



IOC RESEARCH DOSE

Institute of Coaching
McLean Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Affiliate



Diversity Matters

THIS IS YOUR IOC MEMBER BENEFIT

Diversity is a hot topic today for organizations and leaders; diversity initiatives typically focus on developing a diverse workforce and leadership team. Diversity is much more though – it is a big construct, and its concepts are grounded in science - supported by a variety of leadership theories and research studies.

This month's Coaching Report focuses on **Diversity in Coaching** and features a scholarly article on diversity in leadership. Let's take a closer look at the article, titled: **Diversity as an aspect of effective leadership: integrating and moving forward.**

The authors, George Gotsis and Katerina Grimani in Greece, organized the article in two parts – diversity leadership and inclusion leadership. Diversity leadership focuses mainly on optimizing outcomes while inclusion

leadership focuses on optimizing individual and collective well-being.

1. Diversity Leadership

Leader Motivation & Engagement

Leaders value diversity for three reasons - improved performance, intrinsic moral value and a leader's own convictions.

The authors note that leaders who do diversity well are able to both optimize performance and cultivate quality relationships with diverse subgroups (gender, ethnicity, function, geography). They foster an inclusive climate, as well as manage tensions among diverse groups. They are skilled in framing and implementing diversity initiatives. They develop a unifying identity that respects, includes, and fosters good relations among subgroups, rather than forcing one dominant subgroup identity. They engage in emergent interpersonal activities, instead of focusing on just task leadership.

Transforming Non-Diversity

A study in a healthcare organization in Sweden found that women in male-dominated units reported more gender harassment, discrimination, and less organizational support than other medical units not led or dominated by men. To overcome this unfair treatment, leaders need to actively empower and support learning and growth by both genders, as well as find ways to transform old values, beliefs and behaviors.

Another study showed that organizational performance declined as more leaders from racial minorities were added up to a critical point beyond which performance improved, suggesting the need to reach a critical level of diversity in leadership.

Women Leaders

There is some evidence that women leaders are more skilled than men at encouraging participation, learning, and cohesion of diverse teams – function, size and geography. Interestingly, nominating women successors by incumbent managers has been associated with higher performance of these incumbent managers.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership supports diversity, viewing leadership as a group quality rather than an attribute of a single group member. Hence shared leadership favors distribution of roles and responsibilities among a group of individuals; followers are expected to rely on other group members, sharing their valued resources through processes of reciprocity.

A study of shared leadership effectiveness found that a high female to male ratio and high geographic diversity predicted more team-directed behaviors.

Team Leadership

Organizations that emphasize team leadership skills support diversity awareness and welcome diversity as a resource, while downplaying subgroup identities and differences.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Organizations that create fair, trusting, and inclusive dyadic exchanges between leaders and followers (where there are no in-groups and out-groups) create better environments for diverse leadership to emerge.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is particularly valuable in fostering and leveraging diversity. A transformational leader is able to both present a strategic vision and enable followers to be genuine, transcend self-interest and reach shared goals. High levels of transformational leadership increase the effectiveness, creativity, and innovation of diverse teams through common motivation and openness to diversity, while minimizing relational conflicts.

Transformational leaders who display high levels of visionary behaviors and refrain from categorizing followers into in-group and out-group members foster positive outcomes, while those who are prone to categorizing followers into subgroups reduce financial performance.

2. Inclusive Leadership

Successful diversity leadership in part depends on the inclusiveness of an organization's culture, including equitable and respectful treatment and empowerment (belongingness) of minority groups, inclusion in decision-

making, and appreciation and integration of differences (uniqueness).

One study describes inclusive leadership as including accountability for creating an inclusive culture, engagement and dialogue, bringing one's true self to work, fostering transparent decision making, understanding and engaging with resistance, and communicating how inclusion relates to mission and vision.

Then the authors explore six leadership models which are aligned with inclusion in leadership:

1. **Ethical Leadership:** an ethical leader is a model of inclusive leadership. S/he engages in fair decision-making processes, refrains from discriminating against disadvantaged groups, and is deeply concerned about the welfare of society in its entirety. S/he strives to balance aspirations and interests of all stakeholders and create trusting relationships with all.
2. **Authentic Leadership:** authentic leadership by its nature cultivates an inclusive culture. It's a pattern of transparent and ethical behavior that encourages openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting followers' inputs. It focuses on self-awareness, candor, self-development, self-regulation, intra-team trust and helping. The self-awareness of authentic leaders helps them understand how they are perceived by diverse work groups. Their relational transparency builds trust.
3. **Servant Leadership:** The motivation of servant leaders is to serve others, cultivate a climate of trust, compassion and fairness, and help followers self-actualize. Servant leaders are humble and believe in the intrinsic value of each person, and wish to enable everyone to reach their full potential. Inclusion is a part of the backbone of this theory.
4. **Spiritual Leadership:** Spiritual leaders foster a transcendent vision of service to the greater good and sense of calling grounded in substantial meaning and purpose of one's work. Inclusiveness is inherent in a vision based on universal spiritual values and a culture where both connectedness and uniqueness are valued. Everyone feels appreciated, cared for, and understood. One could say that the foundation of diversity and inclusion leadership is cultivating belongingness to a community while welcoming uniqueness and diverse identities.
5. **Benevolent Leadership:** Benevolent leadership is an emerging

construct relevant to inclusion, as it focuses on building sustainable relationships with multiple stakeholders in order to foster positive change.

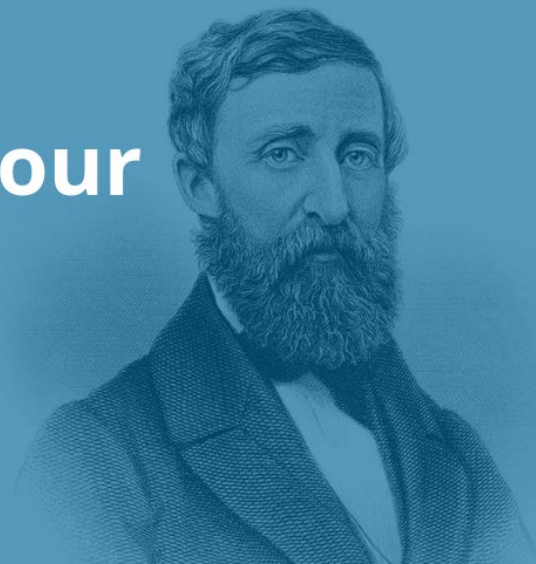
6. **Positive Global Leadership:** This construct appreciates the complex dynamics in which global leaders operate, recognizes the inherent value of differences, leverages diverse strengths, and aligns around concepts of global interdependence and citizenship.

Takeaways for Coaches:

1. As coaches, our role is to help ourselves and our clients cultivate awareness of the subconscious attitudes and perceptions that prevent welcoming of diversity and inclusion.
2. Coaching conversations can draw on the leadership constructs that support diversity and inclusion. Coaches can help clients invite and welcome a diversity of perspectives in addressing their growth areas.
3. Coaches can help clients invite and welcome a diversity of perspectives in addressing their growth areas.
4. Coaches can invite clients to experience:
 - the improved outcomes that result from diversity leadership in their work, families, and lives.
 - the well-being that emerges from an inclusive approach, valuing both uniqueness and interdependence.

"It is never too late to give up our prejudices."

-Henry David Thoreau



From the IOC Team.

Coaching with science in mind.

Featured Article

Gotsis, George; Grimani, Katerina. **Diversity as an aspect of effective leadership: integrating and moving forward.** Leadership & Organization Development Journal; Bradford Vol. 37, Iss. 2, (2016): 241- 264.

More Resources

IOC July/August Coaching Report: **Diversity in Coaching**
