preservation, for motivating me to never give up and for their continuous faith in me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to the United States Census, 4 out of 10 Americans identify with a race or ethnic group other than white, and by the year 2050, the United States will no longer be a Caucasian-dominated country (census.gov). With the workforce becoming more diverse, managers and organizations need to be aware of how to create an inclusive environment for diverse teams. Although diversity and inclusion are often thought of in conjunction with each other, they remain separate constructs. For this dissertation, diversity will be defined in terms of the degree to which employees are varied in terms of sex, age, and race (Lawrence, 1997). The term “inclusion” means the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds” (wh.gov). In an inclusive workplace context, employees are treated fairly, valued for who they are, and included in the workplace (Nishii, 2013). A workplace seen as inclusive would be committed to integrating diverse individuals and seeing those individuals as a way to offer new insights and skills to the organization (Nishii, 2013). Yet, leaders of organizations have struggled to create an inclusive work environment, especially with the sudden increase in virtual work due to the COVID-19 pandemic (AlQershi, 2020).

Leaders face several challenges in creating an inclusive workplace, especially in a virtual context. First, there is a lack of understanding of what specific leader behaviors support an inclusive environment. Diversity management approaches have previously been criticized for only addressing diversity in groups, but not the lack of engagement and participation of diverse members within the organization (Prasad, 2001). Most often, diversity training appears to check the box for the organization but fails to implement programs that promote inclusivity (and training itself may not generalize back to the workplace). Leaders of companies can increase

feelings of inclusion when they use behaviors that spark engagement (Dobbin and Kalev, 2016). This is important for the future of organizations because there needs to be an understanding of how inclusive leadership behavior can foster inclusiveness in a diverse setting. Diversity is becoming more prevalent in the United States and within organizations, yet there is still a gap and lack of understanding of how leaders create an inclusive environment. A large part of creating an inclusive environment comes down to what leaders say and do (Barak et al., 2021). Leaders themselves often face challenges in creating an inclusive environment. Bourke and Titus (2020), found that “what leaders say and do makes up to a 70% difference as to whether an individual reports feeling included (Bourke & Titus, 2020, p.2).” Yet, while it is evident behavior is important to advancing theory within leadership there continues to remain a lack of research studying leader (and follower) behavior (Banks et al., in press). Evidence found from previous research has indicated that out of 2338 variables, only 3% of those variables in leadership and organizational behavior research are behavior in nature (Banks et al., in press). Furthermore, inclusive leaders have been suggested to include visible commitment, humility, awareness of bias, curiosity about others, cultural intelligence, and effective collaboration (Bourke & Titus, 2020). While this is a good starting point, it conflates traits as individual differences, intentions, leader behaviors, and evaluations of those same behaviors (which are subjective assessments) and lacks specificity about trainable behaviors (Fischer & Sitzin, in press). Hence, there is a need for a taxonomy of specific leader behaviors that are trainable which can serve to promote inclusive environments.

The current dissertation draws upon signaling theory as a framework for understanding how specific leader behavior creates an inclusive environment. Signaling theory can help identify specific behaviors that cause followers to evaluate the leader (and the environment) as

inclusive. Signaling theory is used to describe the “behavior when two parties (individuals or organizations) have access to different information” (Connelly et al., 2011, p. 39). Commonly, one party will be identified as the sender and will choose how to communicate or signal (e.g., inclusivity) that information to the receiver (Connelly et al., 2011). The receiver will then choose how to interpret the signal or information that they received (Connelly et al., 2011). The sender must choose whether and how to communicate that information to the receiver, while the receiver must choose how to interpret the information they received. Leaders must learn to signal inclusion through their actions by creating opportunities for open communication, a belief in diversity, and even altering rules for acceptable behavior (Wasserman et al., 2007).

Signals can be considered actions and inactions that serve as information. An example of an action that causes positive evaluations of inclusive leadership behavior is when leadership promotes a safe space for communication between employees. By allowing employees to communicate without judgment employees could potentially view their leader as exhibiting positive evaluations of inclusive leadership behavior. This is not only relevant to the physical workplace but can be conducted in a virtual atmosphere as well. An example of inaction that fails to cause positive evaluations of inclusive leadership behavior is when leadership fails to recognize their employees. This could happen when leadership fails to recognize the work and effort of their employees. Leaders could also fail to recognize that each person is unique and contributes to the group. This may cause an employee to feel undervalued and not recognized as part of the team.

As a second major challenge for the literature, virtual environments are becoming a major part of how work is being performed and how employees are being managed around the world (Abrams, 2019; Garro-Abarca, V. et al., 2021). Leadership is a social influence process. There

are major differences between leading in a virtual environment compared to a face-to-face context (Schmidt, 2014). Hence, there is a real need to look at leaders in charge of managing virtual teams and workers while still creating an inclusive and diverse work environment. While research has looked at virtual team behavior (Huang et al., 2010; Bhat et al., 2017) and virtual environments (Avolio and Kahai, 2003; Morrison-Smith and Ruiz., 2020), there is still a lack of research on leading a diverse and inclusive team environment (e.g., a Zoom meeting). Consequently, there is a need to identify leader behaviors that cause evaluations of inclusion by followers.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide guidance and knowledge for leaders to help make an inclusive virtual workplace, creating best practices within management, and in due course offer solutions for organizations to support their values that resonate with a diverse workforce. The following section will discuss a comprehensive review and synthesis of relevant research as well as signaling theory (Conelly et al., 2010) and followership (Bastardoz & Van Vugt, 2019) as conceptual frameworks. Two empirical investigations were performed. First, a qualitative study was conducted in which participants indicated what types of leader behaviors made them feel included. This resulted in a taxonomy of inclusive leadership behavior (i.e., signals) that were used to characterize inclusive leaders. This study collected employees' demographics, including employee gender, job title, race, and industry. The gender of the participants was 45.5% men, 52.50% women, 1.50% non-binary/gender fluid, and 0.50% preferred not to answer. The study consisted of participants from various occupations ranging from Data Analysis, Attorney, Housekeeper, Nurse, and Pilot. The racial identity of the participants was 70% White, 7.0% Hispanic, 13.5% African American, 4.5% Asian American, and 5.0% identified as biracial. Second, an experimental study was performed to

determine which inclusive leader behavior when experimentally manipulated to evaluate the extent to which the taxonomy of ILBs caused feelings of inclusiveness. This study collected employees' demographics, including employee gender, job title, race, and industry. Participants were 58.6% men, 40.6% women, and 0.80% preferred not to answer. The study consisted of participants from various occupations ranging from Accountant, Store manager, Engineer, and Bartender. The racial identity of the participants was 78.2% white, 6.8% Hispanic, 7.8% African American, 7.8% Asian American, and 3.2% identified as biracial. Finally, the dissertation concludes with recommendations for theory, leadership, and organizations on how to effectively create an inclusive work environment in a virtual workplace.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review previous literature related to leadership and inclusive work environments. This chapter will discuss going from diversity to an inclusive environment, inclusion in the United States, signaling theory, and followership drawing upon evolutionary theory where there has been a lack of knowledge on how individuals legitimize leaders and why inclusive leader behavior promotes followership, what drives an inclusive environment, and understanding inclusive leader behavior.

Diversity to Inclusion

The term “diversity” means the practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, and beliefs of American people, including underserved communities.” (wh.gov). In a workplace context, diversity is the different visible or invisible characteristics of each employee (Nishii, 2013). Furthermore, these characteristics are age, gender, race, and education. Employees define themselves in groups in which they identify they belong, each one of these groups has a larger structure within the organization, and these groups interact with other groups within the organization (Nishii, 2013). Overall, individuals seek an organization that is accepting and welcoming while being able to identify with others in the organization who they find similar to themselves (Mor Barack et al., 2016).

While diversity predominantly focuses on the demographic characteristics within a group, inclusion goes beyond that and encourages participation, integration, and leveraging that diversity into the everyday work environment (Stevens et al., 2006). People want to be individualistic and maintain their own unique identity while continuing to feel a sense of belonging in their work environment (Cunningham, 2015). While diversity has been researched

in numerous studies, there is still a lack of literature focusing on an inclusive work environment (Shore et al., 2011).

Inclusive Work Environments

Employees want to be included and accepted as part of the organization while being able to express their unique identity. Creating an inclusive workforce creates an atmosphere that brings new talent, innovative ideas, better performance for individuals and the organization, and attracts and retains a talented workforce (sec.gov). This has become especially important in recent times when the workforce has become more diverse (census.gov). Organizations can be more competitive by being perceived as inclusive and equal-opportunity employer (Bourke and Titus, 2019). Previous research has shown that when organizations poorly manage diversity there is a negative association with job outcomes, creating greater conflicts, employees being treated poorly, poor employee commitment and engagement, and high turnover intentions (Mor et al., 2016). Despite the growing interest in creating an inclusive work environment, there are several opportunities to advance research and practice.

The work environment can be defined as the artifacts, conditions, and influences that surround a workplace (Thomas et al., 2010). In a classic top-down organization management model, information is flown down from executives to middle managers, middle managers to supervisors, and supervisors to employees. In a bottom-up organizational model, information flows up the chain going from employees to supervisors, supervisors to middle managers, and middle managers to executives. Employees play a substantial role in a bottom-up approach in that employees are involved, have valued opinions, and are seen as knowledgeable contributors to the optimization of the organization. What is unique about a bottom-up approach is that

decisions are made at a level where those individuals possess the knowledge and can create a work environment where employees feel valued.

Changing an organization to become a more inclusive work environment is not an easy task (Jamison and Miller, 2005). While most research in this area has focused on the organizational level in terms of developing a plan and strategy to change the culture within the organization, it is important to have support from executive leadership, supervisors, managers, leadership, and their employees (Jamison and Miller, 2005). To change an organization to become more inclusive, it is essential to understand what behaviors and experiences are occurring between employees and leadership that are preventing the organization from becoming an inclusive work environment.

There have been numerous studies looking at how to determine when it is considered to be an inclusive climate. However, there have been many contradictions in practices of inclusion in the workplace (Dahl, 2014). One study found that inclusive climates exist when employees of any social group have the opportunity to be present, be heard, feel appreciated, and can engage in activities on behalf of the organization (Wasserman, et al., 2008). Another study found that an inclusive organization is present when a diversity of knowledge and perspectives of members of different groups help to shape the strategy of the organization, the work environment, the management, operating systems, and core values the organization adopts (Holvino, et al., 2004). An additional studies has found that an inclusive environment is characterized by employees having the ability to speak up and participate, being treated with fairness, open communication, transparent recruitment, promotions, and development opportunities, and harassment and discrimination are lower (Chorbot-Mason, et al., 2013). Further study identified inclusive environments as whether an employee can have a work-life balance, where the employee can be

seen not only as an employee but as an individual who has a life outside the workplace as well (Deloitte, 2012). An employee's ability to have a work-life balance is viewed as a signal of the organization's support for an inclusive workplace (Deloitte, 2012).

Since the United States has been established, there has been frequent tension over the rights of its citizens. Going back to 1868, when the 14th Amendment to the constitution was the first step made to create an inclusive environment in the United States (loc.gov). The Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibited discrimination in public places, integrated schools, made employment discrimination illegal and helped pave the way for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (archives.gov). Yet, it was not until 1954, under *Brown vs. Board of Education*, that schools would soon become desegregated over the following years (loc.gov). Then in the 1960's the next step towards inclusion was the implementation of Affirmative Action and the establishment of the EEOC (loc.gov). This has now been joined by the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (loc.gov). While the United States has taken steps to create an inclusive environment, it may still be evident that some organizations lack an inclusive work environment (loc.gov). In recent times, the United States continues to grow and be made up of people from all different countries and backgrounds. "America was founded on the idea that from many, we are one, a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. That is the rationale for inclusion" (opm.gov). While being free of discrimination does not necessarily mean there is an inclusive environment to make the most of an ever-increasingly diverse workforce, there needs to be inclusiveness and recognition.

Inclusive environments are defined as places where individuals regardless of their background are treated fairly, valued for who they are, and feel they are part of the core decision-

making (Davidson and Ferdman, 2001). Creating an inclusive work environment is not an easy task for organizations and leadership. There are barriers organizations and leaders face when creating an inclusive environment. Additionally, there are phases the organization and leadership go through in creating an inclusive culture (Pless and Maak, 2004). The phases they identified include raising awareness, understanding, reflection; developing a vision of an inclusive environment; reimagining how management can become inclusive and have inclusive concepts and principles; and adapting a system and inclusive process (Pless and Maak, 2004).

Virtual Work Environments

Virtual work environments have become more prevalent in recent years due to the COVID-19 virus, as more employees are choosing a form of a remote working environment (Ernst et al., 2021). Previous studies have noted that there is a lack of studies on virtual leadership (Banks et al., 2019). With virtual work environments becoming the norm, the responsibilities and expectations of employees and leadership have become less clear (Allen et al., 2015). With this being the case, employees could be more receptive to the goals and visions articulated by leadership (Ernst et al., 2022).

Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of what behavior leaders have. Within an organization, it is important to gain a form of understanding of what behaviors and experiences are occurring that is preventing the organization from reaching the goal of having all employees engaged in diversity and inclusion initiatives that the organization promotes (Konrad et al., 2006). There is a stage called an unfreezing stage, which characterizes human behavior and change, which states that previous attitudes and behaviors can be changed if there is a clear motivation to change them (Lewin, 1951). This unfreezing stage would require leaders to identify their current behavior and consider a new process of doing things (Lewin, 1951). This is

where leaders must examine their style of leadership and look at their employees to confirm their employees are being utilized, respected, and included (Lewin, 1951). This is a difficult task for management because it requires them to unlearn and relearn a new way of thinking, looking at things, and even how communicating with their employees.

Signaling Theory

The signaling theory has been applied to numerous studies on leadership (Banks et al., 2021; Grabo et al., 2017; Ernst et al., 2022). Signaling theory is beneficial for this work because it is used to describe the behavior when two parties (leaders and employees) have access to different information (Connelly et al., 2011). Normally, one party (the sender, such as a leader) will choose how to communicate (or signal) information to the other party (the receiver or employees), the receiver or employee must then determine how to interpret the signal that they received from leadership (Connelly et al., 2011). The focus of signaling theory is reducing the information asymmetry between the receiver and the sender (Spence, 2002). Information asymmetry occurs when “one party in a relationship has more or better information than another” (Bergh et al., 2018, p. 123). Information asymmetry is important in certain circumstances, such as when one party is not fully aware of the characteristics of the other party or when one party is concerned about another party’s behavior or behavioral intentions (Elitzur and Gavious, 2003; Spence, 2002). The receiver typically has less information and actively looks for signals from the sender because the sender has more information before the receiver decides on a course of action (Connelly et al., 2011). In a business environment context, leaders typically have more information than their employees, and their employees seek that information from their leaders (Ernst et al., 2022). When a leader would like to reduce asymmetry between themselves and their employees and create a social influence, the leader may signal their quality (Ernst et al., 2022).

In signaling theory at its essence, there is a signaler that can be considered an insider (e.g., leadership, managers, executives) who obtains information about an individual, product, or organization that is not available to outsiders (Spence, 2002). Insider information may be positive or negative but either way, an outsider would find this information useful (Spence, 2002). An example of this type of insider information may be specifics about the organization's products or services (Spence, 2002). The signal is when insiders obtain information, they must decide whether they wish to communicate this information to an outsider (Spence, 2002). The focus of signaling theory is primarily on the deliberate communication of positive information to convey positive attributes about the organization (Spence, 2002). If negative signals are sent to outsiders, they are done so unintentionally and have the unintended consequence of reducing information asymmetry (Spence, 2002). The receiver of the signal is considered the third element in the signaling theory process (Spencer, 2002). Receivers are considered outsiders who do not have information about the organization but would like to have this information (Spencer, 2002). For the signaling element to take place, the signaler should have some form of benefit from some action from the receiver that the receiver would not otherwise have done; usually, this process involves the selection of the signaler in favor of another alternative (Bird and Smith, 2005).

Signaling theory has elements that are important to take into consideration, such as signaling frequency and counter signals received from followers (Connelly et al., 2011). Most often, followers are shaped by the signals across multiple interactions they have with the leader (Ernst et al., 2022). In an office setting, leaders signal to their employees through emails, phone calls, and meetings they have with their employees throughout the time they are working together (Ernst et al., 2022).

Inclusion Drivers and Outcomes

In the past, organizations viewed inclusion and even diversity as a reactive response to the laws that were put in place which required them to include minorities in their organizations (Ollapally and Bhatnagar, 2009). As time went on, organizations are now seeing the benefits of inclusion within their organization as it provides them with the ability to be seen as a competitive advantage, be able to make better decisions, be more innovative, and be able to access a wide range of information (Ollapally and Bhatnagar, 2009). Employees also report higher job satisfaction, their willingness and intentions to stay with the organization, and overall performance for the organization increases (Shore et al., 2011; Nishii, 2013). When there are inclusive climates, interpersonal bias decreases and gender group-level diversity was related to lower conflict levels (Nishii, 2013).

Not only is it beneficial to the organization but previous studies have also identified numerous benefits for employees. By creating an inclusive environment employees willing to go above and beyond the roles of their position and engage in citizenship behavior also increases (Cottrill et al, 2014). This ties into a positive relationship between inclusion and employee engagement (Gowsami and Kisho, 2018). Employees who are engaged are more likely to help out their co-workers with issues, prevent problems, have initiative, arrive on time for work, be fully involved in their job, have a higher level of commitment to the organization, overlook any minor inconveniences, and have a high-performance level (Cottrill et al., 2014; Mujtaba, 2014). When work environments are inclusive interpersonal biases were reduced, and there were lower levels of conflict, higher levels of information sharing, respect between employees, acceptance, listening, empathy, and trust (Nishii, 2013; Li et al., 2017; Daya, 2014).

Creating an inclusive work environment is not an easy management task but it is important to keep all employees engaged and feeling like part of the team and organization.

When there is a lack of inclusion in the workplace, employees tend to fit co-workers into stereotypes, differences emerge, and employees no longer work together to overcome obstacles and differences (Daya, 2014). With this being the case, leadership must create a climate for inclusion. Management should continuously improve their work practices and have open communication with their employees by finding out their needs and how to meet their expectations. Signaling theory is important to note here because signaling theory is concerned with attempting to reduce any information asymmetry (Spence, 1973). As previously noted, information asymmetry occurs between those who hold information and those that could potentially make better decisions if they had that information (Connelly et al., 2011).

There are two types of information where information asymmetry is important. First, is when one party is not fully aware of the characteristics of another party (Connelly et al., 2011). Second is when one party is concerned about another party's behavior or behavioral intentions (Elitzur and Gavious, 2003). Both of these are important because it relates to the communication between management and the employee. Leaders are typically seen as the signaler and will send out the signal (Connelly et al., 2011). Signals may be viewed as a brief snapshot in time pointing to a quality of the signaler that is unobservable (Davila et al., 2003). The receiver can be a group of employees or a single employee (Connelly et al., 2011). The effectiveness of signaling is determined by the characteristics of the receiver (Connelly et al., 2011). Once the receiver receives the signal, they decide what to do with that information and use it to make an informed decision (Cohen and Dean, 2005). While this sounds simple enough, there is still much to learn about the signaling theory process between leaders and their followers and how followers interpret that information and evaluate the leader as inclusive (Connelly et al., 2011).

All this previous research shows that creating an inclusive environment is important for the success of an organization. In the past organizations would address diversity management by just adding more individuals from different backgrounds into the workplace, but they did not address how these new employees would be treated or how they would feel once they are with the organization (Nishii, 2013). While the previous tactic was to increase minority representation in the organization, this is not beneficial to the workplace (Nishii, 2013). Instead, to create an inclusive environment in an organization it is more beneficial for the organization to make sure that all individuals are treated fairly, that they feel valued, and that they are part of the organization (Nishi, 2013). Important consideration must be taken to signaling theory and how the sender relays information to the receiver and not only how the receiver receives that information but also how the receiver interprets that information. Overall, a critical element of a strong organization is that leaders enact behaviors that cause them to feel included, engaged, and valued for who they are (Tran et al., 2020).

Incivility, Microaggression, and Bias

Negativity in the workplace has been heavily researched, in terms of workplace violence, bullying, abusive supervisors, and how these negative behaviors contribute back to the organization in terms of turnover intentions and stress (Chiabura and Harrison, 2008; Bowling and Beehr, 2006). In more recent years, incivility at the workplace has become a topic of interest. Incivility in the workplace occurs when low-level forms of deviant behaviors with an ambiguous intent to harm the targeted individual, violate the norms of respect (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Uncivil behavior can include verbal abuse, sexual harassment, raising one's voice, insulting someone, and humiliation (Schilpzand, 2016).

Microaggression is another term that is similar to incivility, as both of these behaviors exhibit ambiguous intent to harm the targeted individual groups (Keith et al., 2017).

Microaggression occurs when an individual makes slights and put-downs in the context of another individual's identity (Sue et al., 2007). What distinguishes microaggression from workplace incivility is that microaggression is tied to marginalized individuals and occurs at different points over some time, while workplace incivility can be experienced by any individual but does not specify a repeated experience (Smith and Griffiths, 2022). Most research in the field of microaggression has focused primarily on health and wellbeing (Smith and Griffiths, 2022).

Through the expression of bias within the workplace, organizations can become an environment where employee satisfaction is low and employees end up getting hurt (Ruggs et al., 2018). Bias can present itself in different ways and can be seen at the individual and interpersonal levels by how it underlines discrimination, mistreatment, or incivility toward others (Cortina, 2008; Helb et al., 2002; Ruggs et al., 2011). Overt bias is expressed in negative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that people express toward other individuals based on their group identification (Ruggs et al., 2011). While in the workplace if individuals rely on the overt bias, they allow for stereotyping and prejudices to inform their judgment and decision rather than taking the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the individual (Ruggs et al., 2011). Overt bias can take the form of discrimination, influence interactions, harassment, and bullying, and lead to negative outcomes in the work environment (Ruggs et al., 2011). With discrimination being illegal, bias is typically found in subtle behaviors (Ruggs et al., 2011). Subtle bias is typically less obvious or even unintentional and can be seen in both verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Ruggs et al., 2011). This makes it difficult to identify this form of bias, as such previous research in this field has developed constructs to describe subtle biases and discrimination

(Ruggs et al., 2011). Numerous constructs have been identified and used to describe subtle biases, such as include microaggression (Sue et al., 2007) and incivility (Cortina, 2008).

Understanding Inclusive Leadership

This has been minimal research on inclusive leadership behavior. Most studies in the field of inclusive leadership (Prasad, 2001; Cottrill et al., 2014; Prime and Salib, 2014) have found that either inclusive leadership and practices are antecedents to an inclusive work environment, or authentic leadership is linked to inclusion. But yet, these studies have failed to yield results that identify what specific behaviors cause evaluations of inclusiveness. Furthermore, these studies were conducted in 2014, and since that time the work environment has changed dramatically with increased diversity among employees and the work environment becoming a mix of virtual and in-person. . These studies conflate leadership behavior as the independent variable and follower evaluations as the dependent variable. Furthermore, there is an endogeneity bias that prevents causal inferences.

To create an inclusive environment, leadership needs to value the diversity of talent in their employees, the experiences each employee brings, and the identity of each employee, while still having common grounds and balancing the uniqueness and sense of belonging (Prime and Salib, 2014). Leadership must find a balance between uniqueness and blending of differences. If leadership focuses exclusively on uniqueness, the employee could feel they are being stereotyped into a certain category. If leadership focuses exclusively on blending differences, the employee could feel hesitant to share their opinion. Leadership must find a way to make sure each employee feels valued and recognized for their differences.

I propose the following research questions:

Research question 1: What specific and observable behaviors (action or inaction) signal inclusive leadership to an employee?

Inclusive Leader Behavior in a Virtual Environment

In a digital and pandemic era, leadership has had to change the process and routines that were typically found in their organization to an electronic form of leadership due to employees either becoming fully remote or having adopted a hybrid work environment. (Garro-Abarca et al., 2021). This has created challenges for leadership in terms of managing employees who are expected to collaborate when they are now dispersed geographically (Garro-Abarca et al., 2021). Previously, virtual teams were created to help facilitate creation and innovation among employees (Garro-Abarca et al., 2021). Today, virtual teams have become a way of working for companies where employees must now work together and be managed regardless of where the employee is physically located (Garro-Abarca et al., 2021). This has become a challenge for leadership to manage people located around the globe while ensuring each employee feels included.

Virtual teams are conducted in many different environments, such as a physical work place or at an employee's house, and may take place using different virtual platforms depending on what communication media is used (Gajendran and Joshi, 2012). Virtual teams impact leadership because information and communication in virtual environments take place primarily through email, phone, or even a computer-based program (Lord and Dinh, 2014). While in a virtual team environment, there may be an absence of face-to-face information, non-verbal cues, and tone of voice (Lord and Dinh, 2014). Furthermore, in a virtual environment, the way information is provided and interpreted impacts how the employee and leaders perceive the information they receive (Hoch and Kozlowski, 2012). Additionally, virtual teams have a strong

impact on who leads, why they choose to lead, and how they lead (Lord and Dinh, 2014).

Accordingly, leaders providing relative information to their teams have a stronger impact on the performance of the team (Hoch and Kozlowski, 2012).

In a virtual team context, communication frequency between the leader and the follower and the form of communication selected needs to be established and maintained (Schmidt, 2014; Malhotra et al., 2007). Accordingly, structural supports have a greater impact on the performance of employees in virtual teams (Hoch and Kozlowski, 2012). In addition to communication frequencies, providing relevant information and implementing an appropriate reward and recognition system are also beneficial to the employee (Bell and Kozlowski, 2012). Previous research also found that creating personal relationships, establishing connections with team members, and allowing a personal connection with everyone are other benefits of using virtual teams in a virtual environment (Hart and McLeod, 2003). While creating these connections is easier in a face-to-face environment, some organizations have chosen to do business virtually and by establishing this formal and informal connection with employees on a virtual platform, virtual teams can become more productive without physical face-to-face contact (Hart and McLeod, 2003).

As mentioned, changing an organization to become more diverse and inclusive is challenging. Accordingly, organizations must strive to understand the behaviors and experiences of their employees to help achieve the targeted goal and ensure all employees are part of a diversity initiative (Konrad et al., 2006). By creating an inclusive and diverse workplace there will be an increase in retention, quality, innovation, job satisfaction, and productivity (Jamison and Miller, 2005). By expanding previous research on diversity and inclusion this dissertation will provide management and organizations guidance on the effectiveness of training programs

on diversity and potential benefits for the organization. By creating and operating an inclusive work environment the organization can bring new ideas and experiences.

Maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce has been recognized as instrumental in improving the performance and productivity of organizations. It is well recognized that more organizations have become hybrid or virtual workplaces and this requires additional work that must be recognized by leadership to ensure employees can add tangible and intangible value to the organization and that those employees recognize they are included and valued within their organization. We must go beyond the physical appearance of diversity and shift towards not only diversity but an inclusive diverse virtual work environment. I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Inclusive leadership behavior causes followers' positive evaluations in a virtual context.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the sample, the data collection process, and the measures that were used to test the proposed research question.

Overview

As previously mentioned, this dissertation offers guidance and knowledge for leadership to make an inclusive workplace by creating best practices within management. To offer contributions to research in the field of inclusive leadership behavior, I conducted two studies to advance the theoretical and practical conceptualization of inclusive leadership. The first study conducted was an investigation to identify what types of leader behaviors drive employees to feel included (i.e., ILB). Study two was an experimental study in which the ILBs were

experimentally manipulated to evaluate the extent to which they result in employees feeling inclusiveness. The overall aim was to identify what behaviors drive evaluations of inclusive leader behavior which will improve theoretical specificity, offer solutions for organizations, and create new avenues for future research.

Study 1 Methodology

Participants

To begin the process of inductively ILBs, I sought to recruit a total of 200 participants for this study. This research resulted in 199 participants based in the United States. Panel data was obtained via Prolific and consisted of a nationally representative sample (not workforce) of working adults in terms of age, race, and gender.

Procedure and Design

Data collection involved providing participants with two open-ended questions that encompass inclusive leadership. When the participants agreed to participate in the study, they were directed to a Qualtrics survey where they were asked to respond to the open-ended questions and asked to provide specific examples of their experiences with leadership. Participants were asked to provide at least 50-word responses to ensure the responses were of higher quality responses. This study took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Additional information on Study 1 can be found in Appendix A.

Measures

The open-ended questions were adapted from survey items from Al-Atwi and Al-Hassan (2021). The complete survey items can be found in Appendix B. Participants were asked to respond to two open-ended questions: (1) What behaviors do leaders in your current (or a

previous) workplace engage in that make you feel included in your work environment? Please be as specific as possible and use a minimum of 200 characters (or about 50 words) in your response. Be as specific as possible; (2) What behaviors do leadership in your current (or a previous) workplace engage in that make you feel all group members are treated equally, without personal biases? Please be as specific as possible and use a minimum of 200 characters (or about 50 words) in your response.

Analysis

To address Research Question 1, I began by conducting a thematic analysis by openly coding and using axial coding of the responses. This started the process of identifying possible themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Topic modeling was then used to examine the range of topics that emerged and identified the latent constructs in the responses of the participants (Stock et al., 2022). The results of the topic modeling can be found in Appendix C. By selecting to utilize topic modeling it allowed for the ability to combine the efficiency of computer automation and human input that helps interpret the text responses (Banks et al., 2018; Kobayshi et al., 2018; Oswald et al., 2020; Tonidandel et al., 2021; Stock et al., 2022). This also maximizes analytic reproducibility. Topic modeling utilizes Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) which is used to identify and measure any topics that are hidden within the data collected in the questionnaire (Blei et al., 2010).

Before beginning the analysis, I conducted a pre-processing step such as tokenization, stemming, and the removal of stop words. Additionally, a Bayesian hierarchical mixture model was selected to identify co-occurrences among the words in the responses to determine latent topics in the text (Banks et al., 2018). This study was conducted without an *a priori* number of topics (Stock et al., 2022). The goal of conducting the process in this manner was to identify the

highest quality view of the data to see the results most clearly (DiMaggio et al., 2013). Once topics emerge, I examined those topics using the constant comparative method (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). Inclusive leadership behavior literature was used to analyze the topics that emerged to make sense of the topics conceptually while maintaining parsimony and maximizing interpretability (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Ultimately, the process aimed to confirm that the topics that emerged from the analysis were substantial and related to the literature (Stock et al., 2022). The process for labeling and composing working definitions of the emerging themes was selected from Short et al (2010) and Banks, Woznyj, et al (2018). This process incorporates an inductive approach to label each emerging latent concept from the text and then working definitions was created. Next, a discussion was held regarding the topics that emerged from the text, the identification of any words that co-occurred within the text, and assigning of working labels to the phenomena (Cowan and Fox, 2015). Subsequently, ILB labels and definitions were established from the text. I then provided the output of this process, which was composed of the labels of the topics, examples from the data, and evidence from the literature.

Study 2 Methodology

Participants

I sought to recruit a total of 128 participants for this study. The number of respondents that took part in the study was 128 and all respondents watched their assigned speech and completed the questions in their entirety. This number is based on a power analysis with Cohen's $d = .50$, power = .80 (two-tailed; $\alpha = .05$). Data were obtained via Prolific and consisted of a nationally representative sample (not the workforce) of working adults in terms of age, race, and gender.

Procedure and design

This between-subjects study involved two leadership speeches that were presented as if the speeches addressed were held virtually in a Zoom meeting. Although in the past this suggested scenario seems unrealistic, in recent times the COVID-19 pandemic and the work environment becoming more virtual has made this a more realistic speech to be held virtually. Both speeches were delivered by the same actress who maintained the same appearance in both speeches. Both speeches were approximately 3 minutes each to watch and were presented to the participants followed by 10 questions they were asked to respond to as well as provide demographic information. This study took about 10 minutes for participants to complete.

To ensure that inclusive speech (experimental condition) was not being compared to a weak or bad condition, the standard speech (control speech) was written first and used as a template for inclusive speech. The control speech was written in a standard way that would be a typical speech provided by leaders to their employees. To write this speech numerous recordings of speeches were evaluated. The experimental speech included all 5 ILBs with 1. Statements that give validation being utilized in 3 sentences, 2. Statements about the significance of employee experiences being utilized in 1 sentence, 3. Statements about autonomy at work being utilized in 2 sentences, 4. Statements about a communicative environment being utilized in 3 sentences, and 5. Statements that give validation being utilized in 3 sentences. The standard speech was made up of 27 sentences and 450 words whereas the inclusive speech was made up of 24 sentences and 450 words. Additional information on the speeches can be found in Appendix D. The speeches were identical (e.g., approximately the same word count of 450 words). An objective manipulation check was completed to ensure that the inclusive leadership behavior was manipulated sufficiently to cause differences in evaluations of employees on inclusive leadership

behavior. Two individuals independently coded the two speeches for ILBs without specific knowledge of which speech was which. Across the two raters, they gave an average of 4.5 (out of 27 sentences) for the controlled speech vs. 10 ILBs out of 27 for the experimental. The percentage agreement was 70%. Additional information on the inter rater reliability can be found in Appendix E. Lastly, both speeches were recorded with the same actress and background.

When the participants agreed to participate in the study, the participants were directed to a Qualtrics survey where they were randomly assigned to either the inclusive behavior condition or the standard condition. After watching their assigned video, participants were asked to respond to closed-ended questions adapted from survey items adapted from (Al-Atwi and Al-Hassan, 2021). This scale is a multi-dimensional construct that was utilized to assess the followers perceptions of their leaderships' behavior in relation to supporting inclusion. This scale measured five factors: (1) supporting group members, (2) ensuring justice and equality, (3) shared decision making, (4) encouraging diverse contributions, and (5) helping group members fully contribute. Additional information on Study 2 can be found in Appendix F.

Measures

Participants were then asked to rate the speaker using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). The reliability estimate of the scale in this study was $\omega = .95$; 95% CI [.976, .985] (Cortina et al., 2020). I assessed inclusive leadership behavior using the inclusive leadership scale from Al-Atwi and Al-Hassan (2021). Participants were subsequently asked to respond to 10 close-ended questions adapted from from the inclusive leadership scale such as “The leader cares about my wellbeing,” “The leader treats me equally as he/she treats others, without discrimination,” and “The leader provides the encouragement and

emotional support necessary to ensure I continue presenting new ideas.” In the past, this survey conducted by Al-Atwi and Al-Hassan (2021) has demonstrated good reliability and validity of the scale.

Analysis

Study 2 sought to establish preliminary causal evidence that behaviors identified in Study 1 serve as signals to followers by carrying information that the leader is inclusive. An independent samples t-test was conducted, and a standardized mean difference was calculated to compare the control and treatment groups. This allowed for interpreting statistical significance and practical significance.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter provides the results, findings, and procedures that were performed for both Study 1 and Study 2.

Study 1 results and discussion

The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate and identify what types of leadership behaviors drive employees to feel included (i.e., ILB). The number of respondents that took part in the study was 199 and all respondents completed the questions in their entirety. All the respondents were Prolific users and located in The United States. The participants were asked to respond to two questions and provide at least 200 characters or about 50-word responses.

As described in Chapter 2, Research Question 1 was answered with a mixed methods approach that leveraged a combination of (1) a short thematic analysis conducting open and axial coding. This allowed me to identify possible themes within the responses. The output of this

process can be found in Figure 1. (2) Topic modeling was conducted to examine the range of topics that emerged from the responses of the participants and was compared and contracted with the thematic analysis. This allowed me to effectively combine computer and human input to interpret the text responses of the participants. Following this, a table was created to incorporate the five leader verbal behaviors, a description of that behavior, why the behavior is effective, and a hypothetical statement a supervisor could state to their followers. Topics that were identified during the topic modeling process were then related to the leadership verbal behavior. The output of this process can be found in Table 1.

Figure 1: Open coding, axial coding, and topic modeling

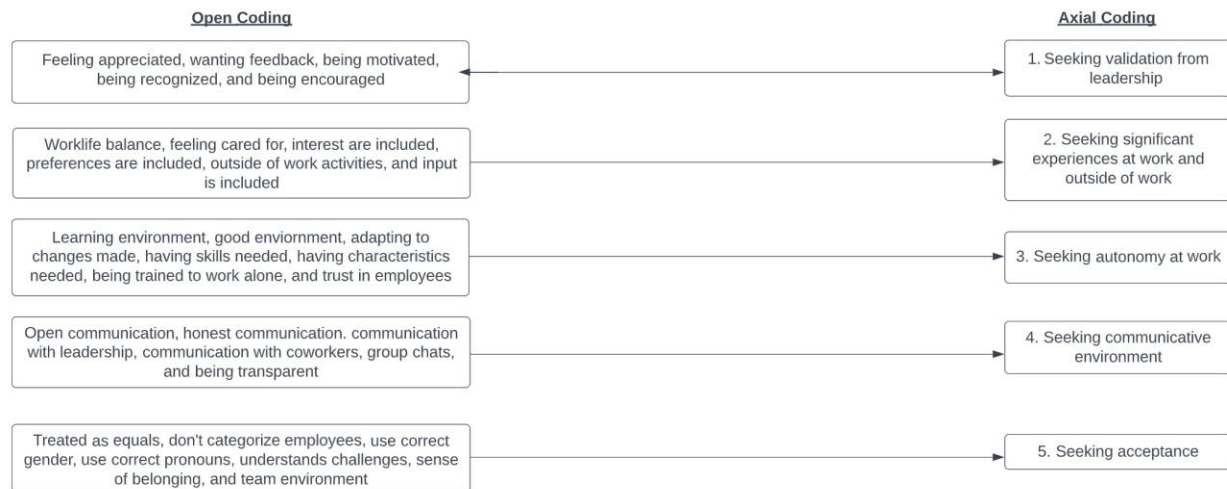


Table 1: Leader verbal behavior, description, why it is an effective and hypothetical statement

Leader verbal behavior	Description	Why is it effective?	Hypothetical statement
1. Statements that give validation	Employees want to feel appreciated, seek feedback from leadership,	It inspires their employees to work hard, they feel valued	I want to let everyone know that I appreciate your hard work and

Leader verbal behavior	Description	Why is it effective?	Hypothetical statement
(Topic 3 and 6)	want to be motivated by leadership, receive recognition from leadership, and be encouraged.	and helps the organization accomplish its mission.	efforts this past week. It is because of every one of you that we have exceeded expectations for this organization.
2. Statements about the significance of employee experiences (Topic 1 and 2)	Employees want to have a work/life balance, they want to feel that they are cared for, that their interests and preferences are included, that they still can have activities to socialize outside of work, and that their input matters.	It helps employees feel more productive and not over fatigued, it can create trust between employees and their supervisors, and it helps employees stay happy and healthy.	I know we are all in a virtual setting and I want to quickly remind everyone of the importance of taking breaks every 75 to 90 minutes.
3. Statements about autonomy at work (Topic 8)	Employees want to be in a learning environment, where they feel they have the skills needed or that they will be provided training to complete those skills, they want to feel they can adapt to work changes, and that leadership trusts them.	It allows employees the freedom to bring new ideas, be creative, be more productive and allows them to learn and grow.	With this new year, we have a new budget for training opportunities for every one of you. I will be meeting with each of you to discuss any challenges, or concerns you are facing, and see if there is any training you are interested in taking.
4. Statements about a communicative environment (Topic 7, 4, 9, and 10)	Employees want to have open and honest communication with their leadership and their teammates, they enjoy having group chats with their teammates, and when their leadership is transparent.	It allows employees to understand what is going on by allowing leadership to disseminate information to them, it can help build working relationships among employees, creates a sense of trust, and allows the	Being in a virtual environment has its challenges and I want everyone to know I am here for you. I am going to start scheduling a weekly Friday catch-up meeting. By doing this, we can all discuss any

Leader verbal behavior	Description	Why is it effective?	Hypothetical statement
		organization to be productive.	challenges we have, recognize our coworkers, and even discuss what we are most excited about for the weekend.
5. Statements about acceptance (Topic 5)	Employees want to be treated as equals, they don't like it when they are segregated or treated differently, they like it when leadership uses the correct gender and pronouns, they want leadership to understand their challenges, want to feel a sense of belonging, and feel part of a team environment.	It allows employees to create more meaningful relationships, feel motivated, maintain a positive reputation for your organization, has higher morale, reduce turnover, allow employees to be themselves, and feel motivated.	This is a quick reminder that we have various employee-led groups that anyone can join. These groups range from parents to women in the workplace, and veterans. These groups will allow you to make connections, network, and even offer professional development opportunities.

Participant responses corroborated the 5 deductively identified ILBs. The 5 ILBs were identified inductively primarily although the constant comparative perspective which involves deduction as well. The 5 identified ILBs are 1. Seeking validation from leadership, 2. Seeking significant experiences at work and outside of work, 3. Seeking autonomy at work, 4. Seeking a communicative environment, and 5. Seeking acceptance. The themes and words emerged through numerous responses provided by participants.

#1 Seeking validation from leadership. The first ILB that emerged from the data was statements that involved employees seeking validation from leadership. Followers' behaviors involved feeling appreciated, wanting feedback, being motivated, being recognized, and feeling encouraged. The desire to feel approved and validated is a central theme for humans and one that leadership can provide to their employees. Through this, leadership can recognize their

employees and inspire them to do their best at work. There are numerous ways that leaders can offer validation to their employees, such as awards, recognition programs, spending time with employees, recognizing their strengths, and involving the employee in the work environment. For example, one participant wrote: “The behaviors that leaders in my current workplace engage that make me included in my work environment is when I’m mentioned or praised on a project I have done.” Another stated “I appreciate being recognized during supervisory meetings, in email correspondence with other agencies and organizations, and directly at my desk. I like to be credited with the work I have done, especially in warm and respectful tones, whether that is during a group meeting or more casually with other higher-level staff that group around for impromptu chats.”

#2: Seeking significant experiences at work and outside of work. The second ILB that emerged from the data was statements that involved employees seeking significant experiences at work and outside of work. Followers’ behaviors involved feeling cared for, that there was a work-life balance, that their interest was included, preferences were valued, that there were outside-of-work activities and that their input mattered. No matter what our position is in the work environment we all want to live a rich and meaningful life in and outside of the workplace. Now more than ever, we see more employees seeking flexible schedules and jobs that are willing to do this to them. This can be offered to employees through their organization and their leadership. This might sound simple enough but leadership faces challenges when trying to maintain a work-life balance for employees to ensure employees stay dedicated, continue to work hard, and can be held accountable for their actions there are ways leadership can fulfill a work-life balance for their employees. For example, one participant wrote: “We would have social time together which helps us get to know each other as individuals. We would celebrate

birthdays too. We would sometimes eat lunch together. The boss would often pay.” Another participant stated about their leadership “She remembers things that I like or don’t like, ask about my family and my life outside of work, and talks and shares about her own.”

#3: Seeking autonomy at work. The third ILB that emerged from the data was statements that involved employees seeking freedom at work. Followers’ behaviors involved a learning environment, being in a good environment, adapting to changes made, that they had the skills needed to do the job, having the characteristics needed, being trained to work alone and that they were trusted. The work environment is not a one-size fits all approach; however, allowing employees to create their autonomy while still being a team and ensuring success is not an easy management task. While giving employees freedom in the workplace is a great way for employees to feel motivated, loyal, and committed to the organization, too much freedom can cause employees to be unproductive. This is a careful balancing act for leaders to navigate. For example, a participant stated: “They give me a lot of freedom as far as controlling my territory goes. I’m not sure if that’s a behavior, but perhaps it’s that they exercise trust in me. This is silly also, but I think people goofing around in our Google chat makes me feel included—like I’m part of something or in on the joke. My workplace is otherwise very independent, despite us working in an office together.” To further illustrate this point, another individual stated “At my current company, my boss regularly gives us side assignments in addition to our day-to-day work. These assignments help us grow our skills and help us branch out from the regular work we do every day. In addition, our boss schedules lessons and tutorials every month for a program we don’t regularly use but would be beneficial in the long run.”

#4 Seeking a communicative environment. The fourth ILB that emerged from the data was statements that involved employees seeking a communicative environment. Followers’

behaviors involved open communication, honest communication, communication with leadership and co-workers, group chats, and being transparent. Having open communication with employees is an essential skill for leaders to manage to ensure the business is successful. When there is a lack of communication or miscommunication there is a chance for poor outcomes for the business, lack of direction, and productivity could suffer. But, when there is a strong communicative environment, the company can operate successfully, have higher productivity, and team moral is higher, and there is overall higher satisfaction for employees and their clients. For example, a participant wrote: “In my current work environment, I have one particular leader who makes it a point to check in fairly regularly (every other week or so) to see how things are going and what they can help with.” Another participant stated, “The leaders at my school are honest and run the environment with an open door policy.”

#5 Seeking acceptance. The fifth ILB that emerged from the data was statements that involved employees seeking acceptance. Followers’ behaviors involved being treated as equals, that they were not categorized, that correct gender and pronouns were used, that leadership understood challenges, that they felt that they belonged and that it was a team environment. When leadership can build an environment that is accepting of their employees, it can result in employees feeling valued, that they are part of a team, empowered to make decisions and increase productivity for the organization. But, when leadership presents itself as a non-accepting work environment this could result in employees feeling the organization does not value them, can create an atmosphere for inappropriate behavior, and decreases productivity within their employees. For example, one participant wrote: “One way of doing this it to make sure all employees are given the same rights, opportunities, and criticisms.” As another example, one

participant explained “My current manager has pronoun pins available for everyone to wear and encourages it.”

The five ILBs have been presented which include seeking validation from leadership, seeking significant experiences at work and outside of work, seeking autonomy at work, seeking a communicative environment, and seeking acceptance. Unlike previous research, this research identified five tangible behaviors (i.e., signals). Additionally, these ILBs can be experimentally manipulated, as illustrated in Study 2 below. Finally, these ILBs can be trained and utilized by leadership.

Study 2 Results and Discussion

The purpose of Study 2 was to experimentally manipulate ILB to evaluate the extent to which they result in employees feeling inclusiveness. This study sought to establish preliminary evidence that the behaviors identified in Study 1 serve as signals to followers by carrying information that their leader would be considered inclusive. Signals that cause followers to evaluate their leadership as inclusive were identified and used to demonstrate a connection between the leader's behavior and followers' evaluation of the leader.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the evaluations of the standard speech and the inclusive speech. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in the evaluations of the controlled speech and experimental speech. The results of the experimental manipulation provided evidence for the degree to which ILBs caused evaluations of inclusion ($t(126) = -14.19, p < .000$; Cohen's $d = 2.51$) between the control condition ($n = 62; M = 2.15; SD = 1.03$) and the treatment condition ($n = 66; M = 4.20; SD = 0.54$). The R code can be found in Appendix G.

The results of this study suggest that certain leadership behaviors can signal to followers the leader's capacity to exhibit inclusive behavior towards their followers. In theoretical terms, signals serve as an initial means to reduce information asymmetry between leadership and their followers (Bergh et al., 2019). ILBs are important leader behaviors in that the behavior is likely to be interpreted by followers as indicators that leaders can develop the followers in a way that is beneficial for some collective (Stock et al., 2022). This study is not able to say that these behaviors exhibited make an inclusive environment for the followers. Yes, this study instead provides these as signaling behaviors leadership may exhibit, at a minimum, that would be considered observable triggers to socially influence the inherent process in leadership (Fischer et al., 2017).

CHAPTER V

This chapter presents an overview of the study conducted. Subsequently, this chapter will present an overview of the two studies, and discuss the findings, practical implications, theoretical implications, study limitations, and suggestions for future research.

General discussion

As the workforce within the United States continues to become more diverse, ILBs have become vital not only for leaders to understand but for advancing the field of leadership research. While the study of inclusive leadership is not a new area of study, there is little evidence which ILBs cause outcomes for followers, especially in a virtual context. As previously noted in the introduction, there continues to be a lack of research studying leadership behavior and follower responses (Banks et al., in press). Previous research in the field of leadership indicated that out of 2338 variables, only 3% of those variables in leadership and organizational behavior research are

behavioral (Banks et al., in press). The main objective of this dissertation was to offer guidance and knowledge for leaders to help them make an inclusive working environment, create best practices within management, and in due course solutions for organizations to support their values that resonate with a diverse workforce. This dissertation serves as the initial step in the process of addressing inclusive leadership behavior. Therefore, the results of this dissertation offer important theoretical and practical implications.

Key Findings

My research question inquired as to what specific and observable behaviors (actions or inactions) signal inclusive leadership to an employee. As previously mentioned, to answer this question I conducted two studies. Study 1 was investigated and identified what types of behaviors leaders may exhibit to drive employees to feel included (i.e., ILB). The findings of Study 1 identified five tangible ILBs (i.e., signals) from 1) seeking validation from leadership, 2) seeking significant experiences at work and outside of work, 3) seeking autonomy at work, 4) seeking a communicative environment, and 5) seeking acceptance. Study 2 was conducted to experimentally manipulate the ILBs (i.e., signals) identified in Study 1 to evaluate the extent to which they result in an individual evaluating a leader as being inclusive (Banks et al., 2022). The findings of Study 2 suggest that certain leader behaviors can signal to followers the leader's capacity to exhibit inclusive behavior towards their followers (Banks et al., 2022). These ILBs suggest that leader behaviors that cause follower evaluations will ultimately cause their behaviors, such as ethical follower behaviors and prosocial behavior. These ILBs can be trained and utilized by leader (Banks et al., 2022). Subsequently, my hypothesis is supported in that ILBs cause followers' positive evaluations in a virtual context.

Leaders that choose to engage in the behaviors identified can cause positive evaluations of inclusion from followers through their social influence. When followers see the positive transformation from their peers and leaders, this could result in more followers following the leader and cause a greater influence in which followers may be more willing to engage in the same types of inclusive behaviors. Consistent with signaling theory, those who utilize ILBs are seeking to communicate information to followers to facilitate improved outcomes. One ILB that was identified is when leadership makes statements of validation to their followers. Leaders signals this to their followers by recognizing their followers for their hard work and ensuring that their followers know that they are a valued part of their team. This not only lets followers feel they have valued members of the team but it inspires employees to work hard to help accomplish the mission of the organization. Another example of an ILB that signals inclusivity is when leadership makes statements about a communicative environment. Leaders signals this to their followers by maintaining an open and communicative environment. This may be exhibited when leaders have group chats with their followers and are honest with employees about what is going on within the organization. This allows followers to build a sense of trust and relationship with their leaders. Additionally, it allows for a more productive work environment by building relationships among employees and their leaders.

As previously mentioned having a diverse set of employees is important but it is also important to have diverse leadership. Diversity within an organization brings a wide range of experiences, skills, and perspectives to the organization. Additionally, diverse leadership is more likely to bring increased awareness on inclusion and understanding that each follower brings with them diverse experience that makes them unique and innovative. Furthermore, leadership may be viewed as an extension of the organization. By having a diverse leadership the

organization may be perceived as progressive, create better understanding of employees and clients, produces greater reliability with clients and employees, and influence followers and fellow leaders to become inclusive.

Another interesting thing to note is that during Study 1, participants did not mention fairness or distribution of rewards. This seems to be an odd omission considering perceptions of unfairness lead employees to be less motivated, creates distrust, and reduced willingness to help others. Fairness in the workplace could be viewed as distributive in that employees are fairly and equally allocated rewards based on their work. Employees could perceive fairness in terms of the amount of energy and effort they exert and the rewards they receive, the quality and impact of their performance, and the experience they bring to the work environment. They could then compare this to other co-workers and supervisors. Fairness and distribution seem to be important for employees but yet participants did not mention this. This could be somewhat of a function of a way the two questions were phrased in Study 1.

Practical Implications

First, this study examined inclusive behavior in a virtual context. As previously mentioned, COVID-19 caused many employees to work virtually, and many have continued to do so. Leaders are now managing virtual workers, but there has been little guidance on how leaders can lead a diverse and inclusive team environment in a virtual context. By understanding how employees perceive inclusive behavior, leaders will be better prepared to create and foster an inclusive environment for their employees. One way that leadership can foster an inclusive environment is by utilizing the taxonomy of verbal behaviors presented here in emails, meetings, one on one conversations. This could lead to an environment that fosters innovation among employees, could create a work environment and organization that is known for being inclusive,

and could create an environment where employees would be willing and eager to participate. Furthermore, while this study was conducted in a virtual context it can also be applied to an in-person sample. The ILBs that were identified during Study 1 can still be applied to a supervisor who manages people in-person or even in a hybrid environment because the respondents from Study 1 and even Study 2 were either virtual, hybrid, or in person.

Second, this study gives not only leadership but organizations an outline for inclusive behavior practices that could be used to improve evaluations of inclusive behavior. As previously mentioned, ILBs can be objectively observed which opens an opportunity for leadership training, development opportunities. Through the use of observable behavior, a space for creating best practices and solutions within the organization could occur and help reduce biases occurring. Furthermore, with ILBs being observable it would allow leadership coaches to identify what specific behaviors can be taught to leaders to create an inclusive environment. Additionally, according to social learning theory, patterns of behaviors can be learned through direct experience or observing others (Bandura, 1967). Accordingly, there is a possibility that inclusivity may be “contagious” in that followers may learn inclusive behaviors from leaders and vice versa. Another practical implication is that this could be applied to a machine learning algorithm that could be taught to recognize ILBs. This could be implemented for training and development purposes by looking at the algorithm to score a leader’s use of ILBs in a Zoom meeting and then providing them feedback on the specific behaviors leaders used.

Theoretical Implications

First, this study advances inclusive leadership by reframing this concept by utilizing signaling theory. By utilizing signaling theory in this study, it brings a deep history that is based

on other scientific domains (Connelly et al., 2011; Dawkins, 1976; Smith and Harper, 2003), which could offer signs for future theoretical and causal connections (Stock et al., 2022). In the past research looked at charismatic leadership tactics (Antonakis et al., 2016; Ernst et al., 2022) as well as transformational leadership behavior (Banks et al., in press; Stock et al., in press). Additionally, signals are not only things an individual does that are visible and communicated but are also non-verbal signals such as body language (Spence 2002, p. 434). These actions or inactions are then used by leadership to create a social influence with their followers (Bastardo and Van Vugt, 2019). When leadership delivers statements or displays cues to their followers they are actively or passively demonstrating attributes that may be perceived as inclusive or non inclusive. When leadership wants to be evaluated as inclusive they can display inclusive attributes and behaviors to their followers, who then in turn perceive leadership as inclusive. This is a means for leaders to signal to followers privately held beliefs that they are in fact inclusive and are encouraging followers to re-create an inclusive environment. While there are several factors that can influence the strength and reliability of the signals leadership is displaying, leadership can decide when and how they wish to signal inclusiveness to their followers. Signaling theory is concerned with reducing information asymmetry between two parties and ILBs are likely to reduce any information asymmetries. While leadership may have information that leaders are not aware of, such as how followers can develop a certain skill set to achieve a goal (Stock et al., 2022). By reframing ILB from a signaling theory perspective starts the process of addressing shortcomings previously mentioned and allows for inclusive leadership to be defined and measured more objectively and precisely (Stock et al., 2022). Furthermore, signaling theory explores what leadership behaviors are evaluated as inclusive, how those behaviors influence followers, and why followers would want an inclusive leader. The theoretical

connection found between ILBs and signaling theory provides an opportunity to conceptually advance the existing taxonomy of leader behavior.

Second, this study presents theoretical advancements by offering an expansion in the conceptualization of ILB. This was achieved in Study 1 by clarifying the conceptualized definitions of ILBs, and Study 2 found supporting evidence (Cohen's $d = 2.51$) that the identified ILBs cause followers to evaluate the leader as inclusive. The behavior exhibited by was objective and observable and is important in developing the theory. This approach results in reducing bias and discrimination when developing this theory. Research studies that exclude objective leadership measures reduce the potential for implicit theories of leadership to be present in the findings that are used to inform those who practice and make the policy (Stock et al., 2022).

Third, there is a lack of theoretical research on how leaders can develop ILBs. Previous studies focused on the organizational level and not on the individual level (Jamison and Miller, 2005). Fourth, there is little theoretical study on virtual leadership (Banks et al., 2019). Research has been conducted on virtual team behavior (Huang et al., 2010; Bhat et al., 2017) and virtual environments (Avolio and Kahai, 2003; Morrison-Smith and Ruiz., 2020), yet there is a lack of research on leading a diverse and inclusive team environment (e.g., a Zoom meeting). The current work represents an important starting point. The virtual workplace has become more prevalent but at the same time, the responsibilities and expectations of employees and leaders have become less clear (Allen et al., 2015). While leadership is a social influence process there are major differences between leading in a virtual context compared to leading face-to-face (Schmidt, 2014). This research provides support that certain leadership behaviors can signal to followers the leader's capacity to exhibit inclusive behavior towards their followers.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations exist for Study 1 and 2 and need to be acknowledged. First, in Study 1 ILBs were identified and manipulated. Study 2 then examined if the behaviors caused variation in follower evaluations of leaders by manipulating the behaviors that were identified in Study 1. The ILBs are considered signals that affect followers' views of leaders, which then causes followers to evaluate leaders positively. However, this change is reflected in a mediating mechanism, which was not tested in Study 2 due to a focus first on establishing main effects. This dissertation did not study follower behaviors but one might expect that if ILBs cause follower evaluations that this will then cause leaders to have a positive influence on subsequent follower behavior. Since I did not collect evidence of the mediation, this would be a good suggestion for future research.

Second, this dissertation did not capture any moderators. A moderator that could have been examined for this study was the gender of the leader. Leadership has a direct influence on how followers perceive their behavior as being inclusive or not. For this study, only a woman was used to record the speeches and act as the participants' leader. This could be used to build upon this research by studying if the moderating effect of leadership gender has an effect on the relationship between ILBs and perceived behavior. Likewise, future work could also be conducted to examine the gender of the follower. While this work did collect the demographic characteristics of participants, this study did not evaluate if the gender of the followers influenced their perception of a leader exhibiting inclusive behavior. Again, future work could consider the moderating effect of follower gender on the relationship between ILBs and evaluations of leader behavior. Future research could examine the extent to which other demographic variables influence followers' perception of a leader exhibiting inclusive behavior.

This study also collected industry information on followers but did not examine this as a moderating variable. Leadership is often viewed as an extension or agent of the organization they work for and spend a substantial amount of their time interacting with their followers. Depending on the industry, there is a possibility that the industry could have a moderating influence on how followers view leaders as being inclusive. This study could be built on by looking into this potential moderating effect.

Third, this study focused on taking a bottom-up approach by looking at how information is perceived between employees and supervisors. The focal point here was looking at the substantial role employees play in optimizing the organization and how employees perceive their leadership behavior. Compared to the classic top-down approach where information and policy decisions are made at the executive level and then followers are relayed this information from their chain of command. To create a fully inclusive work environment, both a bottom-up approach and a top-down approach would need to be leveraged because structural inequalities exist in organizations. Future research could build upon this study by examining a top-down approach.

Fourth, while this study did utilize all 5 ILBs identified in Study 1 and incorporated them into the leadership speech presented to participants in Study 2, it did not utilize the 5 ILBs equally. Ranging from 1. Statements that give validation being utilized in 3 sentences, 2. Statements about the significance of employee experiences being utilized in 1 sentence, 3. Statements about autonomy at work being utilized in 2 sentences, 4. Statements about a communicative environment being utilized in 3 sentences, and 5. Statements that give validation being utilized in 3 sentences. With this being the case, this study was unable to determine if one ILB is more influential than others.

Fifth, this study utilized a white, middle aged female to record both of the leadership speeches. The race, age and gender of the individual selected to record the leadership speech could have affected the way participants responded to speech they watched. It is difficult to know for certain how respondents perceived the individual selected and formed some social categorization of the actor and responded based on this. The nature of intersectionality comes in here where an individual views another person race, gender, age, or even physical appearance to create a mode of discrimination and privilege based on these multiple factors. Furthermore, if the participant is the same gender, race, age, etc. this could have had some effect on how the participant perceived the leader. This study could be built on by having actors of different races, genders, and ages record the speech for participants to view and look at the results of this study and compare it to other leadership actors.

Sixth, this study did not screen out participants based on them being fully remote, hybrid, or in person. With this being the case, all the participants in both Study 1 and Study 2 were a mix of work environments and not exclusively fully remote or virtual. This study could be built on by either setting screen out parameters that specify the working environment of the participant to fully remote. Additionally, this study could be built on by looking at non-remote vs. remote conditions.

A recommendation for future research would consider exploring other variables, such as supervisor subjective evaluations. Additionally, subjective and objective measures of followers' behaviors could be explored. Furthermore, this research was conducted using Prolific and other platforms that could be utilized to reach other participants.

Conclusion

This dissertation focuses on how previous research has provided little support in which ILBs cause outcomes within its followers in a virtual context. To offer guidance and knowledge for leadership and to advance the field, this research has reframed ILBs to apply a signaling theory perspective. Subsequently, two studies were conducted to advance the definition of ILBs, a taxonomy of five ILBs, and then demonstrated that ILBs cause positive follower evaluations of the leaders. Finally, this research provides suggestions for future research and practice.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: STUDY 1



**Informed Consent for
Inclusive Leader Behavior in a Virtual Context: A
Causal Investigation**

Project Title and Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled Inclusive Leader Behavior in a Virtual Context: A Causal Investigation. The purpose of this study is to qualitatively understand what behaviors leaders are enacting to causes employees to evaluate the behaviors of their leadership as inclusive by talking to people about their previous experiences and perspectives on the topic.

Investigator(s):

The Principal Investigator of this study is Adrienne Utz, doctoral student at The University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Under the guidance and supervision of Dr. George Banks, Faculty Advisor.

Description of Participation:

By participating in this study, you have been recruited as a participant using Prolific's service. If you choose to participate, you will answer a series of questions (mostly free response) on an online survey. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. In order to participate in the current study, you must be employed in an organization, other than Prolific, in which you interact with a supervisor, and must be 18 years old or older. The survey will be linked based on your Prolific ID. You must enter your Prolific ID. If you chose to participate, you will be compensated \$5.00. The data collected from the survey will be stored on a password protected computer. The research team will be the only individuals authorized to access the data stored on the computer.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There are no known risks to participation in this study. However, there may be risks which are currently unforeseeable. There may be certain questions that may make participants reflect or think about past or current stressful events. Because of this, we encourage any participant to terminate the survey at any time if they start to feel distressed or uncomfortable. There are no direct benefits to participants in this study, however the information may be used to contribute to a scientific discourse.

Payment for Participation in Study

Participants will receive \$5.00 for completing the survey.

Conflict of Interest:

There are no known conflicts of interests.

Volunteer Statement:

You are a volunteer. The decision to participate in this study is completely up to you. If you decide to be in the study, you may stop at any time. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate or if you stop once you have started. However, only participants that fully complete the questionnaire will be compensated.

Confidentiality:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our research. Before you begin, please note that the data you provide may be collected and used by Prolific, per its privacy agreement. This agreement shall be interpreted according to United States law. Any information about your participation, including your identity, will be kept confidential to the extent possible. All information obtained in this study will be held confidential unless disclosure is required by law. We might use the questionnaire data for future research studies and we might share the non-

identifiable survey data with other researchers for future research studies without additional consent from you.

Fair Treatment and Respect:

UNC Charlotte wants to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the Office of Research Compliance at 704.687.1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu if you have any questions about how you are treated as a study participant. If you have any questions about the project, please contact George Banks at gcbanks@gmail.com or Adrienne Utz at autz2@uncc.edu.

Participant Consent

By participating in this survey, you are consenting to take part in the study and are indicating that you are at least 18 years of age, reside in the U.S., are working full time, and currently have a supervisor.

Instructions

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability.
Use at least 200 characters or about 50 words in your
answers to Question 1 and 2.

Please do **NOT** provide the names of any people or
company/organization.

What behaviors do leaders in your current (or a previous)
workplace engage in that make you feel included in your
work environment? Please be as specific as possible and
use a minimum of 200 characters (or about 50 words) in
your response.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response. In the bottom right corner of the box, there is a small, faint icon consisting of two parallel diagonal lines.

What behaviors do leaders in your current (or a previous) workplace engage in that make you feel all group members are treated equally, without personal biases? Please be as specific as possible and use a minimum of 200 characters (or about 50 words) in your response.



What is the gender of your **current supervisor**?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Non-binary / gender-fluid
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is the current job title of your **current supervisor**?

How long (in years) have you been supervised by your **current supervisor**?

What is **your** gender?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Non-binary / gender-fluid
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is **your** racial identity? (Please mark all that apply)

- ☐ White
- ☐ Hispanic or Latin-American
- ☐ Black or African-American
- ☐ Native American/ Indigenous
- ☐ Asian-American/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Other

What is your current job title?

Which of the following most closely matches your job level?

In what industry do you currently work?

Prolific

Thank you.

**In order to be paid you must provide your Prolific ID.
Once you provide your Prolific ID, you can advance to
the last page, where you will be provided the
Completion Code to verify your completion of the
survey.**

Please enter your Prolific ID in the box below:

APPENDIX B: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Adapted from Al-Atwi and Al-Hassan (2021)

Number	Facilitating Belongingness
1	Really cares about my wellbeing
2	Cares about my general satisfaction at work
3	Stays in touch within my workgroup
4	Shows concern for my needs and feelings
5	Is a good role model for care and acceptance in group interactions
6	Asks me to verbalize what I have appreciated about being part of the group
7	Treats me as equally as he/she treats others, without discrimination
8	Gives honest and fair answers
9	Is able to suppress personal biases against me
10	Enacts policies to provide fairness for group members and ensure a lack of bias
11	Demonstrates that different group members (e.g., physical disability, ethnic minority) are not stereotyped but treated like others in the group
12	Uses my workgroup's suggestions to make decisions that affect us
13	Makes decisions that are based only on his/her own ideas
14	Encourages me to engage in productive debates in an effort to improve decision making
15	Give me opportunities to discuss how to integrate the perspectives offered
16	Ensures that group members' participation in decision-making has been truly shared within or across tasks
17	Is open to hearing new ideas
18	Asks for the input of all group members

19	Values my personal competence
20	Appreciates my unique attributes (e.g., abilities, attractiveness, intelligence, or talent)
21	Pays special attention to soliciting different points of view and approaches
22	Makes me feel that he/she desires to interact and maintain a diverse workforce
23	Is always ready to support me if I introduce an unpopular idea or solution at work
24	Gives me helpful feedback on my ideas
25	Supports group members who sometimes may need to complete tasks in non-traditional ways
26	Provides the encouragement and emotional support necessary to ensure I continue presenting new ideas

Topic 2



Topic 8





APPENDIX D: STANDARD AND INCLUSIVE SPEECH

Study 2 Speech

Note: Participants watch this speech not to complete the described task, but to witness how Patricia Smith conducts herself as a manager

Standard Speech

Inclusive Speech

1. Hi, my name is Patricia Smith, and I am working with the team that has hired you.
1. Hi, my name is Patricia Smith, and I am working with the team that has hired you.
2. You have been brought in to help me raise money for the UNC Charlotte emergency student relief fund.
2. You have been brought in on this special project to assist the UNC Charlotte emergency student relief organization because I believe you are a hard worker and that you frequently exceeding expectations set for you
3. How can you help me be successful in raising funds?
3. How can you help me be successful in raising funds?
4. By stuffing envelopes with materials to be used as a part of a fundraising drive.
4. Even though we are all virtual, we will be completing the task of stuffing envelopes with materials to be sent out to potential donors.
5. My main task is to delegate task to you and to brief you on the importance of what you are going to do.
5. My main task is to brief you on the importance of what you are going to do; we are a team, so, I will be stuffing envelopes too.
6. I want to be recognized as the best manager and beat others raising funds.
6. I appreciate all your hard work, contribution, and time you are offering.
7. It is because of you that we will be successful in raising funds.
7. In the next couple of minutes though, I just want to explain to you the nature of the fundraising campaign and to give you an overview of the task ahead.
8. This is a learning environment and the next couple of minutes, I just want to teach you the skills you will need to complete your task.
8. Of course, you are here to stuff envelopes but there is a one clear way to do it.
9. It is straight forward so please keep communication and questions to a minimum.

9. As a team, I value your input and I am always open to you bringing in new ideas, feedback and suggestions to make this process more effective.
10. At the same time your efforts will also help the UNC Charlotte community achieve what is a noble mission, which is to help others of our community who have faced emergency situations within the last year, for example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
10. We have all had circumstances that required us to adapt to changes, resolve problems, address issues and it is because of all of your effort of this team that we will be able to help others of our community who have faced emergency situations within the last year, for example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
11. Therefore, the job you are doing is really important to help students in need.
11. Therefore, the job you are doing is really important to help students in need.
12. You will help students because the letters you have written to convince a potential donor to help the charity.
13. Plus, you will be helping me win as the best manager.
12. You are an essential part in our mission because the envelopes you will stuff will include letters to help to convince a potential donor to aid the charity.
14. Each letter can potentially help a student in need.
13. Each letter can potentially help a student in need.
15. Let me tell you why.
14. Let me tell you why.
16. Many students have been affected by a number of life events.
15. Many students have been affected by a number of life events.
17. The COVID-19 pandemic is just one of those.
16. One example is the COVID-19 pandemic.
17. Regardless of a person's gender, pronoun, background, we all went through this together.
18. UNC Charlotte has an emergency student relief fund.
18. UNC Charlotte has an emergency student relief fund.
19. And this fund has successfully helped students in need for years.
19. And this fund has successfully helped students in need for years.
20. The charity will help students who cannot afford basic expenses for a determined amount of time.
20. The charity will help students who cannot afford basic expenses for a determined amount of time.
21. Every envelope you stuff with a letter will make a difference because it is only through reaching potential donors that we can raise money.

21. Every envelope you stuff with a letter will make a difference because it is only through reaching potential donors that we can raise money.
22. So, I want you to be very professional and remember you are here to do a job because the job you are doing can better help the students.
22. Additionally, it is through their donations that awareness of resources, student groups, open communication and a sense of community is able to be achieved.
23. You need to be available at all times through email, webcam and phone.
24. I would like you to keep breaks to a minimum and stress the importance that this task is your only priority.
25. So, you unfortunately can't go home until you have completed the full task.
23. I understand this can be a time-consuming task and I care about your wellbeing, so I want to remind you to try to take breaks every 75 to 90 minutes.
26. In closing, I am not going to be available to answer any questions or concerns.
27. So, just get as many done as you can so I can be the best manager, beat others, and help the charity.
24. In closing, I have an open door policy and please know I am here if you need help, have issues, need to discuss anything, or just want to chat.

Hi, my name is Patricia Smith and I am working with the team that has hired you. You have been brought in to help me raise money for the UNC Charlotte emergency student relief fund. How can you help me be successful in raising funds? By stuffing envelopes with materials to be used as a part of a fundraising drive. My main task is to delegate task to you and to brief you on the importance of what you are going to do. I want to be recognized as the best manager and beat others raising funds. In the next couple of minutes though, I just want to explain to you the nature of the fundraising campaign and to give you an overview of the task ahead. Of course, you are here to stuff envelopes but there is a one clear way to do it. It is straight forward so please keep communication and questions to a minimum. At the same time your efforts will also help the UNC Charlotte community achieve what is a noble mission, which is to help others of our community who have faced emergency situations within the last year, for example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the job you are doing is really important to help students in need. You will help students because the letters you have written to convince a potential donor to help the charity. Plus, you will be helping me win as the best manager. Each letter can potentially help a student in need. Let me tell you why. Many students have been affected by a number of life events. The COVID-19 pandemic is just one of those. UNC Charlotte has an emergency student relief fund. And this fund has successfully helped students in need for years. The charity will help students who cannot afford basic expenses for a determined amount of time. Every envelope you stuff with a letter will make a difference because it is only through reaching potential donors that we can raise money. So, I want you to be very professional and remember you are here to do a job because the job you are doing can better help the students. You need to be available at all times through email, webcam and phone. I would like you to keep breaks to a minimum and stress the importance that this task is your only priority. So you unfortunately can't go home until you have completed the full task. In closing, I am not going to be available

to answer any questions or concerns. So, just get as many done as you can so I can be the best manager, beat others, and help the charity. – 450 words

Hi, my name is Patricia Smith and I am working with the team that has hired you. You have been brought in on this special project to assist the UNC Charlotte emergency student relief organization because I believe you are a hard worker and that you frequently exceeding expectations set for you. How can you help me be successful in raising funds? Even though we are all virtual, we will be completing the task of stuffing envelopes with materials to be sent out to potential donors. My main task is to brief you on the importance of what you are going to do; we are a team, so, I will be stuffing envelopes too. I appreciate all your hard work, contribution, and time you are offering. It is because of you that we will be successful in raising funds. As a team, I value your input and I am always open to you bringing in new ideas, feedback and suggestions to make this process more effective. We have all had circumstances that required us to adapt to changes, resolve problems, address issues and it is because of all of your effort of this team that we will be able to help others of our community who have faced emergency situations within the last year, for example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the job you are doing is really important to help students in need. You are an essential part in our mission because the envelopes you will stuff will include letters to help to convince a potential donor to aid the charity. Each letter can potentially help a student in need. Let me tell you why. Many students have been affected by a number of life events. One example is the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of a person's gender, pronoun, background, we all went through this together. UNC Charlotte has an emergency student relief fund. And this fund has successfully helped students in need for years. The charity will help students who cannot afford basic expenses for a determined amount of time. Every envelope you stuff with a letter will make a difference because it is only through reaching potential donors that we can raise money. Additionally, it is through their donations that awareness of resources, student groups, open communication and a sense of community is able to be achieved. I understand this can be a time-consuming task and I care about your wellbeing, so I want to remind you to try to take breaks every 75 to 90 minutes. In closing, I have an open door policy and please know I am here if you need help, have issues, need to discuss anything, or just want to chat. – 450 words

APPENDIX E: INTER-RELIABILITY RATING

Study 2 Speech 2 – Inclusive Speech

		1= inclusive behavior 0= non-inclusive behavior		Individual 1	Individual 2
Sentence					
1	Hi, my name is Patricia Smith and I am working with the team that has hired you.			0	0
2	You have been brought in on this special project to assist the UNC Charlotte emergency student relief organization because I believe you are a hard worker and that you frequently exceed expectations set for you			1	1
3	How can you help me be successful in raising funds?			0	0
4	Even though we are all virtual, we will be completing the task of stuffing envelopes with materials to be sent out to potential donors			0	1
5	My main task is to brief you on the importance of what you are going to do; we are a team, so, I will be stuffing envelopes too.			1	1
6	I appreciate all your hard work, contribution, and time you are offering. It is because of you that we will be successful in raising funds.			1	1
7	This is a learning environment and the next couple of minutes, I just want to teach you the skills you will need to complete your tasks.			0	1
8	As a team, I value your input and I am always open to you bringing in new ideas, feedback and suggestions to make this process more effective.			1	1
9	We have all had circumstances that require us to adapt to changes, resolve problems, address issues and it is because of all your efforts on this team that we will be able to help others in our community who have faced emergency situations within the last year, for example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.			1	1
10	Therefore, the job you are doing is really important to help students in need.			0	0
11	You are an essential part in our mission because the envelopes you will stuff will include letters to help to convince a potential donor to aid the charity.			1	1
12	Each letter can potentially help a student in need.			0	0
13	Let me tell you why.			0	1
14	Many students have been affected by a number of life events.			0	0

15	One example is the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of a person's gender, pronoun, background, we all went through this together.	0	1
16	UNC Charlotte has an emergency student relief fund.	0	0
17	And this fund has successfully helped students in need for years. The charity will help students who cannot afford basic expenses for	0	0
18	a determined amount of time. Every envelope you stuff with a letter will make a difference because it is only through reaching potential donors that we can	0	0
19	raise money. Additionally, it is through their donations that awareness of resources, student groups, open communication and a sense of	0	0
20	community is able to be achieved. I understand this can be a time-consuming task and I care about your wellbeing, so I want to remind you to try to take breaks every	0	0
21	75-90 minutes. In closing, I have an open door policy and please know I am here if you need any help, have issues, need to discuss anything, or just	1	1
22	want to chat.	1	1

Study 2

Speech 2 – Non- Inclusive Speech

1= inclusive behavior
0= non-inclusive behavior

	Sentence	Individual 1	Individual 2
1	Hi, my name is Patricia Smith and I am working with the team that has hired you.	0	0
2	You have been brought in to help me raise money for the UNC Charlotte emergency student relief fund.	0	0
3	How can you help me be successful in raising funds?	0	0
4	By stuffing envelopes with materials to be used as a part of a fundraising drive.	0	0
5	My main task is to delegate task to you and to brief you on the importance of what you are going to do.	0	1
6	I want to be recognized as the best manager and beat others raising funds.	0	0
7	In the next couple of minutes though, I just want to explain to you the nature of the fundraising campaign and give you an overview of the task ahead of you.	0	1
8	Of course, you are here to stuff envelopes but there is a clear way to do it. It is straight forward so keep communication and questions to a minimum.	0	1
9	At the same time your efforts will also help the UNC Charlotte community achieve what is a noble mission, which is to help others in our community who have faced emergency situations within the last year, for example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	0	1
10	Therefore, the job you are doing is really important to help students in need.	0	1
11	You will help students because the letters you have written to convince a potential donor to help the charity. Plus, you will be helping me win as the best manager.	0	1
12	Each letter can potentially help a student in need.	0	0
13	Let me tell you why.	0	1
14	Many students have been affected by a number of life events.	0	0
15	The COVID-19 pandemic is just one of those.	0	0
16	UNC Charlotte has an emergency student relief fund.	0	0
17	And this fund has successfully helped students in need for years.	0	0
18	The charity will help students who cannot afford basic expenses for a determined amount of time.	0	0

19	Every envelope you stuff with a letter will make a difference because it is only through reaching potential donors that we can raise money.	0	0
20	So, I want you to be very professional and remember you are here to do a job because the job you are doing can better help the students	0	1
21	You need to be available at all times through email, webcam and phone. I would like you to keep breaks to a minimum and stress the importance that this task is your only priority. So, you unfortunately can't go home until you have completed the full task.	0	1
22	In closing, I am not going to be available to answer any questions or concerns. So, just get as many done as you can so I can be the best manager, beat others, and help the charity.	0	0

APPENDIX F: STUDY 2

Investigator(s):

The Principal Investigator of this study is Adrienne Utz, doctoral student at The University of North Carolina, Charlotte, under the guidance and supervision of Dr. George Banks, Faculty Advisor.

Description of Participation:

By participating in this study, you have been recruited as a participant using Prolific's service. If you choose to participate, on the next page you will watch a short speech by a leader. The speech takes less than 4 minutes to watch. You will then answer 10 questions about the video and then answer demographic questions. The survey should take no more than 5 minutes to complete. In order to participate in the current study, you must be employed in an organization, other than Prolific, in which you interact with a supervisor, and must be 18 years old or older. The survey will be linked based on your Prolific ID. You must enter your Prolific ID. If you choose to participate, you will be compensated \$5.00. The data collected from the survey will be stored on a password protected computer. The research team will be the only individuals authorized to access the data stored on the computer.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There are no known risks to participation in this study. However, there may be risks which are currently unforeseeable. There may be certain questions that may make participants reflect or think about past or current stressful events. Because of this, we encourage any participant to terminate the survey at any time if they start to feel distressed or uncomfortable. There are no direct benefits to participants in this study, however the information may be used to contribute to a scientific discourse.

Payment for Participation in Study:

Participants will receive \$5.00 for completing the survey.

Conflict of Interest: There are no known conflicts of interests.

Volunteer Statement:

You are a volunteer. The decision to participate in this study is completely up to you. If you decide to be in the study, you may stop at any time. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate or if you stop once you have started. However, only participants that fully complete the questionnaire will be compensated.

Confidentiality:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our research. Before you begin, please note that the data you provide may be collected and used by Prolific, per its privacy agreement. This agreement shall be interpreted according to United States law. Any information about your participation, including your identity, will be kept confidential to the extent possible. All information obtained in this study will be held confidential unless disclosure is required by law. We might use the questionnaire data for future research studies and we might share the non-identifiable survey data with other researchers for future research studies without additional consent from you.

Fair Treatment and Respect:

UNC Charlotte wants to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the Office of Research Compliance at 704.687.1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu if you have any questions about how you are treated as a study participant. If you have any questions about the project, please contact George Banks at gcbanks@gmail.com or Adrienne Utz at autz2@uncc.edu.

Participant Consent

By participating in this survey, you are consenting to take part in the study and are indicating that you are at least 18 years of age, reside in the U.S., are working full time, and currently have a supervisor.

Standard

Leadership Video 1

Please watch this video. Next you will answer questions about the video (you can advance to the next page after the video).

Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Neither (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)
----------------------	--------------	-------------	------------	--------------------

Based on the speech, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement below regarding the leader:

	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Neither (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)
1. The leader would care about my wellbeing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The leader would treat me equally as he/she treats others, without discrimination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. The leader would provide the encouragement and emotional support necessary to ensure I continue presenting new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The leader would show concern for my needs and feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The leader would care about my general satisfaction at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The leader would provide support and encouragement when there is a difficult or stressful task.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. The leader would ask for group-wide participation when making major decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The leader would encourage me to engage in productive debates in an effort to improve decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The leader would demonstrate that different group members (e.g. physical disability, ethnic minority) are not stereotyped but treated like others in the group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. The leader would enact policies to provide fairness for group members and ensure a lack of bias.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Leadership Video 2

Please watch this video. Next you will answer questions about the video (you can advance to the next page after the video).

Very unlikely (1) Unlikely (2) Neither (3) Likely (4) Very likely (5)

Based on the speech, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement below regarding the leader:

	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Neither (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)
1. The leader would care about my wellbeing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The leader would treat me equally as he/she treats others, without discrimination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The leader would provide the	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

encouragement and emotional support necessary to ensure I continue presenting new ideas.

4. The leader would show concern for my needs and feelings. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5. The leader would care about my general satisfaction at work. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

6. The leader would provide support and encouragement when there is a difficult or stressful task. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. The leader would ask for group-wide participation when making major decisions. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. The leader would encourage me to engage in productive debates in an effort to improve decision-making. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. The leader would demonstrate that different group members (e.g. physical disability, ethnic minority) are not stereotyped but treated like others in the group. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. The leader would enact policies to provide fairness for group members and ensure a lack of bias. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

What is your age?

What is your gender?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Non-binary/Gender fluid
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your racial identity? (Please mark all that apply)

- ☐ White
- ☐ Hispanic or Latin-American
- ☐ Black or African-American
- ☐ Native American/Indigenous
- ☐ Asian-American/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Other

What is your current job title?

Which of the following most closely matches your job level?

- ☐ Intern
- ☐ Entry Level
- ☐ Analyst/Associate
- ☐ Manager

- ☐ Senior Manager
- ☐ Director
- ☐ Vice President
- ☐ Senior Vice President
- ☐ C level executive (DIO, CTO, COO, CMO, Etc.)
- ☐ President or CEO
- ☐ Owner
- ☐ Other

In what industry do you currently work?

- ☐ Natural Resources and Mining
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Trade, Transportation, and Utilities
- ☐ Information
- ☐ Financial Activities
- ☐ Professional and Business Services
- ☐ Education and Health Services
- ☐ Leisure and Hospitality
- ☐ Other

Block 4

Thank you.

In order to be paid you must provide your Prolific ID. Once you provide your Prolific ID, you can advance to the last page, where you will be provided the Completion Code to verify your completion of the survey.

Please enter your Prolific ID in the box below:

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APPENDIX G: R CODE

Study 2

```
#Set working directory as needed
library(dplyr)
library(jmv)

#Read in data----
df <- read.csv("Adrienne2.csv", na.strings = c("", ".", ",", "NA"))

#Reliability for Omega----
pacman::p_load(MBESS)
subscale1 <- df[1:10]
subscale1 <- na.omit(subscale1)
set.seed(1)
ci.reliability(data=subscale1, type="omega", conf.level = 0.95,
               interval.type="bca", B=1000)

#Hypothesis test----
ttestIS(df, vars = 'score', group = 'Condition', effectSize = TRUE, ci = TRUE, desc = TRUE)
```