

Inclusive Leadership: the sign of a thriving organisation Dr Ceri Sims

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INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP INTRODUCTION

Rationale

- A need for a participative model of leadership that allows organisations to thrive in a turbulent, competitive and diverse environment.
- Lack of clear definition of Inclusive Leadership (IL) based on current theoretical literature.
- Use scientifically rigorous research methodology.
- Examine IL from a combination of Transformational Leadership and Servant Leadership components.

Current issues of organisational leadership

Cultural and economic change - thriving in a VUCA economy and new ways of communicating.

Increase in employee diversity - Social identity of followers: - identification with, support for and trust in leaders belonging to same subgroup (Duck & Fielding, 2003, *Eur. J. Social Psy.*, 33(3), 387).

How to leverage diversity – Inclusive: A sense of Belonging; feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best (Miller & Katz, 2002, *Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Real Power of Diversity*).

Inclusive Leadership (IL)

Only 12% articles on IL refer to a theoretically established form of Leadership (Nitu & Atewologun, 2015, *OP Matters, British Psychological Society*, 26, June).

- **Academic literature:** Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010, Gender in management: *An Int. J.*, 25(8), 630; Hollander et al. 2008, *The member connector, Int. Leadership Ass.*, May/June.
- **Practitioner literature:** Catalyst, 2014; Deloitte, 2012; Opportunity Now, 2014.
- Research has cherry-picked from two well established models: Transformational Leadership (TL) and Servant Leadership (SL). The unique combination of TL and SL has been theoretically discussed within the context of IL (Echols, 2009, *Journal of Religious Leadership*, 8(2), 85).

- **Transformational Leadership:** Bass & Avolio, 1994, *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*.
- Strong support for this leadership theory as it relates to various measures of effective outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004, *J. App. Psy.*, 89, 755).
- **Servant Leadership:** Greenleaf (1970), *The Servant as Leader*, Spears (1998), *Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit and Servant-Leadership*.
- “Transformational leaders tend to focus more on organizational objectives while Servant leaders focus more on the people who are their followers” (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004, *Leadership & Org. Dev. J.*, 25(4), p359).

RESEARCH AIMS

1. A robust model and definition of IL.
2. The extent to which IL is perceived to be prevalent in organisations.
3. The extent to which diverse people are valued and whether the presence of IL affects self-perceptions of satisfaction, engagement and productivity.
4. The extent to which an organisation's strategy and ways of working impact IL and the associated influence.
5. The development of 360° IL assessment tool.

METHODOLOGY

Design: A mixed-methods design was adopted: Questionnaire surveys were measured quantitatively; Interviews were conducted and analysed using a qualitative approach.

Participants: 11 large national and international organisations from both private and public sectors (all enei member organisations).

Survey/Questionnaires: 966 first line supervisors and non-management members of staff completed the survey.

Rating the following: (5-point Likert scales).

1. **Perceptions of IL in the organisation.**
2. **Positive outcomes:**
 - **Satisfaction** - Wellbeing, coping with stress and job satisfaction.
 - **Engagement** - Motivation, drive, focus and commitment with work activities.
 - **Productivity** - Creative development and performing at one's best.

Quantitative Analyses – Statistical tests:

- a. Reliability and factorial validity (Cronbach's alpha; Principal component analysis).
- b. Relationships between IL ratings of leaders and rated positive outcomes of followers (Pearson correlations; Linear regressions).
- c. Differences between demographic groups - various measures of diversity including protected characteristics (ANOVAs, ANCOVAs, T-Tests).

Interviews:

61 semi-structured interviews with managers and non-managers (with questions dependent on role) completed from all 11 of the participating organisations.

Qualitative Analyses – Thematic Analysis

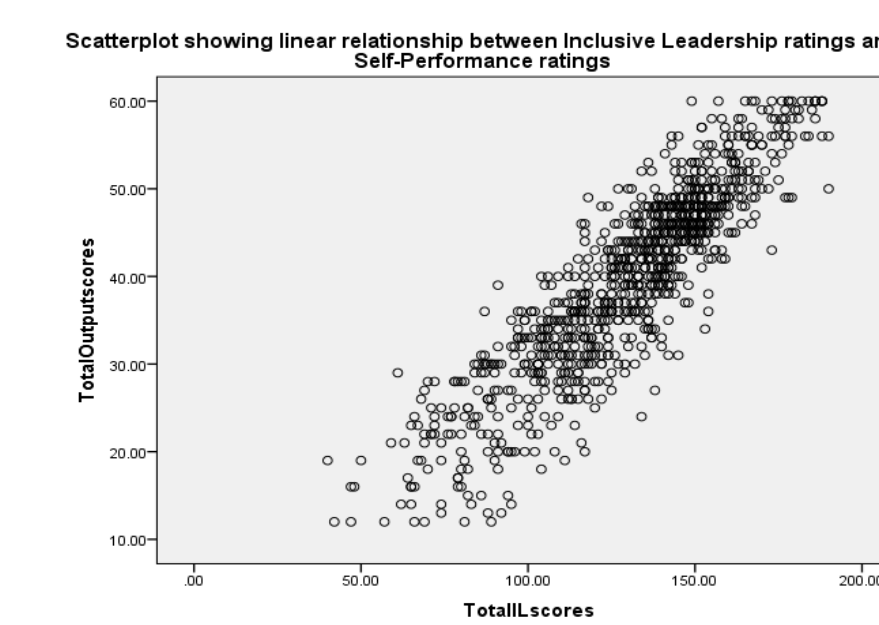
- Positive outcomes of IL were explored both by the survey and by the interviews.
- Contextual factors that might influence the presence or absence of IL were only examined in the interviews.

RESULTS – Key findings

Survey

- People working with Inclusive Leaders rated themselves as more productive, engaged and satisfied than those working with leaders perceived as having low levels of Inclusivity.

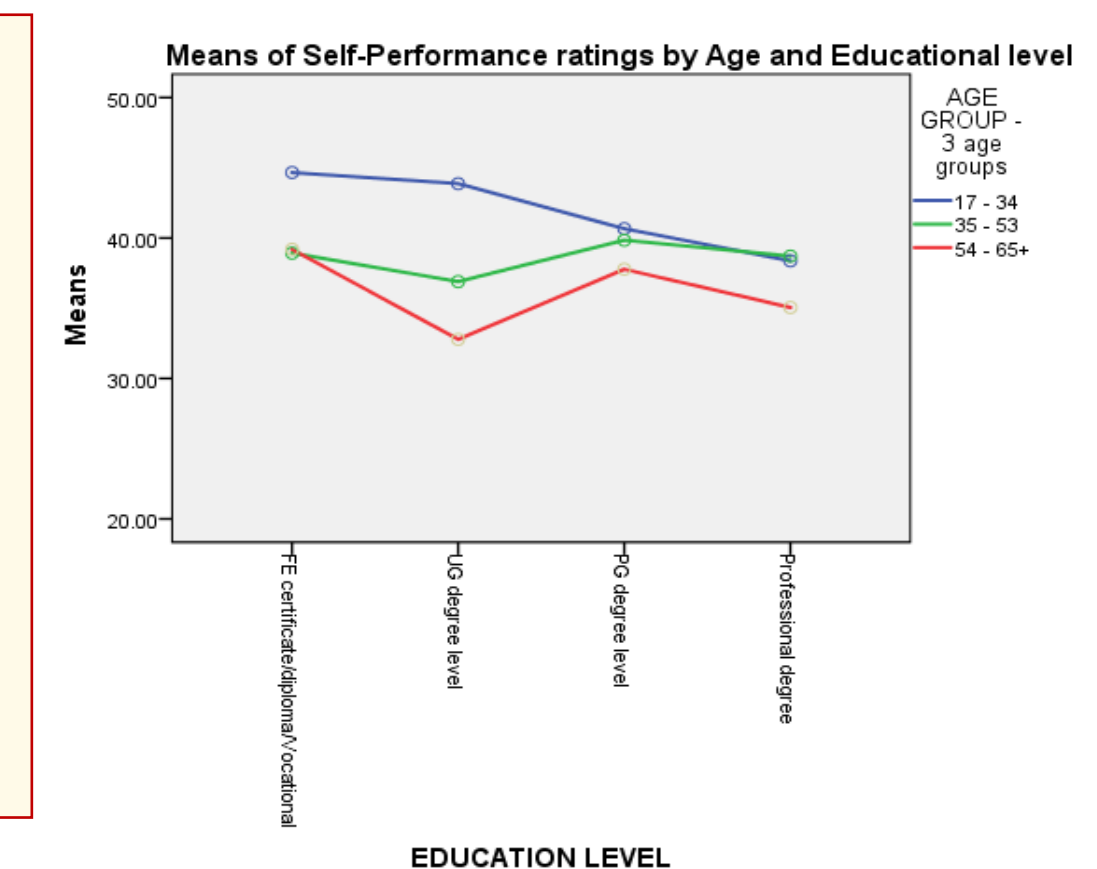
Strong positive correlations between degree of IL and positive outcomes:
Satisfaction: r=0.85
Engagement: r=0.85
Productivity: r=0.85, p<0.001.
 TL and SL together accounted for 80% variance in outcomes.



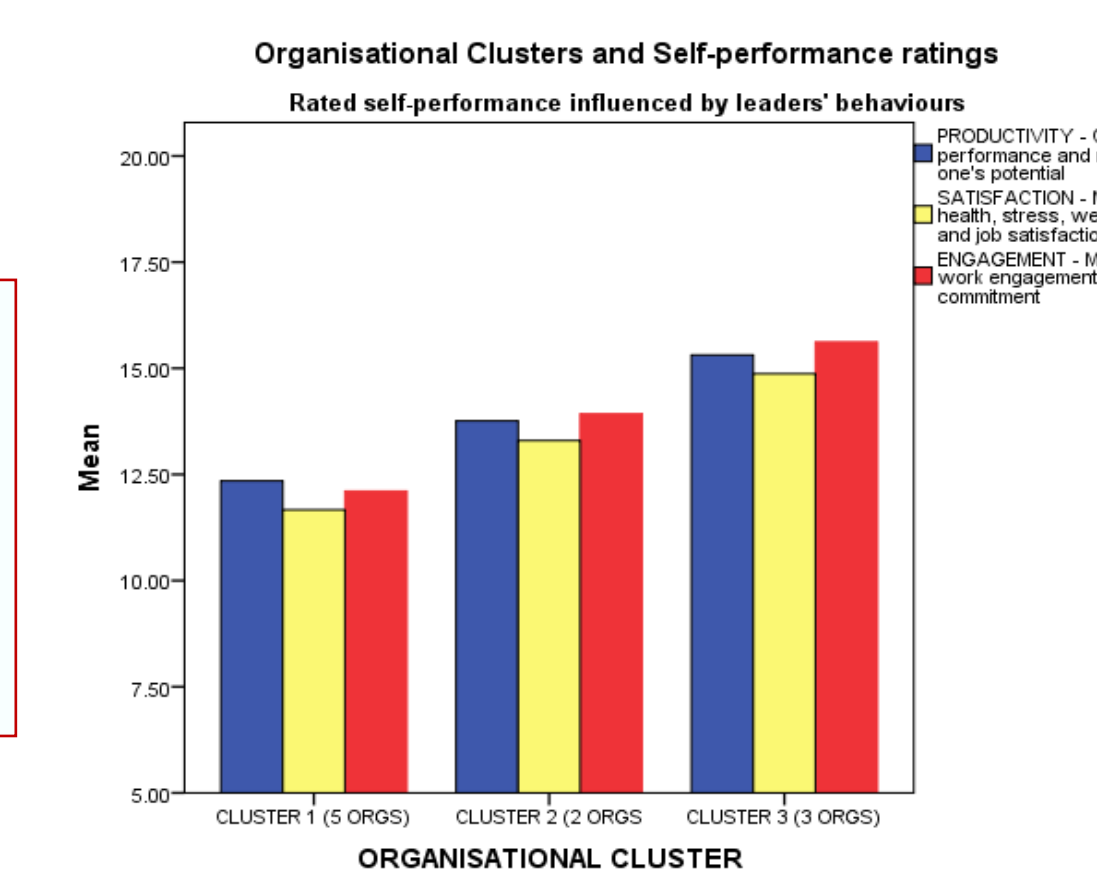
- There were no differences in followers' gender, sexuality, religion, caring responsibilities or educational achievement in ratings of leaders' IL.

- Some groups (**BME employees, those with over five years' service and disabled respondents**) did produce lower ratings of overall IL than other participants.

Gen Y employees who have reached FE and UG level of training and qualifications were the most satisfied with their performance as a result of leaders' behaviours.



Three organisational clusters were identified for IL (confidentiality is preserved).



Interview

- IL must be role-modelled from the top to have the greatest impact.

- Having organisational strategies based on either 'explore' (an emphasis on the development of new products, services and markets) or 'exploit' factors (improvements in existing procedures) are relevant to IL.
- With a stronger emphasis on 'explore' [amongst organisations who were found to be high on IL compared to those perceived as being low on IL].

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP 360° ASSESSMENT 15 COMPETENCES (derived from TL and SL)

1. **Individualised Consideration** – engage with staff as unique individuals
2. **Idealised Influence** – have admirable qualities
3. **Inspirational Motivation** - provide appealing vision
4. **Intellectual Stimulation** - encourage creative thinking
5. **Unqualified Acceptance** – accept others without bias
6. **Empathy** - consider others' feelings and perspectives
7. **Listening** – actively listen to others' views
8. **Persuasion** – influence without coercion
9. **Confidence Building** - provide positive feedback
10. **Growth** - provide opportunities for individual growth
11. **Foresight** - consider the views of others about foreseeable outcomes
12. **Conceptualisation** - focus on staff contributing to long-term objectives
13. **Awareness** - have self-awareness of biases
14. **Stewardship** – commit to the good of everyone
15. **Healing** - focus on the wellbeing of staff

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

Conclusion

1. SL and TL conjointly produce enhanced outputs over SL and TL singly (van Dierendonck et al, 2013, *The Leadership quart.*, 25(3), 544.).
2. IL exerts its influence though a number of coexisting and interrelated competencies (a holistic construct?, 'halo' effects?).
3. Diverse groups experience IL, and IL relates to positive outcomes regardless of demographic diversity (Moss, 2016, *Equal opps rev. June*).

Discussion

- Potential questionnaire rating biases and common method variance issues.
- Survey to be expanded to measure psychological wellbeing more extensively.
- Further research into potential competency clusters and relationships between individual, social, contextual, structural and developmental factors of leadership (Bolden et al, 2007, *report to Leadership Foundation for HE, May*).
- Why do some demographic groups perceive higher or lower levels of IL? Cultural changes, worker expectations.

Further investigations

- Psychological capital and wellbeing of employees experiencing IL.
- Personality types and traits of emergent IL? MBTI and Big-5. Most CEOs are extraverts and conscientious (Moutafi, Furnham, & Crump, 2007, *Brit. J. Management*, 18, 272), yet, active-empathic listeners are more likely to be 'agreeable' and 'open', and unrelated to extraversion (Sims, 2016, *International J Listening, accepted*).
- What is the incidence and emergence of IL in HE or in schools? Differences between sectors: legal sector?

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