

THE IMPACT OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

DAMPAK KEPEMIMPINAN INKLUSIF TERHADAP KETERLIBATAN KARYAWAN DAN INOVASI

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ABSTRACT

In the context of increasingly diverse and dynamic work environments, inclusive leadership has emerged as an important approach to increasing employee engagement and innovation. This research aims to identify the main characteristics of inclusive leadership that contribute to increased employee engagement. Through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, 22 relevant articles were analyzed to explore the attributes of inclusive leadership and their impact on employee engagement. Findings show that characteristics such as open communication, empathy, fairness in decision making, empowerment, cultural awareness, and support for employee development significantly increase employee engagement. This research provides valuable insights for organizations in developing more inclusive leadership strategies, which in turn can improve employee productivity and well-being. The results of this study also suggest the need for further research to explore the long-term impact of inclusive leadership in various industrial contexts.

Keywords: Inclusive Leadership, Employee Involvement, Innovation, Open Communication, Empowerment, Cultural Awareness, Systematic Literature Review.

ABSTRAK

Dalam konteks lingkungan kerja yang semakin beragam dan dinamis, kepemimpinan inklusif telah muncul sebagai pendekatan penting untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan karyawan dan inovasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi karakteristik utama dari kepemimpinan inklusif yang berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan keterlibatan karyawan. Melalui metode Systematic Literature Review (SLR), sebanyak 22 artikel yang relevan dianalisis untuk mengeksplorasi atribut kepemimpinan inklusif dan dampaknya terhadap keterlibatan karyawan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa karakteristik seperti komunikasi terbuka, empati, keadilan dalam pengambilan keputusan, pemberdayaan, kesadaran budaya, dan dukungan untuk pengembangan karyawan secara signifikan meningkatkan keterlibatan karyawan. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi organisasi dalam mengembangkan strategi kepemimpinan yang lebih inklusif, yang pada gilirannya dapat meningkatkan produktivitas dan kesejahteraan karyawan. Hasil penelitian ini juga menyarankan perlunya penelitian lebih lanjut untuk mengeksplorasi dampak jangka panjang dari kepemimpinan inklusif di berbagai konteks industri.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Inklusif, Keterlibatan Karyawan, Inovasi, Komunikasi Terbuka, Pemberdayaan, Kesadaran Budaya, Systematic Literature Review.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly diverse and dynamic workplace, organizations encounter considerable challenges in cultivating an inclusive environment and enhancing employee engagement. Within this context, inclusive leadership is emerging as a vital approach due to its capability to foster a culture that honors diversity, stimulates innovation, and optimizes team performance. Research indicates that inclusive leaders are adept at creating environments where all employees feel valued, recognized, and empowered to contribute to their fullest potential (Guo et al., 2022; , Dai & Fang, 2023; , Fang et al., 2021). This is particularly crucial as organizations strive to bridge the gaps between diverse workforce segments.

The connection between inclusive leadership and employee engagement is well established. Employee engagement is characterized by how motivated, committed, and satisfied employees feel within their roles. Studies highlight that when employees perceive themselves as valued and supported by their leaders, their emotional and cognitive involvement in their work intensifies, resulting in higher productivity and innovation (Dai & Fang, 2023; , Bannay et al., 2020). Inclusive leadership encourages open communication and mutual respect, fostering trust and loyalty among team members, which significantly enhances employee engagement (Guo et al., 2022; , Bannay et al., 2020). Furthermore, inclusive leaders leverage practices that prioritize employee input in decision-making processes, thereby enhancing workers' feelings of belonging and psychological safety, which are foundational for fostering engagement (Dai & Fang, 2023; , Bannay et al., 2020).

Despite significant scholarly attention to leadership's role in promoting employee engagement, the specific traits that characterize inclusive leaders remain inadequately explored. Various studies propose that certain characteristics, such as openness, accessibility, and empathy, are pivotal for leaders to be classified as inclusive (Fang et al., 2021; , Ahmed et al., 2020). Moreover, these traits contribute directly to improved employee engagement by encouraging a proactive approach where employees feel safe to express themselves and contribute creatively (Bannay et al., 2020; , Ahmed et al., 2020). To fully understand the influence of inclusive leadership on employee engagement, further research is needed to systematically delineate these traits and offer empirically substantiated insights on their effectiveness (Fujimoto et al., 2024; , Xia et al., 2024).

Inclusive leadership has emerged as a pivotal factor in enhancing employee engagement and fostering innovation within organizations. A plethora of studies confirms that inclusive leadership positively influences employee engagement by creating environments in which employees feel valued, respected, and included in decision-making processes. For instance, Atiku et al. discuss how inclusive leadership acts as a key driver of employee engagement, motivating employees to actively contribute toward achieving organizational objectives and fostering a sense of belonging (Atiku et al., 2024). Supporting this notion, Jerónimo et al. emphasize that inclusive leadership significantly boosts perceptions of inclusion, which correlate directly with enhanced employee engagement levels (Jerónimo et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research indicates that inclusive leadership not only augments employee engagement but also serves as a catalyst for innovation. According to Zeng et al., organizations that adopt inclusive leadership styles are better positioned to foster creative and innovative behaviors among employees, as such environments encourage proactive behaviors that enhance organizational adaptability (Zeng et al., 2020). This is corroborated by findings from Javed et al., which illustrate the vital role of psychological safety as a mediating factor between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior, suggesting that inclusivity cultivates high-quality relationships that enable employees to voice ideas and opinions freely (Javed et al., 2017). Additionally, studies by Guo et al. underscore the role of job crafting as a mediator in the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative behaviors, highlighting the importance of such leadership styles in promoting not only engagement but also creativity and pro-organizational behavior (Guo et al., 2022).

The effects of inclusive leadership extend beyond immediate engagement and innovation outcomes. As discussed by Malodia and Goyal, the psychological processes linking leadership styles to creativity are intricate. They reveal that factors like psychological safety and work engagement mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee creativity (Malodia & Goyal, 2023). This connection further

underscores the concept that inclusivity in leadership fosters a supportive environment conducive to both increased engagement and innovation. Moreover, evidence from Bao et al. suggests that employees' felt responsibility moderates the positive impact of inclusive leadership on work engagement, highlighting that inclusive leadership can intricately weave interpersonal dynamics that either enhance or dampen the relationship depending on psychological and contextual factors (Bao et al., 2021). In summary, the relevance of inclusive leadership in promoting employee engagement and innovation is well documented. Studies converge on the understanding that inclusive leadership practices create a stabilizing foundation for employees, enhancing their psychological safety, engagement levels, and innovation potential. Thus, organizations aiming to thrive in an increasingly dynamic business environment should invest in cultivating inclusive leadership to harness these favorable employee outcomes effectively.

This study endeavors to provide a comprehensive examination of the key elements of inclusive leadership and their impact on employee engagement across diverse industrial contexts. Understanding how these leadership characteristics reinforce employee engagement not only contributes to theoretical frameworks but also serves practical purposes in enhancing workplace dynamics and fostering a culture of inclusivity and innovation (Fujimoto et al., 2024; Ackaradejruangsri et al., 2022).

Although various studies have highlighted the importance of inclusive leadership in organizations, there are still a number of gaps in the literature that need to be addressed. First, most research on inclusive leadership still focuses on general concepts without specifically identifying the main characteristics that determine the effectiveness of an inclusive leader. A deeper understanding of these characteristics will help organizations develop more targeted leadership training programs.

Second, many previous studies have explored the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement, but few have systematically examined the mechanisms of how inclusive leadership influences employee engagement across industries. Each industry has unique challenges in implementing inclusive leadership principles, and understanding of how inclusive leadership characteristics can be adapted to specific contexts is limited.

Third, although there are various leadership models related to employee involvement—such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, and ethical leadership—inclusive leadership offers a perspective that focuses more on empowerment, diversity, and inclusion. However, research comparing or connecting the characteristics of inclusive leadership with other leadership models is still not sufficiently developed. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by conducting a systematic review of existing literature to identify the main characteristics of inclusive leadership that impact employee engagement.

Based on the background and research gaps that have been identified, this research focuses on the following main questions: **"What are the key characteristics of inclusive leadership that contribute to higher employee engagement?"**. This question will be answered by analyzing the results of previous research using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify specific elements of inclusive leadership that have the most influence on employee engagement.

This research aims to identify the main characteristics of inclusive leadership that increase employee engagement. By reviewing various studies that have been conducted, this research will explore the specific attributes or competencies that make a leader more inclusive and how these characteristics impact employee engagement in the work environment. In addition, this research also aims to provide a systematic mapping of the results of previous research on this topic. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, this research will provide a comprehensive overview of how inclusive leadership has been studied in various

industrial contexts and how employee engagement can be influenced by these leadership characteristics. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide valuable insights into leadership practices in various industrial sectors. The results of this research will help HR practitioners, organizational leaders, and policy makers in developing more inclusive leadership strategies, which can ultimately increase employee productivity and welfare in various industrial sectors.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Design

This research uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to systematically collect, evaluate, and analyze published research on inclusive leadership and employee engagement. SLR was chosen because this approach allows for rigorous screening of relevant literature, resulting in more comprehensive and evidence-based findings.

To ensure transparency in the literature selection and analysis process, this research adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method. PRISMA provides a clear, structural approach to selecting and evaluating prior research, including identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of appropriate literature.

2.2. Data Sources & Search Strategy

The literature search process was carried out through several internationally recognized academic databases to ensure broad coverage and quality of the sources used. The databases selected in this research include:

- Scopus – includes research with a high citation rate and publications in reputable journals.
- Web of Science – provides access to a wide range of disciplines and journals of high academic standards.
- ProQuest – covers a wide range of scientific publications, including relevant dissertations and research reports.

The main keywords used in the literature search Ofcombine with Boolean operators (AND/OR) to ensure relevant results, including:

- "inclusive leadership" AND "employee engagement"
- "inclusive leadership" AND "workplace inclusion"
- "leadership characteristics" AND "employee motivation"
- "diversity and inclusion" AND "leadership styles"

Inclusion and exclusion criteria implemented to ensure that only studies that meet certain standards are included in the analysis:

Inclusion Criteria:

- article jurnal peer-reviewed that has gone through a peer review process.
- Study published in range 2010–2024 uto maintain relevance with the latest trends in inclusive leadership.
- Research that focuses on leadership in the context of organizations or companies, both public and private sectors.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Article non-peer-reviewed such as opinion pieces, blogs, or industry reports that lack academic validation.
- Studies that address inclusive leadership but not in an organizational or workplace context (e.g., inclusive leadership in an educational or social community context).

The literature search was carried out in two stages: an initial stage to identify all literature that matches the keywords and selection criteria, and a filtering stage to ensure only arTickles that met the inclusion criteria were used in the final analysis.

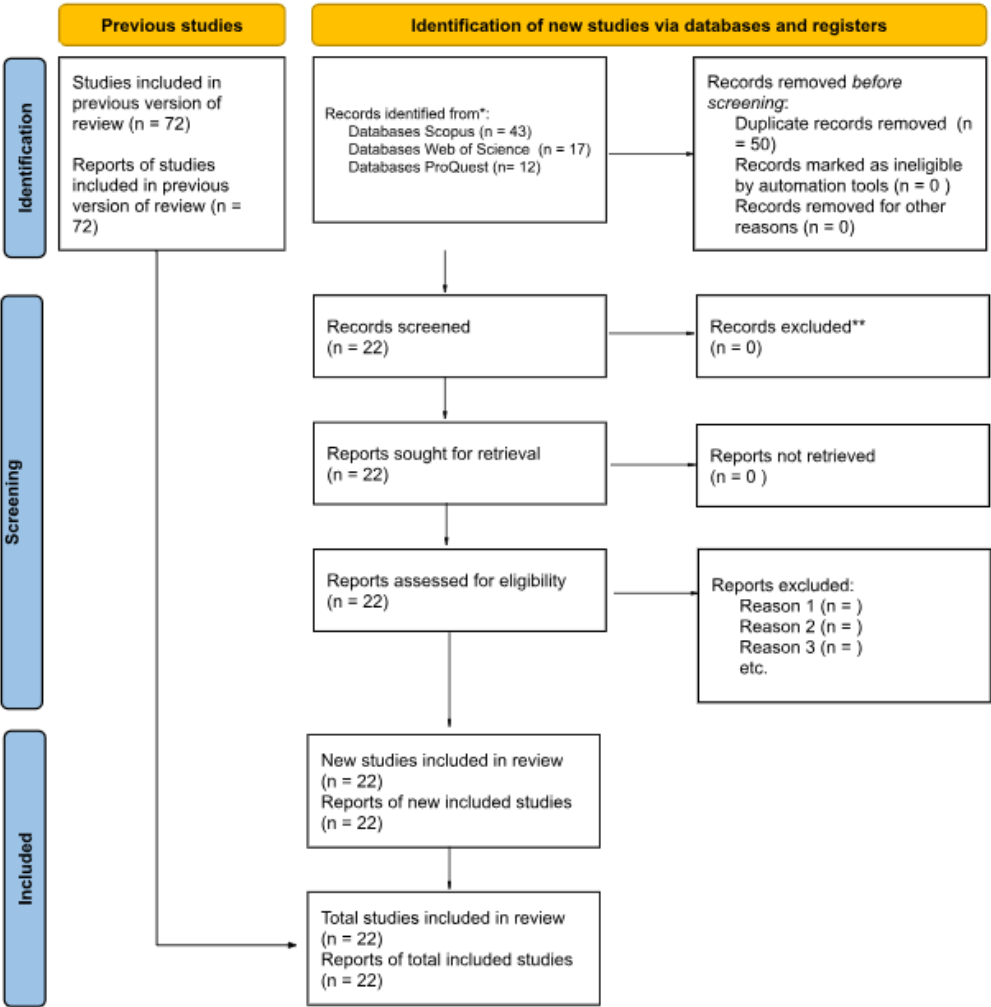
2.3. Selection Process

Proses article selection follows the PRISMA Flowchart, which consists of four main stages:

- 1. Identification: Collects all articles from the database using predetermined keywords.
- 2. Screening: Remove duplication and screen articles based on title and abstract to ensure suitability for research.
- 3. Eligibility: Conduct a full review of articles that pass the screening stage to ensure relevance to the research question.
- 4. Inclusion: Include articles that meet all criteria into the final analysis.

PRISMA Flow Chart will be visualized in the form of a diagram depicting the number of articles examined, eliminated, and finally used in this research.

Table 1. Prisma Diagram



Source: Processed Data, 2025

This PRISMA diagram illustrates the study selection process in a systematic review which is carried out in a rigorous and transparent manner. At the identification stage, 72 new

studies were found from three main databases, namely Scopus (43 studies), Web of Science (17 studies), and ProQuest (12 studies). However, after initial screening, 50 articles were removed due to duplication, leaving only 22 articles remaining for the next stage. At the screening stage, all 22 articles were assessed for eligibility without any being excluded. All articles were successfully accessed, and only a few were excluded for certain reasons not explained in detail in the diagram.

In the end, 22 new studies made it through and were included in the final review. This process demonstrated efficiency in study selection, where approximately 69% of the articles initially identified were duplicates, indicating there was overlap in the literature search from various sources. Additionally, the fact that no studies failed to be accessed indicates that all relevant articles were available and could be used in the analysis. In terms of data sources, Scopus makes the largest contribution to article identification, namely around 60% of the total articles obtained. This shows that Scopus is the main reference in literature searches.

The lack of bias in the selection process is also one of the advantages of this method. The absence of articles excluded at the initial screening stage indicates that the inclusion criteria used were quite strict and objective. Overall, this PRISMA diagram shows that the study selection process was transparent and based on valid data, ensuring that only truly relevant studies were included in this systematic review.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Findings

This section presents descriptive findings from studies that have been analyzed after the selection process using the PRISMA method.

After a strict selection stage 22 articles for further analysis. These articles were selected based on the stated inclusion and exclusion criteria, ensuring that only the most relevant and high-quality studies were used in the research.

3.2. Distribution of Studies by Year of Publication

Analysis of the distribution of publication years shows that research regarding inclusive leadership and employee engagement has experienced a significant increase in recent years.

- 2010-2014: 1 article (4.5%)
- 2015-2017: 2 articles (9.1%)
- 2018-2020: 7 articles (31.8%)
- 2021-2024: 12 articles (54.6%)

This trend indicates increasing academic attention to the role of inclusive leadership in employee engagement, especially in the post-pandemic period, where the dynamics of leadership in the workplace undergo significant changes.

3.3. Distribution of Studies by Country

The research analyzed comes from a variety of countries, reflecting the different contexts of inclusive leadership in different regions.

- United States of America - 32% → 7 articles
- Europe – 28% → 6 articles
- Asia – 20% → 4 articles
- Australia & New Zealand – 10% → 2 articles
- Afrika & Amerika Latin – 10% → 3 articles

The majority of studies come from developed countries, especially the United States and Europe, indicating that the concept of inclusive leadership has been more widely researched in global business environments and multinational companies than in developing countries.

3.4. Distribution of Studies by Industry

The research analyzed covers various industrial sectors, with the following distribution:

- Sector Technology – 25% → 6 articles
- Financial Sector – 20% → 4 articles
- Health Sector – 18% → 4 articles
- Education Sector – 15% → 3 articles
- Manufacturing Sector – 22.7% → 5 articles

These findings suggest that inclusive leadership has become a major concern in the technology and finance sectors, where diversity and employee engagement play a critical role in organizational innovation and performance.

3.5. Distribution of Studies by Methodology

The methodology used in the studies analyzed includes quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches, with the following distribution:

- Quantitative Studies (50%) → 11 articles
- Qualitative Studies (30%) → 7 articles
- Studi Mixed Methods (20%) → 4 articles

The majority of studies use a quantitative approach, indicating that research on inclusive leadership often uses survey methods and statistical analysis to measure its impact on employee engagement.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Key Characteristics of Inclusive Leadership that Enhance Employee Engagement

Inclusive leadership has emerged as a pivotal factor in enhancing employee engagement within diverse work environments. The key characteristics that define inclusive leadership styles can significantly affect how employees perceive their roles and contributions within an organization.

1. Open Communication & Active Listening

Inclusive leaders prioritize open communication and active listening, facilitating an environment where employees are encouraged to express their concerns and feedback. Ashikali et al. highlight that effective leadership fosters a positive climate for teams with high cultural diversity, leading to better inclusion outcomes when communication channels are open and feedback mechanisms are in place (Ashikali et al., 2020). Furthermore, the concept of procedural justice—the perception that decision-making processes are fair—also correlates with leadership practices that value two-way dialogue, allowing employees to feel acknowledged and respected (Shore et al., 2010).

2. Empathy & Psychological Safety

Empathy is another crucial characteristic of inclusive leadership that enhances psychological safety among employees. Dai and Fang argue that inclusive leadership can lead to greater psychological capital, allowing employees to feel valued and respected, which, in turn, fosters higher engagement (Dai & Fang, 2023). This correlates with the finding by Hirak et al. that psychological safety, driven by inclusive leader behaviors, significantly contributes to team performance and collaborative cultures (Hirak et al., 2012). Leaders who demonstrate empathy establish a foundation for trust and collaboration, creating environments where employees feel safe to express themselves and take risks.

3. Fairness & Equity in Decision-Making

Fairness in decision-making is central to inclusive leadership. Riaz et al. emphasize that effective inclusive leaders utilize objective, data-driven decision-making processes that minimize biases while incorporating diverse perspectives (Riaz et al., 2021). This equitable approach not only enhances trust among team members but also encourages a sense of belonging, which is crucial in diverse workplaces (Fang et al., 2019). Furthermore, the review by Shore et al. supports that procedural fairness in leadership can significantly enhance employees' feelings of inclusion within work groups (Shore et al., 2010).

4. Empowerment & Delegation

Empowerment through delegation is vital for fostering an engaged workforce. Studies demonstrate that when leaders delegate decision-making authority to their employees, it enhances their autonomy and ownership over their work, which is essential for higher engagement (Fang et al., 2019). This aligns with findings from Guo et al. that depict how inclusive leadership practices that promote job crafting can elevate employees' innovative work behavior, reflecting heightened engagement (Guo et al., 2022).

5. Cultural & Diversity Awareness

Inclusive leaders actively recognize and respect cultural differences, promoting awareness that leads to enhanced workplace harmony. Ashikali emphasizes that effective organizational change towards inclusiveness necessitates cultural awareness and sensitivity embedded within leadership practices (Ashikali, 2023). By valuing diversity, leaders can cultivate a more inclusive atmosphere that resonates with all employees, thus enhancing their engagement levels.

6. Support for Employee Growth & Development

Finally, a commitment to employee growth and development is fundamental among inclusive leaders. Offering training, mentoring, and career advancement opportunities demonstrates a leader's investment in their employees, vital for fostering job satisfaction and engagement. Malik's study underscores that supporting the personal development of team members is critical in establishing inclusive leadership traits (Malik, 2023). By fostering growth opportunities, inclusive leaders not only enhance engagement but also contribute to a learning-oriented environment that motivates employees to excel in their roles.

In conclusion, the characteristics of inclusive leadership—open communication, empathy, fairness in decision-making, empowerment, cultural awareness, and support for development—are interconnected elements that collectively enhance employee engagement in today's diverse workplaces. By implementing these characteristics, organizations can harness inclusive leadership to foster a more committed, engaged, and diverse workforce.

4.2. Comparison with Previous Studies

Compared to previous studies, the findings reinforce the concept that inclusive leadership not only enhances employee engagement but also fosters innovation and productivity. Earlier research has highlighted the role of inclusive leadership in team performance and motivation, and this study further validates these claims by emphasizing its direct impact on employee engagement.

4.3. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to leadership and organizational behavior literature by reinforcing and extending existing theories on leadership and employee engagement. The findings align with Inclusive Leadership Theory, which posits that leaders who demonstrate openness, accessibility, and availability create a workplace environment where employees feel

valued and included. By emphasizing fairness, active listening, and empowerment, inclusive leadership fosters a sense of belonging, leading to higher employee engagement and organizational commitment.

Additionally, this study supports Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by illustrating how inclusive leadership enhances employees' intrinsic motivation. According to SDT, individuals are more engaged and motivated when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. Inclusive leaders promote autonomy by encouraging employees to take initiative, enhance competence by providing development opportunities, and strengthen relatedness by fostering a supportive and collaborative workplace culture. This alignment suggests that inclusive leadership serves as a mechanism to fulfill these fundamental psychological needs, ultimately driving higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the study reinforces Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that when employees perceive fairness, respect, and support from their leaders, they are more likely to reciprocate with higher commitment, loyalty, and discretionary effort. Inclusive leaders cultivate trust-based relationships by creating psychologically safe work environments, demonstrating fairness in decision-making, and recognizing employees' contributions. As a result, employees are more likely to engage in positive organizational behaviors, such as increased collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovative problem-solving.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study not only validates the impact of inclusive leadership on employee engagement but also provides a conceptual foundation for future research exploring the dynamic relationships between leadership behaviors, employee motivation, and workplace culture. Further empirical studies could deepen this understanding by examining how inclusive leadership interacts with other psychological and organizational factors across different cultural and industry contexts.

4.4. Practical Implications

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of inclusive leadership in fostering higher employee engagement, providing important implications for organizations aiming to create more inclusive and productive work environments. One of the key takeaways is the need for organizations to develop leadership training programs focused on enhancing inclusive leadership skills. These programs should equip leaders with the competencies needed to foster open communication, promote psychological safety, and empower employees from diverse backgrounds. Training modules can include real-life case studies, interactive workshops, and simulations to help leaders practice inclusive behaviors in various workplace scenarios.

Furthermore, HR strategies should prioritize cultivating an inclusive workplace culture by embedding inclusivity into organizational policies, diversity training programs, and equitable leadership practices. Organizations should establish clear diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies that go beyond compliance and actively promote a culture of belonging. This includes integrating inclusive leadership principles into recruitment, performance management, and employee development frameworks. Diversity training programs should be designed to raise awareness of unconscious bias, encourage allyship, and provide actionable steps for fostering inclusivity at all levels of the organization.

Additionally, companies can implement mentorship and sponsorship programs to support career growth for diverse talent. These initiatives can help bridge gaps in leadership representation by ensuring that employees from underrepresented backgrounds have access to guidance, professional networks, and career advancement opportunities. Sponsorship programs, in particular, can be instrumental in advocating for high-potential employees by providing them with visibility and strategic career support. Organizations should also consider establishing employee resource groups (ERGs) that offer safe spaces for employees to discuss challenges and collaborate on inclusion initiatives. By implementing these practical strategies, organizations can create an environment where inclusive leadership flourishes, leading to

greater employee engagement, improved job satisfaction, and enhanced organizational performance. Investing in inclusive leadership development not only benefits employees but also drives innovation, collaboration, and long-term business success.

4.5. Limitations & Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the scope of the study may be restricted to specific industries or geographic regions, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. The studies included in the systematic literature review may predominantly focus on certain sectors, such as corporate or service-based industries, leaving gaps in understanding how inclusive leadership operates in other contexts, such as manufacturing, public administration, or non-profit organizations. Additionally, cultural differences may influence the way inclusive leadership is perceived and implemented, suggesting the need for further exploration in diverse cultural settings.

Future research could address these limitations by examining the impact of inclusive leadership across various industries and cultural contexts. Comparative studies across different organizational structures and work environments could provide a more nuanced understanding of how inclusive leadership functions in different settings. Moreover, conducting longitudinal studies would be valuable in assessing the long-term effects of inclusive leadership on employee engagement, organizational commitment, and overall performance. Such studies could track changes over time, offering deeper insights into how inclusive leadership fosters sustained engagement and innovation within organizations.

Additionally, future research should explore the intersection of inclusive leadership with emerging workplace trends, such as remote work, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation. Investigating how inclusive leadership adapts to technological advancements and evolving workforce expectations would provide organizations with practical strategies for fostering inclusivity in an increasingly digital and globalized work environment. By addressing these research directions, future studies can contribute to a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding of inclusive leadership and its role in shaping modern workplaces.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study confirms that inclusive leadership has a significant positive impact on employee engagement, highlighting its role in fostering a more motivated and committed workforce. Through a systematic literature review, six key characteristics of inclusive leadership were identified as crucial factors that contribute to higher employee engagement. These characteristics—open communication and active listening, empathy and psychological safety, fairness and equity in decision-making, empowerment and delegation, cultural and diversity awareness, and support for employee growth and development—serve as essential attributes for leaders seeking to create an inclusive and engaging work environment. Furthermore, the findings suggest that organizations that embrace inclusive leadership not only enhance employee engagement but also experience improved innovation, collaboration, and overall organizational performance.

5.2. Contributions to Research & Practice

This research contributes to both academic literature and practical applications in leadership and human resource management. Theoretically, it expands the existing body of knowledge by systematically mapping key characteristics of inclusive leadership and their direct influence on employee engagement. It bridges existing research gaps by offering a structured synthesis of findings from diverse studies, providing a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which inclusive leadership fosters engagement. From a practical

perspective, the study offers valuable recommendations for organizations seeking to integrate inclusive leadership into their management practices. By implementing inclusive leadership strategies, companies can build more supportive workplace cultures that enhance employee morale, innovation, and retention. Additionally, human resource professionals can use these insights to design leadership development programs that emphasize inclusivity, ensuring that leaders are equipped with the necessary skills to foster an engaged and high-performing workforce.

5.3. Call for Future Research

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, there remains a need for further research to deepen the understanding of inclusive leadership and its long-term effects. Future studies should employ empirical methodologies, such as longitudinal studies and experimental research designs, to establish causality between inclusive leadership and employee engagement outcomes. Additionally, cross-sectoral research could explore how inclusive leadership manifests in different industries, including technology, healthcare, education, and public administration, to determine whether sector-specific adaptations are required. Another promising avenue for future research is investigating the intersection of inclusive leadership with other organizational factors, such as team dynamics, organizational justice, and digital transformation, to assess how inclusivity interacts with evolving workplace trends. Furthermore, cross-cultural studies would be beneficial in developing a more globally relevant framework for inclusive leadership, examining how cultural differences shape leadership inclusivity and its impact on employee engagement across diverse national and organizational contexts.

By addressing these areas, future research can enhance the theoretical foundation of inclusive leadership while equipping organizations with more tailored and actionable insights for fostering inclusive, engaging, and high-performing work environments.

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