ABSTRACT

Using a large sample of employees from a Midwestern healthcare organization, this study examines perceived exclusion by dominant group members in a multicultural context. Specifically, this study recognizes diversity resistance as a potential concern for perceived exclusion in multicultural organizations. Leadership remedies such as role modeling diversity practices and communication are explored as behaviors to mitigate exclusion perceptions. Finally, departmental diversity values are tested as a moderator to understand contextual factors which may impact these leadership remedies’ success. Findings indicate that both leadership behaviors are associated with an increased sense of inclusion among dominant group members, which subsequently shows to be related to increased employee engagement. Furthermore, departmental values of diversity did impact the effectiveness of communication behaviors by leaders. This study highlights dominant group exclusion as a potential indicator of resistance, and offers support for leader behaviors which may remedy this increasingly important issue.

INDEX WORDS: Resistance, Diversity, Dominant Group, Exclusion, Leadership.
PERCEIVED DOMINANT GROUP EXCLUSION AND RESISTANCE: A LOOK AT
POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP REMEDIES

by

JACOB LEEDS MARTIN
B.A. Wake Forest University, 2010

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

ATHENS, GEORGIA
2012
PERCEIVED MAJORITY GROUP EXCLUSION AND RESISTANCE: A LOOK AT
POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP REMEDIES

by

JACOB LEEDS MARTIN

Major Professor: Karl W. Kuhnert
Committee: Gary J Lautenschlager
Kecia M. Thomas

Electronic Version Approved:
Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2012
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I can’t even begin to express all my love and gratitude for my most influential role models: my parents. You have always supported me in my endeavors and inspired me to never stop learning. As you have relentlessly cared for Alice and me, it has served as an invaluable lesson to never stop working for the things which you value. Feel free to recognize this manuscript as a tangible milestone towards currently unfulfilled, but never forgotten, promises of a retirement beach house.

Throughout graduate school, my undergraduate friends have been incredible. In spite of distance and time apart, I am constantly reminded of your unwavering support. For my graduate school friends, thank you for always being there at just the right times to provide both academic insight and unforgettably fun experiences. I love you all.

I would also like to thank my major professor, Karl Kuhnert, who has always helped foster my ideas and efforts to successfully navigate this process. My thesis committee members, Gary Lautenschlager and Kecia Thomas, have also been instrumental in their patience and support given towards this project. I sincerely could not have come this far without all of your help!

Finally, these acknowledgments would not be complete without thanking Walkers Coffee and Pub. Much of this manuscript was written at Walkers, with the integral support of both the staff and their delicious coffee. Thank you for many late nights of productivity as my home away from home!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................1

2 LITERATURE REVIEW, HYPOTHESES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS ...........3

   Background ........................................................................3

   Varied Approaches to Workplace Diversity ..........................4

   Resistance to Diversity .....................................................9

   Perceived Exclusion and Resistance .....................................15

   Leadership and Follower Values .........................................16

   Diversity Role Modeling ....................................................18

   Leadership Communication ...............................................20

   Leadership Diversity Values .............................................22

   Inclusion and Engagement ...............................................25

   Contribution to the Literature ...........................................27

3 METHOD .............................................................................30

   Participants .....................................................................30

   Procedures .....................................................................33
Measures ..........................................................33
Analyses ..........................................................37

4 RESULTS .................................................................................39
Descriptive Statistics .........................................................39
T-Test Results .................................................................39
Multiple Regression and Moderated Regression Results ..........39
Research Question Results ...............................................43

5 DISCUSSION .................................................................45
Future Directions and Limitations ......................................50

REFERENCES ..............................................................................52
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Demographic Information</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations for Constructs and Corresponding Samples</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Intercorrelations among Predictor, Cross-Product and Criterion Variables</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>T-test Results Comparing Minority and Dominant Group Employees on Inclusion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Regression Coefficients from Multiple Regression</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Regression Coefficients – Moderated Regression (Practices X Values)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Regression Coefficients – Moderated Regression (Com X Values)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1: Communication Predicting Inclusion by Departmental Leadership Value ..................43
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Racial and ethnic diversity in America is expected to increase significantly for the next few decades (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009). More households are identifying as same-sex, more Americans are identifying as multi-racial, and Hispanics have already passed Blacks as the largest minority group (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009; Cole, 2001; Diversity Inc., 2002; McDonough, 2002). These demographic changes have manifested in the workforce, and organizations are still adjusting as the changes continue. While not as rapidly growing as the population demographics, the minority workforce was listed as 16.5% in 2000, and is expected to grow to an estimated 25% in 2050 (Christian, Porter, and Moffitt, 2006). Accordingly, many businesses are directing more attention to these shifting demographic rates, often through the adoption of multicultural models to attract and include diversity (Berry, 1984; Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2000; Plaut, 2002).

Although substantial research has explored the positive impact of these multicultural systems (e.g. Verkuyten, 2005; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), research should also consider the potential aversive attitudinal and behavioral reactions by employees, particularly by dominant group members. Thomas and Plaut (2008) explore resistance to diversity, but additional studies are needed to test these attitudes and behaviors in organizational settings. One of the few studies examining this unique perspective finds that a dominant group’s support for multicultural policies differs according to how included they feel in such a system (Baumeister &
Leary, 1995). Exploring perceived inclusion as a critical factor towards Whites’ support of multicultural systems is thus a central facet of this manuscript.

The present study first aims to present existing research demonstrating the presence and detrimental impact of resistance to diversity initiatives in multicultural organizations. Utilizing a large sample of White employees in a multicultural healthcare organization, this study then contributes to the literature by exploring leadership behavioral remedies (as well as contextual factors) associated with an increased sense of inclusion among dominant group employees. Establishing the nature of these relationships may shed light on effective leadership strategies in helping dominant group employees feel more included, particularly within organizations which may seem to celebrate minority employees more explicitly. It’s likely that the impact of this increased sense of inclusion could result in less resistance to such multicultural policies by employees.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW, HYPOTHESES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Background

Business practices regarding diversity are changing steadily, largely due to shifting demographics nationally (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009), and subsequently in the workplace (Christian, Porter, and Moffitt, 2006). Although consistently requiring justification through ties to bottom-line results (Diversity Inc., 2002), diversity in organizations has shown to produce many benefits. Such advantages have been shown to be both financial (e.g. Society for Human Resource Management, 2001), and employee-based (e.g. McBride & Bostian, 1998). Furthermore, legal costs of neglecting diversity may serve as additional motivation to direct resources accordingly (Thomas, Mack, & Montaglioni 2004).

To account for this increased focus on diversity, organizations are investing more resources in diversity management (Mehta, 2000). Specifically, although some organizations still opt to pursue equal treatment of employees through a colorblind approach, there is an increasing trend in adopting multicultural models of diversity and inclusion (Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, and Sanchez-Burks 2011). These models, which recognize and celebrate group differences in the workplace, have been shown to be beneficial to both minority and dominant group employees (e.g. Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). However, recent advances for diverse groups in the workplace have been met with resistance, largely tied to dominant group feelings of discomfort, fear, or exclusion (Thomas & Plaut, 2008).
Using a large sample of employees from a Midwestern healthcare organization, this study addresses the specific leadership behaviors of diversity practice role modeling, as well as communicating expectations, as being associated with higher levels of perceived inclusion by the dominant group. From a charismatic leadership perspective, these behaviors may serve to align employees toward an overarching mission promoting diversity and inclusion, above and beyond their individual, lower-level, interests. Buying into this mission and the associated feelings of commitment are likely to be associated with increased perceptions of inclusion in the multicultural systems. This study goes further to explore overarching departmental values of diversity as contextual factors which may impact these relationships. Establishing links between these variables may assist managers hoping to convey a sense of inclusion to all employees in multicultural systems. Furthermore, this study will conduct an additional test exploring the relationship between this perceived inclusion and employee engagement. Findings may suggest further importance for the promotion of employee inclusion for all groups, as these employees will tend to be more engaged in their jobs. First, however, it is important to provide an appropriate context within the literature regarding our discussion of diversity and inclusion.

**Varied Approaches to Workforce Diversity**

*Diversity and Inclusion: What’s the Difference?*

With the clear evidence that embracing this growing diversity in the workforce not only can result in profit gains, but also neglecting such change can be significantly costly, most organizations are quickly adjusting strategies to accommodate some form of diversity. The question for businesses is how do you build your diversity strategy? Cox (1991) and Thomas and Ely (1996) articulate a few perspectives by classifying diversity management styles by the extent to which diversity not only exists, but that it is truly included in strategy, organizational
structure, decision making, and processes. To capture this important distinction, the terms “diversity” and “inclusion” have been separated and articulated specifically to reveal significant manifestations of approaches to shifting demographics among companies.

Diversity may be defined as “differences in perspectives resulting in potential behavioral differences among cultural groups as well as identity differences among group members in relation to other groups” (Larkey, 1996). This perspective portrays diversity as represented by variation in cultural significance, observable differences, and unobservable differences (Cox, 1993; Milliken & Martins, 1996). Among observable differences, diversity may include gender, race, age, and ethnicity. Unobservable differences focus on cognitive, cultural, and technical aspects of employees (Kochan et al., 2003). Research suggests these differences, both observable and unobservable, have real consequences, such as influencing the patterns of interactions between workgroup members (Jackson, May, & Whitney, 1995; Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992).

Diversity literature often classifies inclusion as the extent to which individuals have access to information, can influence the decision-making process, and are truly involved in work groups and processes (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998). While diversity is seen as more of a state or quality that a workgroup possesses, inclusion is a measure of the extent to which employees are actually empowered and included in business structures, strategies, and processes (Cox, 1991; Thomas & Ely, 1996). Thus, with minority groups experiencing a history of being excluded from certain workforce networks and positions of impact, inclusion can be a measure of empowerment and worker participation (Ibarra, 1993; Pettigrew & Martin, 1989).

Research would suggest that across many aspects of climate, such as workforce demography, value and comfort regarding diversity, inclusion, fairness, and employee
perceptions of climate, there is a clear distinction between diversity and inclusion (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998). Furthermore, Pelled, Ledford, and Mohrman (1999) found job security, access to information, and a greater influence in decision making to be real outcomes of an inclusive workplace. Cox and Blake (1991) recognize that staying fixated on employee demographic variability presumes inclusion, which may actually not exist across all groups in an organization. Following these trends in the literature, many organizations have been adopting a more inclusion-focused approach to supplement their commitment to diversity (Mehta, 2000; Harvey, 1999).

With the mounting support for the profitability of both diversity and inclusion in the workplace, many organizations have begun adopting and expanding their repertoire of deliberate efforts to embrace shifting demographics. Outcomes for these efforts are largely positive, such as building loyalty among diverse employees, as well as a growing commitment to the company’s business goals (SHRM, 2001; Diversity Inc., 2002). Specifically, these efforts may include affinity groups, leadership-driven diversity endorsement, training, targeted recruitment efforts, and career development (Cox, 1993; Morrison, 1992). Some organizations have expanded further, implementing broader programs and initiatives that may include communication strategies, community relations, and employee participation in decision-making (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 2000).

Colorblind vs. Multicultural Organizations

In diversity and inclusion, organizations may simply acknowledge employee differences, or embrace them. To elaborate on this distinction, research has utilized a cultural psychological lens. This perspective can explain the impact of cultural ideologies on a specific environment and intergroup relations within, such as a work place (e.g., Heine & Norenzayan, 2006; Knowles
et al., 2009; Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009; Sanchez-Burks, Bartel, & Blount, 2009).

Specifically, the two most popular ideologies which manifest in business as diversity models are colorblindness and multiculturalism (see Park & Judd, 2005; Plaut, 2010; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). The purpose of these ideologies is to guide organizations, through ideas, meanings, and practices, towards specific methods of including and accommodating all groups in a diverse society (Berry, 1984; Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2000; Plaut, 2002).

The “melting pot” in American rhetoric is probably the best metaphor for the colorblind model. This perspective asserts that all Americans are essentially similar, and thus color should not be acknowledged as it will only create harmful schisms between groups. In this mindset, assimilation is key, and leads to the best interpersonal and intergroup contact. On the other hand, multicultural models use a mosaic metaphor, suggesting that individual differences are real and hold significance, but that these pieces together can still form a coherent image. A multicultural perspective actually highlights group differences as something to not only be aware of, but also to celebrate and cherish (Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, and Sanchez-Burks 2011). The difficult notion behind the two models lies in the varying interpretations. For instance, the colorblind perspective fits well with the dominant American ideals of individualism and meritocracy. If we are all really the same and share similar experiences, the only thing left to differentiate our accomplishments are hard work and individual abilities (Thomas, Mack, & Montaglioni, 2004). Thus, dominant group members of society perceive the colorblind model as a means of achieving equality, as refusing to perceive differences must equate to fair treatment for all (see Knowles et al. 2009). The colorblind approach is largely challenged by minorities in that such initiatives appear insincere, and in some cases a threat to fairness via a resulting absence of anti-discrimination efforts (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008). In addition,
the colorblind approach assumes treating people equally will result in fair treatment, which is often not the case due to historical and present-day social realities. Such impressions are most prevalent when organizations contain low numerical diversity representation.

Model Impact

Research suggests a myriad of insidious results of colorblindness across a variety of settings, including ongoing discriminate treatment of students in school settings (Apfelbaum, Pauker, Sommers, & Ambady, 2010; Schofield, 2006), reduced empathy toward minority clients from counselors (Burkard & Knox, 2004), rationalizations for groupbased inequities (Knowles et al., 2009; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000; Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008), an increase in discrimination and racial bias among Whites (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Schofield, 2006), stunted growth for minority employment status (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995), reduced psychological engagement for minorities (Plaut et al., 2009), and lower organizational effectiveness (Ely & Thomas, 2001). As the evidence suggests, though largely appealing on the surface to dominant groups, the colorblind perspective comes with many organizational drawbacks.

Richeson and Nussbaum (2004) found that Whites endorsing multiculturalism (or who are temporarily primed to view this perspective positively) demonstrate less racial bias. In addition, such Whites will adopt more inclusionary attitudes toward social policies (Wolsko et al., 2006), as well as hold more acceptance and open-mindedness towards others (Verkuyten, 2005; Vorauer, Gagnon, & Sasaki, 2009). Just as important, benefits for minorities within multicultural systems are quite prevalent, ranging from educational, to psychological, to organizational. For example, Plaut and colleagues (2009) demonstrated that minorities exposed to multicultural models are more psychologically engaged. Other research suggests increased
citizenship and intellectual engagement (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), greater creativity (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008), and organizational effectiveness and learning (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Overall, multicultural models result in superior employment status for minorities (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995), and can breed more tolerant views from Whites. To further explore the impact of these systems, the present study draws participants from a healthcare organization which espouses a strong culture of multiculturalism.

**Resistance to Diversity**

*Dominant Group Resistance to Multicultural Systems*

With the aforementioned evidence, one would assume multicultural practices to be a clear and simple path to a more integrated American workforce. However, changing times have bred uncertainty amongst majority group members. Research has actually demonstrated that Whites tend to view such diversity and inclusion policies as a “zero-sum game” where gains for protected groups must indicate losses for them. Furthermore, such findings reveal that this dominant group perceives to be the target of discrimination more so than minority groups presently (Norton & Sommers, 2011). Such anxieties and more tend to manifest in resistance to these changes.

Taking a larger perspective, resistance has found its way into our nation’s dialogue. Indeed, the 21st century has proven to contain ongoing rhetoric against the abolition of slavery, civil rights and voting, while coupled with new perspectives against domestic partnerships and influxes of immigration. Quite recently, multiculturalism has met resistance from many sources, including academics (Michaels, 2006; Schmidt, 1997; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994), historians (Schlesinger, 1992), politicians (e.g., Gov. Richard Lamm’s “I have a plan to destroy America” speech), and court cases (e.g., Shaw v Reno, 1995; Parents Involved v. Seattle, 2006; Grutter v...
Most of these arguments attack the notion of inclusion via multiculturalism as “fraud.” They assert that the minority groups are being favored at the expense of the dominant groups’ resources, which are often seen as having been earned through merit (Auster, 2004b, p.197). Patrick West, a British journalist (2005, p.5) articulated this perspective directly when he wrote that multiculturalism “has mutated into a philosophy of self-loathing, in which everything that is the preserve of the ‘the Other’ has to be celebrated.” Perhaps the most alarming attacks on multiculturalism have arisen in education, as this arena would be the ideal setting to educate individuals on the importance of diversity and inclusion. Indeed, major challenges have been brought against multicultural systems as unifying forces (see Banks, 2002; Bennett, 1995). An example of these challenges is shown in Arizona’s (2010) law (HB 2281), which prohibited schools “from teaching classes that are designed for students of a particular ethnic group, promote resentment, or advocate ethnic solidarity over treating pupils as individuals.” The rhetoric in this law sends a clear message of colorblind preference over any perspective highlighting group differences.

Dominant groups in our country still struggle with shifting issues regarding race, culture, language, and sexual identity (Van Buren 1996; Dass & Parker 1999). Sadly, these views have been manifested in the workplace, and in spite of an increase in explicit commitment to tolerance and equality, workplace discrimination rates are only increasing (Wooten & James, 2004). With organizations embracing diversity more than ever, how can such acts of prejudice be on the rise? An important facet is the reactions to such initiatives by the dominant groups, who despite becoming less of a majority in the population, still hold a dominant representation in most business settings through both numerical representation, as well as positions of leadership. For
this reason, the present study concentrates on the perspectives of the dominant group in a work setting that promotes numerous multicultural policies.

**Resistance and Organizational Change**

Organizational change literature acknowledges employees’ fears of an unclear future, diminishing familiarity of the established present, and a lack of control accompanying such transition. Change may signal a loss of power, status, and influence. This literature acknowledges the threat of resistance as a result of these anxieties (Reger, Gustafson, Demarie, & Mullane, 1994). Such resistance has been articulated in terms of behaviors (e.g. Brower & Abolafia, 1995; Ashforth & Mael, 1998; Shapiro, Lewicki, & Devine, 1995), emotional terms (e.g. Coch & French, 1948; Vince & Broussine, 1996; Argyris & Schön’s 1974, 1978), and in terms of affect (e.g. Watson, 1982; Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). Regardless of how it’s conceptualized, addressing and reducing such resistance can be a difficult challenge for organizations in transition.

These volatile periods may be particularly critical for fostering employee cooperation (Ford & Ford, 1995; Robertson, Roberts, & Porras, 1993). Thus, research on organizational change has explored several methods for reducing employee resistance (e.g. Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Nutt, 1986). Many strategies appear to involve manager influence as a key component, as these figures are seen as the primary link between the employees and their organization (Lewin, 1951). For example, managers may attempt to explain why change is necessary (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999), or perhaps deliberately involve employees in designing the change (Nutt, 1986). Employee support may be gained by relying on key personnel to persuade their peers (Nutt, 1986), or even management giving speeches to inspire buy-in among subordinates (Armenakis et al., 1996). Other influence tactics may include more
transactional strategies, such as implementing sanctions or rewards to guide employee behavior (Poole, Gioia, & Gray, 1989). The present study adopts these perspectives from the change management literature by exploring management’s potential impact on dominant group perspectives in a multicultural system.

*The Psychology of Resistance: Diversity and Change*

Inclusive organizational cultures often experience sabotage in many ways, largely as a result of the aforementioned persisting anxieties, fears, discomfort, stereotypes, and anger. As a form of organizational change, these feelings may be triggered by deliberate efforts to include underrepresented groups in meaningful facets of business (Thomas & Plaut, 2008). French and Bell (1999) argue such a shift in policies is often viewed as threatening to employees. Furthermore, this change forces employees to confront uncomfortable issues of race, gender, and sexuality (Thomas & Plaut, 2008). These issues may even provoke anxiety of being sufficiently “politically correct” (Ginges & Cains, 2000; Verkuyten, 2005). There are few things perceived to be worse than being labeled as a racist (Tatum, 1999), and feelings of anxiety or discomfort of a shifting workforce may be misinterpreted as racist views. Thus, these patterns of interpretation can leave dominant group employees feeling helpless to voice their opinions (Thomas & Plaut, 2008). These anxieties are enhanced by societal individualistic value systems, which often may seem inconsistent with multicultural systems highlighting group differences (Schofield 1986). We cannot be seen as a “melting pot” if there are group differences within our population. Additionally, the “American Dream,” asserting that anyone can succeed through individual hard work and merit, becomes muddled when other forces such as prejudice and privilege are considered. Tatum (1992) reinforces these findings in her classroom study which found similar emotional reactions to class discussions concerning race, such as anger, guilt, and shame.
Without addressing these reactions, resistance to diversity and inclusion can manifest in many forms.

**Manifestations of Diversity Resistance**

A model proposed by Thomas and Plaut (2008) details the two dimensions across which resistance to diversity may come into fruition. Resistance may be identified at either an individual or organizational level, as well as an overt or subtle expression. Individual examples of overt discrimination are fairly straightforward, including harassment, prejudice, and conventional discrimination. Naturally, subtle examples are more difficult to detect, and may include avoidance, distancing, and even apathy when observing overt discrimination. Overt organizational resistance behaviors may simply be human resources policies which aim to discriminate against particular groups, but due to legal mandates, subtle organizational examples are far more typical. These may be aligned with the colorblind models toward diversity, and often result in creating environments where minority groups fail to experience equal employment opportunities. Specifically, these subtle forms of organizational resistance may involve communicating mixed messages concerning diversity, failing to acknowledge the presence or significance of diversity, or even actively encouraging silence concerning the presence and implications of minority groups in the workplace (Thomas & Plaut, 2008).

Causes of both overt and subtle resistance are complex, and may span many sources. Overt resistance may stem from individual differences of hostility or value orientations, as well as cognitive factors such as the propensity to stereotype members of outgroups to being unfit for their position (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991). Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) further elaborates the ingroup-outgroup perspective and explains our desire to create positive perceptions of our ingroup to increase self-esteem. Finally, groups may exhibit
resistance when they feel that their resources are threatened by other groups (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), or perhaps even their power over such groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Subtle forms of resistance are more difficult to diagnose, as they are often legitimately implicit and ambivalent, while at times supplemented by good intentions of fairness (e.g. Gaertner & Donvidio, 1986; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). Silence falls under this category as societal norms may influence such members to allow discrimination to occur without providing important dominant group support (Asch, 1955). Although this is clearly not committing an act of prejudice at an individual level, it provides a critical level of support for more intentional acts and can be just as detrimental.

*Group Differences in Resistance to Diversity*

Although resistance and its associated psychological processes can develop among many cultural groups (as all Americans are exposed early on to individualistic and meritorious ideologies of our country), there do appear to be group differences in how we view the colorblind–multicultural distinction. For instance, dominant racial/ethnic groups (i.e., Whites) offer less support for multiculturalism when compared to groups of color (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Plaut, 2002; Ryan et al., 2007; Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2006). In fact, research shows that in addition to expressing less support, Whites (more so than underrepresented groups) will resist multicultural efforts in favor of colorblind models and their respective policies. This has been shown to occur in both educational and organizational settings (Markus et al., 2000; Schofield, 2006; E. H. James et al., 2001; Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Linnehan & Konrad, 1999; Thomas et al., 2004).
Perceived Exclusion and Resistance

This study seeks to acknowledge the prevalence and significance of majority group resistance to diversity and inclusion in the workplace, but directly tapping such a phenomenon is problematic. Resistance to deliberate inclusion policies, as outlined above, can manifest in behaviors ranging from ambiguous to overt deviance (Thomas & Plaut, 2008). Similar to counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) in the workplace, these actions can be difficult to measure in research (Dalal, 2005; Spector, Bauer, & Fox, 2010). Specifically, accurately tapping into these resistance behaviors amongst participants from real employee samples is unrealistic, as individuals are unlikely to honestly admit to any overt actions against fellow employees, their employer, or its policies. This social desirability bias may be even more likely considering such resistance would be against racial outgroup members, which as explained previously, carries heightened societal disapproval (Tatum, 1999). Such resistance measures may be further clouded as many majority group employees may legitimately fail to acknowledge the more subtle behaviors as resistant, due to outright denial, or rationalizations of intent for justice and fairness (Gaertner & Donvidio, 1986; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).

In the typical absence of exhaustive resistance measures, this study considers inclusion, as measured by majority group employees, as a means of defining the propensity for resistance. As defined above, inclusion is seen as a measure of the extent to which employees are involved in impactful processes in the workplace (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998). While this term is often considered in diversity research and in the context of diversity policies, it is not limited to the experiences of minorities, but rather all employees. Furthermore, Baumeister and Leary (1995) discovered that Whites’ support for multicultural policies actually differs according to how included they feel, or to what extent they perceive themselves belonging in such a system. Thus,
a common source of the anxieties (and perhaps subsequent resistance) for dominant group members may be a perception that diversity and inclusion policies do not actually include them, meaning they are unlikely to benefit from supporting such organizational models.

Although not the sole factor, research seems to suggest that perceived exclusion can impact the likelihood of resistance manifestation in the workplace (e.g. Plaut et al., 2011). Consequently, this study’s focus on perceived inclusion by the majority group can have implications in addressing the increasingly common workplace dilemma that is resistance to proactive diversity models. Given the nature of multicultural systems defined above, we assume such policies will highlight and benefit minority employees specifically, if they are not at least perceived this way by dominant group members. Thus, the present study seeks to begin exploring this reasoning with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Significant differences are expected between minority and dominant group members for ratings of perceived inclusion in the organization’s diversity mission, such that minorities will be higher.

Leadership and Follower Values

As this study focuses on dominant group employee attitudes, it is important to consider how leaders may impact such follower values. Specifically, leaders will need to develop a vision that helps shape articulated goals of diversity (personal and organizational) into realities (Oshry, 1995). This study asserts that to bring life to such a vision is to align followers’ adherence to such goals, and collective adherence may yield higher perceptions of inclusion. Several explanations may account for a leader’s potential to foster such buy-in among followers.
For instance, theories of self-construal explore the assorted ways in which the self can be
defined in collective terms, resulting in collective interests becoming substituted for personal
interests. Naturally, this has been shown to relate to leadership effectiveness (for overviews, see
Haslam, 2001; Haslam, van Knippenberg, Platow, & Ellemers, 2003; Hogg & Terry, 2001; van
Knippenberg, 2000). Perhaps most relevant to the current study, relational self-construal
suggests that self-conception may include significant others (Aron, 2003; Aron & McLaughlin-
Volpe, 2001). This psychological merging of the self and an “other” causes a reduced distinction
between personal interests and those of the significant other. Andersen and Chen (2002) contend
that relational self-construal operates through affect, motivation, and evaluations regarding the
“other” as included in one’s self concept. In a leadership context, research has suggested that
when this significant other is one’s leader, this personal identification may motivate an increased
loyalty and perceived shared interests. This personal identification may ultimately result to
leadership effectiveness (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Kark & Shamir, 2002; Kets de Vries, 1988;
phenomenon mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and dependence.

A far more popular take on leadership is that of leader-member exchange (LMX). The
basis of LMX states that leaders will develop dyadic relationships of varying quality among
followers as a result of ongoing exchanges in the workplace (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975).
Often categorized as either high or low LMX relationships, these outcomes for each dyad can
have very different impacts for followers. Relevant to shaping follower commitment, LMX has
been shown to be positively related to stronger organizational commitment (e.g., Nystrom,
1990), more positive role perceptions (e.g., Snyder & Binning, 1985), increased loyalty,
emotional support, mutual trust, and liking (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Scandura, 1987).
On the contrary, those in low LMX relationships are held in more of a transactional exchange relationship. It is reasonable then, to assume that followers would be more aligned with leader goals and interests when engaged in high LMX relationships.

In particular, this study aims to explore the role of charismatic/transformational leadership as a vessel for shaping follower commitment. Bass (1985) described this process as motivating followers to rise above original expectations. Furthermore, he describes transformational leaders as broadening and shifting the interests of their followers to become more in tune with the purposes and mission of the group. With individual anxieties and feelings of exclusion within dominant groups of multicultural organizations, and the resistance which may manifest, such transformational styles are perhaps especially important. To this point, Meindl and Lerner (1983) suggest that such a shared identity can lead to a “heroic motive” causing followers to voluntarily abandon self-interests for more collectivistic endeavors. This phenomenon has been identified as manifesting via four factors: intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, charisma, and inspirational leadership. Indeed, these theories and more suggest that leaders have the potential to impact followers’ values and commitment to goals through certain behaviors. This study addresses the question: which behaviors seem to be most important in shaping these qualities?

**Diversity Role Modeling**

Several trends seem to suggest that role modeling behaviors of leaders are important in aligning followers to perspectives above and beyond their individual interests. Indeed, in Offerman and Phan’s (2002) best practices for managing diversity, lower level leaders are encouraged to see vision into practice, thus serving as role models for their staff. While helpful in a diversity context, this recommendation is reflective of broader findings in the
transformational/charismatic leadership literature, which also finds role modeling behaviors to be essential. In Shamir and colleagues (1993) exploration into the self-concept motivational factors explaining charismatic leaders’ influence, “role modeling” is considered one of the two major behaviors explaining this phenomena. This contends that learning occurs vicariously through leaders’ behaviors, life style, emotional reactions, values, aspirations, and preferences. The messages contained in each of these expressions are often inferred by followers.

Bellah and colleagues (1985) support this perspective by portraying the leader as a “representative character,” bringing symbolic meaning to the supervisor role, allowing for many to organize around these gestures as a concentrated image. This can result in giving meaning and direction to the lives of followers in the workplace. This point of reference framing is echoed and stressed to represent what is “good and legitimate to develop” for employees (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Other research suggests that such ideological role-modeling behavior, especially when signifying personal sacrifice and unconventionality, can be indicative of courage and conviction towards the mission (Conger and Kanungo, 1987; Sashkin, 1988). If role-modeling contains more impact when perceived as ideological, unconventional, and indicative of personal sacrifice, leaders demonstrating a sincere commitment to diversity and inclusion may in fact see a particularly strong transformational effect amongst employees. Further, leaders seek to transform their followers by creating increased commitment to larger organizational goals beyond their personal interests, and such transformational effects may be products of behaviors reflective of such overarching goals. Such reinforcing behaviors may instill a greater sense of inclusion within such an organizational mission for followers, as this alignment would suggest solidarity by nature. Therefore, this study explores the following hypothesis:
Hypothesis 2: A significant positive relationship is expected between perceptions of inclusion in the organization’s diversity mission and leader diversity practices.

Leadership Communication

While role-modeling behaviors seem to be an important factor in creating transformational effects on followers, Shamir and colleagues’ (1993) second behavior explaining the motivational processes of this leadership theory may be just as important. Communication remains a consistent staple in the actions of a leader hoping to articulate a vision. In addition, communication seems to be acknowledged as largely important to creating a more effective diverse and inclusive workplace. Sessa (1992) spoke on leadership’s role in facilitating such an environment by implementing new policies and facilitating information flow at all levels of the organization. Furthermore, research suggests effective leadership of diverse groups involves an emphasis on communicating expectations from employees, particularly through mentoring relationships (Eden, 1990; Bowen, Bok, & Burkhart, 1999).

Building on a mentoring perspective, the LMX literature gives recognition to the importance of communication streams in fostering the high LMX relationships which often create the most commitment among followers. Research has suggested that the immediate manager often serves as an immediate manifestation of “the organization” to employees, and thus better relationships with such leadership may cause employees to feel more included in the overarching organizational mission (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004; Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). The strength of these relationships is certainly reflective of communication levels between leader and followers, and the literature has supported this both in regards to frequency (Baker & Ganster, 1985; Schiemann & Graen, 1984) and interactive patterns (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989;
Fairhurst, 1993). Naturally, increases of quality and quantity of communication between leader and follower have generally shown to produce high LMX relationships, and these have been shown to be associated with higher organizational commitment.

It should be no surprise that any success of charismatic/transformational leadership lies in a leader’s ability to communicate his/her vision. Indeed, many of the transformational effects on followers could not simply be fostered through role-modeling alone. For instance, followers’ effort-accomplishment expectancies are often increased by charismatic leaders. This occurs by expressing high expectations and demonstrating confidence in the followers’ ability to achieve these standards (Yukl, 1989, Eden 1990). This can result in increased self-efficacy for followers, and subsequent increased motivation (Bandura 1986, p. 351). Supplementing the communicative importance of setting expectations of followers, successful charismatic leaders will articulate an organizational mission by framing immediate goals in terms of the values they represent (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Further, these goals must be communicated to be consistent with the collective past and future, which deemphasizes change and instead frame a new vision into an evolution of past values. This helps follower adjustment to the collective mission by maintaining self-consistency and meaningfulness (McHugh, 1968). Although employees may inherently be attached to individual goals, charismatic/transformational leadership has been theorized to shift the focus of followers to a more collective goal reflective of the overarching organizational mission. It seems safe to say that an effective communication pattern between leaders and followers is a crucial precursor to many of the processes facilitating shift.

Communication will always be an important tool for leadership in attaining influence over followers. In this study’s context of diversity management, research has emphasized this point as well. Furthermore, LMX theory, which explores relationship patterns of leaders and
followers to predict increased employee commitment, has revealed communication quality and quantity to be an important determinant of the strength of such relationships. Finally, charismatic/transformational leadership is heavily reliant on effective communication streams between leader and followers to facilitate the alignment of values towards a collective mission. Consistently, several areas of research seem to suggest the importance of communication towards aligning followers’ commitment to a more overarching, collective goal. Often, this seems to manifest through setting expectations of followers which may create a more collective focus on the overarching mission. This study suggests that communication quality between leader and follower may have an impact on followers’ perceived inclusion. Once again, abandoning lower-level individual concerns for a collective organizational goal would most likely come with an increased sense of inclusion in such a mission. Thus, this study suggests communication may foster perceived inclusion in a mission actively advocating diversity.

Hypothesis 3: A significant positive relationship is expected between perceptions of inclusion in the organization’s diversity mission and perceived communication between leader and employee.

Leadership Diversity Values

While this study addresses the importance of leaders’ behavior modeling and communication strength, it is important to note that such approaches do not happen in a vacuum. Specifically, while leaders may go through the motions of communicating and modeling a particular vision, the true commitment to that vision may have an impact on to what extent those actions result in follower alignment. The vision itself is critical, as it is often how management shapes a system that turns articulated goals of diversity into realities (Oshry, 1995). Simply put,
leadership’s sincere commitment to diversity values may translate to more effective transformational processes via role modeling and communication.

*Direct Impact of Leadership Values*

Research suggests the importance of leadership’s commitment to diversity. For instance, in Wheeler’s (2001) diversity metrics, two specific points were encouraging leaders to be committed to diversity, as well as creating an environment which embraces diversity and inclusion. Offerman and Phan (2002) endorse training and selecting for cross-cultural leadership, which they define as “the ability to engage in the mental processes and adaptive behaviors needed to function effectively as a leader in collective environments in which there is a diverse followership.” Other researchers concur that the primary aim of leadership development in modern organizations should be cross-cultural competencies. This will lead to a new generation of professionals who value and understand multicultural workplaces (Thomas, 1998; Kahn, 1999; Yukl, 2002; Shelton, et al., 2002). The drawbacks of failing to breed this new style of leadership may result in several layers of disconnect between leaders and diverse employees. Indeed, a leader’s lens in which they perceive their subordinates has an impact on how they interact with such employees. For instance, research has shown leaders make attributions regarding their subordinates’ performance, and such attributions impact how a leader treats these employees. If an underdeveloped cultural lens results in false attributions, this can have severe consequences in management toward diversity (Offermann, Schroyer, & Green 1998). Building on similar logic, low expectations harbored by leaders toward employees of color may result in discrepancies of support given, which thus fulfills the prophecy and can result in lower performance of minority groups (Eden 1990). Finally, Offerman and Hellman (1997) demonstrate that leaders’ cultural values can actually relate to how employees perceive their
manager’s leadership style. Such importance in facilitating an effective diverse environment, as well as conveying a sincere leadership commitment to diversity, should demonstrate the importance of leadership values towards diversity.

**Departmental Impact of Leadership Values**

Within large organizational settings, it is unlikely that followers would only be influenced with their direct supervisor. Many other leaders across varying degrees of proximity may have an impact on employees directly or distally. For instance, Griffin and Mathieu (1997) note how the perceptions of individuals at different levels of organizations may influence each other. Complex organizations have been found to involve influence processes across multiple subsystems down hierarchical levels (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Likert, 1967). Furthermore, Daft and Weick (1984) considered the coordination and interpretation of information by leaders as critical. This suggests that collective leadership values within a group, even if representing assorted hierarchical levels, may provide a more thorough insight into the impact of leadership on subordinates than just the immediate supervisor. Furthermore, this implies that immediate supervisors, or rather any leadership figure in a group, may be influenced by perceptions of other levels’ values. Franklin’s series of studies (1975a,b) supported this idea that influence can travel down organizational hierarchy. Considering the importance of diversity values on the defining of an overall organizational mission, and the impact of hierarchical leadership structures on group perceptions, an overall measure of diversity leadership within departments will be of significance in this study. Furthermore, these lines of research seem to suggest that the transformational effects of communication and role modeling may be amplified by values of diversity adopted by group leaders. Thus, this study suggests the following hypotheses:
Hypothesis 4a: Diversity values of departmental leadership moderates the relationship between leader diversity practices and employee perceptions of inclusion such that higher values will yield a stronger relationship amongst inclusion and diversity practices.

Hypothesis 4b: Diversity values of departmental leadership moderates the relationship between perceived communication between leader and employee and employee perceptions of inclusion such that higher values will yield a stronger relationship amongst inclusion and communication.

Inclusion and Engagement

As the focal variable in this study, perceived inclusion is likely to be an influential construct. That is, researchers and practitioners alike should value employee perceptions of inclusion because inclusive workplaces have been found to be associated with perceptions of job security, access to information, and a greater influence in decision making (Pelled et al., 1999). In order to further suggest the importance of this study, a post-hoc research question was posed concerning the relationship between inclusion, as defined in this study, and the more widely-considered attitudinal construct of employee engagement. If findings suggest that perceived inclusion varies according to our proposed leader behaviors, then establishing a link between this perceived inclusion and feelings of engagement may further signify the organizational impact of such charismatic leadership. First, we will consider the importance of employee engagement as a secondary criterion of interest.

Macey and Schneider (2008) defined both state and trait engagement. Specifically, they found that state engagement signifies positive affectivity associated with the work setting and
job. This tends to indicate a wide array of positive feelings such as pride, dedication, energy, vigor, alertness, and persistence. Trait engagement signifies a number of interrelated personality facets, such as positive affectivity and conscientiousness. Both conceptualizations of engagement suggest that employees who feel engaged will be more inclined to approach their work more actively, positively, and with high levels of energy. These employees will tend to go above and beyond expectations toward organizationally relevant outcomes (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Supplementing these claims, research has demonstrated that employee engagement predicts important outcomes such as organizational success and financial performance (e.g. Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006). Finally, understanding employee engagement is more important than ever, as somewhat recent reports have identified an increasingly disengaged workforce, ultimately costing US businesses $300 billion annually in lost productivity (Richman, 2006; Bates, 2004; Johnson, 2004: Kowalski, 2003).

A quick glance at the existing literature concerning both inclusion and engagement would suggest a relationship may exist between the two constructs. For instance, employee engagement research outlines several relevant antecedents. Maslach and colleagues (2001) outlined six areas of work-life which may predict engagement, including control, recognition, community and social support, perceived fairness, values, and workload. Perhaps associated with inclusion, these authors specifically recognize appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, and fairness in the workplace as predictors of engagement. As mentioned previously, perceived inclusion is associated with a sense of influence and control in the workplace (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998), which may signify recognition and social support. Furthermore, in the context of a dominant group’s interaction in multicultural systems, perceptions of inclusion in this system may represent a sufficient sense of fairness. This may be
opposed to perceiving such systems as only benefiting members of minority groups, while failing to recognize dominant group members. In addition, Saks (2006) found that perceived organizational support (POS) predicted job and organizational engagement. Being included in organizational systems by an employer would likely be seen as support from one’s organization. Thus, this study poses the following supplementary research question:

**Research Question 1:** What relationship, if any, exists between perceived inclusion in the organization’s diversity mission and employee engagement?

**Contribution to the Literature**

From a practical perspective, examining dominant group inclusion in the workplace, as well as leadership behaviors which may enhance these perceptions, is a timely and important approach to the diversity literature. As organizations increasingly adopt multicultural models of diversity and inclusion, the initiatives within such models will become increasingly mainstream. Already, over 75% of Fortune 1000 companies had adopted diversity initiatives by 2001 (Daniels, 2001). Such policies including affinity groups, affirmative action hiring and advancement, and ongoing diversity training (Cox, 1993; Morrison, 1992), may serve as increasingly salient to a growing resistance from the shrinking majority (White, male, straight) workforce. The perceived threat of these more deliberate organizational endeavors will only be supplemented by what these majority groups will see in a distinctly changing makeup of coworkers. Simply put, straight White males who were once accustomed to a largely homogenous and similar group of coworkers will be increasingly working with, placed in teams with, and even supervised by, a growing assortment of minority group members. Addressing perceived exclusion by dominant group members in these systems with shifting coworker
demographics may help mitigate detrimental resistance behaviors. This study also aims to demonstrate an association between perceived inclusion in these systems and employee engagement, a state of productivity highly desired by organizations (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

In addition to the obvious desires to produce harmony among employees of all groups in multicultural organizations, research shows that disharmony may prove costly for organizations. Increasingly proactive multicultural models that organizations adopt may naturally incur additional costs, as opposed to previous “color-blind” models, which approached diversity from a more laissez-faire perspective. Research and legal mandates show clear support for these investments (SHRM, 2001; Diversity Inc., 2002, Thomas, Mack, & Montagliani 2004), but this should highlight the importance of creating an environment that ensures the greatest chance for success for such practices. If perceived exclusion by dominant groups, as well as potential subsequent resistance, may result in these practices being less effective, organizations are losing out. Additionally, resistance to diversity and inclusion initiatives should be addressed because it may result in costly legal action (Thomas et al., 2004). Discrimination rates in organizations are on the rise (Wooten & James, 2004), and even successfully defending EEOC lawsuit incurs massive legal fees, while losing makes matters quite worse (“what is this going to cost me?” 2002). This study addresses factors toward creating a sense of inclusion for all employees, which should be a business imperative.

This study addresses several voids existing in the literature as well. For instance, findings should contribute to our understanding of leadership’s role in mitigating perceived exclusion, and perhaps resistance to diversity. Although there is existing literature addressing the importance of leadership in diversity management, this is typically in the context of what leadership can do to manage their diverse employees, or perhaps foster an environment which
effectively includes and taps into the full potential of these groups (e.g. Offerman & Phan, 2002; Thomas, 1998; Kahn, 1999; Yukl, 2002; Shelton, et al., 2002). Far less research has considered the impact these approaches will have on the still-dominant group, as well as the importance of understanding this piece of the puzzle. In addition, there is some existing research in the change management literature which explores leadership’s role in mitigating employee resistance to change (e.g. Krishnan, 2004; Furst & Cable, 2008). While perhaps more relevant to this study, this research still does not specifically address diversity and inclusion models as this organizational change, nor do the samples in such research often reflect a majority group focus (Johnston & Packer, 1987; Thomas, 2005). This study would add to an increasingly important demographic (straight, Whites) in the diversity and inclusion research context. In addition, it can also expand on research examining diversity initiatives as examples of organizational change. Finally, results of this study could expand the scope of the transformational leadership literature, which often does not explore this theory’s effectiveness in the context of managing diversity (e.g. Kearny & Gebert, 2009).
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Participants

A large Southeastern University created a voluntary survey for a large Midwestern healthcare organization. Participants’ responses were kept anonymous and findings from the survey were only reported in group aggregates to the organization. This particular organization is especially relevant to this study, as it has adopted many practices and policies indicative of a multicultural diversity and inclusion model. Such practices include affinity groups, multicultural celebrations, and ongoing diversity training. While the survey was extended to roughly ten thousand employees, four-thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight responses were provided, yielding a response rate of about 49%. Of those employees, the sample included 20.3% male, 79.6% female, and 0.2% transgender. Conducive to this study, 79.2% of the sample identified as White, while a variety of other racial and ethnic groups was also represented. For instance, respondents also identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.6%), Asian American, Asian, or East Indian (2.7%), Black or African-American (13%), Hispanic of Latino (1.1%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (0.1%), Multiracial (1.4%), and other (1.9%). In regards to sexual orientation, the vast majority of participants identified as straight (94.9%), while 2.9% identified as gay or lesbian, 1.2% as bisexual, and 1.1% as other. Pay differential was split fairly evenly between hourly (51.1%) and salaried (48.9%) respondents.

There was some variability in age range of employees, with the largest group identifying between 42 and 60 (45.5%), and other age groups including 18-30 (21.6%), 31-41 (29.8%), and
older than 60 (3.1%). Job tenure among respondents also demonstrated a wide range, with 17.1% working less than a year, 17.7% working 1-2 years, 22% working 3-5 years, 19.5% working 6-10 years, 13.9% working 11-20 years, and 9.8% working more than 20 years. A multitude of departments were represented from the sample, including accounting, surgical services, legal, patient services, information systems, education and training, and pastoral care, to name a few. In total, over eighteen departments were represented.

To test most of the hypotheses and research question, a subsample will be taken to specifically measure the employees of the dominant group within the sample, which I define as White (79.2% of the larger sample). In doing this, the total sample for this study will be one-thousand four hundred eighty-four participants. Of this subsample, 86.2% identify as female, with 13.1% identifying as male, and the remaining 0.1% identifying as transgender. In addition, 1.1% of the subsample identify as bisexual, 3% identify as Gay or Lesbian, the vast majority, 94.6% identify as Heterosexual, and the remaining 0.2% identify as Other. This subsample also has a range of ages represented, with 26.5% identifying as 18-30 years old, 27% identifying as 31-41 years old, 43.4% identifying as 42-60 years old, and 2.5% identifying as over 60 years old. Unlike the total sample, the subsample has more hourly (55%) than salaried (44.7%) workers. Finally, tenure ranged fairly evenly among this subsample. 17.9% identify as employed for less than a year, 18.2% for 1-2 years, 23.5% for 3-5 years, 17.3% for 6-10 years, 12.4% for 11-20 years, and 10.5% for over twenty years at this organization.

To capture diversity values, as identified by leadership in the organization, an additional subsample was created of only those who identified as being in a position of leadership. Specifically, this item of the survey read “A leadership position is defined as one that manages a department or division, makes budget decisions, or supervises other people including hiring,
developing work schedules or evaluating performance.” When aggregating leadership diversity value ratings within departments, we included such departments only when they met sufficient interrater agreement. According to the recommendations by Lindell, Brandt, and Whitney (1999), using $r^*wg(J)$ with a statistical control for sample size serves as the optimal measure of agreement in cases involving multiple raters rating a single target on multiple items, such as our diversity values measure. Although the generally agreed upon cutoff for interrater agreement is 0.70, Lance and colleagues (2006) suggest that the origin of this level is not derived from any statistically meaningful source. Therefore, to maximize our sample of departments, and thus our overall sample size, we chose a $r^*wg(J)$ cutoff of .65, which still signifies a strong level of rater agreement. According to additional recommendations from Lindell and colleagues (1999), departments with extremely small leader sample sizes (N<4) were omitted as well. Considering these criteria, while simultaneously maintaining sufficient alpha levels for the departmental value measure, we were left with a final group-level sample of leaders spanning 10 departments.

This leadership subsample consisted of five hundred and nine participants, and the gender distribution included 61.5% female, 37% male, 1 transgender leader, and the remaining 1.3% without a gender response. In regards to sexual orientation, this subsample included a large majority of heterosexual leaders (92.3%), and less who identify as Gay or Lesbian (3.3%), Bisexual (1.4%), and those identifying as “others” (1.8%). A large majority (85.1%) of leaders identified as White, while the remaining participants of the subsample claimed smaller percentages of Black or African American (6.9%), Asian American, Asian or East Indian (2.8%), Hispanic or Latino (1.2%), Multiracial (0.6%), American Indian or Alaska Native (1.2%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (0.6%), or “Other”/unresponsive (1.8%). These leaders varied quite a bit in how long they have worked at the organization, with 5.9% employed for less than a
year, 11.2% employed for 1-2 years, 18.1% employed for 3-5 years, 24.4% employed for 6-10 years, 23.6% employed for 11-20 years, and 16.1% employed for over 20 years. Finally, the leader subsample also consisted of a range of ages, spanning across 18-30 years (8.1%), 31-41 years (27.5%), 42-60 years (58.9%), and older than 60 (4.7%). Demographic information for the overall sample and sub-samples is reported in Table 1.

**Procedure**

The seventy-four item survey was issued online to respondents, and their participation was voluntary. The purpose of the survey was to assess the diversity climate of this healthcare organization, and it was developed through both structured interviews of program leaders, employees, and established theory in climate assessment literature. Both management practices and diversity practices were covered in the survey. Specifically, management practices include topics such as fairness, communication, and employee treatment. Diversity practices cover areas such as inclusion, leadership for diversity, and diversity practices. Survey design allotted for roughly 15-20 minutes for completion.

**Measures**

All individual items within the diversity climate assessment are measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Due to minimal instances of missing data, responses which were left blank by participants were simply not included in measure aggregations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Demographic Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sample</strong> &amp; <strong>Employees</strong> &amp; <strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender &amp; 79.6% Female &amp; 83% Female &amp; 61.5% Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 20.3% Male &amp; 16.1% Male &amp; 37% Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 0.2% Transgender &amp; 0.1% Transgender &amp; .001% Transgender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (Years) &amp; 21.6% (18-30) &amp; 24.7% (18-30) &amp; 8.1% (18-30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 29.8% (31-41) &amp; 28.1% (31-41) &amp; 27.5% (31-41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 45.5% (42-60) &amp; 43.6% (42-60) &amp; 58.9% (42-60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 3.1% (60+) &amp; 2.9% (60+) &amp; 4.7% (60+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure (Years) &amp; 17.1% (&lt; 1) &amp; 18% (&lt; 1) &amp; 5.9% (&lt; 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 17.7% (1-2) &amp; 18.1% (1-2) &amp; 11.2% (1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 22% (3-5) &amp; 22.6% (3-5) &amp; 18.1% (3-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 19.5% (6-10) &amp; 18.1% (6-10) &amp; 24.4% (6-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 13.9% (11-20) &amp; 13.2% (11-20) &amp; 23.6% (11-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 9.8% (20+) &amp; 9.6% (20+) &amp; 16.1% (20+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race &amp; 20.8% Minority &amp; N/A – Minority &amp; 14.9% Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 79.2% White &amp; 100% White* &amp; 85.1% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation &amp; 1.2% Bisexual &amp; 1.1% Bisexual &amp; 1.4% Bisexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 2.9% Gay or Lesbian &amp; 2.5% Gay or Lesbian &amp; 3.3% Gay or Lesbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 94.9% Straight &amp; 94.8% Straight &amp; 92.3% Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 1.1% Other &amp; 0.4% Other &amp; 1.8% Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Differential &amp; 51.1% Hourly &amp; 56.8% Hourly &amp; N/A Hourly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 48.9% Salaried &amp; 42.9% Salaried &amp; N/A Salaried</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Employee sample was only dominant group employees, or White employees for this study.
Diversity Values

Diversity values are measured as employees’ values and goals for diversity as they reflect recruitment and organizational policies. This assessment measured this theme with four items (α = .712) such as “[Organization] is a multicultural institution” and “Organizational policies should support racial and ethnic diversity.” This study examined responses to this measure by the “leadership” in each department, as described above.

Leader Diversity Behaviors

Leader diversity behaviors consisted of items from the diversity practices measure. Specifically, this addressed the extent to which diversity is a priority for leadership and leadership is comfortable with addressing diversity concerns/issues. The measure for this study focused on leader behaviors, and thus included three items (α = .81) such as “leadership is comfortable addressing diversity issues/concerns” and “diversity is a priority for leadership.” This study examined responses to this measure by subordinates in order to capture their perspectives of their superior’s diversity behaviors.

Communication with Supervisor

These items dealt with the extent to which communication and feedback between employees and supervisors are honest, open, and timely. The measure for this study selected items which specifically addressed communication between supervisors and their subordinates, which totaled three items (α = .91). These included items such as “I am provided the feedback I need to effectively do my job” and “My supervisor communicates the performance expectations for my position.” This study examined responses to this measure by subordinates in order to capture their perspectives of superior-subordinate communication quality.
**Inclusion**

The inclusion measure consisted of eight items ($\alpha = .84$) which focused on the extent to which diverse groups have an equal opportunity for voice, participation, and influence (Roberson, 2006). Items included statements such as “I believe that I play an important role in helping to shape the policies, procedures, and practices of [organization]” and “My co-workers show their appreciation for the contributions I make to our department.” This study examined responses to this measure by subordinates in order to gauge their feelings of inclusion as the majority group in an organization.

**Engagement**

The engagement measure consisted of five items ($\alpha = .83$) and measured the extent to which employees believe in and are proud of the goals and objectives of the organization, as well as feel that they are willing to go beyond what is expected for the organization to be successful. Items included “doing well in my job tasks and duties is very important to me” and “I am proud to tell others that I work at [Organization].”

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

To test the fit of our proposed measures, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted for each scale, as measured by their respective sub-samples utilized in this study. First, it should be noted that no scale utilized in this study contained fatal flaws such as negative factor loadings. Furthermore, each scale demonstrated some statistical evidence of good, if not ideal, fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For instance, our four-item Diversity Values scale demonstrated a good fit to our data, $\chi^2(\text{N}=509) = 9.57^*\ast$, TLI = .945, CFI = .982, RMSEA = .086, SRMSR = .024. Our eight-item Inclusion scale also suggested a decent fit, $\chi^2(\text{N}=1484) = 597.287^{***}$, TLI = .90, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .092, SRMSR = .05. Unfortunately, our five-item Engagement scale demonstrated
some signs of poor fit, $\chi^2 (N=1484) = 667.738^{***}$, TLI = .61, CFI = .81, RMSEA = .299, SRMSR = .078, but factor loadings for each item were still moderately strong. Finally, the three-item measures of diversity practices and communication were both just-identified models with perfect fit, due to their low item numbers. To account for this, all items were then included for each scale, and factor loadings proved to be especially strong for the items proposed by this study’s measures. Although somewhat mixed results in some cases, overall CFA results suggest the proposed measures to be of sufficient fit.

**Analyses**

All analyses were computed using SPSS Statistics 19. Descriptive statistics of all model variables were reported according to their respective sub-samples by which they were measured. In addition, correlations of these same variables were computed to explore their interrelatedness. To test the first hypothesis, a simple t-test was utilized to examine if a significant difference exists between feelings of inclusion of the minority (coded as 0) and majority (coded as 1) groups. The remaining hypotheses were tested with multiple regression and moderated regression, according to established recommendations in the literature (e.g. Aguinis et al., 2005; Aiken & West, 1991, Lautenschlager & Mendoza, 1986). To test the second and third hypotheses, employee perceptions of inclusion in the organization’s diversity mission were regressed onto both perceptions of supervisor diversity practices, as well as perceptions of communication strength with supervisor. Before testing the fourth hypotheses, the aforementioned continuous predictor variables, as well as the departmental leadership value moderator variable, were centered by subtracting their means. This helps to reduce collinearity, and can also provide more meaningful values for interpretation, depending on the variables being measured. Then, product terms were computed by multiplying the centered department value
variable by centered diversity practices and communication variables, respectively. Using these
terms, hierarchical moderated regression was used to test for the presence of significant
interaction effects. For Hypothesis 4a, a first model was tested by regressing the inclusion
variable on the two centered predictors, diversity practices and communication, as well as the
centered leadership diversity values. Next, a second model was tested by adding the interaction
term of diversity practices and leadership diversity values as a predictor to the first model. The
beta values and significance levels for each variable were reported, as well as the overall $R^2$
change and $F$ values for the second model. Similarly, Hypotheses 4b was tested in an identical
fashion, except the interaction term of communication and leadership diversity values was added
as the additional predictor in the second model. Once again, we reported beta values and
significance levels for each dependent variable and interaction term, as well as any $R^2$ change
and $F$ values indicated by the second model. Additionally, any significant interaction terms’
slopes were tested for significant differences from zero. To address Research Question 1, the
aforementioned correlation tables were consulted to examine the relationship between the
study’s inclusion measure and employee engagement.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations for employees are presented in Table 2 for each measure, according to the corresponding sub-sample of employees who responded. Specifically, to illustrate responses between dominant and minority groups in the inclusion measure (Hypothesis 1), these figures will be reported according to the entire sample of participants. For responses pertaining to measures considered in Hypotheses 2, 3, 4a, 4b, and Research Question 1, these statistics will be reported for the employee subsample. Also displayed is the leadership subsample’s response data for diversity values. In addition, intercorrelations among predictor, cross-product and criterion variables were computed and appear in Table 3.

T-Test Results

This study’s first hypothesis proposed that perceptions of inclusion in the organization’s diversity message would be higher for minority, as opposed to dominant group, employees. Results are reported in Table 4, and although these groups’ means were similar, t-values suggested that the dominant group (M = 3.62, SD = .649) actually felt slightly more included than the minority group (M = 3.55, SD = .729); t(3709)= -2.637, p= .008. Thus, the first hypothesis was rejected, and actually was found to be in the opposite direction than expected.

Multiple Regression & Moderated Regression Results

For the next few hypotheses, multiple regression was utilized to test if specific leadership behaviors of diversity role modeling and effective communication significantly predicted
dominant group feelings of inclusion. Table 5 demonstrates that diversity role modeling significantly predicted inclusion ($\beta = .425, p<.001$), as well as strong communication between

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Constructs and Corresponding Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whites (Dominant Group)</th>
<th>Minority Group</th>
<th>Combined Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Practices*</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication*</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader Sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Values</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.586</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * signifies measures taken by employees about their direct supervisor. Ratings indicated perceptions of supervisor diversity practices and communication strength, respectively.

supervisor and employee ($\beta = .377, p<.001$). This regression model with the stated predictors accounted for 44.3% of the variance in dominant group perceived inclusion. These findings indicate that Hypotheses 2 and 3 were supported.

To test Hypotheses 4a and 4b, or the impact of the departmental leadership diversity values on these predictors’ relationships with inclusion, moderated regression was used by adding moderator and interaction terms to the model used to test Hypotheses 2 and 3.
Table 3. Intercorrelations among Predictor, Cross-Product and Criterion Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Diversity Practices</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.376**</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.566**</td>
<td>.339**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Communication</td>
<td>.376**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.538**</td>
<td>.297**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Diversity Values</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>-.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inclusion</td>
<td>.566**</td>
<td>.538**</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.436**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Engagement</td>
<td>.339**</td>
<td>.297**</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.436**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05.  ** p < .01.

Table 4. t-test Results Comparing Minority and Dominant Group Employees on Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td>-2.637</td>
<td>3709</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>2990</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Minority Group = 0. Dominant Group = 1.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients from Multiple Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diversity Practice</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>20.13</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: DV = Inclusion.  N = 1484

In the first model, the leader behaviors of diversity role modeling (β = .425, p < .001) and communication (β = .378, p < .001) still significantly predicted inclusion. However, when including the moderator term leadership diversity practices within department, this predictor was found to be non-significant (β = .021, p = .281, ns). Two sets of second models were then tested.
to represent Hypothesis 4a and 4b, respectively. For Hypothesis 4a, the second model tested included the aforementioned three predictors, as well as an additional interaction term of diversity role modeling and leadership diversity values. With this addition, minor changes occurred among the other predictors, and the interaction term itself was found to be non-significant ($\beta = -.023, p = .244, \text{ns}$). Considering this finding, Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

An alternative second model was tested to explore Hypothesis 4b, this time including an interaction term of communication and leadership diversity values. This interaction term was found to be significant ($\beta = -.046, p<.05$) with an overall $R^2$ improvement to the model by roughly .002 ($R^2 = .446$). Similar to Hypothesis 4a, Hypothesis 4b was not supported, but still reflected a significant finding in an opposite direction than was expected. Results from these moderated regressions are presented in Table 6 and Table 7. Because a significant interaction was found, predictor slopes were generated with high and low values of the moderator, and these slopes were tested to ensure significant differences from zero. Results indicate that both high ($b = .347, t(1478) = 15.8, p = .000$) and low ($b = .404, t(1478) = 18.779, p = .000$) values yielded slopes significantly different from zero. A graphic display of the slopes indicated by this interaction is shown in Figure 1.

Table 6 Regression Coefficients from Hierarchical Moderated Regression (Practices X Values)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$R^2(\Delta R^2)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diversity Practice</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>20.13</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Div. Value</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>1.078</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diversity Practice</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.428</td>
<td>20.13</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td>17.87</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Div. Value</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice X Value</td>
<td>-.252</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>-1.17</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: DV = Inclusion. N = 1484
Table 7 Regression Coefficients from Hierarchical Moderated Regression (Com X Values)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>R²(ΔR²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diversity Practice</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>20.13</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Div. Value</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>1.078</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diversity Practice</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>20.20</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.380</td>
<td>17.99</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader Div. Value</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Com X Value</td>
<td>-.442</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>-2.36</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: DV = Inclusion. N = 1484

Figure 1: Communication Predicting Inclusion by Departmental Leadership Value

Research Question Results

Finally, Research Question 1 was included to explore the relationship between our measure of perceived inclusion in the organization’s diversity mission and employee engagement. Our correlation table indicates that the two constructs are significantly, positively related (r = .436, r² = .19, p < .01). Thus, the logic preceding Research Question 1 seems
supported in that dominant group employees who feel more included in the diversity mission will likely feel more engaged.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The present study explored potential leadership behaviors which may help dominant group employees feel more included in a multicultural organization’s diversity mission. Furthermore, this study examined a departmental contextual factor of the leadership’s diversity values, and the extent to which this impacted the effectiveness of the leader behaviors. Little existing research seems to consider the role of the dominant group in organizations as a relevant factor in determining a successful fostering of diversity (e.g. Offerman & Phan, 2002; Thomas, 1998; Kahn, 1999; Yukl, 2002; Shelton, et al., 2002). However, this study serves to recognize the importance of dominant group feelings toward multicultural systems in organizations, as these feelings may breed resistance behaviors, both overt and subtle (Thomas & Plaut, 2008). Such behaviors are likely to have an impact on the success of such systems as a whole, and this can prove costly for organizations, as well as harmful toward the ultimate goal of a fair and harmonious workplace for all (Thomas, Mack, & Montagliani 2004).

Multicultural systems typically highlight group differences and may in turn fail to recognize dominant groups to the same extent as minority groups (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), or even overlook this demographic entirely. This recognition can come with perceived favoring and advantages. Thus, perceived exclusion is a likely issue among White employees in firms which espouse a particularly strong diversity message (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The present study utilized a large sample of participants from such an organization. Specifically, this study examined to what extent the diversity role modeling and strong communication behaviors of
leaders could mitigate such feelings of exclusion among majority group members. If these behaviors, typical of charismatic leadership approaches, can serve to create alignment among White employees toward the organization’s mission of diversity, it is likely they will feel more included in such a mission.

The findings of this study proved to be interesting, with some hypotheses supported, but most rejected, and found to be significant in the opposite direction than expected. For instance, research identifying multicultural systems in organizations largely frames these sets of policies in the diversity context, which often highlights minority groups’ more so than Whites (Plaut et al., 2001). Furthermore, research exploring reactions to multicultural systems has found that such support may largely be related to the extent to which employees feel included by the system (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Plaut and colleagues (2011) even demonstrated through several studies that Whites associate multiculturalism with more exclusion than minorities. Following this line of reasoning, it’s a bit surprising to find that dominant group employees actually felt slightly (yet significantly) more included in the organization’s diversity mission than minority employees. This finding revealed an opposite direction than what was expected by Hypothesis 1.

One explanation which may account for this finding is that a strong majority of employees in the sample’s organization are women (79.6%). Because women are not traditionally seen as a dominant majority in an organization, the study’s focus on a dominant group was simply classified as all White employees. However, if this particular organization’s multicultural model makes an effort to highlight gender in its policies, this may explain a surprisingly high perception of inclusion in a diversity message, even amongst our “dominant group.” Simply put, if White women feel included in the diversity policies because of their identity as women, as opposed to as Whites, this finding may be somewhat misleading of how
White men, in particular, feel in other multicultural organizations which have predominantly male employees.

It’s also important to note that both minority and dominant group average ratings of inclusion fell below the “4” rating (Minority M = 3.55, White M = 3.62), which indicates that both groups, on average, failed to agree that they felt included in the organization’s diversity mission. Although the dominant group, on average, felt more included than the minority group, the subsequent hypotheses of the study are certainly still relevant. Specifically, outside of a minority group reference point, the dominant group still failed to agree that they were included in the organization’s diversity mission. Ultimately, this study should highlight the fact that both dominant and minority groups may not feel included to some extent, even in organizations with multicultural policies.

The most encouraging findings of this study were demonstrated by Hypotheses 2 and 3. Following our logic regarding the impact of charismatic leadership behaviors on employees’ commitment to an overarching mission, both diversity leadership behaviors (role modeling) and strong communication were found to significantly predict higher perceptions of inclusion. This is an exciting finding because it may indicate dominant group inclusion can still be fostered in multicultural systems. Specifically, leaders may be able to build alignment toward these overarching diversity missions among White employees, which in turn can allow them to feel included in the goals. As Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) highlighted, it appears especially important that supervisors create this buy-in by role modeling behaviors relating to the diversity mission, as well as communicating clear expectations of the mission for employees to follow. Both of these behaviors predicted inclusion among dominant group members in this study.
This study also recognized that such behaviors between employees and supervisors do not occur in a vacuum (e.g. Griffin & Matthieu, 1997). We hoped to explore the extent to which leadership in a department values diversity, and how these departmental values impact the relationships between our leadership behaviors and perceived inclusion. It seemed likely that considering the goal of creating alignment among dominant group employees, this commitment will be greater when leadership within their respective department truly values diversity. Diversity management literature seems to reinforce this logic, as it is often encouraged that leaders are selected or trained to strongly value diversity and inclusion in the workplace (e.g. Offerman & Phan, 2002).

Our findings were mixed regarding the moderating effects of departmental leadership diversity values. For instance, we found no impact of leadership values on the relationship between leader diversity practices and inclusion. However, we did find a significant effect of these diversity values on the relationship between communication and inclusion. Although we expected a significant interaction, this particular result to Hypothesis 4b ran counter to our predicted positive direction. Rather, as diversity values are higher in a department, it appears the positive relationship between supervisor-employee communication strength and inclusion grows weaker. This indicates that in departments where diversity is heavily valued by leadership, the strong communication streams between dominant group employees and their supervisors are less likely to increase perceptions of inclusion among these employees. There are a few explanations that could account for this surprising finding.

In some ways, this finding may reinforce our overarching premise, that highly diversity-salient environments may prove threatening to employees of the dominant group. If a strong presence of multiculturalism is communicated, and these systems inherently seem exclusive of
Whites, it is likely that dominant group employees will feel increasingly less included. This explanation of an “overkill threshold” may suggest that when supervisors manage employees in departments which strongly value diversity, extra caution could be necessary when communicating the expectations of such a mission. These supervisors should realize that a highly diversity-focused environment may make for more guarded population of dominant group employees, due to excessive pressure to embrace diversity. For instance, the interaction effect from Hypothesis 4a, although not significant, showed the same directional force as the significant interaction we found with communication strength. Conversely, when diversity values are lower in a White employee’s department, they may simply feel less threatened or anxious overall, and thus more easily be persuaded by leadership influence behaviors advocating the diversity mission.

An additional important caveat of this finding rests in the change in R² of the second model. Simply put, although the impact of leadership’s diversity values was statistically significant on the relationship between communication and perceived inclusion, the value it added in explaining perceived inclusion overall was miniscule. In general, our study suggests that the extent to which leadership in a department values diversity is either statistically insignificant, or practically insignificant, at best. Once again, it would be interesting to test if the small significant impact we see here proves larger among a dominant group of employees more reflective of the American workforce. Specifically, if the dominant group measured was not only all White, but also of a male majority, would the departmental leadership’s diversity values have an even stronger effect on these relationships in the same direction?

Finally, this study demonstrated through existing literature that inclusion, particularly in the context in which we are framing, would likely be related to engagement (e.g. Maslach et al.,
2001). Specifically, both a sense of inclusion in a multicultural system, as well as employee engagement, seems to be preceded by perceived fairness and support for the organization. Our Research Question results showed that inclusion and engagement were positively related, and thus we can determine that as dominant group employees feel more included in the organizational diversity mission, they will tend to be more engaged in their work. This supplementary finding further emphasizes the importance of ensuring all employees feel included in the workplace, particularly when an organization has become strongly committed to multicultural policies. To allow any group of employees to feel excluded by such a mission will likely lead to disengagement and its many negative outcomes.

**Future Directions and Limitations**

This study marks an important and timely consideration of an often overlooked piece of the diversity puzzle. Although the reactions of dominant group members have been considered in diversity research, little has tested what behaviors may result, and very few studies explore what can be done to redirect these views. The results of this study should encourage future research to continue exploring dominant group samples, as they will likely have unique and impactful reactions to the increasingly popular multicultural systems adopted by organizations.

A limitation of this study may be the sample utilized. Although the organization itself was ideal in that it is an organization with many multicultural systems and policies in place, the employees are overwhelmingly female. This may not serve as the most generalizable sample in non-healthcare settings, particularly in a study examining attitudes of exclusion toward a diversity-related mission. For instance, it’s likely that some aspects of this multicultural system in which the participants work are recognizing women as a protected group. If this is the case, a large percentage of our sample may inherently feel included in this message, even though they
are also White. Future research should test these relationships on a sample of employees that is more decisively “dominant.” Many organizations are still largely White and male, and exploring these firms may reveal stronger trends than we see here.

In addition to gender-related issues with the sample, this study could have been improved by considering additional contextual moderators that may impact the proposed relationships. For instance, the relational demography of each employee’s work unit may have some additional buffering effect on their sense of inclusion in the diversity message. If our results suggest that a highly-diverse salient environment may serve as a form of overkill, then perhaps the increased pressure of interpersonal relationships with those of increasingly different demographics may also reduce the effectiveness of our leader behaviors. It may also be that considering the collaborative environment of a healthcare organization, increasingly diverse relational demography may reduce dominant group anxiety regarding diversity. Future studies should consider this demography within groups and examine its impact on perceived inclusion.

Finally, as this study intends to suggest that leader behaviors can create alignment among employees toward a specific mission, and then subsequent perceptions of inclusion, a longitudinal approach would be ideal. Future studies should explore these perceptions, actions by leaders, and then reevaluate such perceptions at a later time in order to better suggest causal effect. Findings from such studies could show that these leader behaviors truly foster inclusion, as opposed to perhaps employees who feel included having more favorable perceptions of their supervisors.
REFERENCES


Lindell, Brandt, and Whitney (1999)


