Managing Cultural Diversity in Global Teams: The Role of Inclusive Leadership and Intercultural Competence

Dr. Tintu Mary Pushkeria[1*]

[1*]*Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, SCMS School of Technology and Management, Ernakulam, Kerala, India. E-mail: tintu@scmsgroup.org, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1260-3056*

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Abstract

Purpose: The current paper explores the effect that inclusive leadership and intercultural competence have on cooperation in culturally diverse global teams. Approach: An integrated approach is based on social identity, cultural intelligence, psychological safety and team learning theories; the paper develops a multilevel theoretical framework rather than collecting empirical field data. Analytical findings: Cultural diversity opens up opportunities for accessing different types of knowledge but is also a source of attribution bias, subgrouping and coordination costs. Inclusive leadership might facilitate the process of converting differences into involvement through distribution of voice, acceptance of criticism, and setting standards of behavior. Intercultural competence might supplement the aforementioned activities through perspective taking, adaptation of communication, and conflict management. The model covers the factors that enable or hinder the process of interaction, interaction mechanism and possible team outcomes; boundary conditions are outlined as well. Contribution: Contrary to theories that take diversity to be a direct performance predictor, the paper outlines the reasons for examining the joint influence of leadership behavior and member capacity. Practical significance: It provides an evaluation process for international managers and a research design that could test the mediation, moderation, and cross-national equivalence of measurements. The propositions are conceptual and should not be understood as statistical findings.

Keywords: Cultural Diversity; Inclusive Leadership; Intercultural Competence; Global Teams; Psychological Safety; Knowledge Integration.

I. INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, international organizations collaborate by using teams that consist of individuals who are different from one another in terms of their nationality, native language, field of expertise, and culturally acquired expectations. Multicultural teams are able to recognize new possibilities and understand difficult markets from many perspectives, but at the same time, such a variety might create problems related to communication, exchange of knowledge and common understanding (Kour & Jyoti, 2022; Kadam et al., 2021). Thus, cultural diversity in teams cannot be presented as a guaranteed benefit or a certain reason for conflict. The result will depend on the social process of exchanging, assessing and integrating the information. In particular, studies of multicultural teams show that it is necessary to know the features of a team and not generalize culturally determined groups (Casas Klett & Arnulf, 2020). Virtual communication might limit

context clues, unequal levels of language ability might affect participation, and the styles of leadership that are appropriate within one culture might not be perceived in the same way in another (Swartz & Shrivastava, 2022; Shan et al., 2021; Zakaria & Ab Rahman Muton, 2022). Such factors highlight the importance of intercultural competence and inclusive leadership when working together. Inclusive leadership and intercultural competence might mean that even though a team has a lot of cultural information, it might not have a system in place for making sure that everyone's voice is heard. On the other hand, an inclusive leader might promote participation without giving members the tools to understand new communication practices (Chen, 2022; Wang, 2022).

Inclusive leadership refers to the practice of being open, accessible, fair and actively encouraging various viewpoints (Ashikali et al., 2021; Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2021). Intercultural competence entails the ability to understand new cultures, reflection of personal biases, and effective adaptation of behavior (Kour & Jyoti, 2022; Shan et al., 2021). The combination of both can lead to an understanding of how different views become common assets rather than independent contributions. Also, the concept of inclusive leadership can contribute to knowledge transfer and innovations by fostering an environment where the employees can bring forward their experience (Kadam et al., 2021; Jia et al., 2022; Li & Tang, 2022). Therefore, the current study attempts to look into how inclusive leadership and intercultural competence can collectively impact communication, psychological safety, knowledge integration, conflict resolution, and team performance.

The central question is Conditions under which inclusive leadership and intercultural competence can lead a culturally diverse team at the global level to turn diversity into collaboration are analyzed here. This essay provides an answer to this question from a theoretical perspective and also suggests research propositions. It is more of a theoretical work rather than an empirical study.

1.1. Research Purpose and Contributions

The paper makes three important contributions to the research field. First, the article distinguishes between the diversity composition and the mechanisms that influence how the diversity becomes functional. Second, it shows how leaders' actions and team members' skills are connected via psychological safety, voice, and knowledge integration. Third, contingencies such as the hierarchy of languages, interdependence of tasks, working in virtual teams, and organizational power are considered as factors which may either enhance or inhibit the suggested relationships.

II. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS AND SCHOLARLY DEBATE

2.1. Diversity as Informational Potential and Social Categorization

While information and decision-making perspectives hold that diverse groups have access to non-redundant information, social categorization perspectives note that differences can create a separation of individuals into the categories of in-groups and out-groups. Diversity management literature also holds that the usefulness of differences within the organization relies on sharing the information and turning it into innovation (Kadam et al., 2021). It is clear from these

perspectives that diversity is not necessarily an indicator of higher performance. Instead, diversity is beneficial when team members are able to identify, communicate, and integrate their different experience and perspective. In international teams, language proficiency, status in the field, and the relationship between the headquarters and subsidiaries are all indicators of whose expertise will be acknowledged. Studies of multicultural team effectiveness identify cultural intelligence, shared group identity, and communication as important mechanisms for coordination (Shan et al., 2021).

Thus, a conceptual framework needs to cover both aspects of participation as well as the circumstances in which individual contribution influences the group decision-making process. Diversity is multi-dimensional; being born in a particular nation does not guarantee that an individual will share that nation's values, and individuals belong to multiple communities based on cultural, functional, and organizational aspects. The generalization of national cultures leads to overlooking individual differences within one nation and imposes stereotypes on individuals belonging to one community. Studies challenging generalizations about Chinese and Western groups show the importance of studying specific contexts and organizations instead of making sweeping generalizations of cultural categories (Casas Klett & Arnulf, 2020).

2.2. Inclusive Leadership as a Relational Resource

Inclusive leadership entails those actions that communicate the importance of members, their permission to critique assumptions, and accessibility to leaders (Ashikali et al., 2021). Inclusive leadership is associated with the creation of an inclusive organizational climate within diverse teams in research (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2021). The related research also finds inclusive leadership to be related to psychological safety, employee participation, and positive work behavior (Zhao et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2020). Such results serve as a theoretical framework for analyzing the ways of how leaders can facilitate members to voice their opinions, share concerns, and knowledge in the absence of interpersonal rejection. Inclusion should not be considered as consensus; productive inclusion accepts dissent, requires justification for decisions, and shields participants from the interpersonal consequences of dissenting. Speaking-time imbalance, asynchronous contribution, and differential access to informal decision-making channels are also issues that global leaders have to handle. Results linking inclusive leadership with creativity and innovation in teams imply the additional value of inclusive leadership beyond participation (Jia et al., 2022; Li & Tang, 2022).

Whether the outcomes of inclusion will occur may be influenced by how credible the procedures are judged. The invitation to speak becomes irrelevant when individuals feel that the decisions have been made already, or that their views as minorities will simply be ignored. In studies on diversity management, knowledge sharing has been identified as an organizational process, and inclusive leadership as a condition that may influence the transformation of diversity into innovation (Kadam et al., 2021). So, inclusive leadership has been used as an enabling condition of teamwork.

2.3. Intercultural Competence and Adaptive Interaction

Intercultural competence includes awareness of cultural assumptions, contextual knowledge, motivation to work across cultures, and behavioral flexibility (Kour & Jyoti, 2022; Chen, 2022). In addition to cultural intelligence studies, researchers analyze how people perceive situations in terms of culture and adapt their communication style to facilitate multicultural cooperation (Shan et al., 2021). Such skills could be useful for understanding unclear messages, noticing different directness norms, and resolving misunderstanding without assuming ill will. However, competence does not mean simply learning national etiquette; action depends on situational awareness and readiness for reinterpretation.

Learning programs that involve either virtual or international experiences provide the possibility to learn these skills through cross-cultural interactions, reflection, and collaboration practices (Swartz & Shrivastava, 2022; Chen, 2022; Wang, 2022). In case of global teams, learning such skills is even more important if members have to collaborate remotely and interpret messages without having access to contextual information like in face-to-face communication. Learning about cultural and emotional intelligence in global virtual teams is also connected to individual capabilities and conflict (Davaei et al., 2022).

Intercultural competence measurement poses some challenges. Self-assessment can be misleading since self-reporting may not reflect the person's behavior, and one test score on the training can hardly indicate transferable skills. It is better to use multiple sources of information, behavioral simulation, and assessment of real collaboration situations when possible. The ability to collaborate interculturally should be viewed as an evolving skill rather than a trait.

2.4. Psychological Safety, Voice, and Team Learning

The concept of psychological safety can be explained as the collective belief that risks can be taken when it comes to interaction. Inclusive leadership studies have shown that positive leadership can lead to psychological safety and decrease psychological distress at work in stressful conditions (Zhao et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2020). In culturally diverse groups, the notion of psychological safety is applicable when it comes to voicing ideas, clarifying questions, expressing doubts, and addressing concerns about miscommunication. Nonetheless, psychological safety does not mean an absence of conflicts and responsibility.

Apart from open communication, team learning involves the testing of assumptions, the exchange of expertise and knowledge incorporation in decision-making. Diversity management literature relates knowledge sharing to innovation within organizations and highlights that the value of diversity within organizations lies in the extent to which these diverse perspectives get shared and incorporated (Kadam et al., 2021). Literature regarding multicultural and global virtual teams also emphasizes communication, cultural intelligence, and interpersonal difference management in relation to collaboration effectiveness (Shan et al., 2021; Davaei et al., 2022).

This is important as even a psychologically safe team might lack decision making discipline. Moreover, active participation does not matter much if there is no synthesis of thoughts. Code switching in global virtual teams is another example where the need to communicate in accordance with cultural differences comes into light (Zakaria & Ab Rahman Muton, 2022). Hence, this research paper will discuss psychological safety, voice, intercultural communication,

and knowledge integration as process mechanisms through which inclusive leadership and intercultural competence can play their role.

2.5. Research Gap

Research on diversity, leadership, and intercultural competence provides crucial insights, but insights that are usually developed independently. The theory question yet to be answered is how leader behavior, which is inclusive in nature, along with intercultural competence at the level of group members affects knowledge processing within distributed and diverse groups. An explanation is required which would identify the mechanisms involved in such processes and take into account the context in which inclusion alone does not suffice.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

3.1. Theory-Led Integrative Approach

The approach used for the development of the framework for this study is an integrative synthesis of the existing literature. This is aimed at analyzing the interaction between inclusive leadership and intercultural competence in influencing psychological safety, knowledge integration, and effectiveness within culturally diverse global teams. Instead of carrying out any primary research or systematic review of the literature, the approach involves integrating existing theoretical perspectives for developing relationships and propositions for research. The theoretical perspectives include social identity theory, information and decision-making perspectives, cultural intelligence, psychological safety, and organizational team learning.

The literature review will be centered around academic articles in relation to culture diversification, inclusive leadership, intercultural competency, multicultural teamwork, and global virtual collaboration. Articles were chosen deliberately based on their relevance to the topic, their ability to provide explanation of team processes, and their relevance to cross-cultural organizational contexts. Specific emphasis was placed on recent research articles that have been published between 2020 and 2022, as well as their theoretical backgrounds. The literature review contrasts theoretical arguments, highlights competing theories, and analyses context of the proposed relationship.

This framework is formulated via theoretical integration, not by statistical analysis and/or qualitative coding. Interviews, surveys, experiments, and data from organizations were not gathered. Hence, these relationships are theoretically based and need to be validated via empirical studies in the future.

3.2. Conceptual Synthesis and Framework Development

The conceptual synthesis was divided into four stages that were related to each other. The first stage entailed the identification of the key constructs that were used, namely cultural diversity, inclusive leadership, intercultural competence, psychological safety, knowledge integration, and team effectiveness. At the second stage, theoretical approaches were compared in order to outline the informational benefits of diversity in terms of possible problems associated with social categorization, communication problems, and unequal participation. In addition, at the third stage, relationships between leadership practices, intercultural competencies, and the process of team work were analyzed in order to suggest possible mechanisms of the impact of diversity on group performance.

This paper distinguishes between theories that have already been developed and those that are proposed for the first time, highlighting some other interpretations that might affect global team performance. Special emphasis was placed on the roles of inclusive leadership in achieving equity and intercultural competence in accurate interpretation and knowledge transfer. This synthesis led to the development of a theory that explains the transformation of cultural diversity within teams into organizational performance. The figure 1 below shows the process of synthesis employed in this research.

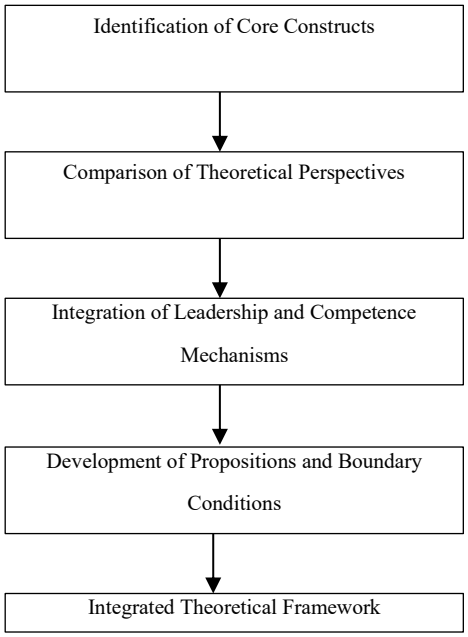


Figure 1: Conceptual Synthesis and Framework Development Process

3.3. Construct Boundaries and Unit of Analysis

Diversity is a characteristic of team composition; inclusiveness is mainly a behavior of a leader, which could be aggregated into a team-level shared perception; intercultural competence is a feature of an individual and may be either a dispersion or mean of team members' intercultural competences. Psychological safety and knowledge integration are proposed team-level processes. Team effectiveness is multidimensional and includes such dimensions as coordination, problem solving, learning and accomplishment of a team goal. All levels should not be collapsed in future quantification of this phenomenon without aggregation evidence. Table 1 provides information on constructs, their meanings and potential measures for culturally diverse global teams. Diversity is a diversity of background and experience of individuals; inclusiveness is related to equal opportunities for all members to participate and to openness in communication. Intercultural competence is a resource for adaptive communication, while psychological safety fosters discussion without fear of punishment. Knowledge integration is a condition for using diverse competences, which in turn contribute to team effectiveness through better coordination, learning, adaptability and accomplishment of the team goal.

Table 1: Construct Definitions and Proposed Operationalization

Construct	Conceptual Meaning	Possible Indicators
Cultural diversity	The distribution of culturally pertinent experiences and identities	Nationality/languages mix; distribution of cultural values; task-related experience
Inclusive leadership	Accessibility, openness, and equal participation of leaders	Dissent is invited; time allotment for speeches; implementing the input received
Intercultural competence	Knowledge, motivation, and cross-cultural adaptation skills	Perspective-taking; Communication adjustment; Behavioral Scenarios
Psychological safety	Mutual confidence in interpersonal risk taking	Confidence in asking questions; mistakes talk; debate without punishment
Knowledge integration	Evaluation and combination of distributed knowledge	Idea acceptance of cross-member; joint decision-making; integration effectiveness
Team effectiveness	Outcome quality and flexibility of joint task performance	Task quality; coordination; learning; stakeholder analysis

3.4. Transparency and Analytical Limitations

The current paper is conceptual in nature and driven by a theory-based framework. Literature integration has been done with respect to an understanding of the existing sources. It is not claimed that the literature used in the research is comprehensive; rather, the purposive approach has been followed in the literature collection process. The current study does not aim at following systematic review guidelines like PRISMA. There has been no qualitative analysis, reliability testing, meta-analysis, and hypothesis testing in the study. Hence, the resulting framework can be taken as a theoretical one instead of being an empirical relationship. Though the combination of various perspectives has provided a basis for developing the hypotheses, the results suffer from limitations inherent in the use of literature, its interpretation, and generalizability.

IV. ANALYTICAL FINDINGS AND PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

4.1. From Diversity Exposure to Meaningful Participation

First, cultural diversity widens the pool of possible viewpoints without necessarily guaranteeing their emergence. People may choose to keep quiet due to linguistic concerns, hierarchy, or the fear of how their dissenting views would be perceived. This challenge can be overcome by inclusive leaders through the facilitation of turn-taking, the request for prior written submissions from team members, and the endorsement of questioning. It is anticipated that these efforts would lead to increased psychological safety and voice equity, though the extent of their success remains uncertain.

Proposition P1: Inclusive leadership has a positive relationship with psychological safety and equality of voice in culturally diverse global teams.

Proposition P2: Knowledge Integration Mediated by Psychological Safety and Voice Equity in Relation to Inclusive Leadership.

4.2. Competence as the Conversion Mechanism

The second insight pertains to interpretation. While the leader might arrange speaking opportunities, members would still need to interpret culturally foreign communications. Intercultural competence can help prevent premature negative attributions, facilitate clarification and foster comparisons between different perspectives (Swartz & Shrivastava, 2022; Shan et al., 2021). It could also prevent the misinterpretation of superficial agreement as actual understanding. Thus, intercultural competence would supplement inclusive leadership in this case.

Proposition P3: The relationship between team intercultural competence and knowledge integration quality is positive.

Proposition P4: Intercultural competence enhances the postulated link between inclusive leadership and knowledge integration in cases where diversity is highly interdependent.

4.3. From Integrated Knowledge to Collective Outcomes

The third finding is that participation is more important where the contribution creates coordinated action. The knowledge integration process might help to enhance the decision-making process by creating a more complete decision-making process, identifying local risks, and aiding in adaptive problem solving. However, it should be noted that diversity might increase the cost of time; thus, performance might be contingent upon decision deadlines and conflict resolution processes (Zhao et al., 2020; Zakaria & Ab Rahman Muton, 2022).

Proposition P5: Knowledge integration has a positive impact on team effectiveness when there is task interdependence and coordination capabilities.

4.4. Cross-Level Model and Rival Explanations

Figure 2 provides the proposed causal chain. Analytically independent antecedents are inclusive leadership and intercultural competence; mediation is provided by psychological safety and knowledge integration; and the outcome is effectiveness. Competing explanations are past experience of the team, shared professional training, resource availability, organizational context, and selection into mobile global positions. A subsequent study should sort out these possibilities instead of automatically ascribing all variation to culture.

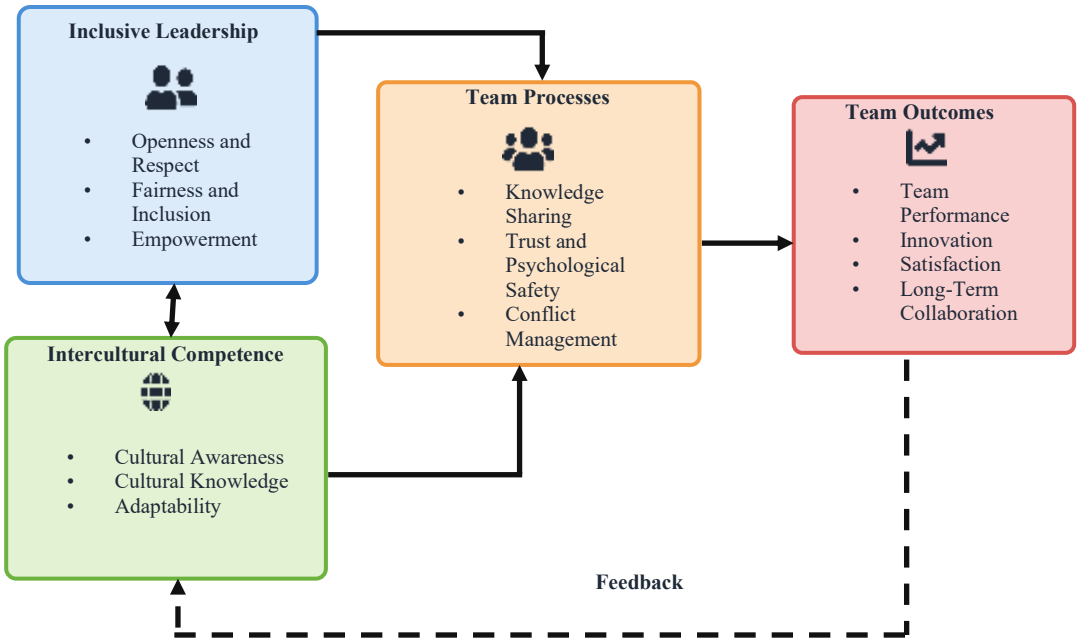


Figure 2: Proposed Mechanisms Linking Leadership, Competence, and Team Outcomes

4.5. Theoretical Interpretation

This model involves a blend of an interpersonal channel and a cognitive channel. There could be leadership practices that would lower the cost of contribution; and there could be intercultural competency that would assist in interpreting such contributions. The two channels are anticipated to help with elaborating the information. This differentiation is valuable for theoretical purposes as it helps to separate the willingness to share information from the ability to interpret and integrate the shared information.

4.6. Moderating Role of Contextual Boundary Conditions

These associations between inclusive leadership, intercultural competence, psychological safety, knowledge integration, and team effectiveness can differ depending on the organizational and cultural environment in which global teams' function. Four possible boundary conditions of such a nature include team virtuality, power distance, language asymmetry, and interdependence among tasks performed by the team members. Such variables will affect the efficacy of the proposed paths instead of being independent determinants of team efficiency. Team virtuality can be a factor moderating the association between inclusive leadership and psychological safety through lack of instant interpersonal feedback. As for virtual teams, such factors as asynchronous communication, lack of nonverbal cues, and delayed responses will make it difficult for the employees to perceive their leaders as accessible and supportive. Therefore, for inclusive leadership to promote psychological safety, it is necessary to have some feedback system and proper communication practices. Power distance is likely to affect the association between inclusive leadership and equitable voice. Within those organizations which stress the role of hierarchy in their team functioning, the workers are likely not to raise objections against the decision of the management even when the participation in decision-making is encouraged by the management. It is possible that structured opposition, secret feedback, and the reactions of managers might assist in lowering such barriers. This means that the effectiveness

of inclusive leadership depends on the perception of the workers on whether participation in decision-making is acceptable within the existing organizational hierarchy. Asymmetrical usage of language may affect the link between intercultural competence and knowledge integration. The use of written communications, clarifications, and common terminology might assist in minimizing communication disparities and facilitating knowledge sharing. Task interdependence can act as a moderator of the effect of knowledge integration on team performance. With tasks that involve considerable coordination of actions and combining various specialties, the contribution of knowledge integration to team performance is likely to be stronger. On the other hand, the relevance of knowledge integration will probably be lesser in tasks that do not necessitate interaction. This context implies that inclusive leadership and intercultural competence alone may not be enough for efficient global teamwork. The benefits of these factors rely upon communication structure, organizational hierarchy, language skills, and task demands. The expected mechanisms of moderation are summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2: Proposed Moderating Effects of Contextual Boundary Conditions in Culturally Diverse Global Teams

Boundary condition	Proposed relationship Affected	Expected Moderating Effect	Underlying Mechanism
Team Virtuality	Inclusive Leadership → Psychological Safety	Might Deteriorate without Structured Communication	Feedback is Delayed and Less Interpersonal Communication.
Power Distance	Inclusive Leadership → Equitable Voice	May Collapse Due to Hierarchical Pressures	Fear of Questioning Authority
Language Asymmetry	Intercultural Competence → Knowledge Integration	May be Weakened by Uneven Language Abilities	Communication Barriers and Unbalanced Expressions
Task Interdependence	Knowledge Integration → Team Effectiveness	Will be Reinforced with Greater Interdependence	Higher Degree of Joint Expertise Required

V. MANAGERIAL APPLICATION AND CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

5.1. A Practical Intervention Architecture

Managers may be able to use inclusion as an operating procedure that can be repeated, rather than just a value statement. Prior to collaborating, managers can identify language needs, expertise dispersed across sites, and norms of clarification and disagreement. During collaboration, managers can alternate facilitation roles, call for suggestions in writing, and track why alternatives are rejected or accepted. Following the decision-making process, reflection sessions can point out any perspectives that have been overlooked. These are possible uses of the framework, not the interventions supported by the current study.

5.2. Different Conditions Call for Different Responses

A high degree of language asymmetry within a group might require asynchronous writing contributions and summaries; a high power-distance expectation within a group would mean that private channels are necessary for initial disagreement; a highly virtual group will gain from having handover procedures clearly stated; and a new group will need to build trust more deliberately than an existing group. These differences show how inappropriate it is to develop a single training program. Training for intercultural competence should be done using practice, feedback, and context. The table 3 below highlights possible ways of dealing with the major problems in the culturally diverse global team. Problems like language imbalance and power inequality can be dealt with using effective communication and participation processes. Virtual team management needs to have responsibility and decision-sharing. Training and interaction across locations will help in mitigating the risks of misunderstandings and knowledge integration. The proposed evaluation measures like psychological safety, conflict management, participation equity, and decision making will provide measures of evaluating the leadership and intercultural competency in global teams.

Table 3: Context-Sensitive Managerial Actions and Evaluation Signals

Contextual challenge	Suggested management practice	Evaluation signal
Language Asymmetry	Pre-Read Material; Written Input; Confirm Shared Meanings	Participation Distribution; Clarification Frequency
Status and Power Differences	Anonymous Issue Escalation; Structured Dissent Rounds	Voice Equity; Perceived Safety
Virtual Coordination	Explicit Handoffs; Shared Decision Logs; Time-Zone Rotation	Rework; Missed Dependencies
Intercultural Misunderstanding	Scenario Practice; Perspective-Taking Debriefs	Conflict Repair Quality; Interpretation Accuracy
Knowledge Fragmentation	Cross-Location Review Pairs; Decision Rationale Capture	Idea Integration; Decision Completeness

5.3. Implementation Cycle

Figure 3 shows a practical cycle of learning that includes modifiable components. First, managers must evaluate barriers to interaction, modify practices related to meetings and feedback, and examine both process and task performance measures. This monitoring process should not punish workers for any problems encountered. The end goal is organization-wide learning, not a simplistic diversity score.

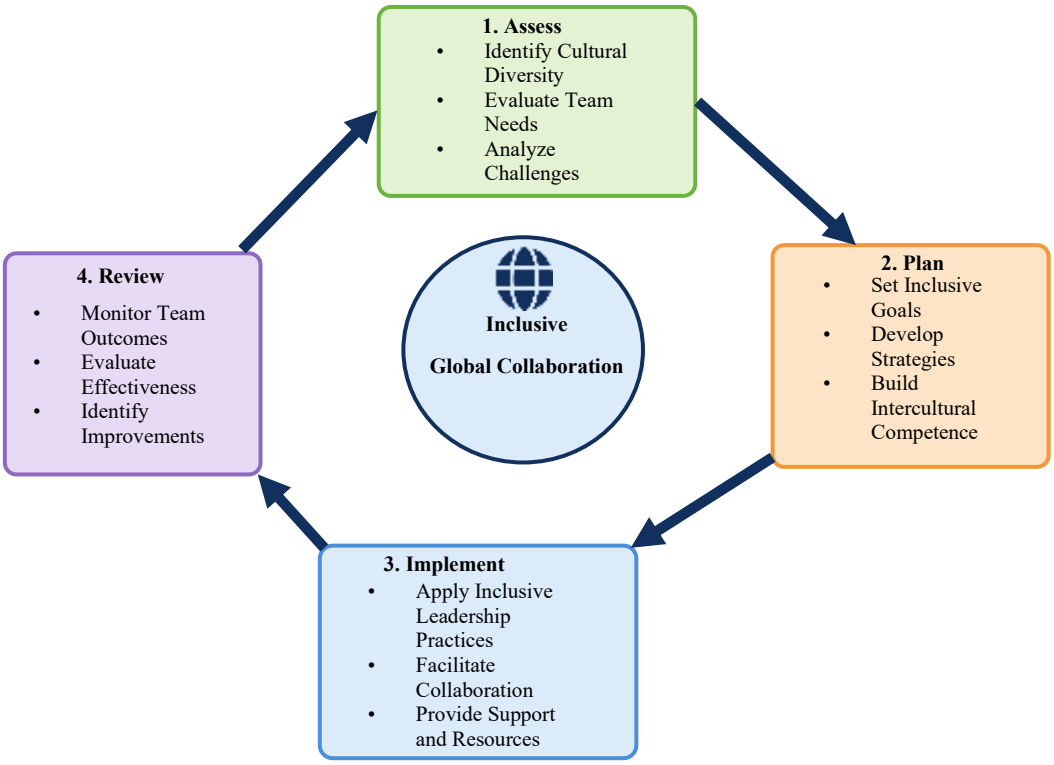


Figure 3: Iterative Management Cycle for Inclusive Global Collaboration

5.4. Ethical and Organizational Safeguards

It is imperative that organizations refrain from judging the capabilities of individuals based on their nationalities, religions, accents, or any other identifiers. The evaluation of cultural competency should be done in an open, proportional, and developmental manner. Information obtained through employee surveys has to be treated confidentially, and the interpretations have to be made in light of local employment laws. Leaders should also be able to differentiate between inclusion and forced identification.

VI. DISCUSSION: CONTRIBUTIONS AND BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

Cultural diversity is conceptualized here in a new way as a potential resource that can be utilized through relational and cognitive means. This attempts to resolve the conflict between the informational value of diversity and its categorizing threat (Kour & Jyoti, 2022; Kadam et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2020). Inclusive leadership is supposed to make participation possible, while intercultural competence to increase understanding of culturally novel input. Psychological safety and knowledge integration are separate intervening mechanisms, not equivalent terms. At the same time, the limitations are mentioned. Participation can turn into a ritual when leaders ask their employees for their opinion but do not take it into account. Intercultural training will not help if organizational structure, workload or language hierarchies stay the same. Psychological safety is high enough to facilitate open discussion but not necessarily lead to right decisions. Therefore, the paper is not about intentions but process and task quality. One major theoretical question is whether inclusive leadership makes up for lack of intercultural competence or if there should be a certain minimum of competence in the first place. Another one is whether dispersion

of competence in the team is more important than its average value. Such alternatives require configurational non-linear modeling rather than a simple direct-effect theory. A comparison between teams of various configurations of leadership inclusion, competence, and coordination can be a topic for further investigation. Cross-cultural measurement equivalence becomes a requirement for further research as well. Speaking-up survey item or leader availability may have quite different meanings depending on the country and language. So, measurement invariance, translation verification, and qualitative cognitive interviews become necessary conditions for any meaningful cross-cultural analysis. There is one more methodological issue related to the cross-cultural equivalence of the constructs that should be addressed. Inclusive leadership, psychological safety, intercultural competence, and equitable voice may mean something different in the contexts of different nations and languages. For instance, employees in high power distance cultures may define leader availability or disagreement differently from their counterparts in low power distance cultures. This is a threat to validity of the measurement of such constructs using identical instruments in different cultures. That is why any cross-cultural comparison between relationships should be preceded by validation of conceptual and measurement equivalence of the constructs.

VII. FUTURE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AGENDA

7.1. Sampling and research design

For future research, a sample of multinational teams engaged in projects could be obtained from different sectors and locations, including various team members and their managers. The inclusion criteria should not only be based on the fact that people belong to the same multinational organization, but also that the members engage in interdependent tasks in cross-cultural/cross-national settings. Information about team tenure, size, virtuality, task complexity, language skills and organizational context can be collected. Time lagged design can help to decrease methodological issues.

7.2. Measurement and Analysis

Empirical research in the future needs to use well-known scales measuring inclusive leadership, intercultural competence, psychological safety, knowledge integration, and team effectiveness. Prior to collecting the data, the scales need to be analyzed by experts and piloted to ensure their conceptual soundness, contextual applicability, and linguistic correctness. To check reliability, it will be possible to use McDonald's omega and composite reliability, while to validate construct convergent and discriminant validity, confirmatory factor analysis can be used.

In view of the fact that global teams work in different countries and languages, cross-country measurement equivalence becomes an important consideration when testing the suggested theory. Translations and back-translations, together with cognitive interviews, need to be conducted in order to identify the divergent meanings of the items. Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis needs to follow in order to test the configural, metric, and scalar measurement invariance across the appropriate countries and languages. The configural invariance tests whether the same factor structure is present across groups, the metric invariance compares the factor loadings across groups, and the scalar invariance measures the item intercept equivalence across groups.

For team level analyses, the extent of agreement and intraclass correlation coefficients among team members needs to be assessed prior to aggregation of individual scores. Further, multilevel structural equation modeling could be conducted to explore the indirect relationships hypothesized here, considering the nesting of individuals within teams. The potential moderating influence of virtuality, power distance, language asymmetry, and task interdependence could be studied through the use of appropriate interaction terms. Effect size, confidence intervals, model fit indices, and sensitivity tests are some of the metrics that future studies should provide. In case of failure to establish complete measurement invariance, partial invariance or other viable procedures need to be considered with their limitations stated.

7.3. Competing Predictions and Robustness

Research in the future should explore if inclusive leadership can contribute uniquely to explaining team effectiveness over and above supportive leadership and if intercultural competence can contribute uniquely to explanations over and above language skills and international experience. The suggested relationship needs to be tested using regular and creative tasks, different levels of team virtuality, and organizational hierarchy. Decision quality, coordination efficiency, and rework measures need to be included along with subjective reports.

Cross-cultural robustness tests need to take into account potential biases due to language effects, cultural effects on responses, and different understandings of constructs of leadership and psychological safety. Measurement invariance needs to be demonstrated before any cross-national comparison can be conducted. In cases where measurement invariance is not achieved, researchers need to refrain from making inappropriate cross-country comparisons and find out what causes the differences in measurements. Further replication research can be done to see whether the mechanisms work in other organizational contexts and developmental stages of teams.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Intercultural diversity within international teams leads to chances of enhanced learning and flexibility in decision making; however, such chances do not happen by default. In this paper, a theoretical explanation is offered whereby inclusion of leaders enables participation and intercultural competence allows correct interpretation and constructive interaction. Psychological safety, equal voice, and knowledge integration tie these antecedents to team outcomes that are possible. The theory recognizes limitations arising from language disparity, status differentials, virtual teamwork, and task requirements. An important takeaway from this theory is that global managers should include inclusiveness in daily operations of teams while building intercultural competence. The two concepts are complementary to each other and do not replace the requirement for transparent procedures of decision-making and accountability. Since this paper is not based on primary data and just a theory-driven review, no causalities or statistical significance can be achieved by this paper. This work rather defines an agenda for differentiated future research and proposes practice of managers depending on the context.

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