

Hybrid Leadership and Its Relationship to Inclusion in Healthcare

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Leadership is critical in managing healthcare organizations to address financial limitations, availability of skilled workforce, globalization, disruptive innovation, new technology, and hyper-competition. This challenging environment has forced many healthcare organizations to change their bureaucratic organizational structure to a more organic one headed by leaders rather than managers. There are many leadership styles to consider for healthcare leaders. However, this research focuses on nine leadership and hybrid leadership styles to determine significant relationships to inclusion in the workplace. We used the VanSimpco Leadership Survey and Chung et al.'s Work Group Inclusion scale to survey 174 healthcare employees. We found that autocratic, autocratic-transformational, democratic-transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles impacted workplace inclusion uniqueness. Democratic, autocratic-transformational, and autocratic-transactional leadership styles impacted workplace inclusion belongingness. This research is based on Leader-Member Exchange and Optimal Distinction theories.

Keywords: leadership, hybrid leadership, inclusion

INTRODUCTION

Most healthcare policymakers agree that the real reason behind both cost escalation and reduction in the quality of healthcare services is the epidemic of chronic diseases and their associated complications (Healy, 2018). One way to solve these complex problems is by enhancing and improving leadership, along with empowered followers, which supports creativity and innovation in developing, implementing, and evaluating health education initiatives among healthcare organizations throughout the United States (Healy, 2018). A commitment to providing leadership focused on diversity and inclusion is vital to improving healthcare disparities in the physician workforce (Brooks et al., 2022). Carmeli et al. (2010) described inclusive leadership as a relational leadership style where leaders are open, accessible, and available in their ongoing interactions with followers. When high levels of inclusiveness exist, a leader is likely to exhibit behaviors that encourage, invite, and acknowledge others in discussions and decisions about the work and future of the organization (Carmeli et al., 2010).

There is little written in today's research about hybrid leadership and its relationship to inclusivity and inclusion, which also represent challenges to healthcare leaders. Leader inclusiveness is the actions and words expressed by a leader or leaders that indicate or create an environment of participation and appreciation for the contributions of others (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). However, now more than

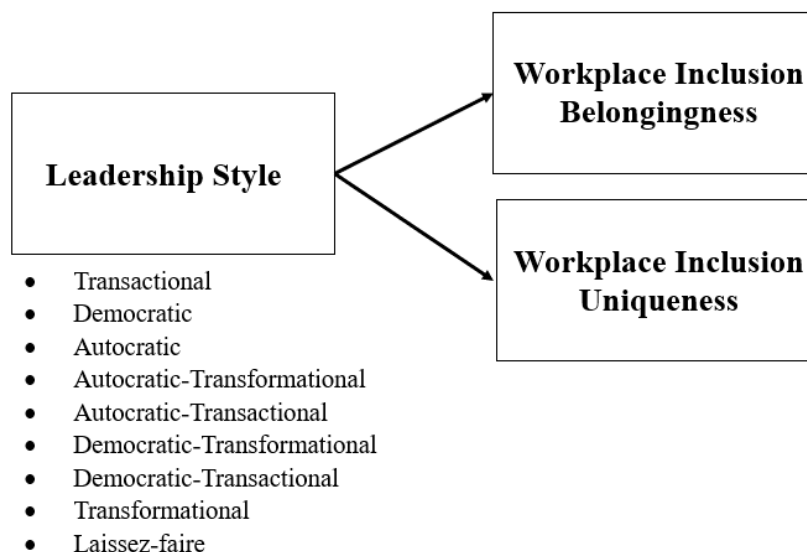
ever, leadership is a topic that deserves attention by examining leadership through a hybrid leadership lens in today’s post-pandemic healthcare environment. Lamba et al. (2022) explained how the Covid-19 pandemic caused stressors in healthcare organizations that impacted the workforce’s morale and called for healthcare leadership to strengthen a culture of inclusion for their employees.

This research aims to examine the impact of different leadership styles on workplace inclusion in healthcare organizations to determine which leadership styles better promote workplace inclusion. This study is unique because it includes multiple and hybrid leadership styles, whereas previous studies only address a single leadership style (i.e., Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Brimhall et al., 2019; Masood et al., 2006) or compare two leadership styles (i.e., Merlini et al., 2019). We used Buchen’s (2011) definition that envisions hybrid leadership as blending the qualities and abilities needed to lead in a global and hybrid work environment exemplified by rapid change. Our research question is:

RQ: *What leadership styles promote workplace inclusion in healthcare organizations in the United States?*

Figure 1 shows the research model that includes five leadership and four hybrid leadership styles.

FIGURE 1
RESEARCH MODEL – WORKPLACE INCLUSION



For this research, we used Chung et al.’s (2020) definition of workgroup inclusion, which consisted of two components – belongingness and uniqueness. Chung et al. conceptualized inclusion as the satisfaction of belongingness and uniqueness, which can occur concurrently. Inclusion in this context includes everyone, regardless of the majority or minority status, in the workplace. Chung et al. applied the definition of belongingness from Shore et al. (2011) to mean that employees perceive supporting and caring relationships with their workgroup members. Whereas uniqueness is “a form of social identification in which the individual defines himself or herself in terms of membership in a particular organization” (Chung et al., 2020, p. 79). Uniqueness means that employees can be different from others in their workgroup and have different views and ideas which are respected by others (Shore et al., 2011). The appeal of inclusion is appreciating and valuing individual differences (Ferdman & Deane, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Styles

Blending or using hybrid leadership styles is not a new approach. Bass and Avolio (1991) developed the Full Range of Leadership Model that differentiates between transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership and placed them on an active-passive continuum. Behaviors at the right end of the continuum are transformational, and the factors of Charisma/Inspirational Leadership, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Considerations represent this style. In the middle of the continuum is transactional leadership, represented by the factors of Contingent Reward and Management by Exception. The left or lower end of the scale is laissez faire leadership or the avoidance of leadership. Bass and Avolio (1993) stated that it is possible to describe a purely transactional or transformational organizational culture. However, it is more likely that both leadership styles characterize organizations.

The Full Range of Leadership Model presents that transformational leaders are charismatic and motivate employees by inspiring them, providing individual consideration to them, and stimulating their intellectual needs. The transactional leader specifies tasks and monitors performance to achieve the tasks by providing a system of rewards. The laissez-faire style of leadership in this model avoids involvement. Avolio (1999) stated that the Full Range of Leadership Model does not mean that it covers all the dimensions of leadership. However, it is a model that ranges from passive/avoidant (laissez-faire) leadership to a highly encouraging charismatic role model (transformational) leader. Bass and Avolio (1993) found that the best leaders displayed transformational and transactional leadership. These factors were considered part of a continuum from laissez-faire leadership or passive leadership to transformational or active leadership. The Full Range of Leadership Model was developed to broaden the range of leadership styles investigated in the leadership field (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Bass and Avolio (1991) stated that effective organizations move toward a transformational culture and maintain healthy transactional qualities. Based on the Full Range of Leadership Model, there is no perfect leadership style; it can consist of multiple styles. This research contributes to academic literature by examining multiple leadership styles, including hybrid leadership styles.

Our research examined hybrid leadership through the Buchen (2011) definition that envisions hybrid leadership as blending the qualities and abilities needed to lead in a global and hybrid work environment exemplified by rapid change. Vann et al. (2014) proposed that leadership should be examined by combining various leadership traits into more realistic and applicable categories and developed the Vannsimpco Hybrid Leadership Survey based on this approach. They further stated that leadership cannot always be described in monolithic terms of transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and/or laissez-faire. Instead, leaders employ a hybrid of various styles based on their contextual situation. Vann et al.'s leadership survey addressed democratic, autocratic, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and hybrid leadership styles (autocratic-transformational, autocratic-transactional, democratic-transformational, democratic-transactional) situational leaders use.

Theoretical Basis

This research is based on leader-member exchange (LMX) and optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT). Leader-member exchange (LMX) involves interpersonal relationships between leaders and followers (Lee, 2005, p. 659). It is a behavioral approach to leadership in which dyadic exchanges are thought to range from high-quality exchanges and are characterized by a higher level of trust, support, and rewards versus low-quality exchanges (Lee, 2005). According to Gerstner and Day (1997), studies have shown that the strength of LMX relationships predicts outcomes, which include performance and attitude variables. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) explained that some leadership styles build on relationships with followers. Positive relationships with followers lead to workplace inclusion and less workplace incivility, as included workers tend to feel valued (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). When leaders exhibit inclusiveness in their leadership styles, employees may adopt inclusiveness in their interactions as part of LMX.

Brewer's (1991) optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT) explained that "social identity derives from a fundamental tension between human needs for validation and similarity to others and a countervailing need

for individuation and uniqueness” (p. 477). Shore et al. (2011) built upon ODT by positing that inclusion has two components: belongingness and uniqueness. When individuals identify with a group, their feelings of belongingness and uniqueness are satisfied (Pickett et al., 2002). This research contributes to ODT by examining if certain leadership styles may result in inclusion, thus contributing to the balance of individuation and uniqueness.

Leadership Styles and Workplace Inclusion

Others have studied the relationship between leadership styles and workplace inclusion in healthcare. Adams et al. (2020) examined the relationships between employee inclusion, discrimination, and well-being. Positive leadership includes three styles – authentic, respectful, and inclusive leadership (Adams et al., 2020). They used two cross-sectional survey studies and found a relationship between positive leadership and inclusion ($\beta=.46, p<.001$). Brooks et al. (2022) examined the leadership infrastructures and initiatives that promoted diversity and inclusion in academic anesthesiology departments. They used an online survey with closed and open-ended questions (quantitative and qualitative). The results were analyzed using counts, proportions, and thematic analysis. There were 44 total responses from different departments, with 70% stating they had inclusion initiatives and 62.5% stating they had someone in the leadership role for diversity and inclusion. However, there was no guidance for leadership styles that promoted inclusion.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership and Inclusion

Transformational leadership’s characteristics make it a prime candidate for inclusion. Burns (1978) first identified transactional and transformational leadership, with each concept’s definition on the opposite ends of a continuum. Burns (1978) described transactional leadership as the lower-order type and transformational leadership as the higher-order type of leadership behavior. Transformational leaders recognize and exploit an existing need or demand of a potential follower and look for potential motives seeking to satisfy higher needs, thus engaging the full person and converting followers into leaders.

In contrast, the transactional leader approaches followers with an eye on exchanging one thing for another. Bass (1985) refined these concepts, with each complementing the other and giving more attention to the followers versus the leader’s needs. Masood et al. (2006) found that transformational leadership behavior influences how followers work and are given the freedom to work in organizations. When transformational leadership is present in organizations, it may be easier to create and change situations to allow workers discretion and freedom in decision-making, thereby increasing morale and confidence (Masood et al., 2006). Transformational leadership characteristics include individual consideration for followers and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1991). Individualized Consideration (IC) refers to the behavior of leaders that contributes to “the satisfaction of followers by advising, supporting, and paying attention to the individual needs of followers and allowing them to develop and self-actualize” (Antonakis et al., 2003, p.23).

Prior research indicated that transformational leadership is attributed to workplace inclusion in healthcare organizations. Brimhall (2019) found that transformational leadership created a positive climate for inclusion using longitudinal multilevel path analyses in a diverse nonprofit healthcare organization in the western region of the United States at department and group levels. Brimhall found that transformational leaders increased perceptions of inclusion, improving employee commitment.

Transformational leadership is also attributed to workplace inclusion in public employment. Merlini et al. (2019) surveyed individuals in the Department of Defense and analyzed a sample of 3,834 employees from 966 units. They found that transformational and authentic leadership contributed to perceptions of inclusion in the workforce. Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015) found that transformational leadership enhanced public employees’ affective commitment by fostering inclusion within the organization.

Based on the characteristics of transformational leadership and prior studies, we hypothesize the impact of transformational leadership on inclusion.

H1: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and workplace inclusion (belongingness and uniqueness).

The transactional leader approaches followers with an eye on exchanging one thing for another. Transactional leadership attributes may not contribute to inclusion unless the leader promotes an inclusive environment. Management by exception is an attribute of transactional leadership where leaders monitor the lack of compliance with rules and standards and initiate corrective measures when required (Bass & Avolio, 1985; Bass, 1990). If inclusion is a standard required by the organization and leader, then employees are expected to promote an environment of inclusion. However, if a transactional leader does not consider inclusion as a workplace standard, employees may not promote an environment of inclusion. Based on the characteristics of transactional leadership, we hypothesize the following relationship.

H2: There is no relationship between transactional leadership style and workplace inclusion (belongingness and inclusion).

Democratic Leadership and Inclusion

Democratic leadership is a style that relies on the decision making and involvement of a group (Lewin & Lippitt, 1938). Democratic leaders motivate followers by engaging them, listening to their ideas, and treating followers as equals (Lewin & Lippitt, 1938). The organizational hierarchy becomes less important or unnecessary with equality as the guide; followers are motivated to work harder because they trust they have an equal share of the organization's success (Lewin et al., 1939). This inclusiveness and involvement in the decision-making process are connected to enhanced levels of satisfaction among followers (Foels et al., 2000).

Goleman (2000) further describes the democratic leader as getting followers' ideas and buy-in, enabling them to build trust, respect, and commitment. They allow workers to have a say in decisions that affect their goals and how they do their work, which builds flexibility and responsibility (Goleman, 2000). They listen to employees' concerns and learn what is needed to keep morale high. Based on the above literature review, we posited the following hypotheses.

H3: There is a positive relationship between democratic leadership and workplace inclusion.

Autocratic Leadership and Inclusion

An authoritarian leader dictates all group policies and determines the steps to obtain goals (Lewin & Lippitt, 1938). Both authoritarian and autocratic leadership terms are used interchangeably in literature and require the unquestioned compliance of followers (Chen et al., 2014). Authoritarian leaders set strict rules and requirements, promising rewards for following the leader and punishment for not complying (Cheng et al., 2014). This approach will not work when a leader is working with experts or peers who are more experienced than they are and may see the leader as pompous or out-of-touch (Goleman, 2000). Mazurek (2022) characterized autocratic leadership as one of the least effective leadership styles and described the behavior of autocratic leaders as tending to make unilateral decisions without seeking input from others. This leadership style tends to disempower employees and may lead to high turnover, low morale, and decreased productivity. Since autocratic leadership is shown not to seek input from followers and disempower employees, we developed the following hypothesis based on autocratic leadership.

H4: There is a negative relationship between autocratic leadership and workplace inclusion.

Hybrid Leadership Styles and Inclusion

There was little evidence of research that examined hybrid leadership styles and inclusion. Since Bass and Avolio (1991) stated that effective organizations move toward a transformational culture and maintain a healthy level of transactional qualities, we hypothesized that hybrid leadership styles with a transformational component would positively affect workplace inclusion.

H5: There is a positive relationship between autocratic-transformational leadership and workplace inclusion.

H6: There is a positive relationship between democratic-transformational leadership and workplace inclusion.

We hypothesized that autocratic-transactional leadership does not promote workplace inclusion. The characteristics of autocratic leadership do not promote the involvement of others in decision making, which might not promote feelings of belongingness in the workplace.

H7: There is a negative relationship between autocratic-transactional leadership and workplace inclusion.

Since democratic leadership involves the group with an emphasis on listening to the ideas of others, we hypothesized a positive relationship.

H8: There is a positive relationship between democratic-transactional leadership and workplace inclusion.

Laissez-Faire Leadership and Inclusion

The passive-avoidant leadership style is also known as by laissez-faire (Avolio & Bass, 2004). It is defined as the absence of leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The leader exhibiting laissez-faire behaviors avoids getting involved when important problems or issues arise (Miner, 1978). They are absent when needed and avoid making decisions and delay responding to urgent questions (Bass, 1981; 1999). Robbins and Coulter (2005) defined laissez-faire leaders as those who give the group complete freedom to make decisions and complete the work in whatever method is needed. Based on the above literature review, we posited the following hypothesis.

H9: There is no relationship between laissez-faire leadership and workplace inclusion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative field survey was conducted to determine the perceptions of a broad cross-section of healthcare professionals in the United States using Amazon MTurk. Items from two existing surveys measured leadership styles and inclusion in the workplace in addition to three demographic questions for the complete 48-question web-based survey. To determine the sample size, we used G*Power 3.1.9.7 for an a priori linear regression with an effect size of .15, power of .80, and $\alpha = .05$ (Faul et al., 2009), which resulted in 166 required participants. Then two multiple regression analyses were performed to determine if the nine leadership styles (independent variables) were associated with inclusion (belongingness and uniqueness).

Leadership styles were measured with the 27-item Vannsimpco Hybrid Leadership Survey developed by Vann et al. (2014). The statements included three items for each leadership style. Participants evaluated the items on a five-point Likert scale with (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The instrument showed good reliability, with all Cronbach alpha values being at least 0.70.

Workplace inclusion was measured with Chung et al.'s (2020) Work Group Inclusion ten-item scale, with five items for belongingness and five for uniqueness. As shown above, the same five-point Likert scale was used. The instrument showed good reliability, with both Cronbach alpha values exceeding 0.80.

A web-based survey was used to administer 40 survey questions for the study. Amazon MTurk was used to recruit participants who were employed in healthcare in the United States and at least 18 years old. The survey participants' identities are not seen by the researchers but administered through the MTurk platform by Amazon. To ensure the anonymity of the survey participants, the researchers did not collect IP addresses. Participants who completed the survey received \$1.25, which was funded by the researchers. The participants recruited through Amazon MTurk were directed to QuestionPro through a web link. The first page of the QuestionPro survey contained the consent form. Participants must agree to participate

before they can advance to survey questions. If the participant declines to participate, then the survey will close. Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants. There were 171 completed surveys with no missing questions.

**TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

	N	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	86	49.4
Female	88	50.6
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	4	2.2
25-34	152	84.0
35-44	15	8.3
45-54	5	2.8
55-64	4	2.2
Above 64	1	0.5
<i>Occupation</i>		
Nurse	30	17.2
Nursing Manager	14	8.0
Physician	26	14.9
Administration	63	36.2
Other	41	23.6
Total Participants	171	

To check for CMB, we used Harmon’s single-factor test, which showed that the first factor explained 34.9% of the total variance, which was below the recommended 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

ANALYSIS

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations for inclusion and leadership style predictor variables.

**TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS FOR INCLUSION AND LEADERSHIP STYLE PREDICTOR VARIABLES**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Inc-B	3.89	0.67	.33**	.30**	.30**	.42**	.41**	.33**	.35**	.43**	.37**
Inc-U	3.76	0.64	.28**	.21**	.26**	.42**	.31**	.23**	.29**	.45**	.36**
Predictor Variables											
1 Transformational	4.04	0.59	-	.49**	.47**	.52**	.54**	.62**	.47**	.54**	.18*
2 Transactional	4.01	0.59	.49**	-	.50**	.47**	.57**	.54**	.62**	.44**	.23**
3 Democratic	4.01	0.62	.47**	.50**	-	.50**	.45**	.59**	.40**	.49**	.23**
4 Autocratic	3.89	0.62	.52**	.47**	.50**	-	.49**	.53**	.50**	.51**	.36**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5 Autocratic - Transformational	4.00	0.62	.54**	.57**	.45**	.49**	-	.61**	.48**	.43**	.05
6 Democratic - Transformational	4.02	0.68	.62**	.54**	.59**	.53**	.61**	-	.41**	.52**	.13
7 Autocratic – Transactional	4.01	0.62	.47**	.62**	.40**	.50**	.48**	.41**	-	.55**	.23**
8 Democratic – Transactional	4.04	0.67	.54**	.44**	.49**	.51**	.43**	.52**	.55**	-	.27**
9 Laissez-faire	3.51	0.80	.18*	.23**	.23**	.36**	.05	.13	.23**	.27**	-

**p < .01 *p < .05

We performed two multiple linear regression analyses using SPSS version 28.0.1.1. The first analysis was for the dependent variable Inclusion – Belongingness. The second analysis was for the dependent variable Inclusion – Uniqueness. The independent variables for both analyses were the leadership styles – transformational, transaction, democratic, autocratic, autocratic-transformational, democratic-transformational, autocratic-transactional, democratic-transactional, and laissez-faire. Table 3 shows the analysis summary for inclusion–belongingness. A significant regression equation was found ($F(9,164) = 9.55, p < .001$) with an R of 0.59 and R^2 of 34%. Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples indicated that the regression coefficients did not change from those obtained in the initial multiple regression analysis.

TABLE 3
REGRESSION ANALYSIS SUMMARY FOR LEADERSHIP VARIABLES PREDICTING INCLUSION – BELONGINGNESS

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Transformational	.12	.10	.11	1.28	.20
Transactional	.04	.10	.03	.36	.72
Democratic	.35	.10	.32	3.52	.00
Autocratic	-.03	.09	-.02	-.27	.79
Autocratic -Transformational	.24	.10	.20	2.32	.02
Democratic - Transformational	-.02	.10	-.02	-.22	.82
Autocratic – Transactional	.24	.06	.28	4.03	.00
Democratic – Transactional	-.10	.11	-.08	-.90	.37
Laissez-faire	-.00	.10	-.00	-.04	.97

Note: $R^2 = .34$ ($N=174, p < .001$).

The conditions for using regression were checked using SPSS version 28.0. The Likert scale variables were numerical, and all predictors exhibited non-zero variance. Myers (1990) stated that VIFs of 10 or greater are cause for concern. The VIFs ranged from 1.25 to 2.45, indicating there was no perfect multicollinearity. The residual terms should be uncorrelated (or independent) for any two observations and were examined using the Durbin-Watson test statistic. The Durbin-Watson test statistic can be between 0 and 4, with 2 meaning the residuals are uncorrelated. A value below 2 means a positive correlation. The conditions are met if the values are between 1 and 3 (Durbin & Watson, 1951). For this study, the Durbin-Watson test statistic was 2.22, indicating the conditions are met. The standardized predicted values of the dependent variable inclusion (belongingness) based on the model and the plot of the standardized residuals indicated that the residuals in the model are random, normally distributed variables with a mean of 0. The

condition for homogeneity of variance was checked by examining the plot of standardized residuals versus predicted values. There was no evidence of heteroscedasticity.

From the results shown in Table 3, the democratic, autocratic-transformational, and autocratic-transactional leadership styles indicated a positive relationship to creating an atmosphere of the belongingness aspect of inclusion.

Table 4 shows the analysis summary for inclusion–uniqueness. A significant regression equation was found ($F(9,164) = 8.63, p < .001$) with an R of 0.57 and R^2 of 32%. Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples indicated that the regression coefficients did not change from those obtained in the initial multiple regression analysis. From the results shown in Table 4, the autocratic, autocratic-transformational, and democratic-transactional leadership styles indicated a positive relationship to creating an atmosphere of the belongingness aspect of inclusion.

TABLE 4
REGRESSION ANALYSIS SUMMARY FOR LEADERSHIP VARIABLES PREDICTING INCLUSION – UNIQUENESS

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Transformational	-.01	.10	-.01	-.08	.94
Transactional	-.13	.10	-.12	-1.24	.22
Democratic	-.00	.09	-.00	-.02	.98
Autocratic	.21	.09	.20	2.25	.03
Autocratic -Transformational	.25	.10	.24	2.60	.01
Democratic - Transformational	-.14	.10	-.14	-1.43	.16
Autocratic – Transactional	-.04	.10	-.03	-.37	.72
Democratic – Transactional	.37	.10	.33	3.70	.00
Laissez-faire	.19	.06	.24	3.33	.00

Note: $R^2 = .32$ ($N=174, p < .001$).

We checked the conditions for the second regression. The VIFs for the second regression ranged from 1.25 to 2.45, indicating no perfect multicollinearity. For the second regression analysis, the Durbin-Watson test statistic was 2.02, indicating the conditions are met. The standardized predicted values of the dependent variable inclusion (uniqueness) based on the model and the plot of the standardized residuals indicated that the residuals in the model are random, normally distributed variables with a mean of 0. The condition for homogeneity of variance was checked by examining the plot of standardized residuals versus predicted values. There was no evidence of heteroscedasticity.

Table 5 shows the findings for our hypotheses testing.

TABLE 5
HYPOTHESES TESTING FOR TWO REGRESSION ANALYSES

Hypothesis	Findings
H1: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and workplace inclusion (belongingness and uniqueness).	Reject for belongingness and uniqueness
H2: There is no relationship between transactional leadership style and workplace inclusion (belongingness and inclusion).	Reject for belongingness and uniqueness
H3: There is a positive relationship between democratic leadership and workplace inclusion.	Reject for uniqueness Accept for belongingness

Hypothesis	Findings
H4: There is a negative relationship between autocratic leadership and workplace inclusion.	Reject for belongingness and uniqueness. There is a positive regression coefficient for uniqueness.
H5: There is a positive relationship between autocratic-transformational leadership and workplace inclusion.	Accept for belongingness and uniqueness
H6: There is a positive relationship between democratic-transformational leadership and workplace inclusion.	Reject for belongingness and uniqueness
H7: There is a negative relationship between autocratic-transactional leadership and workplace inclusion.	Reject for belongingness and uniqueness. The regression coefficient was positive and significant for belongingness.
H8: There is a positive relationship between democratic-transactional leadership and workplace inclusion.	Reject for belongingness. Accept for uniqueness.
H9: There is no relationship between laissez-faire leadership and workplace inclusion.	Reject for belongingness. Accept for uniqueness.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

An interesting finding of the research is a statistically significant positive relationship between laissez-faire leadership and the uniqueness aspect of inclusion. Chung et al. (2020) explained that the uniqueness dimension of inclusion had two components – room for authenticity and value in authenticity. With uniqueness, employees feel they can be different from the group and their values (Shore et al., 2011). Since a laissez-faire leader is hands-off and leaves followers alone, employees may feel that they can be their authentic selves without interference from the leader. However, laissez-faire leadership was not statistically significant for the belongingness aspect of inclusion. The belongingness dimension of inclusion means the employee needs team membership in a supportive environment (Shore et al., 2011) that a laissez-faire leader does not promote.

The other hybrid leadership style findings that promote the uniqueness dimension of inclusion include transformational and democratic styles. Autocratic–transformational was a significant predictor for uniqueness and belongingness. The transformational leadership style includes individualized consideration, which would align with allowing the follower to demonstrate uniqueness while also creating a sense of belongingness in the workgroup. If the leader is dedicated to inclusion, the autocratic style could promote inclusion in the group. The participants responding to the survey could have leaders who use transformational leadership when appropriate to promote both dimensions of inclusion and autocratic at other appropriate times.

The characteristics of democratic leadership contribute to inclusion in the workgroup. By actively involving employees by engaging them and listening to their ideas, democratic and democratic-transactional leadership styles can be used to promote inclusion in the workforce.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

According to Burke and Titus (2020), what makes people feel included in organizations is that they feel that they are treated fairly and respectfully, are valued, and belong. Some of these things are an organization’s mission/vision, its policies, and practices, along with co-worker behaviors. It then really comes down to the leaders of an organization to build inclusiveness. What leaders say and do accounts for a 70% difference in whether individuals feel that they feel included (Burke & Titus, 2020).

According to the Full-Range Leadership Model, there is no perfect leadership style. Leadership styles in organizations can consist of multiple styles. Managers should examine multiple leadership styles and consider using hybrid leadership styles such as autocratic-transformational, democratic-transactional, and autocratic-transactional to promote inclusion in the organization. It is also important to consider the two dimensions of inclusion (belongingness and uniqueness) when promoting an inclusive work environment.

The democratic, autocratic-transformational, and autocratic-transactional leadership styles indicated a positive relationship to creating an atmosphere of the belongingness aspect of inclusion in our research. In addition, the autocratic, autocratic-transformational, and democratic-transactional leadership styles also indicated a positive relationship to creating an atmosphere of the belongingness aspect of inclusion in this research. Utilizing these leadership styles in organizations may improve the belongingness aspect of inclusion in the workplace.

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