



THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN FOSTERING WORKPLACE INCLUSION: A SOCIAL INFORMATION PROCESSING PERSPECTIVE

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The extant literature has largely overlooked the importance of a climate for inclusion as a response to the growing trend of workplace diversity. This conceptual article contends that an organization-wide change effort comprising several reinforcing processes aimed at creating a climate for inclusion is needed to institutionalize workplace inclusion. Drawing on social information processing theory, authentic leaders are posited to transmit social information about the importance of inclusion into the work environment through inclusive leader role modeling. Reward systems that remunerate inclusive conduct can foster the vicarious learning of inclusive conduct by followers. Large and diverse workgroups offer a plethora of opportunities for followers to learn how to behave in an inclusive manner. Authentic leaders and followers who share cooperative goals related to developing a climate for inclusion can prompt the vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers, thereby facilitating goal attainment for both parties. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed. © 2014 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Keywords: social information processing theory, climate for inclusion, integration-and-learning, authentic leadership, reward systems, group composition, group size, goal interdependence

Introduction

Organizations are experiencing a prominent trend of an increasingly diverse workforce, thereby underscoring the earnest need for leaders to effectively attend to the changing nature of the workplace (Chavez &

Weisinger, 2008; Lirio, Lee, Williams, Haugen, & Kossek, 2008; McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2009; Pless & Maak, 2004; Sanchez-Burks, Bartel, & Blount, 2009; Scott, Heathcote, & Gruman, 2011). Through a review of the diversity literature, Shore et al. (2009) conclude that, until recently, researchers have largely examined diversity from the perspective

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of a single facet, including race, ethnicity, and gender. Often this research has been grounded in its originating paradigms that center mostly on the problems, such as biases and discrimination, associated with diversity (Shore et al., 2009). However, recently this area of research has focused on examining the value inherent in diversity and workplace inclusion (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; Nishii, 2013; Q. M. Roberson, 2006).

More specifically, there has been a growing interest toward examining how nontraditional internal processes can foster workplace inclusion (Shore et al., 2011). For instance, Wasserman, Gallegos, and Ferdman (2008) assert that leaders are instrumental in cham-

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pioning inclusion initiatives. Instead of silencing resistance to inclusion initiatives, leaders must engage with such resistance to support the vision of an inclusive workplace (Wasserman et al., 2008). Indeed, inclusion is a nascent construct that is conceptually and empirically distinct from diversity (Shore et al., 2011). Broadly speaking, inclusion refers to employee involvement and the integration of diversity into organizational systems and processes, whereas diversity refers to the variability in the composition of a work group (Q. M. Roberson, 2006). Although several conceptualizations of inclusion have

been proposed in the literature (e.g., Lirio et al., 2008; Q. M. Roberson, 2006), two general themes of belongingness and uniqueness emerge from these definitions (Shore et al., 2011). The *belongingness* theme reflects a sense of acceptance for all organizational members, whereas the *uniqueness* theme implies that the contributions of all employees are valued whereby each member experiences respect and the opportunity for voice in the workplace. The commonalities across these definitions suggest that we need to begin understanding how this type of work climate can be fostered to provide all employees the opportunity to experience a sense of belongingness and uniqueness.

Building upon these dominant themes of inclusion and in line with the general conceptualization of work climate (e.g., Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider, 1990), the term *climate for inclusion* is defined as the shared perception of the work environment including the practices, policies, and procedures that guide a shared understanding that inclusive behaviors, which foster belongingness and uniqueness, are expected, supported, and rewarded. This article seeks to understand how inclusion can be institutionalized in the work environment by drawing on social information processing theory as an overarching theoretical framework (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). More specifically, the integration-and-learning paradigm (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Ely, 1996) is offered as a prelude to the following discussion. This paradigm posits that when organizations sincerely value and embrace diversity by linking it to work processes, tasks, and strategies, the result is a significant improvement in terms of group functioning (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Ely, 1996). However, employees will only apply their individual differences if they feel comfortable in the workplace. In support, Tulenko and Kryder (1990) found that employees must feel comfortable in order to be creative, which undoubtedly involves the application of individual differences. Moreover, employees from underrepresented groups often experience discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization (Goldman, Gutek, Stein, & Lewis, 2006). These feelings tend to have a direct negative influence on their desire and capacity to contribute to the organization (L. Roberson & Block, 2001). Henceforth, a climate for inclusion, which engenders a sense of belongingness and uniqueness, provides the comfort needed for employees to apply their individual differences to work processes, strategies, and tasks. It is therefore imperative to understand *how* a climate for inclusion can be institutionalized.

This article presents a conceptual model that explains why authentic leaders are a key source of social information that can significantly influence the formation of a climate for inclusion. Authentic leaders can help their followers understand the value of individual

differences by using their elevated status to seek out opportunities to support and encourage followers to apply their individual differences to improve work processes. Since the integration-and-learning perspective emphasizes the need for several reinforcing systems and processes (Thomas & Ely, 1996), the role of organizational reward systems, workgroup composition, group size, and goal interdependence are also explored because these factors are fundamental in reinforcing the importance of workplace inclusion. Taken together, this article explores how an organization-wide change effort aimed at institutionalizing workplace inclusion through the formation of a climate for inclusion can enable employees to apply their individual differences to work processes, strategies, and tasks.

In doing so, this article contributes to several calls for this much-needed research. Q. M. Roberson (2006) contends that research is sorely needed pertaining to the determinants of inclusive work climates. Shore et al. (2011) assert “much research is still needed to understand how organizations can create inclusive environments that provide opportunities for the variety of people who work together in our global economy” (p. 1275). Moreover, Wasserman et al. (2008) specifically contend that leaders have a particularly instrumental role in shaping an inclusive workplace. Indeed, researchers have long recognized the importance of leaders in shaping climate perceptions (Dragoni, 2005). Leaders communicate their own meanings and interpretations of organizational systems by serving as “interpretive filters” of practices, policies, and procedures (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003). In doing so, leaders provide a common reference point for employees that in turn limits the variation in employee interpretations of the work climate (Ashforth, 1985). Leaders have thus been coined “meaning managers” (Rentsch, 1990) and “climate engineers” (Naumann & Bennett, 2000). Although there are a number of studies that demonstrate how specific leadership styles can shape facet-specific climates (e.g., Ehrhart, 2004; Hsiung, 2012), limited research has examined how leadership can foster a climate for inclusion.

This article offers several important theoretical contributions. First, the social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) is used to understand why authentic leaders are a particularly important determinant in the formation of an inclusive climate. In doing so, this research deepens our understanding of the integration-and-learning paradigm by exploring how authentic leaders can foster a climate for inclusion, thereby enabling employees to feel comfortable so they can apply their individual differences to work processes. Second, the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) explains how authentic leaders can shape a climate for inclusion by role modeling inclusive conduct for their followers. The central moral value of inclusion is a key individual difference that differentiates the authentic leaders who are the most effective role models. Third, the dynamic formation of an inclusive climate is taken into account by examining how followers who vicariously learn how to behave in an inclusive manner can indirectly help foster a climate for inclusion. Fourth, organizational- and group-level factors (i.e., reward systems, workgroup composition, group size, and goal interdependence) can influence followers’ vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors, thereby deepening our understanding of how important structures and processes can indirectly influence the formation of an inclusive climate.

In the following, an overview of organizational climate and culture is presented within the context of workplace inclusion. Thereafter, the social information processing theory and the importance of authentic leadership are discussed. The conceptual model is then presented along with the research propositions. This article concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications along with directions for future research.

Organizational Climate and Organizational Culture

Organizational climate can be defined as the shared perception of the work environment, including the procedures, policies, and

practices that guide the expected, supported, and rewarded behaviors (Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider, 1990; Schneider, White, & Paul, 1998). An organizational climate manifests when employees collectively share perceptions of the nature of the work environment (L. R. James, James, & Ashe, 1990). The theoretical and methodological concerns associated with the global conceptualization of climate have resulted in a shift

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toward the focus on a climate *for* something (Schneider, 1990)—that is, a climate with a specific referent, such as safety (Zohar, 1980), innovation (Anderson & West, 1998), and service (Schneider et al., 1998). Researchers have recently introduced the construct of a climate for inclusion (e.g., Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011). As previously alluded to, climate for inclusion is defined as the shared perception of the work environment comprising the practices, policies, and procedures that guide a shared understanding that inclusive behaviors, which foster a sense of belongingness and uniqueness, are expected, supported, and rewarded. This definition is based on the widely accepted meaning of work climate (e.g., Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider, 1990) and the two dominant themes of inclusion in the extant literature (Shore et al., 2011). Schneider, Erhart, and Macey (2013) comprehensively define organizational culture as the shared values, assumptions, and beliefs that are communicated to newcomers through myths and stories about how the organization addressed prior issues of internal integration and external adaptation that have shaped its present form. In other words, employees are taught how they should think, feel, and behave according to the behaviors that the organization used to overcome prior problems, thereby validating the importance of these actions (Schein, 2010).

Organizational culture manifests through three layers that differ in terms of subjectivity and accessibility (Schein, 1990). First, *artifacts* are highly observable elements (e.g., rituals, dress, myths, stories, symbols, and language) that are underpinned by values, beliefs, and assumptions that represent the outermost layer of culture. Second, *espoused values* reflect the middle layer of culture and are moderately accessible organizational values and philosophies. Third, *underlying assumptions* are unobservable taken-for-granted assumptions, values, and beliefs that influence employee perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that represent the innermost layer of culture. The culture of inclusion construct has also recently been introduced into the literature (e.g., Mujtaba, 2013; Pless & Maak, 2004; Wasserman et al., 2008). Culture of inclusion is defined as the shared values, assumptions, and beliefs about the importance of uniqueness and belongingness in fostering workplace inclusion that are communicated to newcomers to explain how this has helped the organization address prior issues related to internal integration and external adaptation. This definition draws on the meaning of organizational culture (Schneider et al., 2013) and the two core themes of inclusion (Shore et al., 2011).

Climate and culture are distinct, albeit overlapping, constructs (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Climate is rooted in psychological research concerned with the impact of climate on individuals using predominantly quantitative methods that are often employed across multiple organizations (Denison, 1996). In contrast, culture has anthropological roots concerned with understanding how social systems evolve using predominantly qualitative methods in a single organization (Denison, 1996). Henceforth, climate has a personal frame of reference and culture has a system frame of reference (L. R. James et al., 1990). Climate also focuses on relatively enduring surface-level manifestations of organizational life, whereas culture focuses on highly enduring beliefs, values, and assumptions that are embedded in organizational life (Denison, 1996; Moran & Volkwein, 1992). In other words, climate involves employee perceptions

of *what* happens in the organization and culture focuses on *why* it happens (Ostroff et al., 2003).

Nevertheless, climate and culture both focus on the meaning-making process that individuals use to make sense of their work environment that is learned through social interactions with others (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Schneider et al., 2013). There is an inherent overlapping nature of these constructs that occurs through the link between assumptions (culture) and perceptions (climate) (Ashforth, 1985). In short, climate manifests from culture (Schein, 1990) because culture influences organizational procedures, policies, and practices (Ostroff et al., 2003). In other words, the deeply embedded values, assumptions, and beliefs of culture influence the organizational system that in turn shapes employee perceptions of the work climate (Moran & Volkwein, 1992). Notwithstanding, Moran and Volkwein (1992) also posit that short-term factors, such as leadership style, can also influence climate perceptions. Taken together, culture influences organizational structures that are collectively interpreted by employees, thereby shaping climate perceptions (Ostroff et al., 2003).

Social Information Processing, Integration and Learning, and Workplace Inclusion

The social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) explains that individuals make meaning of their environment based on processing the social information in the workplace. In other words, employees socially construct their perceptions and attitudes based on the social cues within the workplace that in turn influences their behavior (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). As previously alluded to, the extent to which a work climate represents a specific facet is contingent on the interpretations of the attributes of the work environment (L. R. James et al., 1990). An established critique of this theory is that it fails to adequately explain how information is dispersed among individuals (Contractor & Eisenberg, 1990). In response, social learning theory is used to explain how authentic leaders

can transmit social cues in the workplace regarding the importance and expectation for inclusive behaviors. Prior to doing so, the three dominant paradigms that explain how organizations can approach diversity are introduced whereby the integration-and-learning paradigm is offered as a prelude to the conceptual model (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

First, the *discrimination-and-fairness* paradigm asserts that there is a moral responsibility to eliminate discrimination to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities for all employees; however, this approach tends to result in assimilation and poor group functioning. Second, the *access-and-legitimacy* paradigm posits that access to specific target markets can occur by altering the workforce to mirror the primary characteristics of the target markets. Although this approach tends to result in moderate outcomes, employees are made aware of their differences. Third, the *integration-and-learning* paradigm values diversity as a resource, whereby diversity is linked to work processes, strategies, and tasks. The integration of all employees into the workplace facilitates sharing of diverse perspectives and insights about work-related matters resulting in cross-cultural learning. This approach results in the most beneficial outcomes for employees and the organization. The integration-and-learning perspective is adopted as a prelude to the conceptual model because a climate for inclusion is posited to foster feelings of comfort, thereby enabling employees to apply their individual differences in the work environment.

Moreover, the meanings and interpretations of the work environment are socially constructed (L. R. James et al., 1990; L. R. James & McIntyre, 1996). The behavioral repertoires of organizations are malleable because the information derived from the social environment is fluid (e.g., Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). The prominent sources of social information tend to derive from those with high status (e.g., Copeland, 1994). Status and power differences are nearly inherent within any group dynamic (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), and these status differences can have a pervasive influence on employee perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Bunderson & Reagans, 2011).

Since work climate is learned through social interactions (Reichers & Schneider, 1990), the primary source of social information that can influence the formation of a climate for inclusion must be examined.

Research highlights the critical role of leaders in shaping employee perceptions of the work environment. McKay et al. (2009) conclude that significant financial gains were achieved when leaders and subordinates shared perceptions of a workplace that socially integrated all employees and used fair personnel practices. Indeed, leaders are instrumental in shaping shared climate perceptions because followers tend to rely on their daily interactions with their leaders to understand the behavioral expectations in the workplace (Schneider et al., 1998). Kozlowski and Doherty (1989) further posit that “an individual’s immediate supervisor is the most salient, tangible representative of management actions, policies, and procedures” (p. 547). Organizational practices, procedures, and policies are interpreted by leaders and subsequently manifest through their actions and behaviors (Ostroff et al., 2003). Followers use this information provided by their leaders to understand the behavioral expectations in the workplace (Rentsch, 1990). Henceforth, leaders are particularly instrumental in shaping climate perceptions because they

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serve as a salient source of social information for their followers.

Authentic leaders are particularly important in fostering a climate for inclusion because ethicality is central to this style of leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Followers tend to perceive these leaders as credible, respectful, and trustworthy because their actions and behaviors are aligned with their convictions and values (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). Luthans and Avolio (2003) further state that “the authentic leader does not try to coerce or even rationally persuade associates, but

rather the leader’s authentic values, beliefs, and behaviors serve to model the development of associates” (p. 243). In other words, authentic leaders are self-regulating leaders who are positive role models for their followers because they behave in accordance with their morals and values despite contradictory pressures (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Broadly speaking, inclusive behaviors that can derive from an authentic leadership style include genuinely eliciting viewpoints from followers (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008), seeking follower input to facilitate participative decision-making (Pless & Maak, 2004), and encouraging open communication especially among employees whose voices may have otherwise been absent (Nemphard & Edmondson, 2006). Moreover, recent research provides several context-specific examples of inclusive behaviors. For instance, Munir, Yarker, Hicks, and Donaldson-Feilder (2012) explain that leaders can use an array of inclusive behaviors (e.g., creating a phased return to work schedule; explaining changes to work processes and/or the job role; revising job duties to allow for a lighter workload) to help an employee transition back to work following a long-term sick leave. In a similar vein, Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard, and Sürgevil (2011) contend that leaders can use specific inclusive behaviors (e.g., developing a diversity education program with a sexual orientation component; creating an open dialogue to reduce sexual orientation misperceptions) directed toward the integration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees into the workplace.

Although sufficient evidence supports the importance of authentic leaders as a key source of social influence to initiate and sustain an organization-wide initiative aimed at fostering workplace inclusion, several caveats must be noted. Authentic leaders, similar to most other individuals, may not always “do the right thing” and may also have prejudices and biases. However, since ethicality is central to authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), these leaders tend to engage in ethical behaviors that are driven by their values and

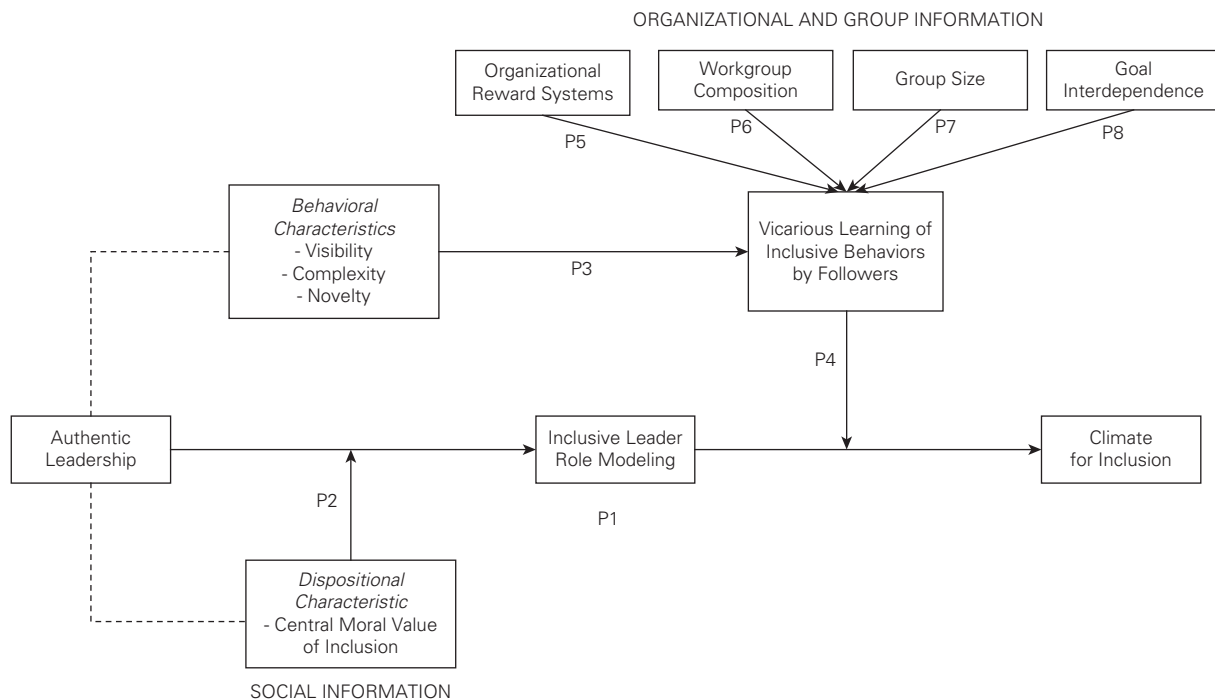
beliefs system. Nevertheless, some authentic leaders may fail to “do the right thing” on occasion. Henceforth, an organization-wide change approach is presented to explain why authentic leaders may be particularly driven to act inclusive even if it is not in their moral imperative.

To illustrate, a reward system that remunerates inclusive behaviors provides a direct impetus for authentic leaders to engage in inclusive conduct. In support, Treviño (1990) found that reward systems that indicate the type of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors tend to result in fewer unethical decisions. Authentic leaders who fail to adhere to these behavioral expectations may be disciplined by their superiors, which could become quite public given their elevated status and high visibility. Henceforth, reward systems can be critical in reinforcing the importance of workplace inclusion. Moreover, this article contends that authentic leaders have different central moral values, which explains why authentic leaders who value inclusion as a central moral value engage in more inclusive behaviors than authentic leaders who do not hold inclusion as a central moral value.

Although authentic leaders may not always “do the right thing” all the time, there are several reinforcing mechanisms that can motivate these individuals to support workplace inclusion. Next, the conceptual model is presented.

The Formation of a Climate for Inclusion: A Social Information Processing Perspective

In the following, the institutionalization of workplace inclusion is delineated through the social formation of a climate for inclusion. The conceptual model (Figure 1) depicts the research propositions. First, authentic leaders serve as role models, thereby highlighting the behaviors that are expected from followers who in turn can positively influence employee perceptions of a climate for inclusion. Second, organizational reward systems that remunerate inclusive behaviors provide an impetus for followers to learn how to behave in an inclusive manner. Third, large and diverse workgroups present greater opportunities for followers to learn how to engage in inclusive conduct. Fourth,



Note: The dashed line refers to the dispositional and behavioral characteristics that derive from authentic leadership.

FIGURE 1. An Organizationwide Approach to Developing a Climate for Inclusion

authentic leaders and followers who share similar goals related to creating a climate for inclusion can entice followers to learn how to behave in an inclusive manner. The theoretical arguments are constructed in detail next.

Authentic Leadership and a Climate for Inclusion

Organizational climate involves the meanings employees assign to organizational actions and attributes (L. A. James & James, 1989). In other words, climate reflects the “way things are around here” (Reichers & Schneider, 1990, p. 22). As previously alluded to, leaders play an instrumental role in the

formation of the work climate because it is primarily based on the values and belief systems of leaders (Dickson, Smith, Grojean, & Ehrhart, 2001). Since authentic leaders are role models who behave according to their strong values and belief systems (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), their interactions with their followers can pervasively influence follower behavior (e.g., Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris, 2010). Based on this line of reasoning, authentic leaders are critical in shaping a climate for inclusion through the mediating role of inclusive leader role modeling.

There are four features of authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008). First, *self-awareness*

occurs when a leader has an understanding of his/her strengths, weaknesses, impact on others, and own meaning-making process. In other words, authentic leaders who are self-aware are highly cognizant of their verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Second, *relational transparency* occurs when a leader behaves in a manner that represents his/her true nature. Stated differently, authentic leaders who are transparent present their genuine self that is in line with their internalized morals and values when leading others. Third, *balanced processing* occurs when a leader reviews and analyzes all information prior to making a

decision despite potential contradictions to his/her personal viewpoint. In other words, authentic leaders strive to make fair decisions by genuinely considering the perspectives of others. Lastly, *internalized moral perspective* represents a form of self-regulation whereby internalized morals and values guide decision-making processes. Indeed, authentic leaders are particularly important in institutionalizing workplace inclusion because their inherent ethical nature drives their decision-making processes and behaviors.

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986) further explains *how* authentic leaders can create a climate for inclusion. The values and belief systems of authentic leaders are embodied through their ethical verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Indeed, Sims (1992) defines ethical behavior as actions that are morally “good” as opposed to morally “bad.” Although Sims (1992) notes that this perspective inherently involves a grey area, morally “good” behaviors undoubtedly include inclusive behaviors. Henceforth, authentic leaders tend to engage in a variety of inclusive behaviors, which as previously suggested, can broadly include genuinely valuing diverse perspectives, encouraging participative decision-making, and supporting open communication.

More specifically, since authentic leaders are role models (Luthans & Avolio, 2003), their behaviors and actions signify the appropriate and expected behavioral conduct from followers. Followers learn, as opposed to merely mimicking, which behaviors to replicate in the workplace through direct and indirect experience (Bandura, 1986). Direct experience occurs when followers replicate the observed behaviors. Authentic leaders who socially approve of these behaviors indirectly encourage replication of such behaviors. In contrast, indirect experience occurs when followers engage in vicarious learning by observing the consequences arising from the behaviors of others, which either facilitates or impedes followers’ motivation to produce similar behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Behaviors that are perceived to result in favorable outcomes are usually replicated, while

behaviors that are punished and/or fail to result in any rewards tend not to be replicated (Bandura, 1986). Followers encode this information into memory and through skill acquisition replication of similar behaviors tend to begin (Bandura, 1986).

In essence, authentic leaders are self-aware, transparent, and make balanced decisions guided by deeply held morals and values (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Since leaders are instrumental in shaping a shared perception of the work climate (Dickson et al., 2001), authentic leaders are particularly instrumental in conveying the expectations for inclusive behaviors through inclusive leader role modeling, thereby resulting in perceptions of a climate for inclusion.

Proposition 1: Inclusive leader role modeling mediates the positive relationship between authentic leadership and a climate for inclusion.

The Moderating Role of the Central Moral Value of Inclusion

Although authentic leaders naturally demonstrate inclusive behaviors through their role modeling, their central values are a key individual difference that can result in certain authentic leaders who are more effective role models than others. More specifically, authentic leaders with a central moral value of inclusion are posited to engage in more inclusive leader role modeling than authentic leaders who do not prioritize inclusion as a central moral value. Since values drive behavior (Verplanken & Holland, 2002), authentic leaders who strongly value inclusion are more likely to exhibit behaviors that resemble a sense of belongingness and uniqueness. Indeed, these leaders tend to exhibit inclusive behaviors more frequently than those with a moral perspective grounded in a different central moral value. Thus, authentic leaders who strongly value inclusion as a central moral value are uniquely influential in shaping a climate for inclusion.

Values are lasting beliefs regarding the types of behavior that are most preferred, thereby guiding future actions (Rokeach, 1979); however, the importance placed

on each value differs by each individual (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Nevertheless, there are central values that are the most influential in driving behavior (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Although all authentic leaders have an internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2008), the central moral value held by each authentic leader differs. There are many different moral values, including trustworthiness, responsibility, and citizenship (Schwartz, 2005); however, authentic leaders who are driven by a moral perspective centered on inclusion are more likely to demonstrate verbal and nonverbal behaviors resembling inclusion than authentic leaders with a moral perspective centered on a different moral value.

Since authentic leaders are characterized by relational transparency (Walumbwa et al., 2008), leaders with a central moral value of inclusion will tend to present their genuine self in accordance with this deeply held value. Moreover, these authentic leaders are highly self-aware and will also tend to engage in balanced decision-making processes guided by this central moral value of inclusion (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Thus, the salience of inclusion as a central value of authentic leaders tends to be highly apparent through their role modeling as evidenced through their actions, gestures, and words. Since values serve as regulatory guides (Lord & Brown, 2001), the central moral value of authentic leaders can moderate the positive relationship between authentic leadership and inclusive leader role modeling.

Proposition 2: The central moral value of inclusion will moderate the relationship between authentic leadership and inclusive leader role modeling, such that strong levels of the central moral value of inclusion will strengthen the positive relationship between authentic leadership and inclusive leader role modeling compared to low levels of the central moral value of inclusion.

Authentic leaders are particularly instrumental in conveying the expectations for inclusive behaviors through inclusive leader role modeling, thereby resulting in perceptions of a climate for inclusion.

The Dynamic Interplay Between Leaders and Followers in Forming a Climate for Inclusion

The relationship between inclusive leader role modeling and the formation of an inclusive climate requires careful consideration of the followers because they occupy a vital role in shaping a climate for inclusion. There are two overarching processes that underpin how followers can vicariously learn about workplace inclusion (Gioia & Manz, 1985). First, the *cognitive process* includes follower attention and retention of the observed behaviors demonstrated by an authentic leader (Bandura, 1977). Second, the *behavioral process* relies on cognitive processing and motivation to reproduce the observed behaviors (Bandura, 1977). The following discussion elaborates on this dynamic interplay between leaders, followers, and the formation of a climate for inclusion.

The relationship between inclusive leader role modeling and the formation of an inclusive climate requires careful consideration of the followers because they occupy a vital role in shaping a climate for inclusion.

In line with social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), three behavioral characteristics of authentic leaders are posited to directly influence followers' vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors. First, the *visibility of behaviors* refers to the extent to which leaders' behaviors are accessible and observable to followers. Second, the *complexity of behaviors* reflects the extent to which leaders' behaviors resemble an intricate and complicated

arrangement of components that make it difficult for followers to understand the nature of the behavior. Third, the *novelty of behaviors* refers to the extent to which leaders' behaviors are original and unfamiliar to followers.

Visibility of Behaviors

The extent to which authentic leaders' behaviors are visible to followers will significantly influence followers' ability to vicariously learn these inclusive behaviors. Authentic leaders who engage in highly visible inclusive behaviors bestow the opportunity for followers to devote the required attention

and awareness to the observed behaviors (Bandura, 1977). In contrast, covert behaviors are difficult to observe, and thus gathering the needed behavioral information is difficult. Visible behaviors also allow for improved retention of the observed behaviors due to a more accurate cognitive absorption of the behavioral details. This detailed retention of the behavioral characteristics strengthens the rules or codes of the observed behaviors into memory, thereby positively influencing vicarious learning by followers (Bandura, 1977). Authentic leaders who engage in highly visible inclusive behaviors can improve the overall learning process of how to properly enact inclusive behaviors by followers (Bandura, 1977). These arguments are summarized in the following proposition.

Proposition 3a: The visibility of the leader's inclusive behaviors will be positively related to followers' vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors.

Complexity and Novelty of Behaviors

The complexity and novelty of the inclusive behaviors demonstrated by authentic leaders can also directly influence followers' vicarious learning of such behaviors. When authentic leaders engage in complex and novel inclusive behaviors, it becomes very difficult for followers to attend to all of the behavioral details because greater cognitive processing is required. Indeed, Jassawalla and Sashittal (1999) found that collaborative behaviors involving product development processes are complex and difficult for employees to learn. Similarly, authentic leaders who engage in complex and novel inclusive behaviors tend to make it difficult for followers to learn these behaviors, resulting in an associated decrease in vicarious learning. This impaired learning process hinders followers' ability to learn how to replicate similar behaviors in future workplace interactions.

Since complex and novel behaviors require more thoughtful cognitive processing, followers can easily overlook critical information, leading to inaccurate or incomplete coding of the observed behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Indeed, early research has reported that nonlinear rules are associated

with greater learning difficulties than linear rules (Brehmer, Hagafors, & Johansson, 1980). Complex and novel behaviors require greater attention and retention of the behavioral details because the unfamiliar nature of these behaviors requires greater awareness and attention to leaders' behavioral processes for successful replication. It may be difficult for some followers to reproduce complex and novel behaviors because they may not have the necessary capabilities needed to effectively replicate the observed behaviors. Since successful replication of complex and novel behaviors is difficult, there tends to be an associated decrease in the followers' motivation to replicate behaviors that are complex and novel (Bandura, 1977). The following propositions are offered in support of these arguments.

Proposition 3b: The complexity of the leader's inclusive behaviors will be negatively related to followers' vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors.

Proposition 3c: The novelty of the leader's inclusive behaviors will be negatively related to followers' vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors.

Followers' Vicarious Learning

Authentic leaders are particularly instrumental in guiding the inclusive conduct of their followers. In further support, Hannah, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2011) found that followers' moral courage mediated the relationship between authentic leadership and followers' ethical and prosocial behaviors. In other words, authentic leaders can effectively guide followers toward engaging in ethical behaviors, refraining from engaging in unethical behaviors, and behaving in a manner that promotes the well-being and integrity of others (Hannah et al., 2011). In the following, the interplay between inclusive leader role modeling and followers' learning of inclusive behaviors is examined to understand *how* the replication of authentic leaders' behaviors can occur.

There are four conditions that must be satisfied for successful role modeling to occur (Bandura, 1972, 1986). First, followers must devote sufficient *attention* to the behavior of

the role model. In other words, followers must carefully observe the behaviors of authentic leaders with sufficient detail to understand how they can replicate the observed behaviors. Authentic leaders serve as important role models (Luthans & Avolio, 2003), and their inherent power, visibility, and legitimacy provide the leverage needed to positively influence follower behavior (Wood & Bandura, 1989). For example, recent empirical research found that abusive manager behavior is positively linked to abusive supervisor behavior and in turn is positively linked to interpersonal deviance at the employee level (Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012). These researchers used social learning theory to explain why employees often look to their leader's behavior to guide their own behavior and conduct within the work environment.

Second, followers must engage in the *retention* of the behaviors of authentic leaders in some symbolic form for later replication (Bandura, 1972, 1986). The failure to retain the details of the observed behaviors can make it very difficult for followers to engage in behaviors that are similar to those that have been observed. Henceforth, sufficient attention and retention of the observed behaviors by followers enable for successful modeling of inclusive behaviors. Moreover, followers must retrieve the symbolic representations to guide their *reproduction* of the observed behaviors (Bandura, 1972, 1986). In other words, followers seek to emulate inclusive behaviors based on their observation of the behaviors of authentic leaders. The replication of the inclusive behaviors is likely to occur, provided the followers have the physical and cognitive capacity to replicate the observed behaviors.

Finally, replication of the behaviors of authentic leaders are also contingent upon *motivational* and reinforcement processes (Bandura, 1972, 1986). Followers must possess a desire to reproduce the observed behaviors, which is partially contingent upon reinforcement, in order for modeling of the observed behaviors to occur. As previously alluded to, behaviors that are received negatively by leaders (e.g., discipline, punishment) discourages employees from adopting such behaviors,

whereas behaviors that are received positively by leaders (e.g., praised, rewarded) encourage future replication of such behaviors (Bandura, 1986). In other words, the consequences associated with certain behaviors inevitably signal to employees the expected behavioral conduct in the workplace. For example, an employee who observes a colleague receiving praise for his/her inclusive conduct signals to other employees that the

Although authentic leaders play an important role in shaping a climate for inclusion, an organization-wide support system is needed for complete institutionalization of workplace inclusion.

leader positively views this form of behavioral conduct. This outcome reinforces the acceptableness of the behavior, thereby encouraging others to adopt similar behaviors. The aforementioned arguments are summarized in the following proposition.

Proposition 4: Vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers will moderate the relationship between inclusive leader role modeling and a climate for inclusion, such that strong levels of vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers will strengthen the positive relationship between inclusive leader role modeling and a climate for inclusion compared to low

levels of vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers.

The Influence of Organizational and Group Processes, Structures, and Strategies

The integration-and-learning perspective (Ely & Thomas, 2001) posits that an organization-wide change effort can allow for meaningful integration of diversity into work processes. As previously suggested, a climate for inclusion is an important mechanism in which to facilitate feelings of comfort, thereby enabling all employees to apply their individual differences in the workplace. Although authentic leaders play an important role in shaping a climate for inclusion, an organization-wide support system is needed for complete institutionalization of workplace inclusion. This perspective indicates that it is necessary to consider how other social factors (e.g.,

organizational and group processes, structures, and strategies) influence the application of diversity to work processes. In this section, the role of organizational reward systems, workgroup composition, group size, and goal structures are examined on followers' vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors.

Reward Systems

Organizational reward systems entail monetary and nonmonetary means in which to recognize employees for specific behaviors and achievements (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). Reward systems directly influence the information in the social environment by indicating the nature of the behaviors expected from employees (Kerr, 1975). As previously alluded to, followers learn how to behave in the workplace by avoiding replicating behaviors that are punished and replicating behaviors that are rewarded (Bandura, 1977). Henceforth, the organizational reward system is a key organizational process that dictates the type of behaviors expected in the workplace by rewarding those behaviors that are expected from employees (Colville & Millner, 2011).

Organizations that adopt an organization-wide change effort aimed at recognizing the value of all employees by meaningfully integrating diversity into work processes require a reward system that supports this process. Indeed, the integration-and-learning perspective involves employees sharing their diverse insights in order to offer fresh ideas to improve work processes (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Since this process requires employees to constructively challenge and learn from each other, there is an implicit need for inclusive interactions. Reward systems that encourage and reward inclusive behaviors can prompt such behaviors from employees (e.g., Podsakoff, Podsakoff, & Kuskova, 2010). In support, Ferrin and Dirks (2003) found that employees shared more knowledge with their peers when the reward system supported knowledge sharing; however, competitive reward systems that failed to remunerate knowledge sharing resulted in less information sharing among employees (Ferrin & Dirks, 2003). This research suggests that followers will engage in

greater vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors if the reward system encourages this type of behavior.

In contrast, reward systems that fail to reward employees for their inclusive behaviors will unlikely encourage employee learning of inclusive conduct. To illustrate, Hegarty and Sims (1987) found an increase in unethical behavior when these behaviors were rewarded in comparison to when these behaviors were not rewarded. This study provides direct evidence of the importance of the reward system in terms of eliciting specific types of behaviors. The reward system is thus critical in terms of transmitting social information into the work environment pertaining to the expected behaviors from employees (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). In essence, a reward system that remunerates employees for vicariously learning how to engage in inclusive conduct can elicit vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors from followers. Henceforth, the following proposition is offered.

Proposition 5: Organizational reward systems that reward inclusive behaviors are positively related to vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers.

Workgroup Composition

Diversity in the composition of the workgroup can vary in terms of visible and nonvisible characteristics of group members (Milliken & Martins, 1996). Workgroup diversity can be surface-level, such as gender, or it can be deep-level, such as work values (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). For simplicity, this section is limited to examining workgroup composition from a cultural perspective; however, the arguments hold for both visible and nonvisible differences among group members. Since workgroup composition can have a significant influence on employee behavior (Choi, 2007), the nature of the composition of the workgroup on followers' learning of inclusive conduct must be examined.

Culturally diverse groups are composed of group members that significantly differ in terms of national and/or ethnic background,

whereas *culturally homogeneous groups* are composed of group members that share the same national and/or ethnic background (Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Culturally diverse workgroups tend to have significant differences in the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors among group members (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Indeed, these differences provide authentic leaders a greater number of high-quality opportunities to imbue social cues about the importance of workplace inclusion into the work environment (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). In other words, authentic leaders can easily seek out opportunities to help employees apply their individual differences to work processes, tasks, and strategies. Subsequently, there are greater opportunities for followers to vicariously learn how to engage in inclusive behaviors by observing the behaviors of authentic leaders. In support, Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) found that students that had more interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds experienced more positive learning outcomes, including intellectual engagement and active thinking.

Conversely, culturally homogeneous workgroups are negatively related to vicariously learning of inclusive behaviors by followers because there are fewer opportunities for followers to learn how to behave in an inclusive manner. Indeed, homogeneous workgroups tend to be associated with fewer diverse viewpoints and perspectives (e.g., Hoffman & Maier, 1961). From an integration-and-learning perspective, there are fewer high-quality opportunities for authentic leaders to help followers apply their individual differences to their work processes and tasks that in turn lead to fewer inclusive behaviors. For example, homogeneous workgroups tend to have relatively similar viewpoints, leading to fewer opportunities to respectfully challenge the viewpoints of others. Indeed, McLeod, Lobel, and Cox (1996) found that culturally similar workgroups had lower-quality ideas than culturally diverse workgroups. Taken together, diverse workgroups tend to present more opportunities for authentic leaders to engage in inclusive behaviors. Henceforth, there are more opportunities for followers to vicariously learn how to emulate inclusive behaviors.

Proposition 6: Heterogeneous workgroup composition is positively related to vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers.

Group Size

Workgroups can differ considerably in terms of the number of group members. Small workgroups tend to range from two to six members, and large workgroups usually have seven or more members (Hare, 1992). Workgroup size is an important group structure, as numerous studies have shown that it can influence important individual and unit-level outcomes (e.g., Colquitt, Noe, & Jackson, 2002; Weege, Roth, Neubach, Schmidt, &

Kanfer, 2008). More specifically, Gill and Ling (1995) explain that the number of group members can influence learning effectiveness. Henceforth, the following discussion examines the role of group size on followers' vicarious learning of inclusive conduct.

Group size can influence the extent of surface- and deep-level diversity within workgroups (Jackson et al., 1991). An increase in the number of group members is associated with an increase in the likelihood of surface- and deep-level diversity in the workgroup. Large workgroups tend to have more followers with unique opinions and experiences resulting from their differing backgrounds (Bantel & Jackson, 1989). Henceforth, these groups provide more opportunities for authentic

leaders to demonstrate a wide range of inclusive conduct because there are usually more high-quality opportunities to help followers apply their differences to work processes. In other words, group size can influence the capacity of authentic leaders to transmit social cues into the work environment pertaining to the importance of inclusive conduct (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Followers who are provided more high-quality opportunities to vicariously learn how to behave in an inclusive manner can devote more attention

toward learning the behavioral details for subsequent replication (Bandura, 1986).

In contrast, small workgroups tend to reflect limited surface- and deep-level diversity because there are simply fewer members that can differ on visible and nonvisible attributes (Jackson et al., 1991). From an integration-and-learning perspective, authentic leaders of small workgroups usually encounter fewer opportunities to demonstrate a wide range of inclusive behaviors because there are fewer individual differences among followers who can be uniquely applied to work processes. In support, Mooney, Holahan, and Amason (2007) found that group size was positively related to cognitive conflict, thereby suggesting that small workgroups tend to have members with limited variation in experiences and opinions. Authentic leaders thus transmit less social information through their behaviors related to the importance of inclusive behaviors into the work environment (e.g., Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Taken together, large workgroups present authentic leaders with more opportunities to demonstrate a wide range of inclusive conduct, thereby positively influencing the vicarious learning of inclusive conduct by followers.

Proposition 7: Workgroup size is positively related to vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers.

Goal Interdependence

Goal interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1973) posits that the interdependence of goals among authentic leaders and followers can have important implications (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Authentic leaders can convey their goals of developing an inclusive climate by imbuing social cues into the work environment related to the importance of workplace inclusion (e.g., Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Followers retrieve this goal-related information to determine whether their goals are interdependent with their leaders. This assessment can subsequently influence followers' attitudes, behaviors, and interactions with others (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Henceforth, the interdependent nature of the goals between authentic leaders and

Followers who are provided more high-quality opportunities to vicariously learn how to behave in an inclusive manner can devote more attention toward learning the behavioral details for subsequent replication.

followers can influence whether followers are likely to engage in vicarious learning of inclusive conduct.

There are three types of goal structures: cooperative, competitive, and independent (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). First, *cooperative goals* occur when authentic leaders and followers have a positively correlated goal structure. In other words, authentic leaders who progress toward their own goals also have followers who shift toward reaching their own goals and vice versa. This structure results in win-win situations because both leaders and followers are committed to helping each other succeed (Tjosvold, Tang, & West, 2004). Second, *competitive goals* occur when authentic leaders and followers have a negatively correlated goal structure. Stated alternatively, authentic leaders who progress toward their own goals simultaneously impede followers from attaining their goals and vice versa. This goal structure results in win-lose situations because both leaders and followers are not driven to help each other, as helping can frustrate and/or delay personal goal attainment (Tjosvold et al., 2004). Third, *independence* refers to an unrelated goal structure, such that authentic leaders who move toward reaching their own goals have no impact on followers' progress toward their own goals and vice versa. Generally speaking, research has found that cooperative goals result in positive interactions/outcomes and competitive goals foster negative interactions/outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 2005).

Authentic leaders and followers who share a cooperative goal structure related to creating a climate for inclusion can foster followers' vicarious learning of inclusive conduct because this learning can simultaneously help both parties reach their goals (Deutsch, 1973; Johnson & Johnson, 1989). To illustrate, authentic leaders who have a goal of creating a climate for inclusion can have followers who share a similar goal, such as to improve inclusive cross-cultural learning among group members to increase workgroup performance. The positive interdependent nature of these goals tends to elicit behaviors that are beneficial to both parties (Tjosvold et al., 2004). In support,

cooperative goal structures have been linked to open-mindedness, whereby group members share personal viewpoints and seek to understand others' viewpoints to ensure the most positive outcomes result for both parties (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 1998). As previously alluded to, authentic leaders who are driven to create a climate for inclusion tend to demonstrate a range of inclusive behaviors aimed at transmitting social cues into the work environment for followers (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Followers are more likely to be attuned to these behaviors in order to learn how to properly act in an inclusive manner across a variety of contexts (Bandura, 1986). In doing so, followers can help authentic leaders attain their goal of creating a climate for inclusion and their own goal of fostering inclusive cross-cultural learning among group members to improve workgroup performance.

In contrast, followers are unlikely to vicariously learn how to behave in an inclusive manner when their goals diverge from those of authentic leaders. Competitive goal structures can elicit behaviors from followers who impede authentic leaders from creating a climate for inclusion (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Divergent goals are likely to prompt oppositional interaction (i.e., behaviors that are intended to support personal interests and impede goal attainment by the other party) (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), but are unlikely to facilitate promotive interaction (i.e., helping behaviors that are directed toward goal attainment for the other party) (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In support, Tjosvold (1997) found that competitive goals interfered with productive networking by preventing an open dialogue among a sample of dentists that could have otherwise been used to help solve business and technical issues. Moreover, although independent goal structures are unlikely to elicit follower behaviors that impede authentic leaders from

Authentic leaders and followers who share a cooperative goal structure related to creating a climate for inclusion can foster followers' vicarious learning of inclusive conduct because this learning can simultaneously help both parties reach their goals.

creating a climate for inclusion, this goal structure is also unlikely to trigger any helping behaviors (Deutsch, 1973). Henceforth, followers' vicarious learning of inclusive conduct can be prompted when authentic leaders and followers share a cooperative goal structure related to a climate for inclusion.

Proposition 8: Cooperative goals aimed at fostering a climate for inclusion shared by authentic leaders and followers is positively related to vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors by followers.

Discussion

There is an ever-increasing trend of workplace diversity (Buttner et al., 2010; Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2009), which is resulting in a growing number of calls

Authentic leaders with a central moral value of inclusion are the strongest inclusive leader role models because central values are influential in driving behavior.

for scholarly attention to understand how to attend to this phenomenon. In response to these calls, this article presented a conceptual model that contributes to the growing body of literature on workplace inclusion (e.g., Bilimoria et al., 2008; Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011). This article specifically explored how a climate for inclusion can foster feelings of comfort, thereby encouraging all employees to directly apply their differences to work processes, tasks, and strategies. Drawing on the social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), an

organization-wide change effort aimed at creating an inclusive work climate was examined. Authentic leaders are posited to serve as a significant source of social information in terms of conveying the importance of workplace inclusion to employees. Organizational reward systems, workgroup composition, group size, and goal interdependence are also critical organizational and group structures, processes, and strategies that can have a key influence on the formation of a climate for inclusion.

Theoretical Contributions

This article offers four significant theoretical contributions. First, the social information

processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) is used to explain why authentic leaders are an important source of social information pertaining to workplace inclusion for their followers. Authentic leaders are naturally driven to behave in an inclusive manner deriving from their internalized moral perspective. Henceforth, authentic leaders are particularly instrumental in transmitting social cues into the work environment through their verbal and nonverbal behaviors regarding the importance of workplace inclusion. Followers retrieve this social information to understand how they are expected to behave in the workplace, and in turn this shapes their perceptions of an inclusive work climate. In doing so, this article deepens our understanding of the integration-and-learning paradigm by explaining how authentic leaders can foster the formation of a climate for inclusion that enables all employees to feel comfortable so they can apply their individual differences to work processes, tasks, and strategies.

Second, authentic leaders occupy a particularly unique role in shaping the formation of an inclusive climate due to their emphasis on ethics, morals, and values (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Drawing on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), authentic leaders can engage in inclusive leader role modeling by demonstrating a range of inclusive conduct for their followers. In doing so, authentic leaders indicate the expected, supported, and rewarded behaviors from followers, thereby facilitating perceptions of a climate for inclusion. However, there are individual differences that can differentiate the authentic leaders who are the most fruitful in fostering a climate for inclusion. The central moral value of inclusion is posited to be a key individual difference that can have a significant influence on the inclusive behavior demonstrated by authentic leaders. In other words, authentic leaders with a central moral value of inclusion are the strongest inclusive leader role models because central values are influential in driving behavior (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). In doing so, this research partly responds to a recent call for research: "It would be enormously useful if future research investigated the organizational and

individual-level factors that make unit leaders more likely to create inclusive climates" (Nishii, 2013, p. 27).

Third, the dynamic formation of a climate for inclusion is taken into account by exploring the role of followers, such that followers can help foster perceptions of an inclusive climate by engaging in cognitive and behavioral processes to vicariously learn how to behave in an inclusive manner. Followers begin the learning process by devoting significant attention to observing and retaining the behavioral details of the inclusive behaviors of authentic leaders (e.g., Gioia & Manz, 1985). Afterward, followers engage in a behavioral process to emulate the inclusive behaviors of authentic leaders by retrieving previously encoded symbolic representations of the inclusive conduct (e.g., Bandura, 1977). Moreover, authentic leaders who motivate followers to behave in an inclusive manner through positive reinforcement can help to stimulate vicarious learning of inclusive conduct by followers. Henceforth, followers who vicariously learn inclusive conduct from authentic leaders can help to indirectly shape a climate for inclusion.

Fourth, organizational and group processes, structures, and strategies can indirectly influence the formation of a climate for inclusion by impacting followers' learning of inclusive behaviors. Organizational reward systems that remunerate inclusive conduct signals to employees that inclusive behaviors are encouraged, supported, and rewarded. This reward system can motivate followers to learn how to behave inclusively by observing leaders who reinforce the importance of inclusive behaviors through their actions. Workgroups that are large and highly diverse present authentic leaders with more high-quality opportunities to demonstrate inclusive conduct because there tends to be more surface- and deep-level diversity in these groups. Followers thus tend to engage in greater vicarious learning of inclusive behaviors because followers often look toward their leader for behavioral guidelines. Authentic leaders and followers who share cooperative goals related to creating a climate for inclusion can stimulate vicarious learning

of inclusive behavior by followers because this learning can help followers and authentic leaders reach their respective goals. Taken together, this research offers several important theoretical contributions to the literature, yet future research is needed to further extend the workplace inclusion literature.

Avenues for Future Research

Broadly speaking, future research is needed to deepen our understanding of the key determinants and outcomes of a climate for inclusion. Future research should begin to examine antecedent-based questions, such as: What other forms of leadership can facilitate or impede creating a climate for inclusion? What are other important boundary conditions of creating an inclusive climate? The outcomes associated with a climate for inclusion should also be examined by addressing outcome-based questions, such as: How do inclusive climates influence conflict, group dynamics, and creativity? How might a climate for inclusion influence performance at the individual, group, and organizational levels? In the following, specific avenues for future research are offered.

The conceptual model should be empirically tested using both qualitative and quantitative methods. In line with calls for more qualitative management research (e.g., Gephart, 2004), case-study methodologies could be used to examine how the social process of creating a climate for inclusion unfolds in a specific organization. Researchers should use techniques such as participant observation, in-depth interviews with authentic leaders and followers, and focus groups to gain rich insights into how authentic leaders can create an inclusive climate (e.g., Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Similar to most work climate studies, researchers should also use quantitative methodologies. For example, a longitudinal research design that uses multisource questionnaires could be used to test the propositions. Indeed, there are a number of previously validated measures that can be used (e.g., Nishii, 2013; Walumbwa et al., 2008); however, some of these measures may require minor modifications (e.g., Tjosvold et al., 2004).

Although some studies have developed a measure of inclusive behavior for a specific context (e.g., Munir et al., 2012), research is sorely needed to develop a more comprehensive measure of inclusive behavior.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) can be used to assess for the mediating (e.g., Proposition 1), moderating (e.g., Proposition 2), and direct main effects (e.g., Proposition 5) in the conceptual model (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). SEM is a powerful multivariate technique that primarily uses confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis (PA) to test rather complex structures of interdependent relationships (Hair et al., 2010). SEM is often deemed superior to many

Researchers can draw on the social capital perspective to examine how star employees can use their social ties to disseminate knowledge about the importance of workplace inclusion.

other statistical techniques for a number of reasons, including its flexibility with estimation options and model specification (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This recommendation is in line with many other studies that examine how leadership can influence work climate (e.g., Ehrhart, 2004; Shih, Chiang, & Chen, 2012). Researchers who seek to test the model could also further extend this model by examining how other dispositional characteristics of authentic leaders influence inclusive leader role modeling. For example, researchers could explore the influence of leader self-efficacy (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, &

Harms, 2008) because self-efficacy has been linked to performance outcomes (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Future research is also needed to explore the role of “star employees,” who are defined as exceptional performers arising from their extraordinary productivity (Groysberg, Lee, & Nanda, 2008). Researchers can draw on the social capital perspective to examine how star employees can use their social ties to disseminate knowledge about the importance of workplace inclusion. Future research is also needed to explore the role of specific characteristics of star employees (e.g., benevolence) in order to identify which type of star employee is most fruitful in terms of helping

to create a climate for inclusion. These questions provide evidence of the importance and wealth of research needed to begin further developing the climate for inclusion literature.

Practical Implications

There are also several important insights for managers and human resource (HR) professionals. The recruitment and selection process should be aimed at identifying authentic leaders based on the key characteristics of self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and an internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) posit that authentic leadership can be identified using survey-based methods, experiential exercises, and scenario-based exercises (e.g., presenting an ethical dilemma to potential job candidates in order to assess their ethical decision-making abilities). Although some leaders may not require any support to draw out their authentic leadership style, many leaders currently employed in organizations need guidance (Avolio & Luthans, 2006). Henceforth, genuine authentic leadership interventions should be offered in order to produce trigger events that stimulate a significant behavioral change in leadership style (Cooper et al., 2005). These interventions should also include an explicit focus on ethical decision-making processes (Cooper et al., 2005). Indeed, leaders need to employ their authentic selves in order to foster an inclusive climate by role modeling inclusive behaviors for their followers.

Socialization initiatives (e.g., orientation sessions, on-boarding programs) for new hires should communicate the behavioral expectations from employees (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012). HR professionals leading these programs should clearly indicate the importance of inclusion by providing examples of inclusive behaviors specific to the organization. Moreover, authentic leaders should continue to convey the importance of inclusive behaviors on a daily basis by leading others according to their morals

and values to allow followers to emulate their inclusive behaviors. More specifically, leaders should seek to engage in visible and simple behaviors to facilitate a strong understanding by followers of how to replicate their behaviors. Workgroups should also be designed to facilitate cross-cultural learning by ensuring significant surface- and deep-level diversity among group members. Training programs should also be offered to teach employees how to interact in a respectful and inclusive manner (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

HR professionals should ensure the organizational reward system reinforces the importance of inclusion by rewarding employees for engaging in sincere inclusive behaviors to further elicit these types of behaviors (e.g., Colville & Millner, 2011). HR professionals should also seek to provide employees numerous voice opportunities to foster a sense of uniqueness and belongingness through various initiatives, such as diversity-enhancing work councils, equality-promoting initiatives, and anonymous feedback systems (e.g., Bell et al., 2011). Finally, HR professionals should review HR practices, policies, and procedures to ensure there is an inclusive HR system. For example, Boehm, Kunze, and Bruch (2013) explain that age-inclusive HR practices comprise age-neutral recruiting practices, equal access to training irrespective of age, and age-neutral career development and promotion practices. Taken together, an organization-wide

change effort comprising several reinforcing processes and practices is needed to institutionalize inclusion by fostering a climate for inclusion.

Conclusion

Workplaces are becoming increasingly diverse, thereby underscoring the need for research to investigate how organizations can attend to this trend by fostering workplace inclusion. This article presents an organization-wide change effort whereby authentic leaders, organizational reward systems, workgroup composition, group size, and cooperative goal structures serve as mutually reinforcing mechanisms that can convey the importance of workplace inclusion. These processes interact to create a work climate whereby employees can feel comfortable to apply their individual differences to work processes, tasks, and strategies. In doing so, this article offers many important directions for future research aimed at understanding the institutionalization of workplace inclusion.

Leaders should seek to engage in visible and simple behaviors to facilitate a strong understanding by followers of how to replicate their behaviors.

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