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Empowering Diversity: The Role of Leadership in Inclusion in the Organizational Context

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ABSTRACT

Since the late 2000s, new problems have emerged alongside the existing ones, putting the of populations to the test. Following the global financial crisis of 2008, the world was confronted with the Covid-19 pandemic and, more recently, the outbreak of war in Ukraine. In this context, the imperative of building more inclusive societies has become a pressing concern. As our world becomes increasingly diverse and heterogeneous in the social, economic, cultural, and religious dimensions, moments of crisis further exacerbate social inequalities, highlighting the paramount importance of the debate on inclusion.

The promotion of social inclusion can and should be pursued and implemented at various levels, including at the professional level. In this sense, leadership can play a fundamental role in the inclusion of individuals in organizations and, consequently, in society.

Inclusion in the workplace is about creating an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel valued, respected, and have equal opportunities to contribute and succeed. Leaders have the power to shape the culture, policies and practices that promote or hinder inclusion. Thus, leadership plays a crucial role in promoting inclusion within organizations.

This chapter will review the literature on inclusion based on the responsible leadership and inclusive leadership approaches, seeking to understand what kind of leadership promotes the creation of more inclusive environment in the work context. The chapter will end with the proposal of a set of requirements/assumptions that must be taken into account to better achieve the inclusion of individuals in organizations.

KEYWORDS: Inclusion, inclusive leadership, responsible leadership, workplace diversity

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the world has also faced problems related to the movement of people, for which globalization and wars are partly responsible. The result is the displacement of large numbers of individuals from their home territories, whether as immigrants (legal and illegal), temporary workers or refugees. Thus, societies and organizations are increasingly heterogeneous (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2020).

Given this scenario, it is not difficult to conclude that we are facing a complex reality with multiple challenges, namely in terms of the integration/inclusion of newcomers to host societies. And for this social inclusion, the integration in the workplace is a fundamental dimension, in which leadership can play an important role. Among the various approaches to leadership, we argue that the inclusive leadership and the responsible leadership approaches can contribute decisively to the integration of individuals in the work context and, consequently, to their social integration.

First defined in 2006, inclusive leadership is understood as "words and deeds by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions" (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006, p.927). Several authors have reflected on inclusive leadership and presented new definitions, making it difficult to find common ground among the various conceptualizations, as each one of them focuses on and values different aspects of leadership (Randel et al., 2016), ranging from the contributions of workers to the organization (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), to the availability, openness and accessibility of leaders (Carmeli et al., 2010), or to the leader's behaviours as promoters of the workers' sense of belonging, namely through the promotion of shared decision-making (Randel et al., 2018).

Responsible leadership has also been the subject of research by several authors, who have proposed different definitions, from which two main perspectives stand out. The first perspective views leadership as an ethical phenomenon, while the second is associated with the notion of responsibility in leaders' actions (Roque & Ramos, 2019; Roque & Ramos, 2021). According to the first perspective, leadership can be seen as "a values-based and through ethical principles driven

relationship between leaders and stakeholders who are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose through which they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and commitment for achieving sustainable values creation and social change" (Pless, 2007, p.438). For the second perspective, leadership can be viewed as "the consideration of the consequences of one's actions for all stakeholders, as well as the exertion of influence by enabling the involvement of affected stakeholders and by engaging in an active stakeholder dialogue" (Voegtlin et al., 2012, p.59).

What kind of leadership promotes the creation of more inclusive environments? The answer to this question will be anchored on two theoretical approaches: inclusive leadership and responsible leadership. Therefore, this chapter begins with a review of the literature on inclusion and diversity in the workplace, inclusive leadership, and responsible leadership, in academic databases, such as Social Sciences Citation Index, Emerging Sources Citation Index and SCImago. The objective was not to carry out a systematic review of the literature, but to find the most relevant articles to understand the role of leadership in successful inclusion in an organizational context. Subsequently, we seek to demonstrate how these two approaches can contribute to building a set of effective practices (in the sense of requirements or premises that must be put into practice) to incorporate the diversity and achieve the goal of inclusion/integration in the work context.

BACKGROUND

Inclusion

Globalization has fostered not only the circulation of information but also the movement of people. Societies are becoming increasingly diverse, and diversity is part of all societies, as well as organizations. According to Henriques and Carvalho (2022) diversity refers to several dimensions such as age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, social class, cultural, religious or political beliefs, ethnic diversity, and education. Thus, both societies in general and

organizations in particular are faced with an enormous challenge, that of inclusion, that is, to be able to fit within themselves the existing diversity.

VUCA is a term that describes the challenging and dynamic conditions that organizations face in the contemporary world (Bennett and Lemoigne, 2014; Taskan et al. 2022). The VUCA environment requires organizations to be agile, adaptable, innovative, and resilient to survive and thrive in the competitive landscape. However, many organizations struggle to cope with the VUCA environment due to various factors, such as rigid structures, outdated processes, siloed functions, hierarchical cultures, risk-aversion, and lack of collaboration. These factors hinder the organization's ability to respond quickly and effectively to the changing conditions, to anticipate and seize opportunities, to solve problems creatively, and to learn from failures. Therefore, organizations need to transform their strategies, structures, systems, and cultures to become more VUCA-ready and VUCA-capable. Some of the possible ways to achieve this are: developing a clear vision and purpose, fostering a learning and growth mindset, empowering teams and individuals, leveraging technology and data, cultivating a culture of innovation and experimentation, but also promoting diversity and inclusion.

In everyday language, inclusion usually refers to integration within the family, wider groups or even society. In literature, the concept of social inclusion is not consensual (Bulguer, 2018). Sometimes the concept of social inclusion arises in opposition to the concept of social exclusion, suggesting that the two concepts are interdependent and closely related (Peters et al., 2014). An example of this is the definition presented by Krishna and Kummitha (2017) when they state that: "Social inclusion requires opportunities and resources that are necessary to ensure the participation of those who have been excluded in economic, social, political, and cultural life. It should then be able to provide them with a standard of living and well-being which is considered normal in the society in which they live. Furthermore, such provisions ensure that their voices are respected in any decision-making which affects their lives. Thus, it is claimed that social inclusion is a systematic process that rescues a person or community from the risks or uncertainty of exclusion" (p.13). For other authors (e.g., Silver, 2010), the two concepts represent different ideas, with inclusion associated with the dimension

of "social membership" and the exclusion with that of "social problems." Bulger goes in this direction when he defines social inclusion as "the process and manifestation of recognizing what it means for everyone to be realized as a part of the whole" (2018, p.16).

Although there is no consensus in the literature on the definition of social inclusion, it is widely agreed upon that it gravitates around three dimensions: i) participation; ii) sense of belonging and, in iii) citizenship (Clifford et al., 2015; Cordier et al., 2017). According to Cordier et al. (2017), participation is associated with involvement in social spaces and activities, such as the labor market, the sense of belonging underlies the current and potential participation in the social community and organizations and citizenship is related to the rights and obligations of people as members of society.

In 1958, Schutz considered inclusion as a basic human need that people experience in their interpersonal relationships. According to the author, people, in their communication with others, demonstrate the need to be included.

However, the concept of inclusion has also reached organizations, and in an organizational context, inclusion is seen as a key element to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage (Shah et al., 2022), as well as for the health and well-being of workers (Korkmaz et al., 2022), and can encompass various dimensions such as workers participation in organizations (Roberson and Perry, 2022).

In this sense, Mor-Barack and Cherin (1998) define inclusion as the extent to which workers have access to information and resources, are involved in teamwork, and can participate in decision-making processes. Mathieu et al. (2017) argue that as work has strongly become team-based, team diversity can be a key and differentiating element. However, to fully leverage the diversity of a diverse team, leaders need to have inclusive behaviours by involving all members of their team (Robertson and Perry, 2021). At this point we consider it relevant to distinguish the concept of inclusion from the concept of diversity. Diversity can be understood as a set of attributes present in workforce that affect the way people think, feel and behave in their work, while inclusion focuses on policies, practices and the work climate and culture, reflecting the work experience of workers with

the characteristics mentioned above (Garg and Sangwan, 2021; Henriques and Carvalho, 2022)

Pelled et al. (1999) defined inclusion as "the extent to which a worker is accepted and treated as an insider by others in a work system" (p. 1014). Nishii (2013) seeks to identify organizational practices that can facilitate the inclusion of workers in organizations. In general, inclusion in an organizational context impels that all workers have the possibility to contribute to the defined goals without sacrificing any part of their identity (Ferdman, 2014). Some authors have focused on equity and inclusion in organizations for minority groups (e.g., Warren and Waren, 2023; Santos et al., 2022), asserting that black people and workers from other ethnic backgrounds have been ignored by leadership, leaving them without any support in their careers and facing additional obstacles. Roberts and Roberts (2019) go even further and claim that leadership has never truly embraced the idea of inclusion.

Regardless of the definition of inclusion, for it to become a reality in organizations leaders must desire and promote it. Leaders apply the guiding principles of organizations, serving as role models and influencing other team members with their own behaviour. Therefore, they play a fundamental role in realizing inclusion. As stated by Santos et al. (2022), leaders have the power to create inclusion and they are in a strategic position to put it into practice. At the organizational level, leaders are therefore a crucial element in fostering more inclusive environments (Ferdman, 2014; Shanker et al., 2017), where everyone can express their opinions and participate in decision-making.

The creation of an inclusive environment may not be an easy task, as more and more different generations coexist in the same workplace, with different perspectives on what they consider, for example, quality in the workplace. Gen Z (born roughly between the mid-1990s and early 2010s), the last generation to arrive in the labor market, can play an important role in inclusion, taking into account some their main characteristics such as valuing honesty in the leaders' actions, valuing face-to-face communication with their superiors, the desire that their ideas are heard and the appreciation of social responsibility (Benítez-Márquez et al, 2022). Interpersonal relationships in the workplace and specifically mutual help in teams is essential for this generation (Barhate and Dirani, 2022).

In this way, we believe that this generation, with characteristics very different from the previous ones, can be a valuable help for leaders in creating a more inclusive environment, as they can themselves constitute a driving force for the incorporation of diversity in organizations.

To answer the research question (what type of leadership promotes the creation of more inclusive environments?), the following points will address the two theoretical approaches that, in our view, can play an important role - inclusive leadership and responsible leadership.

Inclusive leadership

The concept of inclusive leadership was first introduced in 2006 by Nembhard and Edmondson. The authors defined inclusive leadership as "words and deeds by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions" (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006, p. 927). The focus, as highlighted by Korkmaz et al. (2022), lies on the recognition of the contributions of subordinates. According to Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), subordinates develop a sense of psychological safety when they feel that leaders appreciate their contributions. Kulknor and Bhattacharya (2020) also advocate that recognizing subordinates' contributions contributes to their psychological safety, as it provides them with the opportunity to express their viewpoints on the issues at hand.

Based on the idea of psychological safety, Carmeli et al. (2010)[1] argue that leaders should demonstrate openness, accessibility, and availability in their interactions with subordinates. This contributes to the creation of a context in which subordinates feel psychologically safe to express their ideas. In other words, leaders exhibit inclusive behaviours by encouraging their subordinates to

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[1] Psychological safety means that "people are comfortable being themselves" (Edmondson, 1999, p. 354) and "feel able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to selfimage, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708).

share their opinions and by demonstrating openness, accessibility, and availability.

Hollander (2012) suggests that inclusive leadership creates a situation in which both leaders and subordinates benefit, establishing a mutually beneficial relationship. However, this relationship depends on respect, recognition, responsiveness, and accountability in both directions (Hollander et al., 2008), with organizational inclusion heavily reliant on the leader's behaviours (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2020).

Shore et al. (2011) defined inclusion as "the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the workgroup through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness" (p. 1265). This definition closely relates to the theory of optimal distinctiveness (Brewer, 2012). According to this theory, people need to be similar but also different from others. The former increases the likelihood of being accepted into a group, while the latter pertains to the recognition of being distinct and unique.

Shore and Chung (2021) further expanded on the concept of inclusion, presenting a 2x2 framework where belongingness and uniqueness are present to identify various workgroup experiences. The identified dimensions are: inclusion, assimilation, differentiation, and exclusion. Inclusion consists of high levels of both belongingness and uniqueness. Assimilation entails a high level of belongingness but a low level of uniqueness. Differentiation involves a low level of belongingness but a high level of uniqueness, while exclusion encompasses low levels of both belongingness and uniqueness.

According to Randel et al. (2018), leadership should focus on supporting group members by ensuring justice and equity and promoting shared decision-making opportunities while consistently encouraging contributions from all members. The authors state that "leaders' efforts are specifically focused on enhancing members' perceptions of the desire for, and value of, their uniqueness as a group member" (Randel et al., 2018, p. 192). In other words, the focus is on the subordinates' experience within the team and on valuing the uniqueness of each team member. To achieve this, leaders should provide support to team members,

ensure fairness and equity, promote shared decision-making, encourage the contribution of all members, and assist team members in sharing their contributions (Randel et al., 2018). These behaviours aim to make team members feel supported and, as a result, comfortable to participate even when they hold different perspectives. Inclusive leadership encourages contributions by soliciting diverse perspectives, thereby fostering an environment that embraces diversity (Winters, 2013).

Similarly, other authors (Choi et al., 2015; Javed et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2016) argue that inclusive leaders treat their subordinates with respect, recognition, and tolerance, paying attention to their opinions. Consequently, subordinates feel more committed to their leaders and are more likely to exhibit innovative behaviours at work (Walumbwa et al., 2011).

According to You et al. (2021), inclusive leadership differs from other leadership approaches by being more humanistic, as it is based on three characteristics: i) leaders have a high level of tolerance and support for subordinates; ii) leaders invest time in training subordinates and celebrate their achievements; iii) leaders exhibit behaviours of transparency and fairness towards subordinates (Bakari et al., 2019).

These conceptualizations of leadership go beyond traditional approaches by focusing not only on the characteristics and abilities leaders should possess, but also on the attention leaders should pay to subordinates' needs and perceptions (Katsaros, 2022).

Studies conducted thus far draw attention to the impact and role of inclusive leadership in various dimensions. Yonas et al. (2021) reveal that inclusive leadership develops subordinates' trust in leadership integrity and reinforces citizenship behaviours. Bau et al. (2021) argue for a positive association between inclusive leadership and work commitment. Li (2022) emphasizes the importance of this type of leadership in promoting innovative work behaviours and productivity. This study also reveals that workers' psychological safety and identification with leaders are crucial in mediating relationships within the organization. Yasin et al. (2022) conclude that inclusive leadership has a positive impact on organizational commitment.

In summary, inclusive leadership has various conceptualizations, ranging from recognizing subordinates' contributions to the openness, accessibility, and availability that leaders should demonstrate in their interactions with subordinates, through the need for belongingness and uniqueness, and the encouragement of subordinates' participation in decision-making processes (Korkmaz et al., 2022).

However, is inclusive leadership alone sufficient to address the challenges posed by current societies? Can other leadership approaches, such as responsible leadership, also contribute to addressing these challenges?

Responsible leadership

The curiosity surrounding the approach of responsible leadership has been increasing as the need for transparency in various societal contexts becomes a pressing reality (Khanam & Tarab, 2022).

Talking about responsible leadership impels us to, in a first step, analyze what is meant by responsibility. According to Waldman and Galvin (2008), responsibility is intrinsically related to the need to act considering the concerns and needs of others while simultaneously taking responsibility for one's own actions. The others can be viewed from two perspectives: the economic perspective and the stakeholder perspective.

The economic perspective is based on three principles. The first considers that the leader's responsibility begins and ends with internal stakeholders. The second asserts that responsible leadership should be strategic and calculative. The third suggests that rewards and monitoring systems should function to ensure that leaders are effectively defining their responsibilities towards internal stakeholders (Waldman & Galvin, 2008).

On the other hand, the stakeholder perspective posits that the responsibility of leaders should consider all stakeholders, whether internal or external, and decisions should respect both (Waldman & Galvin, 2008).

The stakeholder perspective also distinguishes between primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. The former includes customers, investors, employees, and shareholders, while the latter encompasses NGOs, local

communities, and social groups. Responsible leaders should collaborate and cooperate with all stakeholders, whether primary or secondary, establishing relationships of trust.

Just as with inclusive leadership, responsible leadership can have multiple definitions[2], but it is possible to distinguish two main perspectives. The first perspective sees leadership primarily as an ethical phenomenon (Maria & Lozano, 2010; Doh & Stumpf, 2005; Pless, 2007; Pless & Maak, 2011), and responsible leadership is defined as "a values-based and through ethical principles driven relationship between leaders and stakeholders who are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose through which they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and commitment for achieving sustainable values creation and social change" (Pless, 2007, p.438). In this view, leaders are responsible for building sustainable relationships with all stakeholders, achieving common goals that benefit the majority (Maak, 2007).

According to the second perspective, responsible leadership can be seen as "the consideration of the consequences of one's actions for all stakeholders, as well as the exertion of influence by enabling the involvement of the affected stakeholders and by engaging in an active stakeholder dialogue. Therein responsible leaders strive to weigh and balance the interests of the forwarded claims" (Voegtlin et al., 2012, p.59). This definition of responsible leadership is thus linked to the consequences of leaders' actions which are crucial as they can improve people's lives, whether within or outside the organization (Marques et al., 2018).

Based on the behaviours of leaders', Waldman and Galvin (2008) distinguish two possible views regarding responsible leadership: the limited economic view and the extended stakeholder view. The limited economic view considers that leaders' decisions should only consider the maximisation of value for stakeholders. The extended stakeholder view, on the other hand, suggests that leaders' decisions should be more comprehensive, distinguishing between two levels of responsible behaviour: avoiding harm (proscriptive morality) and doing good (prescriptive morality). Avoiding harm refers to decisions that prevent negative consequences

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[2] For more details we suggest consulting Roque & Ramos, 2019.

for stakeholders and society, while doing good encompasses contributing to a better society. The leaders' responses to the dual responsibility of preventing or minimizing harm and maximizing good demonstrate the ethical component of responsible leadership (Longest, 2017).

In their connection with stakeholders, Maak and Pless (2011) argue that responsible leadership should develop a relationship of trust with all parties involved. This relationship is built on the sharing of the business vision and common goals. According to the authors, to meet these requirements, it is necessary to consider five premises: i) consider both internal and external stakeholders; ii) define objectives in both an organizational and a social context; iii) embrace inclusion, collaboration, and cooperation with all stakeholders; iv) consider the impact of decisions on all stakeholders; and v) embrace change to achieve higher social objectives.

Regarding leaders, Liechti (2014) suggests that they should consider five dimensions in their actions: i) integration and consideration of stakeholders' interests; ii) knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemmas inherent to all involved parties; iii) self-awareness and reflection throughout the process; iv) knowing the functioning of the system and anticipate the consequences of decisions; and v) understanding the dynamics of the change process.

According to Han et al. (2019), by making decisions that consider the interests of all stakeholders, both internal and external to the organization, responsible leadership can positively contribute to the development of organizational citizenship behaviours. A study conducted by Zhao and Zhou (2019) also demonstrates that responsible leadership is a fundamental antecedent to developing organizational citizenship behaviours. In addition to these findings, several studies reveal the role of responsible leadership in various dimensions of the lives of workers and organizations. Responsible leadership can promote employees' organizational commitment (Haque et al., 2018) and have a positive impact on workers' well-being and organizational sustainability (Haque, 2021). The results of a study by Alfasar et al. (2019) indicate that responsible leadership is a positive predictor of environmental vision and performance.

As Tan (2023) states, it is possible to identify three approaches to responsible leadership: initial approach, relational approach and holistic approach. In the initial approach, the focus is narrower and focuses mainly on shareholders. In the relational approach, the focus is on developing trust relationships with internal and external clients. And in the holistic approach, there is a concern with the exercise of social responsibility in partnership with both internal and external clients.

Relevant Leadership Practices to Promote Inclusion in an Organizational Context

In recent decades, societies have faced a series of scenarios with economic, financial, and social implications. Globalization, on one hand, has increased the circulation of information and, on the other hand, facilitated the movement of people from their countries of origin to other territories in search of new opportunities. In addition to globalization-driven migration, there are now displacements associated with poverty, wars, and climate change. Consequently, societies are now much more heterogeneous than in the past, composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds in terms of territorial origin, religion, beliefs, sexual orientations, among others. Therefore, the challenges that arise are varied, and the inclusion of diversity, an essential element in societies in general and organizations in particular, is an urgent challenge.

For full realization of inclusion, the role of leaders is crucial. In the workplace, leaders can make a difference and contribute to ensuring that all individuals feel integrated and included. The characteristics associated with inclusive leadership make it relevant in this context, as it advocates for the opportunity for all workers to participate and be heard in decision-making, with leaders recognizing the contributions of their subordinates (Korkmaz et al., 2022). In this context, leaders value the uniqueness of each team member and encourage the contributions of all.

A recent study conducted by Katsaros (2022) with participants from multinational pharmaceutical companies based in the United States revealed a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and participation, mediated by

workplace belonging. The study reinforces the idea that inclusive leadership can be a key element in ensuring that all team members to feel comfortable and sufficiently recognised to participate in decision-making.

Another study, conducted by Chang et al. (2022), with 40 teams from 20 organizations located in Shanghai, revealed that inclusive leadership has a positive impact on workers' proactive behaviour. The openness and accessibility of leaders increase workers' sense of belonging and contribute to their self-efficacy. This study also revealed that inclusive leadership affects workers' trust. Lastly, the same study revealed that the climate of justice moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and workers' proactive behaviour and the relationship between inclusive leadership and workers' trust.

Bannay et al. (2020) conducted a study with 150 individuals from the technology sector in Iraq that demonstrated that inclusive leadership and commitment were related to organizational innovation behaviours, with commitment playing a mediating role between inclusive leadership and organizational innovation behaviours. The results also showed that inclusive leadership behaviours such as openness, accessibility, and availability motivated workers to engage in organizational innovation behaviours.

In a research involving various banking and legal organizations in several cities in China, Qi et al. (2019) found that inclusive leadership was positively related to innovation behaviours, and the perception of organizational support mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and workers' innovation behaviours. When workers perceive that leaders accept and include their ideas, they feel more valued and increase their innovation behaviours.

Based on these results, it is possible to conclude that inclusive leadership can play an important role in organizational inclusion, organizational commitment, as well as organizational citizenship behaviours. Organizational commitment is the psychological bond that connects workers to organizations and besides contributing to a reduction in turnover intentions, it is an important element in organizational performance.

Mousa and Puhakka (2019), in a study involving professionals working in four public hospitals in Egypt, demonstrated a positive association between

responsible leadership and organizational inclusion, as well as between organizational inclusion and organizational commitment.

Another study, conducted by Voegtlin et al. (2019), revealed that when leaders exhibit responsible behaviours, they can achieve positive outcomes, particularly in contexts characterized by uncertainty and doubt, such as the one we are currently experiencing.

Some studies have also revealed a relationship between responsible leadership and citizenship behaviour towards the environment. This is the case of the research conducted by Han et al. (2019), involving professionals from various sectors, which concluded that responsible leadership is positively associated with organizational citizenship behaviour for the environment. They also found that responsible leadership has positive effects on autonomous and external environmental motivation. This study further revealed that autonomous and external environmental motivation play a mediating role in the relationship between responsible leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour for the environment. Similarly, another study by Alfasar et al. (2019) indicated that responsible leadership is a positive predictor of environmental vision and performance.

In 2020, a study involving workers in the banking sector in Pakistan (Yasin et al. 2020,) found a positive association between responsible leadership and ethical climate, and a negative association between ethical climate and turnover intention. The results also revealed the mediating role of ethical climate between responsible leadership and turnover intention. The authors concluded that an ethical climate is crucial for the sustainability of organizations, considering that unethical behaviours have a negative impact on organizational performance.

Drawing from the theoretical approaches of inclusive leadership and responsible leadership, Roque and Ramos (2021) propose a set of premises or assumptions on what good leadership practices should be. These premises are based on principles of inclusive leadership and responsible leadership that must be considered in moments of great unpredictability and which, from our perspective, could also be valuable for dealing with diversity and promoting inclusion in the organizational context. In this regard, leaders should act to: i) foster an

environment of openness, accessibility, and availability in their interactions with subordinates; ii) promote shared decision-making opportunities by encouraging contributions from all subordinates; iii) strengthen trust relationships with all stakeholders based on inclusion, collaboration, cooperation, and communication; iv) consider the impact of decision-making on all stakeholders; v) value the ethical dimension in decision-making.

The first premise provides that the actions of the leaders should foster an environment of openness, accessibility and availability in interaction with subordinates. As mentioned by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), it is important for subordinates to develop a sense of psychological safety. For this to happen, leaders must promote an environment of openness, accessibility, and availability in their interactions with subordinates (Carmeli et al., 2010). This is the only way to think of decision-making in which everyone feels comfortable to contribute, regardless of whether their perspective is identical to that of others. This brings us to the second premise.

The second premise suggests that leaders' actions should promote shared decision-making opportunities, encouraging contributions from all subordinates. After fostering an environment of psychological safety, it becomes easier for each subordinate to feel comfortable expressing their opinions and contributing to decision-making. Recognizing the contributions made by subordinates also helps reinforce the desired environment (Kulkarni and Bhattacharya, 2020).

The third premise states that the actions of the leaders should strengthen relationships of trust with all stakeholders based on inclusion, collaboration, cooperation, and communication. By encouraging the participation and involvement of all stakeholders, a collaborative effort is fostered in which collective concern becomes the primary focus.

The fourth premise emphasizes that leaders' actions should consider the impact of decision-making on all stakeholders. As we know, stakeholders, whether primary or secondary, are always affected by leaders' decisions. Therefore, it is important for leaders' decision-making to meet a dual requirement: avoiding harm (prescriptive morality) and doing good (prescriptive morality) (Stahl and Luque, 2014). This dual requirement contributes to the next premise.

The fifth and final premise considers the value of ethical dimension in decision-making. The credibility and integrity of leaders are crucial (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020). However, this requires that both avoiding harm and doing good are evident in the decision-making carried out by leaders. The leader must set the tone.

In summary, we reinforce the idea that inclusion is crucial for embracing the diversity that exists in societies in general and organizations in particular. When we talk about organizations, we cannot forget that they are part of a society, a community, and the interactions between an organization and its context are also factors to consider. Inclusiveness in the workplace is a concept that refers to creating a work environment where every employee feels respected, valued, and included, regardless of their identity, background, or differences. Inclusive workplaces celebrate diversity and promote fairness and equity for all employees.

Therefore, in addition to internal stakeholders, external stakeholders must not be overlooked. In this sense, we argue that the proposal of good leadership practices by Roque and Ramos (2021) is an effective tool available to organizations to facilitate the inclusion of their employees.

The implementation of inclusion can be facilitated with the presence of Generation Z in the workplace, since many of the assumptions present in the proposal by Roque and Ramos (2021) are closely linked to the values defended by this generation of young workers. Gen Z is the most diverse and digitally savvy generation in history, and they have high expectations for social and environmental responsibility from employers. Gen Z also values individual expression, collaboration, flexibility, authenticity, and dialogue. Gen Z is not afraid to challenge the status quo and demand change for a better future. They are not afraid of the authenticity, which leads to freedom of expression, and the right to be different. Therefore, the presence of these workers can help the leaders to achieve an environment conducive to inclusion in the workplace, since they themselves are spokespersons for the right to diversity, freedom of expression and, by extension, inclusion.

CONCLUSION

Diversity exists in both societies and organizations, making inclusion indispensable. Thus, in both general societies and specific organizations, leadership should foster inclusion.

The thesis we defend is that inclusive leadership and responsible leadership are approaches to consider for achieving the inclusion of workers in organizations in an increasingly global and diverse world.

Leadership plays a key role in promoting inclusion in an organizational context through a series of key approaches and starting with setting the tone. Leaders should have a clear vision and commitment to inclusion, highlighting its importance within the organization. By openly communicating and modelling inclusive behaviour, leaders act like role-models and create an environment that encourages others to follow suit.

Furthermore, leaders are responsible for creating inclusive policies and practices within the organization. They must review and revise existing policies, procedures, and practices to eliminate any biases or barriers that may impede inclusion. This may involve implementing flexible work arrangements, promoting work-life balance, and ensuring that employees from diverse backgrounds have equal access to resources and development opportunities. It may also involve providing training. By investing in training programmes that promote empathy, cultural competence and openness to diversity, leaders help build a more inclusive and understanding workforce that appreciates and respects differences.

An inclusive environment thrives on collaboration and participation, and leaders should encourage collaboration and seek input from diverse perspectives, creating platforms for employees to share their ideas, opinions and concerns. By ensuring that everyone's voice is heard and valued, leaders foster an inclusive environment in which diverse perspectives are recognised and appreciated.

Equally important for creating an inclusive culture is recognising diversity. Leaders should actively celebrate and recognize the diverse contributions and achievements of individuals and teams within the Organization. By showcasing

and appreciating diverse talents, leaders reinforce the message that everyone's contributions are valued and respected, further promoting inclusivity.

Finally, leaders must hold themselves and others accountable for promoting an inclusive environment. By making inclusivity an integral part of the Organization's structure and expectations, leaders ensure that efforts toward inclusion are sustained and effective.

In summary, the fundamental principles of inclusive leadership and responsible leadership play a key role in promoting inclusion in an organizational context. Through setting the tone, cultivating diversity, creating inclusive policies, providing education, encouraging collaboration, addressing bias, celebrating diversity, and holding people accountable, leaders foster an inclusive culture that benefits both the organization and its employees. By prioritizing inclusion, leaders create an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds can thrive and contribute their unique perspectives, ultimately leading to organizational success.

Given these principles, the proposal put forward by Roque and Ramos (2021) for good leadership practices in unpredictable contexts may be valuable in achieving the goal of including employee diversity in organizations.

It would be important for future studies to investigate whether in organizations where inclusive leadership principles and shared leadership are implemented, they effectively reinforce inclusion, as well as whether this reinforcement is consistent across all sectors of activity or whether there are differences. It would also be important to understand if inclusive leadership and shared leadership have the same impact in culturally distinct countries.

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