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The Relationship Between Inclusive Leadership and Turnover Intentions: The Mediating Role of Work Engagement

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Master in International Management

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September, 2024

Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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Aos meus pais, irmão e Diogo, por todo o amor e carinho.

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Resumo

Esta dissertação pretende demonstrar se existe uma relação entre a liderança inclusiva, as intenções de saída e o papel mediador do *work engagement* em equipas diversificadas. Para fundamentar as relações acima referidas, este estudo baseou-se na Teoria da Distintividade Ótima (OTD) e na Teoria da Troca Social (SET). Com base na literatura, é evidente que a liderança inclusiva é altamente benéfica para as organizações e para os trabalhadores.

Neste estudo foi utilizada uma metodologia quantitativa, com recurso a um questionário online que recolheu 227 respostas válidas de colaboradores portugueses que trabalhavam com uma força de trabalho diversificada. Para testar as relações propostas, *PROCESS bootstrapping macro* foi utilizado.

Os resultados sugerem que, num ambiente diversificado, a liderança inclusiva está positivamente relacionada com o *engagement* no trabalho e negativamente com as intenções de saída. Por sua vez, o *engagement* está negativamente relacionado com as intenções de *turnover*, mediando totalmente a relação entre liderança inclusiva e intenções de saída.

Este estudo dá importantes contributos teóricos ao expandir o conhecimento sobre a liderança inclusiva, o *engagement* e as intenções de turnover. Para além de examinar os resultados dos trabalhadores, como o *engagement*, este estudo centra-se também no impacto da liderança inclusiva nos resultados organizacionais, como as intenções de saída. Ademais, examina o efeito indireto do *engagement* como mediador e da liderança inclusiva como forma de atenuar as intenções de saída. Assim, com os ambientes de trabalho a tornarem-se mais heterogéneos, é imperativo que os líderes tomem consciência das vantagens de adotar uma liderança inclusiva.

Palavras-chave: Liderança Inclusiva, *Work Engagment*; *Engagement* no Trabalho; Intenções de Saída

Códigos de Classificação JEL:

O15 – Human Resources

J63 – Turnover

M1 – Business Administration

Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between inclusive leadership, turnover intentions, and the mediating role of work engagement in diverse teams. To substantiate the above relationships, this study was based on the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) and the Social Exchange Theory (SET). From literature, it is evident that inclusive leadership is highly beneficial for both organisations and employees.

A quantitative methodology was used to carry out the study, using an online questionnaire that gathered 227 valid responses from Portuguese employees who worked with a diverse workforce. PROCESS bootstrapping macro was used to test the hypothesised relationships. Based on the data analysis, results suggest that, in a diverse environment, inclusive leadership is positively correlated to work engagement and negatively to turnover intentions. In turn, work engagement is also positively related to turnover intentions and fully mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions.

This study makes significant theoretical contributions by expanding knowledge about inclusive leadership, work engagement and turnover intentions. Besides examining employee outcomes such as work engagement, this study also focuses on the impacts of inclusive leadership on organisational outcomes, such as turnover intentions. Moreover, it examines the indirect effect of work engagement as a mediator and inclusive leadership as a way to mitigate turnover intentions. Nonetheless, given that working environments are becoming continuously more heterogeneous, it is imperative that leaders become aware of the advantages of embracing an inclusive leadership style.

Keywords: Inclusive Leadership; Turnover Intentions; Work Engagement

JEL Classification System:

O15 – Human Resources

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List of Abbreviations

IL – Inclusive Leadership

ODT – Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

SET – Social Exchange Theory

TI – Turnover Intentions

WE – Work Engagemen

Introduction

As globalisation forces change in organisations, working environments are becoming continuously more heterogeneous (Barak & Travis, 2012), making the workforce more diverse than ever (Meena & Vanka, 2017; Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). Because of this phenomenon, the free flow of human resources across geographic boundaries has become customary, reinforcing the need for organisations to understand better the specificities of diverse cultural values, norms, and language (Roberson, 2019), as a significant number of studies support that organisational diversity results in various beneficial outcomes (Okatta et al., 2024; Shore et al., 2011). Numerous academic studies have outlined the advantages of more diversity and connected it to favourable organisational results such as organisational commitment (Giffords, 2009), job satisfaction (Pitts, 2009), retention (Groeneveld, 2011), more access to a more diversified client base (Cox, 1994; Ely et al., 2001), greater creativity, innovation, and problem-solving ability (Bassett-Jones, 2005; Cox & Blake, 1991; Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009; Iles & Hayers, 1997), service quality, cost-savings (Hunt et al., 2018), improved corporate image (Cox, 1994), and productivity (Barta et al., 2012), sustainability (Cox et al., 1991), and constituting a source of competitive advantage (Bassett-Jones, 2005; Cox & Blake, 1991) and organisational success (Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021). However, studies are not in agreement, as some mention that diversity results in adverse outcomes such as lack of retention, lost revenues, increased conflict, and lack of cooperation (Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009; Mamman et al., 2012), reduced communication and creation of in-groups and out-groups (Ely et al., 2001), due to factors including stereotypes and prejudice, bias, discrimination (Shore et al., 2009; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1997), harassment, unsupportive work environment, exclusion and isolation (Morrison, 1992; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1997).

Nonetheless, recent studies show that increasing the number of diverse workers is not sufficient, as greater team diversity does not necessarily correspond to an inclusive environment (Ashikali et al., 2021; Puritty et al., 2017). Therefore, organisations must focus on including employees to benefit from all the benefits of diversity (Ashikali et al., 2021; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Puritty et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2018), by transforming diverse workplaces into environments where all employees can be fully themselves (Ferdman, 2017), are recognised by their individual differences (Bradley, 2020) and are appreciated for their work and contribution (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). As a result, more and more often, managers are tasked with the responsibility of managing the diversity of their workforce and promoting inclusivity inside the organisation.

Inclusive leadership (IL) has, therefore, gained the interest of scholars, as organisations' efforts to recruit, develop and promote diversity do not guarantee that these individuals' capabilities are thoroughly utilised, and that their opinions are fully heard and effectively considered when making organisational choices (Randel et al., 2018), highlighting the crucial role of leadership in getting the best inclusion outcomes (Qi et al., 2019). Thus, inclusive leadership is viewed as a strategy that ensures that the potential benefits of a diverse team are realised (Roberson & Perry, 2022), by promoting inclusiveness in diverse teams and facilitating a safe environment (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Randel et al., 2018) in which different ideas, values, experiences and perspectives are taken into consideration (Roberson & Perry, 2022). Therefore, as work environments are becoming more diverse, a fundamental change in leadership styles is needed to one that promotes inclusion by valuing members for their unique attributes, perspectives, and contributions, resulting in higher performance (Randel et al., 2018), sustained competitive advantage and well-being of organisations' employees (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022).

Otherwise, if an organisation's culture discourages employees from sharing their thoughts, worries, difficulties, questions, and information, the organisation will have compromised performance and environment (Edmondson, 2018), as openness and communication, such as the ability to share feedback and criticism, are crucial and significant elements in an organisation (Musheke & Phiri, 2021), which can impact an organisation's ability to perform effectively (Kibe, 2014), innovate, and retain ideas and opportunities. Developing, overall, a culture of inclusiveness that generates positive results (Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

There are various methods and approaches to support the management of diverse teams, and inclusive leadership is said to be one of the most effective (Hollander, 2009), by ensuring that all team members feel that they are respected and treated fairly and can sense they are welcomed and valued in the organisational setting (Bourke & Espedido, 2019). Academics also concluded that inclusive leadership has positive outcomes on organisational characteristics such as improving employee's sense of belongingness (Randel et al., 2018) and retention (Bentley et al., 2021). Consequently, employees with a high sense of belongingness depict higher levels of involvement, satisfaction, happiness, loyalty, and performance (Le et al., 2018; Mousa et al., 2021).

In another study, when asked why employees were leaving the company, they cited unfair or abusive supervision as the primary cause (Holtom et al., 2005; Teck & Loo, 2017), meaning that a leader's behaviour can play a critical role in employees' turnover intentions (Marlieke, 2016). This is proven to be crucial in organisations with a diverse workforce, which due to many challenges that arise when inclusivity is lacking such as interpersonal conflicts (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), disagreements and misunderstandings (Liu et al., 2023), have a risk of a higher turnover rate (Morris et al., 2009), which is costly for organisations as it negatively affects organisational efficiency, organisational success (Alexander et al., 1994; Han et al., 2016; Holtom et al., 2005; Nica, 2016; Zheng & Lamond, 2010), and weakens the overall business performance (Chiat & Panatik, 2019).

Turnover intention (TI) is defined as the willingness of an employee to voluntarily leave the workplace (Takase, 2010). Losing talented employees can negatively affect an organisation's competitive advantage, lower the morale of other employees (Sanjeevkumar, 2012), lower productivity and work quality loss (Chiat & Panatik, 2019; Holtom & Burch, 2016; Juhdi et al., 2013), lower work pace (Chiat & Panatik, 2019), and reduced organisational efficiency (Alexander et al., 1994). Research indicates that the intent of employees to leave organisations is becoming a widespread global phenomenon, posing a significant challenge for companies (Bao & Zhong, 2021; Memon et al., 2016). Despite the abundant literature on employees' intent to quit, the registered global trend above justifies the need for further research on this phenomenon (Minzlaff et al., 2024).

Prior studies indicate a negative relationship between work engagement (WE) and voluntary turnover (Bailey et al., 2015; Juhdi et al., 2013; Shuck et al., 2014). Engaged employees are those who are proud of their work (Schaufeli et al., 2006), are fully connected with their roles and are dedicated and immersed in their work performance (Bakker, 2011). Multiple studies report that engaged employees express lower intentions to leave the organisation and that reduced levels of engagement account for high rates of employee turnover (Ali & Baloch, 2009; Park & Gursoy, 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This is important as research suggests that employee engagement is a critical factor for an organisation's success and competitive advantage (Macey et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010; Saks & Gruman, 2014), as organisations with engaged employees have higher profitability, productivity, shareholder returns and customer satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002; Rich et al., 2010).

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intention and how it can be mediated through work engagement on diverse teams, as researchers believe that inclusive leadership can be a significant predictor of work engagement (Carmeli et al., 2010; Cenkci et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2015a; Hollander, 2012) and turnover intentions (Bentley et al., 2021; Gajdzińska, 2021; Yasin et al., 2023). This study is of great relevance given the importance of the variables under study, namely inclusive leadership, turnover intentions and work engagement, in the success and sustainability of organisations in a context of economic globalisation and high competition, where organisations that understand how the variables studied are a distinctive factor in competitiveness, thus standing out from other organisations.

First, although work engagement is a well-researched field of management (Gajdzińska, 2021) and numerous studies examined the relationship between various forms of leadership and work engagement, such as empowering leadership (Cai et al., 2018; Tuckey et al., 2013), transformational leadership (Bui et al., 2017; Gemeda & Lee, 2020), servant leadership (Sousa & Dierendonck, 2014), authentic leadership (Oh et al., 2018), little attention has been given to the impact that inclusive leadership can have on work engagement (Bao et al., 2022; Gajdzińska, 2021). This dissertation aims to enhance the current body of knowledge by exploring the impact of inclusive leadership on employee work engagement.

Second, this dissertation argues that it is a case to research if and how inclusive leadership can impact diverse teams' turnover intentions. Researchers have investigated the turnover impact on diversity not only because it has an empirical link to it but also because it poses a severe organisational challenge given the numerous expenses corresponding to it (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Although extensive research has been conducted on different leadership styles and turnover intention, such as ethical, authentic and transformational leadership (Tran & Choi, 2019; Oh & Oh, 2017; Pravichai & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2018; Sun & Wang, 2017) there is still a dearth of research on the ability of inclusive leadership to mitigate turnover intention (Tran & Choi, 2019). However, Randel et al. (2018) and Bentley et al. (2021) advocate that inclusive leadership positively influences retention. Thus, we aim to examine how inclusive leadership impacts turnover intentions on diverse teams which encompass numerous dimensions such as gender, age, religion, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, geographic regions, tenure, physical ability and cognitive ability, language, beliefs, economic category, cultural differences, etc (Krishna et al., 2004).

Third, as workforces become increasingly diverse in countless ways, leaders face the challenge of managing across these differences (Roberson & Perry, 2022). Given their direct influence on employees' experiences, leaders play a fundamental role in fostering inclusive environments (Ferdman, 2013). However, there is a lack of literature on how leadership enables an inclusive climate in diverse teams (Ashikali et al., 2021). Furthermore, Roberson (2006) highlighted that little attention has been given, in organisational literature, to the concept of inclusion. Inclusive leadership promotes the effective functioning of diverse teams in ways that other leadership styles do not sufficiently address by providing distinct styles of recognition, belonging and inclusiveness (Randel et al., 2018). While some research has been done on leadership challenges associated with diversity in teams, there is still little research on leadership styles that can address these difficulties by promoting an inclusive work group experience (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Therefore, research about the impact of inclusive leadership on diverse teams is sparse. This study addresses a gap in the research literature by examining the impact of inclusive leadership on the engagement and turnover intentions of diverse teams.

In an attempt to contribute to this body of literature, this study aims to examine whether and how inclusive leadership is related to lower turnover intentions and if work engagement can mediate this relationship. By helping address this gap, the study provides insights into how inclusive leadership can impact employee turnover intentions by improving work engagement, thereby contributing to theoretical understanding and practical implications for organisations. In terms of real-world practice, we aim that the findings in this dissertation can help leaders understand the effect their daily practices can have on the engagement levels of employees and employees' turnover intentions.

The present study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter encompasses the literature review, in which a comprehensive overview of the main variables is made. The second chapter details the data and methods, followed by the measurements and data analysis. The third chapter presents the results and hypothesis testing. The dissertation concludes with the fourth chapter, 'Discussion,' which includes a discussion of the results, theoretical and practical implications, limitations, future research and the conclusion.

Literature Review

1.1. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

The modern workplaces are characterised by increasing workforce diversity in an immeasurable number of dimensions such as gender, age, religion, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, geographic regions, tenure, physical and cognitive ability, language, beliefs, economic category, cultural differences, etc (Krishna et al., 2004). In fact, diversity is viewed, in many organisations, as a strategic business priority that provides essential benefits. According to Hunt et al. (2018) on a McKinsey & Company report, the most diverse companies tend to perform better since they help attract and maintain talented employees, and diversity provides positive effects such as improved creativity (Choi et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2021), innovation (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013; Guo et al., 2021; Hou et al., 2021) problem-solving, increase employee satisfaction (Hunt et al., 2018), and organisational performance and reputation (Dwyer et al., 2003) .

Diversity has been used to describe the composition of groups or workforces (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Roberson, 2006) and is a highly complex phenomenon that can either improve or disturb team performance (Mayo et al., 2017). In literature, researchers have defined diversity in numerous ways. Some researchers have explicitly defined the term diversity, demonstrating the variety of conceptualisations. Several offer broad definitions, such as Larkey (1996), who defines diversity as the outcome of different worldviews that may lead to behavioural variations across cultural groups as well as identification variations between group members regarding other groups, and similarly, Thomas & Ely (1996) stating that diversity is “the varied perspectives and approaches to work that members of different identity groups bring” (p. 80).

Others, and most scholars, have compartmentalised diversity. Some authors divide diversity into four different categories: personality, which includes traits, skills, and abilities; internal characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, intelligence, and sexual orientation; external characteristics, like culture, nationality, religion, marital status, and organisational characteristics which are positions, department, and union (Chitra & Mohan A., 2017; Singal, 2014). Others, such as Cañas & Sondak (2010), offered a definition based on primary diversity, which includes age, gender, race, ethnicity and physical abilities, and secondary diversity, which relates to socioeconomic status, geographical location, marital status, religious affiliation, and education. Similarly, Gomez-Mejia et al. (2007) define diversity as “human characteristics that make people different from one another” (p. 119) that can be divided into two groups. The first includes biological characteristics such as race, gender, age, colour, and national origin, and the second corresponds to the characteristics that can be modified by the individual, such as work experience, income, marital status, religion, political beliefs, geographical location, education, values, and ethics. Thus, it can be observed that researchers have defined the concept of diversity in a myriad of ways.

Despite having the most significant potential to create value (Distefano & Maznevski, 2000), there are many challenges associated with the complexity of workplace diversity (Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). Young (1998) identifies these challenges as being related to how people relate to each other, how they communicate within the team and differences in their culture. On the same note, Brett et al. (2007) observed that these challenges can arise from the use of different styles of communication (e.g. direct vs indirect), troubles with accents, fluency or wrong usage of words, and different attitudes towards hierarchy and authority (Brett et al., 2007). Moreover, according to Iles (1995), misunderstanding and communication due to the use of different languages, stereotyping, lack of competence and contribution, different expectations, and mutual blaming result in tension, conflicts, and disagreements in teams, adding that these issues are likely to be multiplied when working in heterogeneous teams (Iles, 1995; Jehn, 1997). Other research also mentions that teams with different cultures, education, organisational tenure, and socioeconomic and functional backgrounds can have a significant impact on work style, job performance, goal achievement, and communication (Jackson & Whitney, 1995; Knap-Stefaniuk, 2023; Tsui et al., 1992). As a result, if differences between employees are not well managed, discrimination can occur (Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). Employing a diverse workforce is a commitment to acknowledging and celebrating the variety of attributes that make people remarkable in a setting that encourages and celebrates individual and collective achievement (Hudson, Jr., 2014).

Diversity management is, according to various authors, a set of managerial strategies that ensure participation, equality, and respect among members of the majority and minority affiliations in a way that supports the organisation's tactical and strategic objectives (Bizri, 2018; Gao & He, 2017; Thomas, 1990; Valentine & Godkin, 2017). Diversity comes with numerous advantages, as previously stated. However, diversity can also cause misunderstandings and conflicts in the workplace, resulting in absenteeism, poor-quality work and loss of competitiveness (Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). Hence, organisations must not only focus on bringing diverse employees into the workplace (Moon & Christensen, 2020), as benefitting from team diversity requires more than composing diverse teams and having mere numerical representation (Shore et al., 2011; van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022). Organisations must focus on including them to benefit from all the outcomes of diversity (Mor Barak et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2018). Leaders' values and actions have a direct influence on creating such environments (Ferdman, 2013). As a result, this sense of inclusion can be accomplished with inclusive leadership that captures a set of behaviours and practices that foster a sense of inclusion (Roberson & Perry, 2022), where leaders are characterised by being available and accessible to employees both psychologically and physically (Edmondson, 2011), by displaying openness to other's points of view and allowing members to voice their opinions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Roberson & Perry, 2022), by being attentive to their employees' needs, and by inviting and appreciating employee's contributions (Roberson & Perry, 2022).

Inclusion is conceptually and empirically distinct from diversity (Shore et al., 2011). On the contrary to the definition of diversity above, inclusion has been linked to worker empowerment and participation (Roberson, 2006), and can be enabled by emphasising employees' needs for belongingness and uniqueness simultaneously (Shore et al., 2011). Mor-Barak & Cherin (1998) define inclusion as the degree to which people can participate in work groups, have access to knowledge and resources, and have the power to influence decision-making. Likewise, according to Roberson (2006), inclusion refers to employee involvement and integration of diversity into organisational systems and processes. Shore et al. (2011) define inclusion as "the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness" (p. 1265). Similarly, Pelled and her colleagues (1999) defined inclusion as "the degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by others in a work system" (p. 1014). Therefore, inclusion represents the ability to contribute fully and effectively to an organisation (Ferdman, 2013; Mor-Barak & Cherin, 1998). A growing literature has suggested that creating and fostering an inclusive workplace, particularly in diverse environments, results in positive outcomes such as increased retention, organisational commitment, trust, creativity, innovation and job satisfaction (Brimhall et al., 2014; Mor Barak et al., 2006; Shore et al., 2011), and decreases conflict, turnover intentions and job stress (Mor Barak et al., 2006; Nishii, 2013a; Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

Despite the differences, diversity and inclusion are viewed, in research, as key to achieving better organisational results.

1.2. Inclusive Leadership

Over the past few decades, the concept of inclusive leadership has been gaining popularity amongst academics in response to the growing importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Previous studies concluded that leadership is an essential factor in fostering a sense of inclusion in organisations (Andrews & Ashworth, 2015; Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Bae et al., 2017; Chrobot-Mason et al., 2013; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), as leaders and managers are viewed as agents of the organisation by disseminating its norms and values and shaping the organisational culture (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2004). However, research on this topic is a developing field (Nejati & Shafaei, 2023) characterised by a variety of conceptualisations (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022) on which there is yet no collective agreement (Randel et al., 2016).

Inclusive leadership as a concept was first introduced as “words and deeds exhibited by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others’ contributions” (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006, p. 941). Later, Carmeli et al. (2010) describe inclusive leadership as leaders who are open, accessible, and available to their staff and who encourage people to contribute new and original ideas. Recent research defines it as a set of behaviours exhibited by leaders that prioritise fostering a sense of belonging by ensuring justice and equity, offering opportunities for shared decision-making, valuing individuality by promoting diverse contributions and assisting group members in contributing fully to the processes and outcomes of the group (Randel et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011). Thus, being an inclusive leader implies creating a workplace where employees feel psychologically safe and empowered to express their ideas and address their concerns (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). To an inclusive leader, every employee’s contribution is respected and valued (Roberson, 2006). According to Hollander (2009), inclusive leaders show support for their employees and pay attention to their needs, build harmonious relationships, and promote organisational involvement by showing openness, effectiveness, and accessibility (Guo et al., 2022), resulting in sustained competitive advantage and the health and well-being of their employees (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022). Moreover, Randel et al. (2018) argue that uniqueness and belongingness work together to create a feeling of inclusion, consequently providing opportunities for improvement in group performance.

Inclusive leaders focus on showing appreciation (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022), recognition, and acknowledgement of achievements and qualities (Baumeister, 2012) always emphasising individuals, encouraging and fostering a sense of belonging and demonstrating an appreciation for individuality to promote their range of contributions and skills (Guo et al., 2023). In other words, inclusive leaders view their position as providing support and assistance rather than command and control. They also provide team members with the tools, autonomy, independence, and discretion they need to complete their tasks (Carmeli et al., 2010; Hollander, 2009). Contrary to traditional leadership, which focuses mainly on the leader as a means, inclusive leadership focus on what is needed in the context to help in ways such as problem-solving and achieving shared goals (Hollander, 2009).

Research shows that since group members' attitudes of inclusion are shaped by how they are treated at work, managers of work groups and other people in official leadership roles are crucial to fostering inclusion (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), as they hold influence over the organisational environment (Fletcher, 2017; Nishii, 2013a). By openly supporting varied dialogue and communication in a fair atmosphere, inclusive leadership encourages team

members to voice their thoughts and viewpoints inside the team, motivating team members (Y. Guo et al., 2023), which will cause employees to believe that their leader will not reprimand, criticise or punish them for their behaviour (Ye et al., 2019). Similarly, by highlighting the value of individuality, inclusive leaders make it evident that they want members to share and exchange distinctive traits and apply these in their work practices (Guo et al., 2023). Inclusion-facilitating leaders encourage group members to see themselves as integral parts of the group by acting favourably towards them and setting a positive example (Randel et al., 2018). This approach is imperative, as research indicates a positive correlation between inclusive leadership and organisational learning behaviour (Nejati & Shafaei, 2023).

Furthermore, in contrast to other leadership styles, such as transformational, authentic, and empowering leadership, inclusive leadership prioritises encouraging and appreciating individuality as well as guaranteeing team members' sense of belonging (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2016; Randel et al., 2018). On the behaviour side, an inclusive leader must ensure the team members speak up and are heard, provide a safe space for members to share their ideas, empower team members, take advice, and implement feedback, give actionable feedback, and share credit for team success (Sherbin & Rashid, 2017).

Being an inclusive leader is about regular, small-scale comments and actions practised daily, prioritising that everyone perceives that they are being treated fairly and respectfully, are valued, feel like they belong, and are psychologically safe (Bourke & Espedido, 2019).

Ferdman and Deane (2014) point out that organisational imperatives and inclusion strategies are shaped by leaders' inclusive practices and the experiences of both individuals and groups inside the business. Thus, Veli Korkmaz et. al (2022) proposed that inclusive leadership practices must address not only employees and teams but also the organisational level, making the leader the actor whose behaviours target all three organisational levels. On the employee level, the authors suggest that leaders are responsible for fostering uniqueness by supporting employees as individuals, promoting diversity, empowering employees, and contributing to their learning and development. On the team level, inclusive leaders must ensure equity, build relationships, and share the decision-making process. Furthermore, the authors also defend the importance of recognising the efforts and contributions of the individuals and the team in inclusive leadership. Lastly, on the organisational level, they are responsible for being open to organisational change and promoting inclusion as an organisational mission (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022).

1.3. Turnover Intentions

Decreasing turnover intentions and increasing employee job satisfaction and motivation are topics of interest for most researchers (Chiat & Panatik, 2019) as they are key to attaining competitive advantage and achieving business growth (Dahiya & Rath, 2021). Equally, organisations have also shown interest in retention as it is considered a source of competitive advantage (Onyemah et al., 2021). However, retention of employees has grown to be a challenge for businesses worldwide (Bao & Zhong, 2021), regarding their performance, competitiveness, and survival (Thakre & Damodar, 2015).

Turnover intentions differ from turnover, as those intentions are immediate precursors to actual turnover (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2004). On one hand, turnover intentions reflect the thought of the employee leaving the organisation and are susceptible to influence and variations. On the other hand, the actual turnover is a final and irreversible step (Gajdzińska, 2021). Even though turnover intentions do not equal employee turnover, they are a strong predictor of turnover behaviour (Hulin, 1991; Mobley, 1982) as the relationship between the intentions and the actual turnover has been confirmed in previous research (Bluedorn, 1982; Egan et al., 2004).

Thus, turnover intentions are defined as “the (subjective) likelihood that an individual will change his or her job within a certain period” (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2004, p. 113). Likewise, Ngamkroeckjoti (2012) defined turnover intentions as the likelihood of leaving the current job by an employee. According to the literature, there are two types of employee turnover: voluntary and involuntary. The first is primarily initiated by the employees themselves, whereas the second is initiated by the organisation (Cao et al., 2013).

Depending on the organisation, turnover intentions can be different (Belete, 2018) and literature has pointed out some factors as the reason for turnover intentions. For example, leadership quality plays a crucial role, with employees who experience low-quality relationships with their leaders being more likely to consider leaving (Ahmed et al., 2019). When leadership styles fail to foster trust and engagement, employees may feel disconnected, which, along with demographic factors, can further exacerbate turnover intentions (Belete, 2018). Another significant factor is the balance between work demands and employee well-being. Excessively long working hours, combined with a lack of development opportunities and insufficient welfare programs, often lead to employee dissatisfaction and burnout (Ahmed et al., 2019). Furthermore, these factors can create a perception of unfairness, contributing to lower organisational commitment (Ahuja et al., 2007) and driving employees to seek better

conditions elsewhere (Ahuja et al., 2007). Moreover, organisational justice and climate significantly impact turnover intentions, as employees who perceive unfair treatment or an unsupportive workplace environment are less likely to stay committed to the organisation (Hussein Alkahtani, 2015; Thatcher et al., 2002). Similarly, the organisational culture shapes how employees experience their work life, influencing both their job satisfaction and overall decision to remain within the company (Dwivedi et al., 2013). Additionally, job stress and dissatisfaction are commonly cited as reasons for turnover levels of stress, particularly when combined with unsatisfactory promotion opportunities, inadequate salaries, or poor job conditions, can push employees to seek more fulfilling roles (Jha, 2009; Nyamubarwa, 2013; Onyemah et al., 2021). This is crucial, as employees who interact with colleagues with high turnover intentions are more likely to develop similar intentions due to the negative attitudes towards the organisation exhibited by those considering leaving (Griffeth et al., 2000). Therefore, the literature suggests that inclusive leadership can prevent employee turnover intentions and minimise their negative outcomes and impacts (Bentley et al., 2021; Gajdzińska, 2021; Yasin et al., 2023). Various academics carried out studies to examine the potential consequences of turnover intentions, such as costs for the organisation (Byrnes & Cascio, 1984; Chiat & Panatik, 2019), poor performance (Chiat & Panatik, 2019), loss of valuable human resources, and disruption of ongoing activities (Byrnes & Cascio, 1984), as well as lack of innovation and competitiveness (Park & Shaw, 2013). Hence, more studies and organisational policies to prevent the above consequences are needed in organisations.

1.3.1. Inclusive Leadership and Turnover Intentions

Research reveals that inclusive leadership plays a vital role in reducing turnover intentions (Agarwal et al., 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Elsaied, 2020; Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shuck et al., 2014; Soane et al., 2012), as they address employee's needs (Rayner, 2009), encourage collaborations (Xiaotao et al., 2018), and give support (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022).

To support the path between inclusive leadership and turnover we used The Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) (Brewer, 1991), which is an extension of social identity theory (Brewer, 2012), that has been used to describe individuals' inherent needs for belongingness and uniqueness. Belongingness is about seeking connection and validation through similarities with others, while uniqueness focuses on pursuing individuality and differentiation in contrast to others (Ashikali et al., 2021; Leonardelli et al., 2010). This theory posits that "human needs

for validation and similarity to others (on the one hand) and a countervailing need for uniqueness and individuation (on the other)” (Brewer, 1991, p. 477). In other words, humans are driven by two opposing needs that shape the relationship between their self-concept and their membership in social groups (Leonardelli et al., 2010). Individuals seek to balance these two needs through an optimal level of inclusion in groups (Way et al., 2022) which leads to achieving optimal distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991). Furthermore, research on the ODT suggests that while both needs are important, there are circumstances where one or both needs stand out (Correll & Park, 2005), making the importance of the need variable depending on which context an individual is situated (Leonardelli et al., 2010; Shore et al., 2011). Nonetheless, ODT research reveals that when people's needs for uniqueness and belongingness are threatened, they will make efforts to achieve the balance they desire (Shore et al., 2011). For instance, as group membership becomes more included, the need for inclusion is fulfilled, so the need for differentiation increases; contrariwise, as inclusiveness decreases, the need for differentiation lessens, while the need for inclusion is heightened.

Building on the ODT, scholars suggest that inclusive leadership is essential for fostering both a sense of belongingness and uniqueness, as it simultaneously supports and facilitates these needs (Randel et al., 2016, 2018; Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022). Thus, inclusive leaders aim to create an environment which allows individuals to express their uniqueness while also promoting a sense of belonging and unity (Ashikali et al., 2021)

To achieve this, inclusive leaders facilitate uniqueness by supporting and empowering employees as individuals, promoting diversity, and contributing to their development (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022) in ways such as giving attention to the employees (Ye et al., 2019), providing guidance (Wang et al., 2019), valuing employee's unique characteristics and diverse contributions (Randel et al., 2018), exhibiting availability (Carmeli et al., 2010), promoting opportunities to express ideas (Rehman, 2020), and by allowing and helping employees to improve their weaknesses and develop their strengths (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022). Therefore, inclusive leaders embrace and celebrate each team member's diverse perspectives, experiences, and skills, fostering a sense of inclusion (Athar et al., 2023). Similarly, these leaders can strengthen employees' belongingness in four ways. First, by supporting group members (Randel et al., 2018), which involves leaders making members feel comfortable and communicating that they have the members' best interests in mind (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Second, by ensuring equity and fair treatment (Mansoor et al., 2020; Saxena et al., 2019) which indicates that leaders respect each individual who is part of a workgroup (Randel et al., 2018). Third, by building relationships and supporting employees as team members (Randel et al., 2018) and

lastly, by sharing the decision-making process (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022), which focuses on sharing power, expanding decision-making consultation and influencing how work is carried out helps create a sense of belonging (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Nishii, 2013). Thus, an inclusive leader cultivates a shared identity and common purpose that unites the team, enhancing feelings of belonging and inclusivity (Shore & Chung, 2023).

Building on the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT), when employees are part of an inclusive work environment, they are likely to experience various positive outcomes. For instance, Acquavita et al. (2009) suggested that perceptions of inclusion and exclusion were significant in predicting social workers' job satisfaction, which is in line with other studies that linked inclusion and job satisfaction (Mor Barak et al., 2006). Moreover, literature also supports that inclusive leaders can create positive outcomes such as work engagement, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Randel et al., 2018), organisational commitment and job performance (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008). Furthermore, Avery et al. (2008) concluded that perceived inclusiveness related positively to intent to stay in an organisation and reported that workers with greater social integration are more likely to exhibit higher levels of connection and identification with their organisation and are also less likely to leave. Lindsay et al. (2020), studied the influence of needs for both inclusion and distinctiveness within workgroup identification and the subsequent effect on turnover intention. Using a sample of 306 employees, the author concluded that workgroup identification helps reduce turnover intentions, which is consistent with van Knippenberg & van Schie (2000), who found initial evidence that workgroup identification predicts turnover intention. Furthermore, research carried out by Gonzalez (2016) suggested that optimal distinctiveness, which can be achieved with an inclusive leader, can lower turnover intentions. As a result, we argue that inclusive leadership can impact turnover intentions and formulate the following hypothesis.

H1. Inclusive leadership is negatively related to turnover intentions

1.4. Work Engagement

In recent years, work engagement has gained recognition as a legitimate construct among researchers (Albrecht et al., 2015; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008), gathering much attention in the field of management and psychology (Monje-Amor et al., 2020) as scholars have considered it as one of the most critical factors in determining employee motivation (Cole et al., 2012) and company success (Strom et al., 2014), amongst other favourable outcomes (Monje-Amor et al., 2020) such as better team performance (Costa et al., 2015) and financial results (Xanthopoulou

et al., 2009). However, even though significant progress has been made in academic studies on defining and clarifying the construct and setting it apart from related but distinct constructs (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2013), in practice, “relatively low levels of employee engagement continue to be reported in organisations across the globe” (Albrecht et al., 2015, p. 8). For that reason, to encourage employee engagement, organisations must focus on fostering a supportive work environment, keeping employees motivated and positive about their jobs and the organisation as a whole (Blomme et al., 2015).

Schaufeli and colleagues (2006) provided one of the most accepted definitions for work engagement. They defined it as “a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702). Vigour, dedication and absorption are dimensions of work engagement where vigour is described as high levels of energy, mental resilience while working, persistence when there are difficulties, and willingness to invest energy in work; dedication is related to the sense of pride, inspiration, enthusiasm, and challenge at work; and absorption refers to being fully immersed, and happy with trouble detaching from work (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Work engagement is described as a cognitive-affective state that is more permanent over time as opposed to being a particular and temporary condition (Monje-Amor et al., 2020), that can fluctuate within persons, across time and situations (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Engaged employees are those who are fully connected with their roles, that are dedicated and immersed in their work performance (Bakker, 2011).

The popularity behind work engagement is due to being a good predictor of crucial employee, team, and organisational outcomes (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018), so it is not surprising that efforts to identify factors that promote employee engagement are growing. Engaged workers show better task (Christian et al., 2011b) and team performance (Costa et al., 2015), better results in customer satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002; Salanova et al., 2005), are better in-role and extra-role performance (Schaufeli et al., 2006), show better financial results (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), are more prone to innovative and entrepreneurial behaviours (Gawke et al., 2017), and to help their colleagues (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Research also suggests that engaged workers who have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their jobs believe they can handle their job demands better (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Also, they are less likely to experience burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2006) and turnover intentions (Halbesleben, 2010; Lu et al., 2016; Saks, 2006; Yucel et al., 2023). On the contrary, employee disengagement leads to reduced productivity and higher costs (Choi et al., 2015b).

1.4.1. Inclusive Leadership and Work Engagement

Existing research suggests that leadership is a crucial driver in enhancing employee work engagement (Bakker, 2011; Bao et al., 2022; Strom et al., 2014). More specifically, inclusive leadership has been proven to strongly influence work engagement (Carmeli et al., 2010; Cenkci et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2015a; Hollander, 2012). First, because inclusive leaders are approachable and eager to discuss new concepts and prospects with employees, workers are more likely to feel valued for their contributions (Carmeli et al., 2010). It is anticipated that these positive emotions will raise workers' sense of achievement from their employment (Zhu et al., 2009), and consequently, make them more prone to devote their efforts to their work (Bao et al., 2022). Furthermore, inclusive leaders invite and appreciate employees for their contribution (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), value their uniqueness and facilitate their belongingness.

To substantiate the pathway between inclusive leadership and work engagement, we used the Social Exchange Theory (SET). The SET refers to the “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do, in fact, bring from others” (Blau, 1964, p. 91). It suggests that responsibilities are created by a sequence of exchanges between individuals in a reciprocal interdependent condition, such as those between a leader and a subordinate (Gouldner, 1960). As per SET, the exchange between the immediate supervisor and employee is maintained based on a relationship of interdependence where there is an expectation of reciprocation of support, work, and favour (Shore et al., 2006). When employees feel supported and helped, they are more likely to work harder to reciprocate the help given by the leadership (Xiang et al., 2017). Therefore, when an employee receives and has, for example, social support from colleagues and supervisors, development opportunities, work creativity and flexibility, skill variety, autonomy, and performance feedback (Alfes et al., 2013; Bakker et al., 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Hakanen et al., 2005; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007), they are expected to reciprocate by being more engaged, expressed through vigor, dedication, and absorption (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2020). This is based on the reciprocity norm that states an obligation to return favours and other acts of kindness (Gouldner, 1960). In other words, it is generally expected that when one person does another a favour, a return, in which its exact nature is not specified in advance, will occur in the future (Blau, 1986). Thus, one of the main characteristics of an inclusive leader is their ability to exhibit openness and accessibility (Carmeli et al., 2010). They provide beneficial resources to employees

(Marlieke, 2016), who are presumed to become more motivated to reciprocate by applying themselves fully to their work duties and contributing more mental, emotional, and physical resources to the company when they believe they are receiving these resources, and, in return, workers become more involved in their work (Strom et al., 2014). On the same note, employers who support their workers' skill development and give them ongoing chances to advance their professional and personal abilities, such as inclusive leaders, instil a sense of obligation in their workforce (Memon et al., 2016) to reciprocate the help given. Hence, this theory, which focuses on the reciprocity of the relationship between the employee, the leader and the organisation, helps explain the impact of inclusive leadership on work engagement (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022).

Thus, based on the above discussion, we expect a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and work engagement and, therefore, present the following hypothesis.

H2: Inclusive leadership is positively related to work engagement.

1.4.2. Work Engagement and Turnover Intentions

We argue that work engagement is likely to minimise turnover intentions (Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and that these intentions are more likely to emerge when employees are not engaged in their work, as research has pointed to a negative relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions.

The negative relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions is explained by SET, which suggests that obligations are created through a series of exchanges between parties, such as the ones between leader and subordinate, in a state of reciprocal interdependence, (Gouldner, 1960). In other words, if one party provides something to another, it is expected reciprocation. As per the SET, the exchange is a continuous cycle in which one person initiates contact, the other responds, and so on, creating a new cycle of exchanges (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). So, when a leader provides, for example, fair supervision, autonomy, opportunities for development, and meaningful work, employees feel compelled to repay leaders in various ways such as organisational commitment, loyalty (Bhal, 2006; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), job performance (Blau, 1964), and high levels of work engagement (Agarwal et al., 2012; Saks, 2006). Furthermore, alongside leaders, organisations are the main suppliers of resources, such as economic and socio-emotional ones (Saks, 2006), that help workers achieve a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind, also known as work engagement (Agarwal et al., 2012). As a result, given these resources employees reciprocate by

spending more time, energy, and effort in the organisation and being more engaged, and, as previous studies showed, highly engaged employees are less likely to leave an organisation voluntarily (Juhdi et al., 2013; Saks, 2006). Otherwise, if a leader or organization fails to provide these resources, employees are more prone to withdraw and disengage themselves from their roles (Saks, 2006). Furthermore, when workers are passionate about what they do and find their work engaging, they will go above and beyond to finish even the most challenging assignment (Agarwal et al., 2012), being less likely to experience turnover intentions (Saks, 2006). Additionally, positive, meaningful work experiences and a mental state that is linked to improved health and forward-thinking job efforts are produced by engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003). Employees with these happy experiences and feelings are more likely to show favourable work-related outcomes, respect their employer more, and stay with the company longer (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

In fact, Halbesleben's (2010) meta-analysis proved a strong negative relationship between work engagement and employees' intentions to leave. Agarwal and her colleagues (2012), proposed an approach where they measured engagement as a means through which the leader-subordinate relationship influences critical employee outcomes such as intention to quit. This study, which gathered 979 valid responses and used the SET as a theoretical explanation for the hypothesis that tested the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention, also concluded that work engagement is decisive for organisations that want to retain talented employees. Also, consistent with other research, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Bailey et al. (2015), both reported that engagement is negatively associated with turnover intentions. Similarly, Saks (2006), focused his research on the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement based on the social exchange theory, where he hypothesised that job engagement would be positively related to intentions to quit. Saks (2006) surveyed 102 employees working in a variety of jobs and organisations, allowing him to measure a variety of antecedents and consequences of work and organisational engagement. His findings suggest that, in line with the SET, leaders need to provide employees with resources that will instil an obligation to reciprocate with higher engagement levels, consequently reducing employee intention to leave. Thus, based on this literature, we believe that work engagement relates negatively with turnover intentions. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: Work engagement is negatively related to turnover intentions

1.4.3. The Mediating Role of Work Engagement

There is a lack of research linking work engagement as a mediator between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions, as previous research has not frequently investigated this relationship. In this study, we hypothesise that inclusive leadership is expected to lower employee turnover intentions through increasing work engagement.

As stated above, work engagement is described as a positive, fulfilling, work-related satisfying state of mind (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Based on this definition, engaged workers are those who are fully connected with their roles and who are dedicated and immersed in their work performance (Bakker, 2011), which can result in various positive outcomes such as better financial results (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), more innovative and entrepreneurial behaviours (Gawke et al., 2017), colleague support (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018), organisational commitment (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Moreover, previous studies also concluded that when employees are more engaged in their work, they show less intention to leave the organisation (Bailey et al., 2015; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The established model is supported by the Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to the SET, the exchange between the immediate supervisor and employee is maintained based on a relationship of interdependence where there is an expectation of reciprocation of support, work, and favour (Shore et al., 2006). This theory has in its basic principles the norm of reciprocity, which suggests that when employees feel supported and helped, they are more likely to work harder to reciprocate the help given by the leadership (Xiang et al., 2017). In this context, inclusive leaders provide beneficial resources to employees (Marlieke, 2016), and a work environment where employees feel like they belong and are valued for their unique perspectives and contributions (Randel et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011). As a result, employees are presumed to become more motivated to reciprocate by applying themselves fully to their work duties and contributing more mental, emotional, and physical resources to the company, becoming more engaged in their work (Strom et al., 2014). Furthermore, high work engagement reduces turnover intentions as engaged employees are more satisfied with their jobs, feel a strong emotional connection to their work, and are emotionally and cognitively invested in their jobs (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Consequently, employees are less likely to consider leaving the organisation, which is in line with previous studies that showed that highly engaged employees are less likely to leave an organisation voluntarily (Juhdi et al., 2013; Saks, 2006). Otherwise, if a leader or organisation fails to provide these resources, employees are more prone to withdraw and disengage themselves from their roles (Saks, 2006). Work engagement acts as a mediator because it explains the process by which inclusive leadership leads to reduced turnover intentions. Inclusive leadership fosters an engaged workforce

(Carmeli et al., 2010), which subsequently lowers the likelihood of employees wanting to leave the organisation (Saks, 2006). In other words, inclusive leadership enhances work engagement, and it is this heightened engagement that ultimately drives down turnover intentions.

In this sense, taking into account that inclusive leadership is significantly positively related to higher levels of engagement (Carmeli et al., 2010; Cenkci et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2015a; Hollander, 2012), and engagement is significantly negatively related to employee's intentions to leave an organisation (Agarwal et al., 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Elsaied, 2020; Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shuck et al., 2014; Soane et al., 2012) it is expected that engagement will act as a mediator between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions.

Therefore, we posit that the link between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions is better understood when the mediating role of work engagement is considered since leadership is a critical part that influences the work environment and employees' perspective of their work (Christian et al., 2011). In other words, we expect that inclusive leaders will facilitate employee retention by increasing the feeling of engagement, and we formulated the following hypothesis.

H4: Work engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions.

Figure 1 condenses the hypotheses and respective relationships we aim to study. This model has three variables: the independent variable is inclusive leadership, the dependent variable is turnover intentions, and the mediator variable is work engagement.

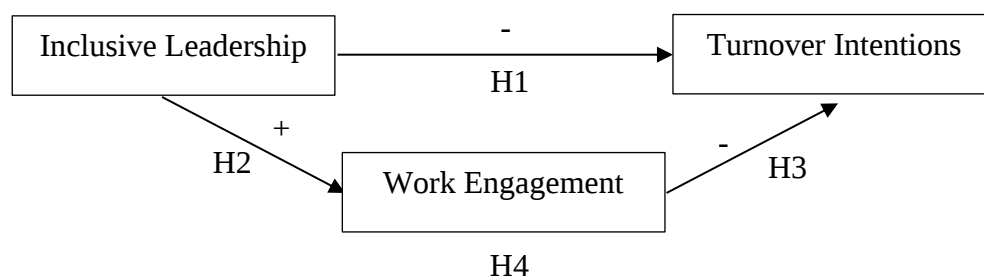


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

2.1. Data Collection

The data in this study was collected online over a one-month period, starting in March 2024.

Data was collected by a questionnaire that can be found in Annex A. The questionnaire was divided into three parts, with a total of 22 questions regarding the variables and nine questions about demographics. The first part explained items such as purpose and eligibility criteria, and then informed consent was asked for. Then, we asked about demographic variables like gender, age, organisational tenure, and education. Lastly, nine items related to inclusive leaders' traits, nine items on work engagement and four items on turnover intentions were asked.

Study participants were assured that the survey was anonymous and that the collected data would be analysed confidentially after receiving their consent to participate in the study. Furthermore, the following items were used as the survey eligibility criteria:

- currently having a manager or supervisor to whom the participant reports;
- working with a diverse workforce.

Regarding the last criteria (working with a diverse workforce), first, a definition and examples of what diversity meant were given to participants in the questionnaire description ("diversity refers to the composition of work teams, e.g. differences in age, gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, education/skills, nationality, language, beliefs and values, economic category, marital status, department, income, etc." (Krishna et al., 2004)). Then, diversity was ensured by asking participants to report on what type of diversity they were exposed to during their work, allowing them to choose other kinds of diversity if needed. It should be noted that for participants to be able to continue the questionnaire, it was mandatory to report the type of diversity, otherwise, they were unable to continue and complete the questionnaire.

In this study, we used quantitative research that allows us to explain a phenomenon by collecting data and analysing it using methods based on mathematics, such as statistics (Creswell, 1994). Furthermore, it is a transversal or cross-sectional and correlational research whose primary purpose is to observe the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions through the mediating role of work engagement.

The instrument chosen for the methodology in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was placed online due to its convenience for both the participants and the author,

as it does not require the presence of the researcher to collect the responses, making it a faster, easier, more convenient, and considerably cheaper alternative to traditional methods (Andrade, 2020; Malhotra & Birks, 2007) allowing for more respondents in a short period. Furthermore, this approach allowed for the inclusion of more participants and is more environmentally friendly, as it eliminates the need for printing. However, it also has disadvantages, such as possible distractions, given that surveys can be completed anywhere, resulting in the possibility of having haltered responses and errors due to lack of attention (Shane et al., 2022).

To collect data, non-probabilistic sampling was used due to the time and resources available, so convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used to collect the data as follows: a link to the questionnaire was shared through email, social media (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and E-mail) and other platforms asking to participate in the survey voluntarily. The link was also sent to personal contacts of the researcher who fit the criteria. Furthermore, some participants were asked to re-share the link to those they knew fit the conditions to gather a more prominent and representative sample.

2.2. Sample

A list of 351 voluntary participants was compiled using Qualtrics to disseminate the survey. Of these, 89 were invalid because of omitted, inconsistencies and incorrect answers. Moreover, 11 respondents did not fit the criteria; thus, they were also removed, and 2, even though they responded to the questionnaire, did not accept the declaration of consent. Furthermore, 22 responses from participants of other nationalities than Portuguese were also excluded. Thus, 227 valid responses were used for data analysis (Table 1).

The demographic data of the sample were as follows. Of the respondents, 140 were female (61,7%) and 87 were male (38,3%). Regarding age, 33,5% were between 19 and 26 years, 16,3 % between 27 and 39 years, 26% between 40 and 52 years and 23,3% between 53 and 64 years. In terms of the level of education, 37 (16,3%) had less than a bachelor's degree, 112 (49,3%) had a bachelor's degree, 76 (33,5%) had a master's degree, and only two respondents had a doctorate. Most respondents (81,9%) were operational employees, with the rest (18,1%) distributed among the various management levels, with 4,4% being first-line managers, 9,7% being middle managers, and 4,0% being top managers. Regarding the respondents' current work situation, 25,1% have been in their organisation for less than a year, and 19,8% between 1 and 2 years. 7,9% have a working tenure of 3 to 5 years and 5 to 10 years. Lastly, 39,2 % have been in their organisation for over 10 years. Regarding employees' time with their supervisor, 20,7 % have worked with them for more than 10 years, 11% between 5 and 10 years, 15 % between 3 and 5 years, 22,5% between 1 and 2 years, and 30,8 % less than 1 year. As expected, the majority of the respondents reported age as being the most prominent type of diversity, with a frequency of 139 responses (61,2%), followed by gender (32,6%), education (29,1%), and marital status (22,9%). Furthermore, diversity in nationality, beliefs and values in the workplace was also frequently reported (18,5% and 21,1%, respectively).

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Variables	Values	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Gender	Female	140	61,7	61,7
	Male	87	38,3	100
Age	Less than 18	0	0	0
	19- 26	76	33,5	33,5
	27 - 39	37	16,3	49,8
	40 – 52	59	26,0	75,8
	53 - 64	53	23,3	99,1
	More than 64	2	0,9	100
Education	Less than a high school degree	4	1,8	1,8
	High school degree or equivalent	26	11,5	13,2
	Some college but no degree	7	3,1	16,3
	Bachelors degree	112	49,3	65,6
	Master's degree	76	33,5	99,1
	Doctorate degree	2	0,8	100
Position	Operational Employee	186	81,9	81,9
	First-line manager	10	4,4	86,3
	Middle manager	22	9,7	96,0
	Top manager	9	4,0	100
Tenure with supervisor	Less than 1 year	70	30,8	30,8
	1-2 years	51	22,5	53,3
	3-5 years	34	15,0	68,3
	5-10 years	25	11,0	79,3
	More than 10 years	47	20,7	100
Tenure	Less than 1 year	68	25,1	25,1
	1-2 years	51	19,8	43,9
	3-5 years	20	7,9	52,9
	5-10 years	19	7,9	60,8
	More than 10 years	91	39,2	100

Diversity	Age	139	61,2
	Gender	74	32,6
	Religion	18	7,9
	Ethnicity	16	7,0
	Cultural	30	13,2
	Sexual Orientation	19	8,4
	Education/qualifications	66	29,1
	Nationality	42	18,5
	Language	27	11,9
	Beliefs and values	48	21,1
	Economic status	30	13,2
	Marital status	52	22,9
	Department	38	16,7
	Other	5	2,2

2.3. Measurement

All measures involved in this study were originally written in English, but a Portuguese version was used to reach a more significant sample. Regarding the work engagement measure, the UWES-9 scale has a Portuguese version; however, the translation is in Brazilian Portuguese, so an adaptation by Simões e Gomes (2012) was used. To ensure the translation comparison of the Inclusive Leadership and the Turnover Intentions Scale into Portuguese, a back-translation procedure was followed (Brislin, 1970). First, a forward translation of the original scales to Portuguese was made by the author, who is a Portuguese native and then, a blind back translation was undertaken by another bilingual. Then, a translation professional compared the Portuguese and English versions of the questionnaires and concluded that they were highly comparable and accurate.

During the questionnaire's development, different types of variables were used; consequently, there were different sorts of scales. The questionnaire includes nominal variables like gender, employment status, organisational tenure, and one dichotomous question of yes/no; scale variables such as age, which was measured in years; and ordinal variables, using, for example, a Likert-scale to measure the main variables of this study.

Inclusive Leadership. This variable was measured using Carmeli et al. (2010) Inclusive Leadership Scale (ILS) which aimed to assess three dimensions of inclusive leaders: openness, accessibility, and availability. Respondents were asked to assess on a Likert scale with five items ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree” the degree to which their manager/leader displays openness (sample item: “Is open to hearing new ideas”), is available (sample item: “Is available for consultation on problems”) and accessible for them at work (sample item: “Encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues”). To provide clarification on whom to evaluate, participants were asked to think about their current manager to whom they report directly. High scores in all three dimensions assessed by the questions indicate a highly inclusive manager/supervisor/leader. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimate for the ILS was 0,950.

Work Engagement. This variable was measured using a scale of 9 item shortened version (UWES-9) of the Utrecht Work Enthusiasm Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2004), which aimed to assess the level of engagement of each participant. These items cover three aspects of the work engagement concept: vigour (sample item: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”), dedication (sample item: “My job inspires me”), and absorption (sample item: “I am immersed in my work”). High scores on all dimensions indicate high work engagement. Participants answered the items on a Likert Scale, 1= “never” and 7= “every day”. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale was 0,935.

Turnover Intentions. To measure turnover intentions, the Robinson (1996) scale was used. Participants answered the items on a Likert Scale, 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”, on the degree to which they think about leaving their organisation. Sample items included “Since I started working in this organisation, I’ve thought about changing job” and “I intend to stay a long time in this organisation”. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimate for this turnover scale was 0,843.

Table 2. Cronbach’s alpha

Scales	Cronbach’s alpha	N° Items
Inclusive Leadership Scale (ILS)	0,950	9
Utrecht Work Enthusiasm Scale (UWES)	0,935	9
Turnover Intention Scale	0,843	4

Demographic Variables. Research suggests that the level of engagement (Avery et al., 2007; Mauno et al., 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2003) and turnover intentions (De Gieter et al., 2011; Huang & Cheng, 2012) are related and may be influenced by personal characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, and tenure. The following demographic variables were used to investigate the correlation between inclusive leadership, turnover intentions, and work engagement. These variables were measured as: gender (1 = “Female”; 2 = “Male”; 3 = “Other”; 4 = “Rather not say”), education level (1 = “Less than a high school degree”; 2 = “High school degree or equivalent”; 3 = “Some college but no degree”; 4 = “Bachelor’s degree”; 5 = “Master’s degree”; 6 = “Doctorate degree”), current work position (1 = “Normal employee”; 2 = “First-line manager”; 3 = “Middle manager”; 4 = “Top manager”). Age was measured in years and then divided into categories according to Braun (1973). Tenure was measured using respondents’ self-reported years of working in the organisation using the single item “How many years have you been working in your current organisation?” and was measured in 5 categories (1 = “Less than 1 year”; 2 = “1–2 years”; 3 = “3-5 years”; 4 = “5-10 years”; 5 = “More than 10 years”). The same categories were used to measure how long employees have been working with their supervisor.

The following table (table 3) shows the questions used in the survey to measure the above variables.

Table 3. Questionnaire's items and variables

Variable		Item
Inclusive Leadership	Openness	A1. is open to hearing new ideas
		A2. is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes
		A3. is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them
	Availability	A4. is available for consultation on problems
		A5. is an ongoing ‘presence’ in this team-someone who is readily available
		A6. is available for professional questions I would like to consult with him/her
	Accessibility	A7. is ready to listen to my requests
		A8. encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues (accessibility)
		A9. is accessible for discussing emerging problems
Work Engagement	Vigor	B1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy
		B2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous
		B5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work
	Dedication	B3. I am enthusiastic about my job

Absorption	B4. My job inspires me
	B7. I am proud of the work that I do
	B6. I feel happy when I am working intensely
	B8. I am immersed in my work
Turnover Intentions	B9. I get carried away when I am working
	C1. Since I started working in this organisation, I've thought about changing job.
	C2. If things go as I intend, I think three years from now I'll still be working in this organisation.
	C3. I would prefer to work in another organisation.
	C4. intend to stay a long time in this organisation.

2.4. Data Analyses

SPSS version 29 was used to analyse the data in this study. First, a characterisation of the sample was made. Then, to test the internal consistency between the items of the main variables, the Alpha Cronbach's were measured. Furthermore, a parametric test was conducted to study the correlations between our variables (Pearson's Correlations). Lastly, to test the hypothesis PROCESS bootstrapping macro (Hayes, 2013: Model 4) was used.

CHAPTER 3

Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the means, standard deviations, and correlation among the variables, respectively.

Regarding Table 4, the mean values for all the research's constructs are between 5,67 and 3,56, with standard deviations between 1,21 and 1,67. More specifically, IL registered a mean of 5,67 and a standard deviation of 1,21, meaning that, overall, the respondents perceived their leader as inclusive. Similarly, the work engagement mean was 5,60 and a standard deviation of 1,22, displaying an overall engaged workforce. Furthermore, the turnover intention variable registered a mean of 3,56 and a standard deviation of 1,67, reflecting a variation towards the respondents' intent to either leave or stay in the organisation, with some wanting to depart and others feeling more inclined to stay.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Inclusive Leadership	5,6711	1,21061	1,11	7
Work Engagement	5,6065	1,22442	1,56	7
Turnover Intentions	3,5661	1,67475	1,00	7

Table 5 represents how the variables are correlated, showing the correlation values between the variables in the study, gathered using Pearson Correlation. From this analysis, inclusive leadership was found to have a positive moderate correlation with work engagement ($r = ,460$, $p > .01$) and a negative correlation to turnover intentions ($r = -,2971$, $p > 0.01$). Moreover, work engagement is also negatively correlated with turnover intentions ($r = -,419$, $p > .01$). Thus, as employees perceive their managers as more inclusive, the level of engagement tends to increase, and the intentions to leave decrease.

Table 5. Pearson's Correlations

Variables	IL	WE	TI
IL	1		
WE	0,460**	1	
TI	-0,297**	-0,419**	1

3.1. Hypotheses Tests

This dissertation assesses whether work engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions. Therefore, to explain the relation, PROCESS bootstrapping macro was used to test the previously announced hypotheses (Hayes, 2013: Model 4) and is summarised in table 6.

First, regarding inclusive leadership and turnover intentions, the relationship was found to be significant ($B = -,4107$; 95% CI $[-,5843; -,2372]$; $p < 0,05$). In other words, when leaders are viewed as inclusive, employees are less likely to want to leave their organisation, supporting hypothesis 1 (H1: Inclusive leadership is negatively related to turnover intentions).

Second, we argue that inclusive leadership is positively related to work engagement. This was found to be true, as the relationship between is significant and positive ($B = ,4654$; 95% CI $[,3472; ,5833]$; $p < 0,05$), supporting hypotheses 2 (H2: Inclusive leadership is positively related to work engagement).

Hypotheses 3 stated that work engagement is negatively related to turnover intentions and as the results shown in table 6 ($B = -,4898$; 95% CI $[-,6724; -,3071]$; $p < 0,05$), work engagement has a significant negative influence on turnover intentions. Hence, the third hypothesis, predicting a negative relation between work engagement and turnover intention, is supported.

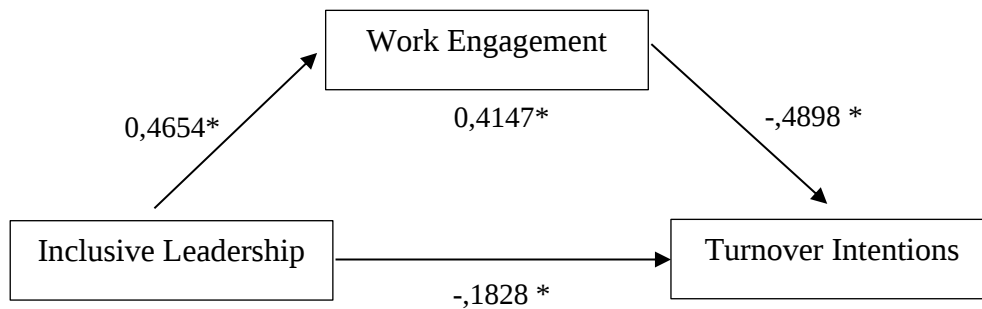


Figure 2. Structural Model

Table 6. Results of the bootstrapping process

Direct and Total effects	B	SE B	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Path a	,4654	,0599	7,7733	,0000	,3474	,5833
Path b	-,4898	,0927	-5,2845	,0000	-,6724	-,3071
Path c – Total effect	-, 4107	,0881	-4,6637	,0000	-,5843	-,2372

Path c' – Direct Effect	-,1828	,0937	-9,5000	,0524	-,3675	,0019
Indirect Effect (5000 Bootstrap)	B		BootSE	LLCI	ULCI	
Path ab	-,2279		,0626	-,3626	-,1166	

Notes. LLCI = Lower Limit Confidence Interval 95%; ULCI = Upper Limit Confidence Interval 95%. Only unstandardised coefficients and effects are presented.

Regarding the mediation, hypothesis 4 proposed that work engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of the impact of inclusive leadership on turnover intentions ($B = -.2279$; 95% CI $[-.3626; -.1166]$). Moreover, this analysis revealed that the 95% confidence interval (LLCI and ULCI) did not contain zero. As a result, it can be stated that the indirect effect significantly differs from zero. Hence, we can determine that the results show a mediation effect. Furthermore, the direct effect of inclusive leadership on turnover intentions in the presence of the mediator was found not to be significant ($B = -.1828$; 95% CI $[-.3675; -.0019]$; $p > 0,05$). Thus, we are in the presence of an indirect-only mediation, or full mediation, that occurs when the indirect effect is significant, but the direct effect is not, instead of partial mediation that occurs when a mediator variable partially explains the relationship (Hair Jr et al., 2021). It suggests that our mediator, in this case, work engagement, fully mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions, and the 4th hypothesis can be confirmed.

Table 7 represents the mediation model summary.

Table 7. Mediation summary

Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Coefficient Interval		t-statistics	Conclusion
Inclusive Leadership > Work Engagement > Turnover Intentions	-0,4107 (0,000)	-0,1828 (0,0217)	-0,2279	Lower Bound -,3626	Upper Bound -,1166	-3,6405	Full mediation

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine the degree to which work engagement acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between inclusive leadership and workers' intentions to quit in diverse teams. The results of this dissertation confirmed the hypothesis that inclusive leadership lowers employees' turnover intentions and enhances work engagement. Furthermore, work engagement is shown as a critical predictor of turnover intentions. Lastly, work engagement was found to mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intention.

The first hypothesis stated that in diverse teams “inclusive leadership is negatively related to turnover intentions”. Drawing on the optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT), the present study suggests inclusive leadership as a crucial path to reduce turnover intentions in diverse teams. The ODT indicates that individuals are driven by two opposing needs that shape the relationship between their self-concept and their membership in social groups (Leonardelli et al., 2010), the need for belongingness and the need for uniqueness (Brewer, 1991). As stated previously, an inclusive leader is essential for fostering both a sense of belongingness and individuality, as it simultaneously supports and facilitates these needs (Randel et al., 2016, 2018; Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022), by creating an environment which allows individuals to express their uniqueness while also promoting a sense of belonging and unity (Ashikali et al., 2021), and therefore, being less likely to experience turnover intentions (Gonzalez, 2016). Thus, the results showed that this first hypothesis can be confirmed, which aligns with previous studies such as Avery's et al. (2008) which concluded that perceived inclusiveness related positively to intent to stay in an organisation, Lindsay's et al. (2020) and van Knippenberg & van Schie (2000), which found that workgroup identification helps reduce turnover intentions and other authors that determined a significant negative relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions (Agarwal et al., 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Elsaied, 2020; Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shuck et al., 2014; Soane et al., 2012). Therefore, both the literature and our results support the first hypothesis.

Secondly, our hypothesis stated that inclusive leadership positively relates to work engagement. To substantiate the hypothesised pathway, we used the Social Exchange Theory (SET). As per the SET and the reciprocity norm, employees reciprocate the help given by the leadership (Xiang et al., 2017) in the form of engagement (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2020). Moreover, the literature found similar results where work engagement can be heightened by using an inclusive leadership style (Carmeli et al., 2010; Cenkci et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2015a; Hollander, 2012). Thus, both the literature and our results confirm the second hypothesis.

Regarding the third hypothesis, it stated that “work engagement is negatively related to turnover intentions”. The negative relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions is explained by SET, which defends that obligations are created through a series of exchanges between parties, such as the ones between leader and subordinate, in a state of reciprocal interdependence, (Gouldner, 1960) Alongside leaders, organisations are the main suppliers of resources, such as economic and socio-emotional ones (Saks, 2006) and given these resources employees reciprocate by spending more time, energy, and effort in the organisation and being more engaged, and, as previous studies showed, highly engaged employees are less likely to leave an organisation voluntarily (Juhdi et al., 2013; Saks, 2006). Therefore, the present study results also concluded that work engagement has a significant negative influence on turnover intentions, which is in line with several previous studies (Bailey et al., 2015; Halbesleben, 2010; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Lastly, the fourth hypothesis affirmed that “work engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions” in diverse teams. Thus, we argued that inclusive leadership enhances work engagement, and it is this heightened engagement that ultimately drives down turnover intentions. To substantiate this mediation, we used the SET. Thereby, inclusive leaders provide, on the one hand, a work environment where employees feel like they belong and are valued for their unique perspectives and contributions (Randel et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011). On the other, they provide beneficial resources for employees (Marlieke, 2016). As a result, employees are presumed to become more motivated to reciprocate by applying themselves fully to their work duties and contributing more mental, emotional, and physical resources to the company, becoming more engaged in their work (Strom et al., 2014). Furthermore, engaged employees are more satisfied with their jobs, feel a strong emotional connection to their work, and are emotionally and cognitively invested in their jobs (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and subsequently, are less likely to leave an organisation. This is in line with several authors that also concluded that engagement is significantly negatively related to employee’s intentions to leave an organisation (Agarwal et al., 2012; Bailey et al.,

2015; Elsaied, 2020; Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006; W. B. Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shuck et al., 2014; Soane et al., 2012).

In sum, our results allow us to confirm the four hypotheses formulated. In a diverse setting, inclusive leadership is negatively related to turnover intentions and positively related to work engagement. In other words, when a leader is perceived as inclusive, employees are more engaged and, therefore, less likely to leave the organisation. We also found that turnover intentions are attenuated when the employees are engaged. Moreover, this relationship was also found to be mediated through work engagement.

4.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Regarding the theoretical implications, our work contributes to the confirmation and better understanding of the suggested associations. In this sense, inclusive leadership appears to have a significant role in turnover intentions and a substantial impact on work engagement. Therefore, this study contributes significantly to three bodies of theoretical knowledge: inclusive leadership, work engagement and turnover intentions.

In the domain of inclusive leadership, earlier research (Carmeli et al., 2010; Choi et al., 2015a) primarily examined the beneficial association between inclusive leadership and employee outcomes, such as work engagement. Nonetheless, this investigation looked at the impacts of inclusive leadership on other organisational outcomes, such as the intention to leave. Our results found that, on diverse teams, inclusive leadership has a significantly negative relation with turnover intention and that inclusive leadership is positively related to work engagement, being in line with previous studies (Carmeli et al., 2010; Cenkci et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2015a; Hollander, 2012). Furthermore, our work contributed to the existing literature by considering the indirect effect and demonstrating that work engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions, contributing this way to the growing literature on work engagement and addressing the need for research to examine the mechanisms which operate between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions.

Moreover, this study contributes to the expanding literature that addresses ways to mitigate turnover intentions. Turnover intentions can be influenced by many factors, and in this dissertation, we argue that inclusive leadership and an inclusive climate are two ways to moderate this effect. Like previous research (Agarwal et al., 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Elsaied, 2020; Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shuck et al., 2014; Soane et

al., 2012) this study also concluded that inclusive leadership is vital to reducing turnover intentions.

Another essential contribution of this study is in terms of context. According to the Emigration Observatory (Vidigal, 2024), there has been an upward trend in the number of Portuguese emigrants, so it is crucial for Portuguese organisations to find mechanisms to make their workers more engaged and less likely to leave the organisation, and possibly, Portugal. Thus, we addressed how they can retain employees by making them more engaged using an inclusive leadership approach. As a result, and because this study focused on Portuguese workers, it sheds light on significant topics in the Portuguese context.

In terms of practical implications, we aimed that the results in this dissertation could help leaders understand the effect their daily practices can have on employees' engagement levels and turnover intentions. In fact, the findings of this study suggest the fundamental role that an inclusive leader has in fostering and stimulating employee engagement, which in turn will reduce turnover intentions on diverse teams. Leaders are, therefore, critical to the development of inclusive environments, given their direct influence on employees' experiences (Ferdman, 2013). Otherwise, if diverse workforces are not well-led, it can result in a lack of retention, lost revenues, increased conflict, and lack of cooperation (Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009; Mamman et al., 2012), reduced communication and the creation of in-groups and out-groups (Ely et al., 2001) can occur.

Likewise, this dissertation contributes by highlighting the importance of leadership in organisations, more specifically inclusive leadership, which is proven to be extremely important as poor inclusive leadership can result in less employee engagement and high turnover intentions. Hence, organisations that do not employ an efficient leadership style risk high turnover, which can lead to increased organisational costs. In this sense, by practising inclusive leadership, organisations must focus on bringing inclusion into the organisation. Some practices for inclusion include promoting uniqueness by finding and utilising workers' varied abilities and work styles; reducing prejudices and use of stereotypes by recognising that diversity exists and learning to value and respect individual differences; strengthening the feeling of belonging to the team by asking team members what and how they want to contribute and giving them different projects to work on; creating a supportive environment, by, for example, learning how team members want to be treated, encouraging teamwork and communication, fostering a sense of community and belongingness where employees feel comfortable to contribute and take risks; adopting actions to appreciate and encourage the participation of all views in conversations at work; and recognising and showing appreciation for the efforts of both

individuals and teams, and providing organisational support to promote inclusive practices such as providing constant feedback to the employees as well as searching for feedback on what they can improve to make an environment more inclusive. Simultaneously, employees feel valued both as individuals and team members, thereby strengthening their sense of inclusion (Roberson & Perry, 2022), making them more engaged and less likely to leave.

Furthermore, the present dissertation contributes by highlighting the importance of work engagement in reducing employee turnover intentions. Thus, some practices to increase work engagement and decrease turnover intentions include offering development and growth opportunities, such as creating a personalised development plan tailored to the needs and ambitions of each employee; fostering a healthy and positive work environment, by encouraging policies that promote work-life balance (e.g. flexible working arrangements or remote work opportunities), and offering initiatives which focus on employee's physical and mental health; promoting open communication and transparency, by, for example, creating open communication channels where employees feel safe to express their individuality, ideas, concerns and suggestions, and by being transparent about the organizations strategic decisions and expectations; developing and inclusive leadership which focus on supporting and giving recognition by listening and valuing employees opinions, fostering a trusting environment, as well as provide continuous feedback and empowering employees by giving them the opportunity to participate, to be autonomous and responsible for their work; recognising and rewarding employees contribution, for instance implementing frequent recognitions systems such as formal and informal feedback and by ensuring that employees receive competitive and fair salaries and benefits; and lastly, promoting a sense of belonging and inclusion, by creating an organizational culture that values diversity and promotes inclusions where employees feel respected and valued. By integrating these practices into organisations' day-to-day strategies, organisations will foster an inclusive environment where employees feel motivated, committed and engaged for the long term.

4.2. Limitations

Despite this dissertation's theoretical and practical contributions, as with any study, some limitations should be acknowledged.

First, as this study tested hypotheses using a cross-sectional and correlational approach, it does not allow us to determine causality among variables. Thus, the link between components

should be understood as a suggestion of a relationship between variables that have to be verified by longitudinal study designs.

Second, this study used convenience sampling to gather data, meaning respondents were chosen based on accessibility and availability. Thus, a sampling bias might be present in our data set since it is not considered whether the respondents in the sample represent the whole population, which indicates that our findings may not be applied to other groups.

Furthermore, although we were fortunate to have a decent size sample, our sample was rather homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, as we only considered data from Portugal, and in terms of diversity, where the majority of the respondents reported age as being the most prominent type of diversity with a frequency of 139 responses (61,2%), followed by gender (32,6%), education (29,1%), and marital status (22,9%). Although it is hard to say how this could have impacted our findings, further study on a wider range of samples is required before our conclusions can be confidently applied to other contexts.

Lastly, because common method bias (CMB) is more likely to occur in questionnaire research where all data (independent variable, dependent variable, and mediating variable) are collected using the same method (Hair et al., 2015; Jordan & Troth, 2020; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) we followed established recommendations (Hair et al., 2015; Jordan & Troth, 2020; Podsakoff et al., 2003), such as giving clear instructions to respondents, explaining the research purpose and altering the anchors of the scales used (e.g., from “strongly disagree” to “never”) to control for the influence of common method bias in our study. However, despite our efforts to reduce this phenomenon, it is still possible that participants induced relationships between different variables that are not necessarily the relationships that should be observed.

Thus, in light of the above-mentioned limitations, it is considered that this research has contributed to the study of the subject and can serve as a starting point for future studies on inclusive leadership, work engagement and turnover intentions.

4.3. Future Research

In this dissertation, we aim to clarify the impact that an inclusive leader can have on turnover intentions and the mediating role of work engagement. The need for this attempt is derived from the lack of studies that directly study diverse teams and the relation between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions and how they can be mediated through work engagement. Furthermore, the limitations mentioned above induce some recommendations for the future.

First, in this research, we considered data from Portuguese respondents to draw results. However, it is known that the understanding and the attitudes towards inclusive leadership can be influenced by cultural values, just as they are by how employees respond to their leaders (Kirkman et al., 2009). For instance, in Eastern cultures, hierarchy plays an important role, and employees in these countries are less likely to discuss with their supervisor during the decision-making process, which is a crucial part of an inclusive leadership style. Therefore, future research must focus on understanding if the set of inclusion practices and behaviours of an inclusive leader found in previous literature has the same impact across different cultures, as it can impact the results of engagement and turnover intentions according to culture.

Second, in this study, we used quantitative research that allowed us to explain a phenomenon by collecting data and analysing it using mathematically based methods such as statistics (Creswell, 1994). For future research, we suggest that data be collected from multiple sources to avoid CMB, as well as the use of mixed methods research that combines the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. This allows to maximise the strengths of each approach while making up for the weaknesses of the other approach, resulting in a more complete and complementary understanding with increased validity of the results (Creswell, 2011; Creswell et al., 2011; Greene et al., 1989).

Third, this study uses a cross-sectional study where data was collected all at the same time. For future research, to reduce the common method bias, we suggest a longitudinal design in which all concepts are measured at different moments in time to draw reliable causal conclusions. Last but not least, future studies should employ random sample techniques to get over the drawbacks of convenience sampling, presenting the chance to extrapolate the study's findings.

4.4. Conclusion

The changing demographics of today's workforce make creating an inclusive environment a key priority in every organisation. Hence, the premise of the current research is that inclusive leadership is critical for successfully leveraging diverse human capital, making them more engaged and less likely to leave the organisations. In other words, in this study, we aimed to find if inclusive leadership is related to turnover intentions and if this pathway can be mediated through work engagement.

Our findings concluded that inclusive leadership is negatively related to turnover intentions, that inclusive leadership is significantly and positively related to work engagement,

and that work engagement has a significant negative influence on turnover intentions. Lastly, results revealed a significant effect of inclusive leadership on turnover intentions, suggesting that our mediator, in this case, work engagement, fully mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intentions.

Our results are significant both on a practical and theoretical level. From a theoretical level, they contribute to the existing literature by reinforcing both the literature on inclusive leadership and the growing literature on work engagement and turnover intentions. On a practical level, it reinforces the need to create organisational environments that are not only diverse but inclusive to maximise the benefits of diverse teams. To this end, we propose inclusive leadership, which focuses on facilitating a sense of belonging and valuing uniqueness, resulting in more engaged workers with fewer intentions to leave the organisation.

In conclusion, we believe it is important that more studies are carried out in the future to understand the impact this leadership approach can have on an individual, team and organisational level in the long term. With this study, we also hope that more organisations begin to value and take advantage of all the potential benefits a diverse team can bring to organisations by creating inclusive environments where employees feel their uniqueness is recognised and valued and feel they belong and are part of the team.

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Annex A – Portuguese version of the questionnaire

Parte 1: Declaração de Consentimento

Caro

Participante,

O presente questionário tem como objetivo a recolha de dados no âmbito da tese de mestrado em International Management no ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. Este questionário está disponível em inglês e em português. Para alterar use a lista presente no canto superior direito.

O principal objetivo é estudar, de forma quantitativa, o impacto que uma liderança inclusiva pode ter tanto no empenho do trabalhador (work engagement) como nas intenções de sair (turnover intentions) da organização onde trabalha, num ambiente diversificado. Deste modo, para a sua participação ser considerada válida é necessário:

- Estar a trabalhar sob a supervisão de uma pessoa a quem responde diretamente;
- Estar a trabalhar numa equipa diversificada (diversidade refere-se à composição de equipas de trabalho, por exemplo, diferenças a nível de idade, sexo, religião, etnia, cultura, orientação sexual, educação/habilitações, nacionalidade, língua, crenças e valores, categoria económica, estado civil, departamento, remuneração, etc.).

O tempo aproximado de resposta é de aproximadamente 5 minutos. A participação no estudo é estritamente voluntária, sendo que a qualquer momento pode interromper a sua participação. Os dados obtidos são confidenciais e anónimos e destinam-se apenas a tratamento estatístico onde nenhuma resposta será analisada ou reportada individualmente. Em nenhum momento do estudo precisa de se identificar. Agradeço desde já a sua colaboração. Para qualquer dúvida e esclarecimento adicional contacte, por favor: ascas5@iscte-iul.pt

Declaração de consentimento

Confirmo que fui devidamente informado, que compreendo o principal objetivo do estudo e que as resposta recolhidas serão apenas usadas para fins académicos. Mais informo que a minha participação é anónima e voluntária, assim como estou ciente que a qualquer momento posso optar por interromper a minha participação.

- Sim, dou o meu consentimento;
- Não dou o meu consentimento.

Parte 2: Questões demográficas

Questões demográficas

Q2 – Género *

- Feminino;
- Masculino;
- Outro;
- Prefiro não dizer.

Q3 – Idade * _____

Q4 – Nacionalidade * _____ (lista dinâmica de países)

Q5 – Qual é o nível de escolaridade mais elevado que completou? *

- Menos do que um diploma de ensino secundário;
- Diploma de ensino secundário ou equivalente
- Algum curso superior, mas sem diploma;
- Licenciatura;
- Mestrado;
- Doutoramento.

Q6 – Qual é a sua posição atual? *

- Trabalhador operacional;
- Gestor de linha;
- Gestor intermédio;
- Gestor de topo.

Q7 – Tem um supervisor/gestor/líder? *

- Sim;
- Não.

Q8 – Há quantos anos se encontra a trabalhar com ele? *

- Menos de 1 ano;
- 1 – 2 anos;
- 3 – 5 anos;
- 5 – 10 anos;
- Mais de 10 anos.

Q9 – Há quantos anos trabalha na sua organização atual? *

- Menos de 1 ano;
- 1 – 2 anos;
- 3 – 5 anos;

- 5 – 10 anos;
- Mais de 10 anos.

Q10 - Das opções a baixo, selecione aquela(s) que melhor representa(m) a diversidade da equipa na qual está inserido(a): *

- Idade;
- Sexo;
- Religião;
- Etnia;
- Cultural
- Orientação Sexual;
- Educação/habilitações;
- Nacionalidade;
- Língua;
- Crenças e valores;
- Categoria económica;
- Estado civil;
- Departamento;
- Outro: _____

Parte 3: Questões sobre as variáveis

Liderança Inclusiva

As 9 afirmações seguintes descrevem os seus sentimentos em relação ao seu supervisor/gestor/líder. Pense no seu superior a quem reporta diretamente. Leia atentamente cada afirmação e decida em que medida o seu gerente/supervisor/líder demonstra abertura e está disponível e acessível para si no trabalho.

O meu supervisor/líder/gestor: *

	Discordo totalment e (1)	Discord o (2)	Discordo parcialment e (3)	Não concord o nem discordo (4)	Concordo parcialment e (5)	Concord o (6)	Concordo totalmen te (7)
Está aberto a ouvir novas ideias (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Está atento a novas oportunidades para melhorar os processos/process os no trabalho (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Está aberto a discutir objectivos e novas formas de os alcançar (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Está disponível para consulta sobre problemas (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
É uma "presença" constante na equipa - alguém que está prontamente disponível (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Está disponível para questões profissionais que eu gostaria de consultar com ele/ela (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Está pronto a ouvir os meus pedidos (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encoraja-me a contactá-lo(a) sobre questões emergentes (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Está acessível para discutir problemas emergentes (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Work Engagement

As 9 afirmações que se seguem dizem respeito à forma como se sente no trabalho. Leia cada afirmação com atenção e decida se alguma vez se sentiu assim. Se nunca teve este sentimento,

assinale "1" no espaço que corresponde. Se já teve este sentimento, indique a frequência com que o sente, assinalando o número (de 1 a 7) que melhor descreve a frequência com que se sente assim. *

	Nunca (1)	Algumas vezes por ano ou menos (2)	Uma vez por mês ou menos (3)	Algumas vezes por mês (4)	Uma vez por semana (5)	Algumas vezes por semana (6)	Todos os dias (7)
No meu trabalho, sinto-me cheio(a) de energia (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No meu trabalho, sinto-me com força e vigor (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Estou entusiasmado(a) com o meu trabalho (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
O meu trabalho inspira-me (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quando me levanto de manhã, tenho vontade de ir trabalhar (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sinto-me feliz quando estou a trabalhar intensamente (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eu tenho orgulho do trabalho que faço (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sinto-me envolvido(a) meu trabalho (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
"Deixo-me levar" pelo meu trabalho (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Intenções de Saída

As 4 afirmações que se seguem dizem respeito ao que sente em relação à sua organização. Leia atentamente cada afirmação e decida em que medida pensa em abandonar a sua organização atual. *

	Discordo totalment e (1)	Discord o (2)	Discordo parcialment e (3)	Não concord o nem discordo (4)	Concordo parcialment e (5)	Concord o (6)	Concordo totalment e (7)
Desde que comecei a trabalhar nesta organização , já pensei em mudar de emprego (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Se as coisas correrem como pretendo, acho que daqui a 3 anos ainda estarei a trabalhar nesta organização (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preferia trabalhar noutra organização (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pretendo ficar muito tempo nesta organização (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* (obrigatório/mandatory)