

Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Organizational Performance of University College Hospital, Ibadan

Isiaka Sulu Babaita¹, Nurudeen Bello Ahmed² and Muhammed Taofeek Olowookere²

¹University of Ilorin, Nigeria. ²Kwara State University, Malete.

Abstract

The study examined the effect of inclusive Leadership on employee engagement at the University College Teaching Hospital. This study utilized a descriptive research design to investigate the impact of inclusive Leadership on employee work engagement in the University College Teaching Hospital, Ibadan. A sample size of 379 employees was selected using stratified random sampling, and data was collected through a questionnaire survey. The data were analyzed using regression analysis, and the results revealed a that ($\beta = 0.789$, $t = 11.819$, $p = .005$), which shows inclusive Leadership positively affects employee work engagement in University College Teaching Hospital. The findings emphasize the importance of inclusive Leadership in creating a supportive and inclusive work environment, which fosters employee engagement, innovative behavior, and prosocial behaviors. The study suggests that organizations should prioritize leadership training programs, open communication, and diversity and inclusion initiatives to promote inclusive Leadership and enhance employee engagement.

Keywords: Inclusive Leadership, Employee Engagement, Diversity.

Introduction

Inclusive Leadership is critical to improving organizational effectiveness. It entails building an inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and loved. Inclusive leaders act as role models and sensemakers, affecting employees' views of the work environment and how far inclusion policies are implemented (Wang et al., 2019). Relationships are important in Leadership. Even though the leader is often considered the key figure, Leadership is a process rather than a person (Hollander, 2012). According to Hollander (2012), Leadership comprises much more than examining leaders and their ability to influence and exercise power. Leaders have long been recognized for their responsibilities in problem-solving, planning, dispute resolution, advocacy, and acting as external liaisons; yet, leaders need help to work alone and must incorporate followers in their tasks, accomplishments, and goals (Hollander, 2012). Leaders may be more proactive than followers, yet followers are essential to success. Therefore, leaders benefit from active followers, particularly those with upward influence (Hollander, 2012). Leaders are always growing as a consequence, and it is critical to remember that Leadership is a lifetime learning process (Holck & Andersen, 2019).

The growth and success of an organization are primarily dependent on its staff, who undertake their duties and obligations with enthusiasm and dedication. Superior work-related results are developed to fulfill organizational objectives by demonstrating

dedication to their employment (Qasim et al., 2022). Leadership has been identified as a critical factor in promoting positive individual job results.

Inclusive Leadership aims to empower individuals to fulfill their work tasks autonomously by bringing out the best in them.

Employee engagement drives business performance (Nafe & Alizadeh, 2022) and favorable employee outcomes (Choi, Tran, & Park, 2015). According to Bakker, Albrecht, and Leiter (2011), leaders are important motivators and a substantial source of employee happiness and, ultimately, work engagement. To effectively improve employee engagement at work, one must adopt an open and adaptable leadership style (Choi et al., 2015). Individual leaders and workplace practices must be modified to exercise an open and adaptable leadership style.

The diversity of staff in businesses is becoming more obvious. In the past, superficial characteristics such as race, gender, age, and place of origin were adequate to portray diversity traits fully and systematically (Yu, 2020). According to this concept, inclusive Leadership, as one of the emerging leadership styles in such a diverse setting, is gaining traction in various industries. Inclusive Leadership satisfies the need for a new leadership style for employees in this era, and it can better integrate people and affairs into the leadership style, allowing it to play a new role in the present management context.

For a long time, the significance of Leadership could have been more appreciated. However, the necessity of organizational Leadership is a current issue that must be addressed if a company is to thrive. Effective Leadership has been shown to improve staff performance and productivity in all organizations.

Statement of the Problem

In order to attain the organization's aim, the leader often guards and directs the organizational anchor, influencing subordinates' attitudes and conduct. Leaders are essential to maintaining strong organizational performance. A proper work environment, adequate incentives and rewards, and effective communication between managers and subordinates help attain this goal. In many businesses today, ineffective Leadership has led to various organizational setbacks, resulting in a terrible diversity environment that will lead to low organizational performance and, in most cases, ejecting personnel into labor markets, contributing to society's high unemployment rate. The most challenging task for a public-sector manager is to develop an integrated management structure that will assimilate employees from minority groups or groups other than the majority group. The phrase "detrified chief" originates in Nigeria, where significant cultural distinctions exist, and refers to a leader whose leadership style is free of bias or stereotype and whose discharge of tasks is motivated by merit rather than affiliation or consideration.

Inclusive Leadership significantly influences employee job engagement, but studies have yet to explore its processes in the Nigerian health sector. While some researchers found a positive relationship between inclusive Leadership and desired outcomes like employee creativity and work engagement, others reported an adverse or no relationship. Empirical

data on inclusive Leadership's influence on employee job engagement still needs to be improved, and further research is needed to improve the literature on this topic.

Research Question

What is the effect of inclusive leadership on employee engagement in University College, Ibadan?

Research Objective

To examine the effect of inclusive leadership on employee engagement in University College, Ibadan.

Research Hypothesis

H01: Inclusive Leadership does not have significant effect on employee engagement in University College, Ibadan.

Inclusive Leadership

According to Zhu et al. (2020), inclusive Leadership is characterized by leaders who are approachable, open, and available to their followers. Due to its primary emphasis on addressing workers' demands for individuality and a sense of belonging, inclusive Leadership may be more effective in promoting work engagement than other leadership philosophies. Other types of Leadership, however, differ in this area (Rodriguez, 2018).

Inclusive Leadership is defined as the leader's words and actions that encourage and respect subordinates to contribute to attaining organizational goals (Qasim et al., 2022). The primary goal of this Leadership is to foster an interactive interaction between leaders and their subordinates by listening and paying particular attention to understanding employees' concerns and providing acceptable solutions. This method promotes a harmonious connection, which increases subordinates' involvement in organizational activities while increasing effectiveness, openness, and availability (Qasim et al., 2022).

Workers can work freely and contribute to decision-making under Inclusive Leadership. Leaders value their employees, recognize their worth, understand their needs, and provide support and advice (Wang & Shi, 2021). In their connections with their followers, inclusive leaders communicate effectively through openness, availability, and accessibility. Because inclusive leaders are prepared to listen to, care about, and discuss the thoughts and ideas of their followers, they create a secure social framework in which followers can express themselves and participate in business operations.

According to Hollander (2010), inclusive leaders always assist their followers. According to Hollander (2010), inclusive leaders are prepared and eager to cope with their followers' expectations and requirements by fostering open communication and inviting feedback from their followers.

Inclusive leaders emphasize acknowledgment, respect, responsiveness, and accountability, legitimizing and approving leaders' and followers' actions. Inclusive Leadership fosters an environment where subordinates are treated equally, and there is no distinction between outgroup and ingroup members (Javed et al., 2018). Inclusive leaders also strive to bridge divides between themselves and their followers and ensure that their followers' contributions are valued, regardless of their workplace hierarchy. Finally, inclusive Leadership requires subordinates to collaborate across roles, levels, and demographic boundaries to solve shared challenges through participatory decision-making (Zhao et al., 2020).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has been defined in a variety of ways throughout the years. Employees utilize and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while playing out their roles via employee engagement, according to Kahn (1992). Workers who feel psychologically at ease with their co-workers, job, and competence, who can be themselves without concern for their position, image, and judgment, have higher employee engagement.

According to Saks (2019), employee engagement is "the level of a person's attention and involvement in the execution of their obligations." He emphasizes the importance of actors' emotional and cognitive responses as well. EE is "a workplace approach meant to guarantee that employees are dedicated to their organization's aims and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, and capable of boosting their well-being," according to MacLeod and Clarke (2010). This definition states that an engaged employee is enthusiastic about their work, aware of how it fits into the larger organization, and committed to the organization.

According to Green et al. (2017), work engagement is a drive that encourages individuals to engage in work-related activities and be effective. They have distinguished between just showing up and giving it your best. Therefore, work engagement is a feeling of vitality that is present during the good emotional state of the employee (Green et al., 2017). Job engagement represents the individual energy that employees bring to their work since engaged individuals can be energetic but gladly apply it to their work (Bakker & Leiter, 2015).

Relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Employee Engagement

The following describes a positive link between inclusive Leadership and employee work engagement. First, since inclusive leaders are approachable to workers and eager to explore new ideas and possibilities with them, employees are more likely to feel appreciated and that their thoughts and efforts are valued by the company (Bao et al., 2022). Employees' sense of achievement from their jobs will likely enhance due to these positive feelings (Javed et al., 2019), encouraging them to give their best to their tasks.

Second, employees have a reasonable opinion of their leaders and the working environment because inclusive leaders are available whenever needed (Bao et al., 2022). This perceived support gives employees psychological resources to deal with workplace demands. It pushes them to persevere in difficult situations, which are strongly related to high levels of job engagement (Cai et al., 2018).

Third, inclusive leaders build a sense of belonging among workers, demonstrating that the business values and accepts their individuality by recognizing them and asking them to contribute to the organization (Randel et al., 2018). Belongingness and uniqueness meet two fundamental psychological requirements, and employees are likely to have a high sense of identification and affective commitment to the business (Van Lange et al., 2011). This may persuade employees that the company is worth the extra effort and that they should devote their whole attention to their tasks.

Underpinning Theory

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) describe Social Exchange Theory as a well-known and prominent conceptual framework in organizational behavior. It is predicated on the notion that social interactions include the exchange of resources between persons, and the type of these transactions determines the quality of relationships (Ma & Qu, 2011). Individuals engage in social exchanges with the anticipation of receiving future benefits or rewards, according to social exchange theory (Ma & Qu, 2011). In these encounters, the theory emphasizes the necessity of fairness and reciprocity (Ahmad et al., 2023). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) define *social exchange theory* as a generally accepted conceptual framework in organizational behavior. According to SET, individuals engage in social exchanges with others in which they provide and receive resources like support, recognition, and opportunities for growth. Leaders who exhibit inclusive behaviors establish a positive social exchange with their colleagues, fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and reciprocity in the inclusive Leadership framework. According to research, inclusive Leadership increases employee commitment (Liden et al., 2008). This is explained by the social exchange process, in which employees believe their leader values and respects their contributions, resulting in increased dedication and engagement. Employee work engagement, which is a key driver of performance, is also influenced by inclusive Leadership. Inclusive leaders foster an environment in which employees feel appreciated and included, resulting in increased engagement and motivation (Bao et al., 2022).

Empirical Study

A study by Bannay et al. (2020) investigated the impact of inclusive leadership behaviors on innovative workplace behavior (IWB), focusing on the mediating role of work engagement. One hundred fifty respondents working for mobile phone businesses in Southern and Central Iraq were given questionnaires to complete to collect the study's data. The data were analyzed using the SPSS and SmartPLS programs and the Statistical Package for the

Social Sciences. The study's results indicated a substantial relationship between inclusive Leadership and work engagement and an intermediary role for work engagement in mediating between inclusive Leadership and IWB. The results showed that inclusive Leadership increased staff vigor, devotion, and absorption, positively improving IWB and employee engagement.

Another study by Bao et al. (2021) examined the relationship between inclusive Leadership and employee work engagement using a moderated mediation model. A study involving 261 Chinese employees found that employees' sense of responsibility significantly influences the relationship between inclusive Leadership and person-job fit and indirectly between inclusive Leadership and work engagement via person-job fit. Organizations should promote and develop inclusive leaders to enhance employee work engagement.

Qasim et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between inclusive Leadership and employees' helping behaviors. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 409 nurses working in Pakistan's health sector throughout three periods. The acquired data was analyzed using IBM-SPSS and AMOS to put the suggested model to the test. The study found that inclusive Leadership positively influenced employees' helping behaviors, highlighting the importance of inclusive Leadership in promoting prosocial behaviors among employees.

Jerónimo et al. (2021) conducted a study to examine the impact of inclusive Leadership on the relationship between diversity practices and employee engagement. The authors use simple and multiple linear regressions to assess the mediating influence of inclusion perception, the moderating function of inclusive Leadership, and whether this type of Leadership improves inclusion perception among workers. The study found that inclusive Leadership enhanced the impact of diversity practices on employee engagement, emphasizing the role of inclusive Leadership in creating an inclusive and engaged workforce.

Vakira et al. (2022) explored the effect of inclusive Leadership on employee engagement, mediated by psychological safety in the hospitality industry. The research conveniently selected 247 employees from Zimbabwe's hotel industry. With the assistance of trained research assistants, data were obtained using a self-administered structured questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to obtain descriptive and inferential statistics. We employed regression analysis. The study revealed a direct positive effect of inclusive Leadership on employee engagement, highlighting the importance of inclusive Leadership in fostering employee engagement in the hospitality sector.

The O'Brien (2019) study investigates the impact of inclusive Leadership (IL) on employee engagement (EE) in a Dublin financial services public sector organization. The research used a qualitative approach and nine semi-structured interviews to identify best practice IL traits and key drivers of EE. Most leaders were inclusive, with strong leadership traits such as fairness, respect, autonomy, and awareness of personal bias. However, some leaders did

not embrace critical elements of IL, such as openness to others' views and embracing their weaknesses.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive surveys are particularly suitable for determining the prevalence of a phenomenon, problem, attitude, or concern by examining a population subset. The population of the study was the 7,150 staff of University College Teaching Hospital, Ibadan. The sample size for the study was determined using the Taro Yamme (1967) formula, which gave a figure of 379 size. The study used stratified random sampling, where the population within the study was stratified based on the organization department, and random sampling was adopted in selecting the respondents. This was done to ensure that each element within the population was well represented. The questionnaire survey method was employed to gather data for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section one focused on the respondents' demographic information; Section two related to items measuring inclusive Leadership and employee engagement. Likert-type rating scale of five points was used to enable the respondents to give their opinions to items in the questionnaire based on SA - Strongly Agree - 5, A – Agree - 4, N – Neutral - 3, D – Disagree - 2, SD - Strongly Disagree – 1. An analytical research design was used with descriptive and inferential statistics to test the formulated hypotheses. The data collected were tested using the Multiple Regression Analysis at a 5% significance level.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This part of the paper highlights the analysis and findings of the research based on the statistical data analysis. Regression analysis was used to assess the study's hypothesis to ascertain the effect of inclusive Leadership on employee work engagement. Out of the 379 distributed questionnaires in the study, 298 were used for the data analysis due to unsubmitted questionnaires, missing data, and outliers.

Ho: Inclusive Leadership does not have a significant effect on employee work engagement.

Table 4.16: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.779 ^a	.544	.530	3.15993

a. Predictors: (Constant), inclusive Leadership

Source: Author's Computation, 2023

The model summary in Table 4.16 reveals a R square value of 0.544, implying that the constant variable of inclusive Leadership explains 54% of the variation in the dependent variable (employee work engagement). Because R² is a significant number, this regression (model) is helpful in generating predictions.

Table 4.17: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	631.693	1	105.282	10.544	.001 ^b
	Residual	3764.409	297	9.985		
	Total	4396.102	298			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee work engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), inclusive Leadership

Source: Author's Computation, 2023

According to Table 4.17's estimated F-value of 10.544, which has a significance level of 0.001 and is less than 0.10 (p<0.10), the explanatory variable components may impact change in the dependent variable (employee work engagement). Additionally, the table above summarised the findings of a variation analysis of the dependent variable with a significant value of the regression sum of squares (631.693) in comparison to the residual sum of squares with a value of 3764.409; these results show that the model adequately explains a significant amount of the variation in the dependent variables.

Table 4.18: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.722	1.753		11.819	<.001
	inclusive leadership	.789	.442	.113	1.785	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Employee work engagement

Source: Author's Computation, 2023

The dependent variable, as shown in Table 4.12, clarifies the influence of inclusive leadership management on employee work engagement. This was used as a yardstick to examine the influence of the variables. Specifically, Hypothesis H₀ predicted that inclusive Leadership is positively related to employee work engagement. Results indicated that inclusive Leadership had a significant positive relationship with employee work engagement ($\beta = 0.789$, $t = 11.819$, $p = .005$). This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, the alternate hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, inclusive Leadership have a positive effect on employee work engagement in University College, Ibadan.

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals a compelling and statistically significant correlation between inclusive leadership and employee work engagement within the hospital setting. Notably, respondents widely perceive the leadership within the hospital as accessible, fostering open discussions, and creating an inclusive environment for all team members, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds. The recognition and appreciation of each team member's unique skills and experiences contribute significantly to the establishment of a culture rooted in inclusivity and equity. Consequently, these factors play a pivotal role in shaping employees' sense of engagement with the organization. These findings align with the research of Jerónimo et al. (2021), emphasizing the substantial impact of inclusive leadership on fostering employee engagement and innovative behavior. Furthermore, corroborating the insights of Bao et al. (2021), the study suggests that inclusive leadership positively influences work engagement, especially within the unique context of a green environment. Additionally, drawing on the context outlined by Vakira et al. (2022), the study accentuates that inclusive leadership substantially and positively affects employee engagement.

This not only underscores the importance of inclusive leadership in enhancing employee engagement but also highlights its role in creating a supportive organizational climate that nurtures innovation. Furthermore, building upon the findings, the study echoes the sentiment of prior research, suggesting that inclusive leadership not only enhances employee engagement but also cultivates a workplace environment that encourages prosocial behaviors, motivating employees to go above and beyond to support their colleagues. In essence, these findings emphasize the multifaceted impact of inclusive leadership on employee engagement, providing a comprehensive understanding of its role in fostering a positive organizational climate and encouraging behaviors that extend beyond routine tasks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings provide strong evidence for the positive impact of inclusive Leadership on employee engagement. Inclusive Leadership creates a supportive and inclusive work environment where employees feel valued, respected, and included. This, in turn, fosters employee engagement, innovative behavior, psychological empowerment, and prosocial behaviors

Recommendations

Organizations should provide leadership training programs that focus on developing inclusive leadership skills. This can include training on empathy, active listening, and creating an inclusive work culture. By equipping leaders with the necessary skills, they can effectively promote employee engagement and create a supportive work environment.

Inclusive leaders should prioritize open and transparent communication with their employees. Regular feedback sessions and opportunities for employees to voice their opinions and concerns can foster a sense of inclusion and engagement. Leaders should actively listen to their employees and consider their feedback when making decisions. Organizations should implement diversity and inclusion initiatives that go beyond mere compliance. Inclusive leaders should actively promote diversity and create opportunities for employees from diverse backgrounds to contribute and thrive. This can include initiatives such as employee resource groups, mentorship programs, and diversity training.

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