Promoting workplace inclusion and self-efficacy among skilled migrant workers in Australia

Eddy S. Ng

Smith School of Business, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada and James Cook University, Singapore Campus, Singapore, and

Diana Rajendran and Wahed Waheduzzaman

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Abstract

Purpose – Although skilled migrants have a high capacity for integration, many report experiences of exclusion which impacts their ability to contribute fully to the host country. This experience of exclusion, which can diminish their self-efficacy at work, is especially acute for skilled migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds when functioning in a new or exclusionary environment. In this paper, we explore the relationship between workplace inclusion and self-efficacy and identify factors that contribute to perceived inclusion for skilled migrant workers.

Design/methodology/approach – Participants were recruited through social network groups representing migrant workers via LinkedIn. Through snowball sampling, participants were asked to recommend recent (3–5 years) skilled migrants to participate. A total of 210 skilled migrant workers to Australia completed the survey. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is used to test our model on the relationship between inclusion and self-efficacy.

Findings – Migrants' perceptions of inclusion at work are related to their self-efficacy at work. We also find that some dimensions of inclusion are more important than others in enhancing self-efficacy for skilled migrants. Meaningful exchanges with supervisors, a sense of belonging at work and workgroup cohesion (being accepted by co-workers) are more important than senior management support or getting involved in organizational social activities as determinants of perceived inclusion.

Social implications – Although skilled migrants are often assumed to be a self-select group of highly motivated, high achieving workers, many experience poor adjustment and feel excluded after arriving in the host country. Public policies have limited effects in promoting inclusion of skilled migrant workers in organizations. These policies may be supplemented with an inclusive organizational climate to improve migrant worker success. Organizations and employers are thus critical partners in fostering migrant workers' sense of inclusion and supporting the career outcomes of skilled migrant workers in the host country.

Originality/value – This study supports the link between perceived inclusion and self-efficacy among skilled migrant workers. It also sharpens the evidence of organizational-level factors that contribute to perceived inclusion for migrant workers.

Keywords Self-efficacy, Skilled migrants, Non-English speaking backgrounds (NESBs), Workplace inclusion

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Many advanced economies are experiencing a rapidly ageing workforce and have relied on skilled migrants (i.e. those holding tertiary education or advanced skills) as a source of professional workers. In Australia, many skilled migrants come from diverse cultural and linguistic or non-English speaking backgrounds (NESBs). More than one-quarter of the Australian population comprises international migrants (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019). It is anticipated that through the use of a rigorous migrant selection process (e.g. the Australian Numerical Multifactor Assessment Scheme or the points system), migrants will

have little difficulty in adapting to the host country work environment. The extent to which migrants in developed countries effectively assimilate into the domestic labour market remains unclear, with some scholars (e.g. Chiswick *et al.*, 2005; Duleep and Regets, 1999) pointing to unavoidable positive integration over time, while others (e.g. Constant and Massey, 2005; Fernández-Macías *et al.*, 2015) arguing this process is limiting given discrimination and poor assimilation. Although skilled migrants are often assumed to have a high capacity for integration, many report feeling socially excluded at work and have inferior career outcomes in the host country (Kim, 2020; Tani, 2020; Tian *et al.*, 2018). There have been suggestions that generalized self-efficacy, which enables migrant career success in their home countries, may diminish when migrants function in a foreign environment (Røysum, 2020). In this paper, we explore the relationship between workplace inclusion and self-efficacy, given its implications for skilled migrant career success in the host country. Although our study is based on skilled migrants to Australia, our findings have broad generalizability to other migrant receiving countries such as Canada, the UK and the US.

As the workplace becomes increasingly diverse, there is a greater emphasis on inclusion efforts to cultivate a sense of belonging among migrant workers (Shore *et al.*, 2011; Rajendran *et al.*, 2017). Workplace diversity emanating from skilled migrants can improve creativity and decision-making processes. Such gains emerge from the diverse cognitive backgrounds, mental models, life experiences and perspectives from different cultural heritages. Research also suggests diversity brings conflicts and communication challenges to the workplace, requiring proactive management to optimize work performance (Ferdman, 2017). These mechanisms include promoting workplace inclusion to minimize social exclusion.

Inclusion of all employees is critical to leverage the benefits of workplace diversity (Mor-Barak *et al.*, 2016; Shore *et al.*, 2011). Inclusion means that migrant workers perceive themselves as "insiders" with access to social networks and influence in decision-making available to dominant group employees (Vergani *et al.*, 2021). Migrants who are included feel encouraged to fully contribute to their work teams and organizations (Mor-Barak, 2015; Shore *et al.*, 2011). Workplace inclusion influences individual work-related outcomes such as self-esteem and willingness to go beyond job-related roles to engage in organizational citizenship behaviours (Cottrill *et al.*, 2014). Skilled migrant workers often report feeling excluded in their new Australian workplaces (Rajendran *et al.*, 2017; Tharenou and Kulik, 2020), and as sources of exclusion commonly cite a lack of adequate support from senior management and fellow team members (Chrobot-Mason *et al.*, 2014). These barriers diminish migrant workers' well-being and self-efficacy, affecting their work productivity and performance (Le *et al.*, 2016).

Self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their capacity to perform a job, may diminish for migrant workers operating in a foreign environment (Varma *et al.*, 2011), yet it may be particularly important for their career outcomes in the host country (Ricci *et al.*, 2021). A lack of self-efficacy undermines worker motivation and job performance (Adams *et al.*, 2020; Rajendran *et al.*, 2017). This undermining is particularly true for migrant workers unsure about entering a new labour market. Individuals with strong self-efficacy feel better engaged, involved, safe and motivated (Ferdman *et al.*, 2010; Ferdman and Sagiv, 2012). Further, there is a strong positive relationship between inclusion and individual *performance* (Mor-Barak *et al.*, 2001), but there is little research examining whether inclusion has any relationship with *self-efficacy*, particularly for skilled migrant workers. This knowledge is important for effectively leveraging the skills and talents of migrants to Australia and other countries.

Although studies on workplace inclusion are increasing, the literature on how migrant workers experience inclusion-exclusion and their work outcomes remains limited (Shore *et al.*, 2018). The present study fills this important gap in the literature on understanding the drivers of inclusion and self-efficacy among skilled migrant workers in Australian workplaces. Building on the role of organizational socialization and organizational climate of inclusion in predicting migrant career success (Rajendran *et al.*, 2020), we test several

hypotheses based on perceptual and relational factors experienced by skilled migrants and their sense of inclusion in the Australian workplace. We also test if workplace inclusion contributes to skilled migrants' self-efficacy. Our findings aid in informing workplace diversity management efforts to better integrate and include skilled migrant workers in Australia and elsewhere.

In the next section, we briefly summarize the literature on workplace diversity and the significance of inclusion. We then outline our research methodology and report on a field survey in Australia. We offer a discussion on the factors associated with workplace inclusion and its relationship with self-efficacy for skilled migrants and conclude with some implications of our findings.

Workplace diversity and the significance of inclusion

With an influx of skilled migrant workers and increasing workplace diversity, organizations will need to psychologically incorporate these experienced, but new Australian workforce entrants. Workgroup and organizational processes must integrate culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and their viewpoints into organizational life to foster their sense of inclusion (Stewart *et al.*, 2008). Inclusion is essential to leverage the skills of all workers for effective organizational outcomes (Buengeler *et al.*, 2018; Mor-Barak, 2015; Shore *et al.*, 2011). Exclusion diminishes Australia's immigration and multiculturalism success because of ignorance, prejudice and poor practices (Armillei and Mansouri, 2017). Discrimination and exclusion affect career outcomes for migrants from NESBs and those with "visible" markers (e.g. race, ethnicity, religion) that make them susceptible to discrimination and interpersonal racism (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007).

In this regard, migration policies can fail because of the poor economic integration and inclusion of migrant workers. There is now a greater awareness of the harms of exclusion in hindering equality. Nkomo *et al.* (2019) note that diversity management has shifted its focus from anti-discrimination efforts towards promoting individualized experiences of belonging. Thus, failure to include different cultural groups in a workplace can exacerbate inequality, oppression and discrimination (Rajendran *et al.*, 2017). Inclusion is, therefore, a significant concern across many multicultural workplaces and societies.

Workplace inclusion and research hypotheses

Nishii and Özbilgin (2007) propose a workplace model of inclusion that accommodates cultural differences, empowering employees through their contributions to processes and decisions. In an inclusive work environment, individuals are fairly treated, valued for who they are and are involved in important organizational processes (Mor-Barak, 2015). This inclusion requires a fundamental shift in organizational practices that begins with representing all visible differences and at all levels of the organization to positively influence employees' experiences of inclusion (Mor-Barak, 2017). Drawing from extant literature on the factors related to workplace inclusion, we propose several hypotheses on migrant experiences for testing.

Belongingness

Inclusion is the degree of acceptance and treatment as an insider based on perceived value and recognition by others in the organization (Mor-Barak, 2017). Employees often assess their belongingness via self-evaluations about access to information, influence on decision-making and perceived insider status. These perceptions are also strong predictors of job performance (Mor-Barak *et al.*, 2001), job satisfaction, high self-esteem (Mor-Barak and Cherin, 1998),

organizational citizenship behaviour (Cottrill *et al.*, 2014; Mor-Barak, 2017) and voice (Dennissen *et al.*, 2019; Mor-Barak and Cherin, 1998). Based on the foregoing, we propose that:

H1. A sense of belongingness to an organization will enhance skilled migrant workers' sense of workplace inclusion.

Cooperation and team cohesion
Social identity theory (Ambrose *et al.*, 2018) states that people seek membership in prestigious workgroups because they derive pride and self-esteem from the group's image. Social categorization theory (Melton and Cunningham, 2014) further adds that individuals classify themselves and others into social groups, dividing between insiders (*in-group* members) and outsiders (*out-group* members). However, in-group members (e.g. host-country nationals) may protect their status by excluding others (e.g. migrants) from entry into their workgroups. This behaviour is significant for two reasons. First, migrants are more likely to be sensitive and vulnerable to identity conflicts and experience decreased group cohesiveness (Mor-Barak, 2017; Shore *et al.*, 2011). Second, because of in-group/out-group divisions, migrants may feel they are not valued by their team (Mitchell *et al.*, 2015). Conversely, positive experiences with their workgroup (being accepted) can help satisfy their need for belongingness while maintaining their identities (Shore *et al.*, 2011). Thus, migrant workers feel safe in diverse workgroup contexts (Markus and Steele, 2000). Accordingly, we propose that:

H2. Cooperation and cohesion among team members will promote workplace inclusion in an organization for skilled migrant workers.

Cognitive sharing with supervisors
Nishii and Özbilgin (2007) propose that an organization's performance increases when differences among employees are accepted and valued by supervisors and managers. Migrant workers are more likely to succeed when supervisors encourage inclusion through empathic supervision and development (see Tharenou and Kulik, 2020, for examples). Line managers who model inclusive behaviours within workgroups (Mor-Barak *et al.*, 2016) also help foster an inclusive climate in the workplace (Hurst *et al.*, 2012): other employees mirror such positive behaviours towards co-workers, leading to further inclusion and less discrimination, particularly against migrant workers (Adams *et al.*, 2020). Hence, we propose that:

H3. Management and supervisory support for accepting differences among workers and modelling that support will foster workplace inclusiveness for skilled migrant workers.

Valued by senior management
Employees feel included when they perceive they are valued by senior management. An environment of inclusive leadership that actively seeks out diverse viewpoints and ensures all voices are heard creates resilient individuals who engage and support one another with clarity and confidence. When employees perceive that top managers actively seek out diverse viewpoints, ensure that their voices are heard, perceive that procedures are fair and outcomes are shared, they are more likely to experience a sense of inclusion (Morgan, 2017). This sense of inclusion also results in a stronger work commitment and higher job performance (Shore *et al.*, 2011). Hence, we propose that:

H4. When senior management demonstrates that it values its employees and supports fairness in voice, skilled migrant workers will report higher levels of workplace inclusion.

Involvement in organizational social activities
The social element of organizations embraces superficial socialization in the broad social terms of interpersonal relationships and participation and a deeper level of organizational socialization to become a part of the organization's culture. At the first or social level, inviting new employees into organizational social and informal activities is a key feature of social engagement (Werner and Roythorne-Jacobs, 2006, p. 274). Recent cultural-minority employees require time adjusting to culturally dominant mainstream employees' values, beliefs and assumptions. The former may sometimes stay apart from general discussion and social activities, even though social inclusion may help their deeper organizational inclusion (Chavez and Weisinger, 2008).

At the organizational level, culturally and linguistically different workers are often excluded from important information networks and opportunities to participate in social activities (Findler *et al.*, 2007), which creates barriers to inclusion for minority workers. Networking or cohesiveness within workgroups (Ambrose *et al.*, 2018) and socialization within organizations (Hur and Strickland, 2015) can help bridge gaps between actors in a diversified group. Accordingly, we propose that:

H5. Engaging skilled migrant workers in informal social activities within organizations will facilitate overall organizational socialization at a deep level to foster their workplace inclusion.

In sum, influences on employees' perceptions of inclusion are multi-faceted, complex and often overlapping. On the surface, all these factors may seem equally important; however, we seek to identify the relative contribution of these factors in fostering skilled migrant inclusion.

Inclusion-exclusion in the diversity– self-efficacy relationship
Expanding on social cognitive theory, efficacy beliefs influence the level of self-confidence and self-esteem, which in turn affects how individuals think, feel, motivate themselves and function (Ambrose *et al.*, 2018; Onyishi and Ogbodo, 2012). This influence is particularly important for migrant workers because they often confront exclusion in workgroups in the host country. Yet research remains limited in guiding efforts to promote workplace inclusion for skilled migrants.

Inclusion and self-efficacy
Self-efficacy is an individual's level of confidence and capability to organize and execute delineated actions required to attain designated performance (Bandura, 1997). It affects the choice of activities, effort and level of persistence (Onyishi and Ogbodo, 2012) and is a key determinant of individuals' goals, aspirations, optimism, perseverance and resilience (Adams *et al.*, 2020). Self-efficacy outlines how people voice their perceptions of self-confidence derived from experience, relationships, social persuasion and emotional and physiological inclusion (Bandura, 1997). It also exerts a strong, direct influence on career interests, goals, career success, individual performance and job satisfaction (Bandura, 1997, 2002; Onyishi and Ogbodo, 2012) and is a determining factor of cultural adjustment. With an optimal level of self-efficacy, an employee is stimulated to accomplish a task effectively (Park *et al.*, 2015). Highly self-efficacious individuals – in this case, highly skilled migrant workers – actively seek new cultural experiences (Tsang, 2001) to enhance their potential for socialization in new environments (Saks, 1995). They demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem and internal locus of control (see Bandura *et al.*, 2001). Given the importance of self-efficacy, an inclusive environment promotes behaviours of self-efficacious individuals that focus on the future and goal achievement. Therefore, we seek to investigate the relationship between workplace

inclusion and self-efficacy among skilled workers. To our knowledge, empirical evidence on this important relationship is limited.

Since inclusion is contextual and a multi-faceted phenomenon (Buengeler *et al.*, 2018), we use the Mor-Barak Inclusion Exclusion scale (MBIE). The dimensions of inclusion can be shown to trigger the mechanisms for self-efficacy, with the degree of workplace inclusion inferred as a key influence (Figure 1). Hence, to test the link between inclusion and self-efficacy, we propose that:

H6. Perceptions of inclusion emanating from organizational policies, efforts and supervisor/team member behaviours will contribute to positive self-efficacy beliefs among skilled migrant workers.

Methodology
Data collection
Data were collected using online and paper-based surveys from highly skilled migrant workers in Australian organizations. Respondents were first contacted by organizations that work with migrant communities to survey their employees. Paper-based survey questionnaires (and consent forms) were distributed to potential participants who self-identified as skilled migrants. Participants were also recruited through social network groups representing migrant workers via LinkedIn. Through snowball sampling, LinkedIn members were invited to recommend recent (3–5 years) skilled migrants who might be willing to participate. In total, 506 skilled migrants were approached and 264 (52%) completed surveys were received. After removing cases with missing data, the final sample comprised 210 (42%) respondents, best described as a convenience sample.

Measures
The questionnaire's first section comprised demographic questions. Respondents were well-educated: 90% hold a university degree (29% graduates, 61% postgraduates). There were more men (57%) than women (43%); a majority was married (59%). On average, participants
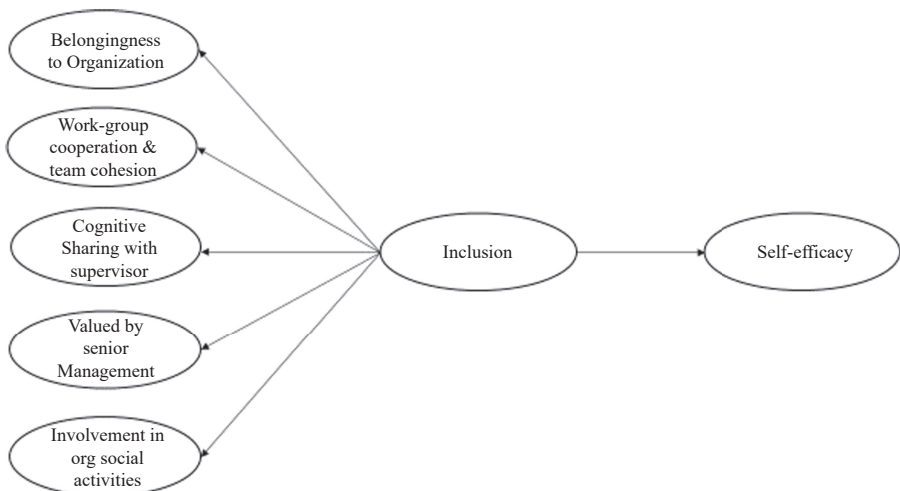
Figure 1.
Relationship between dimensions of inclusion and self-efficacy

were 30.6 years old when they migrated and, at the time of the survey, had spent 2.6 years in Australia. Seventy-seven per cent were from Asia (South, East and Southeast), 8% from the Middle East, 7% from Europe (West and Central Europe) and 4% from Africa.

We use the MBIE (Mor-Barak Inclusion-Exclusion) scale to assess a worker's sense of inclusion in relation to 5 dimensions: belongingness to the organization, workgroup cooperation and team cohesion, cognitive sharing with supervisors, valued by senior management and involvement in organizational social activities. The scale has previously been used to understand the factors and processes that facilitate inclusive workplaces (Rezai et al., 2020).

Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each item on a 6-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). In addition to the MBIE, we used five items to measure self-efficacy. These include "I am actively using my skills, knowledge/expertise and abilities in my current work" and "I am empowered to make work-related decisions on my own, based on my skills and knowledge". Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each item on a 6-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree).

Analytical procedure
We undertook confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) using SPSS and AMOS 25.0 for model validation and relationship testing.

Method bias and outliers
Given the nature of our sampling procedure, several steps were undertaken to eliminate the potential for biases and outliers. Firstly, missing data were identified across all variables. Cases with more than 10% missing data were removed from analysis; for cases with less than 10% missing data, the Expectation Maximization (EM) method was used to replace missing values (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). The randomness pattern of missing data was examined through the Little MCAR test; the results showed a non-significant difference between the pattern of missing data from the sample and a pattern expected from a completely random missing data process (Chi-Square = 293.803, DF = 275, Sig. = 0.208). This result allowed the application of EM when dealing with the remaining missing data in the sample.

Further, multivariate and univariate outliers were identified. The Mahalanobis D^2 test detected three multivariate outliers, resulting in their deletion. Univariate outliers were analysed by reviewing z-scores associated with each variable. There was no evidence of outliers at the univariate level (|z-score| > 3.29). Non-response bias was analysed through two-independent sample t-tests between the first and last 25 survey respondents. Except for three respondents, there was no significant difference between the two groups on study variables. Therefore, non-response bias was not a concern (Groves and Peytcheva, 2008).

As our independent and dependent variables were collected from the same respondents using self-reported measures, the occurrence of common method bias is a possibility (Jordon and Troth, 2020; MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012). To circumvent this, we undertook a common latent factor method analysis. In this approach, we use a common latent factor to capture common variance among all variables in the model (Chin et al., 2012). Comparing the fit indices of the two models indicates that the model with a common latent factor (CFI = 0.962, TLI = 0.946, GFI = 0.892 and RMSEA = 0.067) was somewhat better than the model without the factor (CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.922, GFI = 0.851 and RMSEA = 0.081). As suggested by Byrne (2001), comparing the CFIs of two models provides an indicator of practical significance. The difference in CFIs between the two models was less than 0.05, confirming that common method variance was not a concern for subsequent hypothesis testing (Bagozzi and Yi, 1990).

Analysis and results

Test of the measurement model
We first developed a measurement model of all constructs used in our conceptual framework and then performed confirmatory factor analysis to assess the psychometric properties of the items. We utilized AMOS 25.0 with the maximum likelihood approach as our model estimation method. All fit indices fell within the recommended values: $\chi^2(155) = 367.83$, $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.851; CFI = 0.936; TLI = 0.922 and RMSEA = 0.081 (Hu *et al.*, 1995).

Table 1 shows that the composite reliability of all constructs ranges from 0.82 to 0.91 and the average variance extracted (AVE) ranges from 0.61 to 0.74, confirming the reliability of all constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). All standardized loadings of the items on their respective constructs are above 0.50 and significant at $p < 0.001$, showing convergent validity (Kline, 2016).

Table 2 shows that the AVE for each construct is greater than the squared correlation between that construct and all other constructs in the model, indicating support for discriminant validity (Farrell, 2010). Furthermore, all Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) and Average Shared Variance (ASV) values are less than AVE values for each respective construct, showing additional support for discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Second-order confirmatory factor analysis
We developed second-order CFA. The goodness-of-fit of second order CFA is comparable to the previous CFA measurement model: $\chi^2(165) = 412.77$, $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.83; CFI = 0.93; TLI = 0.91 and RMSEA = 0.08. These fit indices provide evidence of acceptable fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data.

Second-order structural model
The goodness-of-fit of the structural model is comparable to the previous CFA measurement model and second order CFA: $\chi^2(164) = 412.77$, $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.83; CFI = 0.93; TLI = 0.91 and RMSEA = 0.08. These fit indices provide evidence of a satisfactory fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data.

The direct relationships between five dimensions of inclusion were supported, as shown in Table 3. The model explained 75% variance (R^2 0.75, $p < 0.001$) in the belongingness to the organization dimension, 73% (R^2 0.73, $p < 0.001$) in the workgroup cooperation and team cohesion dimension, 82% (R^2 0.82, $p < 0.001$) in the cognitive sharing with supervisor dimension, 63% of the variance (R^2 0.63, $p < 0.001$) in the valued by senior management dimension and 66% (R^2 0.66, $p < 0.001$) in the involvement in organizational social activities dimension. These results support hypotheses H1 to H5. From the variances, cognitive sharing with supervisor dimension was most important for skilled migrant workers, followed by belongingness, workgroup cooperation and team cohesion, involvement in organizational social activities and being valued by senior management.

The theorized relationship between inclusion and self-efficacy was also supported (P6). Table 4 reflects a significant relationship between inclusion and self-efficacy among skilled migrants. Figure 2 summarizes our findings.

Discussion

Although skilled migrants are often assumed to be a self-select group of highly motivated, high achieving workers, many experience poor adjustment and feel excluded after arriving in the host country. These harms are particularly acute for skilled migrants from NESBs. One possible explanation is diminished self-efficacy when functioning in a new or foreign environment. In this regard, we anticipate that feeling included in the workplace may help

Construct (s) Item (s)	SL*	Mean	SD*	α*	AVE*	CR*
Belongingness to the organization				0.90	0.74	0.90
I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization	0.82	3.15	1.49			
I am usually among the first one to know about important changes in the organization	0.86	2.90	1.46			
I am usually invited to important meetings in my organization	0.90	3.15	1.46			
Workgroup cooperation and team cohesion				0.86	0.68	0.87
I have influence in decisions taken by my work group regarding our tasks	0.77	3.78	1.55			
My co-workers openly share work-related information with me	0.80	4.15	1.41			
I am normally involved and invited to actively participate in work-related activities of my group	0.91	4.16	1.42			
Cognitive sharing with supervisors				0.89	0.74	0.89
My supervisor often asks for my opinion before making important decisions	0.86	3.50	1.57			
My supervisor shares work-related information with me	0.85	3.92	1.49			
I am invited to actively participate in review and evaluation meetings with my supervisor	0.86	3.53	1.62			
Valued by senior management				0.89	0.728	0.889
I am often invited to contribute my opinion in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor	0.89	3.09	1.64			
I frequently receive communication from management higher than my immediate supervisor (i.e. memos, e-mails)	0.79	3.41	1.60			
I am often invited to participate in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor	0.87	2.90	1.59			
Involvement in organizational social activities				0.82	0.61	0.823
I am often asked to contribute to planning social activities not directly related to my job function	0.70	2.98	1.563			
I am always informed about informal social activities and company social events	0.84	3.70	1.59			
I am regularly invited to join my co-workers when they go out for lunch or drinks after work	0.79	3.85	1.57			
Self-efficacy				0.91	0.68	0.91
I am actively using my skills, knowledge/expertise and abilities in my current work	0.74	4.24	1.60			
I am empowered to make work-related decisions on my own based on my skills and knowledge	0.77	3.83	1.59			
I see a future for myself in this organization	0.84	3.39	1.58			
I am valued in my organization because of what I bring and not because of who I am	0.88	3.84	1.57			
I feel that my organization gives me a fair go and I can see equity and fairness in all organizational practices	0.87	3.74	1.57			

Note(s): * SL = standardized item loading; SD = standard deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics
and
measurement model

compensate or restore individual self-efficacy. We explore this important relationship among skilled migrants to Australia, with implications for career success.

Our results indicate that perceptions of inclusion at work are related to self-efficacy. Our respondents are skilled migrant workers with high levels of education and they come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. There is an assumption that skilled migrants expect they will be welcome and accepted by host country nationals on account of their high

	BTO*	WGC*	CSS*	VSM*	ISA*	SE*	MSV	ASV
BTO*	*0.74*	0.52	0.58	0.64	0.43	0.53	0.64	0.54
WGC*	0.72	*0.68*	0.67	0.36	0.44	0.57	0.67	0.51
CSS*	0.76	0.82	*0.74*	0.54	0.55	0.54	0.67	0.58
VSM*	0.80	0.60	0.74	*0.73*	0.37	0.39	0.64	0.46
ISA*	0.66	0.67	0.74	0.61	*0.61*	0.59	0.59	0.48
SE*	0.73	0.76	0.74	0.62	0.77	*0.67*	0.59	0.53

Note(s): Correlations are below the diagonal; squared correlations are above the diagonal; and AVE estimates are presented on the diagonal. All correlations are significant at $*p = < 0.001$

BTO* = Belongingness to the organization; WGC* = Work group cooperation and team cohesion; CSS* = Cognitive Sharing with supervisor; VSM* = Valued by senior management; ISA* = Involvement in organizational social activities; SE* = Self efficacy

AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; and ASV = Average Shared Variance

276

Table 2.
Correlation analysis

| Relationship(s)	Standardized coefficients	Critical value	*p*-value
Belongingness to the organization ← Inclusion	0.87		
Work group cooperation and team cohesion ← Inclusion	0.86		
Cognitive sharing with supervisors ← Inclusion	0.91		
Valued by senior management ← Inclusion	0.8		
Involvement in organizational social activities ← Inclusion	0.81		
Inclusion → Self efficacy	0.85	8.82	<0.001

Table 3.
Model path coefficients

Construct	Squared correlation
Belongingness to the organization	0.75
Work group cooperation and team cohesion	0.73
Cognitive sharing with supervisors	0.82
Valued by senior management	0.63
Involvement in organizational social activities	0.66
Self-efficacy	0.72

Table 4.
Squared correlation table

levels of educational attainment. However, discrimination and exclusion can diminish their self-efficacy and hamper the abilities of highly skilled migrants to function in host societies fully. A sense of inclusion, particularly in work settings, can reassure individual employees with a feeling that they are "one among others" or equal to other (local) employees (Chavez and Weisinger, 2008).

Of note, our study finds some dimensions of inclusion are more important than others in enhancing self-efficacy for skilled migrants. The highest correlation is found between the opportunities for cognitive sharing with supervisors and a sense of inclusion for skilled migrant workers. Moreover, respondents emphasized supervisors who seek them out before making important decisions for improving migrant workers' sense of inclusion ("My supervisor often asks for my opinion before making important decisions"). Migrant workers also stressed that participation in meetings with supervisors ("I am invited to actively
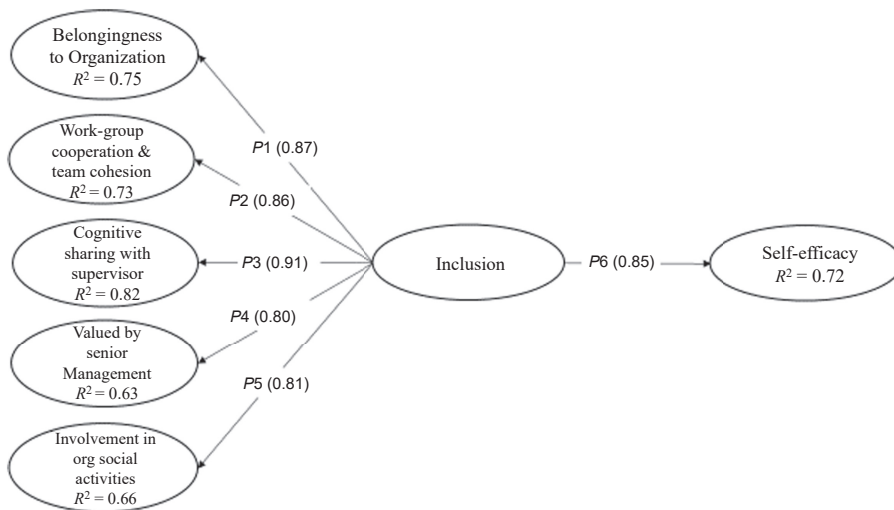
Figure 2.
Results of the
structural model
analysis

participate in review and evaluation meetings with my supervisor") was critical. These findings are not unexpected since these workers are more likely to succeed when their supervisors encourage participatory decision-making processes (Tharenou and Kulik, 2020).

Nishii and Özbilgin (2007) propose that organizational performance is increased when supervisors and managers value differences among employees. Skilled migrant workers are more likely to succeed when supervisors encourage inclusion through empathic supervision and development (see Tharenou and Kulik, 2020). Line managers who model inclusive behaviours within workgroups (Mor-Barak *et al.*, 2016) also help foster an inclusive climate in workplaces (Hurst *et al.*, 2012). When other employees mirror such positive behaviours towards co-workers, it leads to further inclusion and less prejudice, particularly towards migrant workers (Adams *et al.*, 2020).

When individuals are able to exchange ideas and views with their supervisors and managers, it promotes a sense that their skills and experience are valued. This feeling of being valued is particularly important for skilled migrant workers from NESBs. Supervisors and managers can bring new migrant workers "into" the organization by involving them in key organizational activities and decision-making processes (Nishii and Özbilgin, 2007). When migrant workers experience a sense of inclusion, they feel encouraged to utilize their skills and knowledge more fully at work (see Ferdman and Sagiv, 2012). In short, management can play a critical role in promoting a sense of inclusion, particularly for skilled migrant workers from diverse backgrounds.

Our findings also underscore the importance of a robust interpersonal relationship between direct supervisors and employees to improve individuals' self-efficacy and involvement in workplaces. Our study suggests that skilled migrant workers benefit the most through cognitive sharing with supervisors. Given the sophistication of highly skilled migrants, being engaged with supervisors and having meaningful interactions with high functioning individuals are more important than surface-level involvement in organizational social activities. In this respect, workers become more involved in the organization and have greater organizational engagement when they feel a sense of inclusion (see Ferdman *et al.*, 2010). Organizations also benefit from when highly skilled workers can fully function and contribute at work (Rajendran *et al.*, 2017, 2020; Tharenou and Kulik, 2020).

However, our research found that feeling valued by senior management had the least influence in developing a sense of inclusion. Although the diversity literature suggests when top managers value diverse viewpoints, employees are more likely to report a sense of inclusion (Morgan, 2017), our result shows this to rank behind the role of immediate supervisors. We speculate that the workers in our sample are young (average 33.2 years old) and may have few opportunities to interact with senior management. They may also perceive the behaviours of top managers to be largely symbolic (Ng and Sears, 2020).

Conclusion and policy implications

Although inclusion and exclusion can help us better understand and promote generalized self-efficacy, there is a lack of empirical research on the nature of this relationship.

We know from past research that equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies have limited effects in promoting inclusion of skilled migrant workers in organizations (Van Knippenberg and Schippers, 2007). These policies however may be supplemented with voluntary organizational interventions to improve migrant worker success.

Our study helps establish this connection using a sample of skilled migrant workers in Australia. More importantly, we identified the relative contributions of several workplace inclusion efforts to lessening a sense of exclusion in the workplace. This knowledge is important for effectively leveraging the skills and talents of culturally and linguistically diverse migrants to Australia and elsewhere. Further, despite the substantial body of work from government agencies and streams of policy development (e.g. Tani, 2020), the research literature remains scant in paying direct attention to techniques to promote migrant career success. This lack of attention drives policy designers and analysts to depend on work in other cultural and institutional contexts while also pursuing targeted initiatives to recruit skilled migrant workers.

This research has both theoretical and practical implications. We extend research on workplace inclusion by investigating the different dimensions of inclusion and their relative contribution to self-efficacy, which is critical for migrant career outcomes. Our study assists with the development of a more robust research agenda in the skilled migrant literature that often uses a negative lens (e.g. unemployment or underemployment). Our findings also have implications for practice, especially for organizational decision-makers and human resource practitioners. Of note, our research underscores the importance of organizations and employers as critical partners in fostering migrant workers' sense of inclusion and supporting their career outcomes in the host country. As organizations continue to recruit diverse talents globally, our findings can guide employers on how best to integrate skilled migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and enable them to contribute to the host country more fully.

Limitations and directions for future research

As with any studies, establishing causality is an important concern. Although our study suggests that feeling included influences self-efficacy perceptions, our research design limits our ability to make this causal inference. Conceptually, self-efficacy, as individualized beliefs about one's capacity to perform, does not influence our measure of perceptions of inclusion, which is derived from organizational policies and practices. For instance, high self-efficacy does not influence feeling valued by senior management. Further, individuals with high self-efficacy can experience and report exclusion and discrimination. While establishing causality is of importance, it should not distract from theory building.

Our study also relies on highly skilled migrants to Australia. Thus, the findings may be limited to the specificity of our sample ("highly skilled" according to Australian policy

categorization) and the work environment (i.e. English is the dominant and working language in the workplace). It is unclear if our tentative findings may be generalizable to all migrants and we call for broader studies across countries and migrant categories. Nonetheless, our findings would have generalizability to many migrant receiving countries such as Canada, the UK and the US. Further, our study relies on self-reported measures and a cross-sectional design. As such, we cannot ascertain the causality of our findings; however, we recommend future research adopt a longitudinal research design and more objective measures such as career attainment or supervisory performance ratings as an outcome variable. This refinement will help minimize common method variance and demonstrate the causality of our initial associations found here.

References

Adams, B.G., Meyers, M.C. and Sekaja, L. (2020), "Positive leadership: relationships with employee inclusion, discrimination, and well-being", *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 69 No. 4, pp. 1145-1173.

Ambrose, S.C., Matthews, L.M. and Rutherford, B.N. (2018), "Cross-functional teams and social identity theory: a study of sales and operations planning (S&OP)", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 92, pp. 270-278.

Armillei, R. and Mansouri, F. (2017), "'Ethnic Democracy' and authoritarian legacies in Italy's and Australia's contemporary policies towards 'Boat People'", *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 13-40.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019), "2016-17 cat. no. 3412.0", Migration, Australia, available at: https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/D55E16D6BF20AA7CCA 2583D00016ED30?opendocument (accessed 16 February 2021).

Bagozzi, R.P. and Yi, Y. (1990), "Assessing method variance in multitrait-multimethod matrices: the case of self-reported affect and perceptions at work", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 75 No. 5, p. 547.

Bandura, A. (1997), *Self-efficacy: the Exercise of Control*, W.H. Freeman, New York.

Bandura, A. (2002), "Social cognitive theory in cultural context", *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 269-290, doi: 10.1111/1464-0597.00092.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G.V. and Pastorelli, C. (2001), "Self-Efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories", *Child Development*, Vol. 72, pp. 187-206.

Buengeler, C., Leroy, H. and De Stobbeleir, K. (2018), "How leaders shape the impact of HR's diversity practices on employee inclusion", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 289-303.

Byrne, B.M. (2001), *Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS: Basic Concepts, Applications, and Programming*, Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ.

Chavez, C.I. and Weisinger, J.Y. (2008), "Beyond diversity training: a social infusion for cultural inclusion", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 47, pp. 331-350, doi: 10.1002/hrm.20215.

Chin, W.W., Thatcher, J.B. and Wright, R.T. (2012), "Assessing common method bias: problems with the ULMC technique", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 1003-1019.

Chiswick, B.R., Lee, Y.L. and Miller, P.W. (2005), "Longitudinal analysis of immigrant occupational mobility: a test of the immigrant assimilation hypothesis", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 332-353.

Chrobot-Mason, D., Ruderman, M.N. and Nishii, L.H. (2014), "Leadership in a diverse workplace", in Day, D.V. (Ed.), *Oxford Library of Psychology. The Oxford Handbook of Leadership and Organizations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 683-708.

Colic-Peisker, V. and Tilbury, F. (2007), "Integration into the Australian labour market: the experience of three 'visibly different' groups of recently arrived refugees", *International Migration*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 59-85.

Constant, A. and Massey, D. (2005), "Labor market segmentation and the earnings of German guestworkers", *Population Research and Policy Review*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 483-512.

Cottrill, K., Lopez, P.D. and Hoffman, C.C. (2014), "How authentic leadership and inclusion benefit organizations", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 275-292.

Dennissen, M., Benschop, Y. and van den Brink, M. (2019), "Diversity networks: networking for equality?", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 30, pp. 966-980, doi: 10.1111/1467-8551.12321.

Duleep, H.O. and Regets, M.C. (1999), "Immigrants and human-capital investment", *American Economic Review*, Vol. 89 No. 2, pp. 186-191.

Farrell, A.M. (2010), "Insufficient discriminant validity: a comment on Bove, pervan, Beatty, and Shiu (2009)", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 324-327, doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.05.003.

Ferdman, B.M. (2017), "Paradoxes of inclusion: understanding and managing the tensions of diversity and multiculturalism", *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 53 No. 2, pp. 235-263.

Ferdman, B.M., Avigdor, A., Braun, D., Konkin, J. and Kuzmycz, D. (2010), "Collective experience of inclusion, diversity, and performance in work groups", *Revista de Administração Mackenzie*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 6-26, doi: 10.1590/S1678-69712010000300003.

Ferdman, B.M. and Sagiv, L. (2012), "Diversity in organizations and cross-cultural work psychology: what if they were more connected?", *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 5, pp. 323-345.

Fernández-Macías, E., Grande, R., del Rey Poveda, A. and Antón, J.I. (2015), "Employment and occupational mobility among recently arrived immigrants: the Spanish case 1997-2007", *Population Research and Policy Review*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 243-277.

Findler, L., Wind, L.H. and Mor-Barak, M.E. (2007), "The challenge of workforce management in a global society: modelling the relationship between diversity, inclusion, organizational culture, and employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment", *Administration in Social Work*, Vol. 31, pp. 63-94.

Groves, R.M. and Peytcheva, E. (2008), "The impact of nonresponse rates on nonresponse bias: a meta-Analysis", *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 72 No. 2, pp. 167-189.

Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. (2010), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Hu, L.T., Bentler, P.M. and Hoyle, R.H. (1995), *Structural Equation Modeling: Concepts, Issues, and Applications*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Hur, Y. and Strickland, R.A. (2015), "Diversity management practices, do they make a difference? Examining consequences of their adoption in local governments", *Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 325-357.

Hurst, H., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. and Livingston, B. (2012), "The odd one out: how newcomers who are different become adjusted", in Wanberg, C.R. (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, pp. 115-138.

Jordon, P.J. and Troth, A.C. (2020), "Common method bias in applied settings: the dilemma of researching in organizations", *Australian Journal of Management*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 3-14.

Kim, S.H. (2020), "Natives' skills and attitudes towards immigrants: evidence from 20 OECD countries", *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 457-471.

Kline, R.B. (2016), *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling*, 4th ed., The Guilford Press, NY.

Le, H., Zheng, C. and Fujimoto, Y. (2016), "Inclusion, organizational justice and employee well-being", *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 945-964.

MacKenzie, S.B. and Podsakoff, P.M. (2012), "Common method bias in marketing: causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 88 No. 4, pp. 542-555.

Markus, H.R. and Steele, C.M. (2000), "Color blindness as a barrier to inclusion: assimilation and non-immigrant minorities", *Daedalus*, Vol. 129 No. 4, pp. 233-259.

Melton, E.N. and Cunningham, G.B. (2014), "Examining the workplace experiences of sport employees who are LGBT: a social categorization theory perspective", *Journal of Sports Management*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 21-33.

Mitchell, R., Boyle, B., Parker, V., Giles, M., Chiang, V. and Joyce, P. (2015), "Managing inclusiveness and diversity in teams: how leader inclusiveness affects performance through status and team identity", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 54 No. 2, pp. 217-239.

Mor-Barak, M.E. (2015), "Inclusion is the key to diversity management, but what is inclusion?", *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership and Governance*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 83-88.

Mor-Barak, M.E. (2017), *Managing Diversity: toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace*, 4th ed., SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Mor-Barak, M.E. and Cherin, D.A. (1998), "A tool to expand organizational understanding of workforce diversity: exploring a measure of inclusion-exclusion", *Administration in Social Work*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 47-64.

Mor-Barak, M.E., Findler, L. and Wind, L.H. (2001), "Diversity, inclusion, and commitment in organizations: international empirical explorations", *Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 70-91.

Mor-Barak, M.E., Lizano, E.L., Kim, A., Duan, L., Rhee, M., Hsiao, H. and Brimhall, K.C. (2016), "The promise of diversity management for climate of inclusion: a state-of-the-art review and meta-analysis", *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 305-333.

Morgan, E. (2017), "Breaking the zero-sum game: transforming societies through inclusive leadership", *Breaking the Zero-Sum Game (Building Leadership Bridges)*, Emerald Publishing, pp. 5-27.

Ng, E.S. and Sears, G.J. (2020), "Walking the talk on diversity: CEO beliefs, moral values, and the implementation of workplace diversity practices", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 164 No. 3, pp. 437-450.

Nishii, L.H. and Özbilgin, M.F. (2007), "Global diversity management: towards a conceptual framework", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 18 No. 11, pp. 1883-1894.

Nkomo, S.M., Bell, M.P., Roberts, L.M., Aparna Joshi, A. and Thatcher, S.M.B. (2019), "Diversity at a critical juncture: new theories for a complex phenomenon", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 498-517, doi: 10.5465/amr.2019.0103.

Onyishi, I. and Ogbodo, E. (2012), "The contributions of self-efficacy and perceived organizational support when taking charge at work", *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 1-11.

Park, G., Schwartz, H.A., Eichstaedt, J.C., Kern, M.L., Kosinski, M., Stillwell, D.J. and Seligman, M.E.P. (2015), "Automatic personality assessment through social media language", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 108 No. 6, pp. 934-952.

Rajendran, D., Farquharson, K. and Hewege, C. (2017), "Workplace integration: the lived experiences of highly migrant workers in Australia", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 437-456.

Rajendran, D., Ng, E.S., Sears, G. and Ayub, N. (2020), "Determinants of migrant career success: a study of recent migrant workers in Australia", *International Migration*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 30-51.

Rezai, M., Kolne, K., Bui, S. and Lindsay, S. (2020), "Measures of workplace inclusion: a systematic review using the COSMIN methodology", *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 20-454.

Ricci, A., Crivellaro, F. and Bolzani, D. (2021), "Perceived employability of highly skilled migrant women in STEM: insights from labor market intermediaries' professionals", *Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 11 No. 1, p. 7.

Røysum, A. (2020), "The job-seeking experiences of resourceful female immigrants and the impact on their self-efficacy beliefs", *European Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 173-184.

Saks, A.M. (1995), "Longitudinal field investigation of the moderating and mediating effects of self-efficacy on the relationship between training and newcomer adjustment", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 80 No. 2, pp. 211-225.

Shore, L.M., Cleveland, J.N. and Sanchez, D. (2018), "Inclusive workplaces: a review and model", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 176-189.

Shore, L.M., Randel, A.E., Chung, B.G., Dean, M.A., Ehrhart, K.H. and Singh, G. (2011), "Inclusion and diversity in work groups: a review and model for future research", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 1262-1289.

Stewart, M.M., Crary, M. and Humberd, B.K. (2008), "Teaching value in diversity: on the folly of espousing inclusion, while practicing exclusion", *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 374-386.

Tabachnick, B.G. and Fidell, L.S. (2012), *Using Multivariate Statistics*, 7th ed., Allyn & Bacon, Boston, MA.

Tani, M. (2020), "Migration policy and immigrants' labor market performance", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 35-57.

Tharenou, T. and Kulik, C.T. (2020), "Migrant workers employed in developed, mature economies: from newcomers to organizational insiders", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 46 No. 6, pp. 1156-1181, doi: 10.1177/0149206320921229.

Tian, A.W., Wang, Y. and Chia, T. (2018), "Put my skills to use? Understanding the joint effect of job security and skill utilization on job satisfaction between skilled migrants and Australian born workers in Australia", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 139 No. 1, pp. 259-275.

Tsang, E.W.K. (2001), "Adjustment of mainland Chinese academics and students to Singapore", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 347-372.

Van Knippenberg, D. and Schippers, M.C. (2007), "Work group diversity", *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 58 No. 1, pp. 515-541.

Varma, A., Pichler, S. and Toh, S.M. (2011), "A performance theory perspective on expatriate success: the role of self-efficacy and motivation", *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 2-12.

Vergani, M., Yilmaz, I., Barton, G., Barry, J., Bashirov, G. and Barton, S.M. (2021), "Bonding social capital, Afghan refugees, and early access to employment", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 1152-1168.

Werner, A. and Roythorne-Jacobs, H. (2006), "Social processes in organizations", in Bergh, Z. and Theron, A. (Eds), *Psychology in the Work Context*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, pp. 262-276.

Corresponding author
Eddy S. Ng can be contacted at: eddy.ng@queensu.ca