


Inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity: Enhancing team performance and reducing work delays

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Orientation: Delays in completing work hinder operational effectiveness. Workforce diversity also presents challenges in selecting a leadership style that fosters participation and collaboration.

Research purpose: This study examines how inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity influence team performance, by also considering the roles of inclusive climate, team coordination and knowledge sharing.

Motivation for the study: Despite growing interest in inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity, limited research explores its role in improving team performance within diverse settings. Understanding these relationships can offer insights for better team collaboration and effectiveness.

Research approach/design and method: A quantitative survey was conducted with 221 team members across 54 teams in a private university in West Java province, Indonesia. Purposive sampling targeted teams from marketing, administration, student affairs, finance and services. Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling based on partial least squares (SEM-PLS).

Main findings: Inclusive leadership significantly enhances inclusive climate and team coordination, while ethnic diversity positively affects team coordination and knowledge sharing. In addition, inclusive climate, team coordination and knowledge sharing improve team performance, with knowledge sharing having the strongest impact. These findings highlight the importance of an inclusive environment where leadership and diversity foster collaboration and knowledge exchange to enhance performance.

Practical/managerial implications: Organisations should adopt inclusive leadership practices and leverage ethnic diversity to create an inclusive climate, encourage knowledge sharing and enhance team coordination for better team performance.

Contribution/value-add: This study contributes to inclusive leadership literature by demonstrating its impact on team effectiveness, offering empirical insights into optimising team collaboration and outcomes.

Keywords: inclusive leadership; inclusive climate; knowledge sharing; team coordination; team performance.

Introduction

In today's highly competitive and dynamic work environment, organisations face increasing demands to foster collaboration and enhance team effectiveness (Akhavan Tabassi et al., 2024). Across both service and manufacturing sectors, the need to balance stability with adaptability and to promote cohesive teamwork has become central to achieving organisational sustainability (Prabhu et al., 2022). In this context, inclusive leadership and a supportive team climate are increasingly recognised as critical factors influencing team performance (Ashikali et al., 2021). An inclusive climate, which is characterised by openness, respect and mutual recognition, plays a key role in enabling employees to collaborate effectively (Ehud et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2017). As such, fostering inclusive work environment and empowering inclusive leadership are vital to achieving high-performing teams (Andrews & Ashworth, 2015). Leadership styles such as ethical (Zaim et al., 2021), transformational (Prabhu et al., 2022) and authentic leadership (Lyubovnikova et al., 2017) have all been associated with improved team outcomes.

In addition to leadership, ethnic diversity in the workplace has emerged as a critical factor influencing team performance (Patrício & Franco, 2022). When managed effectively, ethnic

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diversity offers a source of competitive advantage through enhanced creativity, broader knowledge bases and richer problem-solving capabilities (Kim & Song, 2021; Luu et al., 2019). A diverse team that comprises individuals from various cultural, ethnic and experiential backgrounds can generate innovative solutions and foster more dynamic team processes, which ultimately improve overall performance (Ehud et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2017).

However, the potential benefits of diversity are not automatically realised. Without an inclusive environment, ethnically diverse teams may struggle with miscommunication, conflict or exclusionary behaviours that undermine coordination and trust (Chung et al., 2015). Research has shown that diversity alone is insufficient to ensure positive outcomes, as it must be paired with inclusive practices and leadership that actively value, integrate and leverage differences (Brimhall, 2021; Luu et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2017).

In the context of educational organisations, fostering collaboration and improving team performance requires more than just diverse teams. It demands inclusive leadership, which ensures every team member feels valued, heard and has an equal opportunity to contribute. A lack of direction, poor coordination and unresolved interpersonal issues can all hinder effective communication and slow down task completion. In this context, inclusive leaders play a critical role in resolving these challenges by encouraging openness, building trust and aligning team members towards shared goals (Shafaei & Nejati, 2024; Verma et al., 2020).

Despite growing attention to inclusive leadership and diversity, prior studies have pointed to persistent gaps in understanding their combined impact on team performance. For example, Ashikali et al. (2021) and Shafaei and Nejati (2024) called for further conceptual development and empirical exploration of inclusive leadership and its impact on team performance, especially after finding that highly diverse teams experienced lower levels of inclusivity than non-diverse teams. Moreover, there remains limited understanding of the mechanisms through which inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity influence team dynamics, particularly in relation to variables such as inclusive climate (Ashikali et al., 2021), team coordination (Akhavan Tabassi et al., 2024) and team knowledge sharing (Eltemasi & Arami, 2024), especially in academic or university settings. While previous studies have acknowledged the value of knowledge sharing in ethnically diverse teams (Eltemasi & Arami, 2024; Navendra & Beldona, 2019), the role of team knowledge sharing in enhancing team performance remains underexplored and lacks contextual validation in the higher education sector.

These gaps can be more effectively addressed by drawing on Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964). Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains how individuals categorise themselves and others based on social groupings such as ethnicity, which may lead to in-group favouritism or out-

group exclusion, and it potentially hinders collaboration in diverse teams. Inclusive leaders, however, can counteract these divisions by emphasising a shared team identity, promoting fairness and ensuring that all voices are valued. Meanwhile, SET (Blau, 1964) provides insight into how inclusive leadership fosters team performance through relational dynamics. When team members perceive that their leaders treat them with fairness, respect and recognition, they are more likely to reciprocate with positive behaviours such as open communication, proactive coordination and willingness to share knowledge. Together, these theories offer a strong foundation for explaining how inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity interact with team processes to influence performance outcomes.

Therefore, the results of this study have practical implications for leaders and organisations seeking to build inclusive work environments that enhance team performance (Patrício & Franco, 2022). As mentioned in previous studies, when employees feel that their leaders can accept their input and are not criticised for their mistakes, they tend to be more confident in conveying creative ideas, more proactive in contributing to the team and more motivated to improve their performance in order to achieve organisational goals (Lyu, 2024; Meng et al., 2023; Shafaei & Nejati, 2024). Working in a supportive environment created by inclusive leaders can encourage better work that improves team performance.

In summary, this study extends the literature by addressing critical gaps in understanding the mechanisms linking inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity to team performance. It highlights the roles of inclusive climate, team coordination and team knowledge sharing, especially in the under-researched university context. In addition, this study offers evidence of the importance of the integrated leadership-diversity strategies in fostering high-performing, inclusive teams.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Inclusive leadership, inclusive climate and group coordination

Inclusive leadership plays a critical role in shaping the work environment by fostering a culture in which power, information and decision-making are shared between leaders and team members (Hirak et al., 2012). This leadership style emphasises openness, involvement, respect for differences and active participation of all team members (Li et al., 2019; Randel et al., 2016). Randel et al. (2018) mentioned that inclusive leadership is seen as important in facilitating and supporting a positive work climate. Inclusive leadership considers the differences of team members and supports a sense of belonging to facilitate the contribution of each team member such as by voicing ideas and perspectives within the team and exchanging diverse ideas. At the same time, inclusive leadership can create a safe work climate and cause each employee to feel valued and respected (Tao et al., 2022).

By embracing and integrating diverse perspectives, inclusive leaders contribute to the development of inclusive climate, which is a shared perception among team members that their uniqueness is acknowledged and appreciated while also experiencing a strong sense of belonging (Ashikali et al., 2021). According to SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), fostering such a climate helps mitigate the risks of in-group favouritism and out-group exclusion that can arise in diverse teams. In addition, by creating a safe and supportive environment, inclusive leaders enable employees to express themselves without fear of rejection or marginalisation (Tao et al., 2022). In doing so, inclusive leadership not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also lays the foundation for stronger collaboration and coordination. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Inclusive leadership has a positive influence on inclusive climate.

The role of a leader in an organisation is crucial for providing supportive performance feedback and ensuring effective coordination within teams (Ashikali et al., 2021). As noted by Meng et al. (2023), inclusive leaders contribute to team coordination by providing motivation to exhibit desired behaviours and holding them accountable for their actions. Constructive feedback from a leader, when delivered appropriately, can help employees recognise their strengths and areas for improvements, thereby enhancing their overall performance.

In addition, Shafaei et al. (2024) emphasised that inclusive leaders encourage behaviours that promote collaboration, innovation and proactivity in addressing challenges and seizing opportunities to achieve organisational goals (Collins & Smith, 2006; Rack et al., 2019). This is evident when inclusive leaders create a supportive environment where all members can coordinate with each other in achieving goals (Ashikali et al., 2021). Therefore, the role of leadership is very powerful in enabling employees to create an environment that supports each other in achieving common goals. In this context, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Inclusive leadership has a positive effect on team coordination.

According to Anderson and West (1996), team climate refers to the shared perception among team members regarding their work environment. In an inclusive team climate, members are less likely to assign blame and are better able to collaborate effectively, ultimately leading to improved performance (Ashikali et al., 2021). Shore et al. (2018) conceptualised inclusion as fulfilling two critical needs: a sense of belonging and a sense of uniqueness. By balancing these needs, teams can foster an environment that embraces diverse contributions while maintaining cohesion (Ashikali et al., 2021).

In an inclusive environment, employees from all backgrounds are treated fairly, valued and actively engaged in organisational processes (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Such an environment is built upon a value framework that respects

the diverse cultural perspectives of its employees (Meng et al., 2023). Fu et al. (2022) further emphasised that an inclusive organisational climate enables individuals to express their authentic selves while being accepted as integral members of the team, encouraging learning from one another's differences (Perry et al., 2020). Previous studies have consistently found that perceptions of inclusiveness positively impact relationship quality, team decision-making, team performance (Meng et al., 2023) as well as team communication and knowledge sharing, which subsequently enhance innovation performance (Shore et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2023). Overall, an inclusive climate fosters equal participation and contribution among team members, leading to stronger team outcomes. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Inclusive climate has a positive effect on team performance.

Ethnic diversity, team coordination and team knowledge sharing

A group or team consisting of various individuals from diverse backgrounds requires effective coordination to achieve common goals (Hoogendoorn & Van Praag, 2021). In this process, each member contributes based on their respective role, thus creating synergy that supports the efficiency and effectiveness of the group in realising the targets that have been set (Ashikali et al., 2021). Ashikali et al. (2021) identified two perspectives to explain how ethnic diversity can influence an inclusive climate and foster effective coordination. The first is the information/decision-making perspective, which emphasises that ethnic diversity enriches teams with a broader range of knowledge, skills and perspectives that can support their work. The second is the social identity perspective, which focuses on potential challenges arising from group categorisations and biases within diverse teams. According to Velinov (2023), the positive effect of ethnic diversity on team coordination can be explained by the information perspective, as recognising the uniqueness of each team member enriches mutual understanding and contributes to group harmony. Similarly, Le et al. (2023) and Luu et al. (2019) noted that the diverse characteristics of team members can strengthen communication and coordination effectiveness. Previous studies have suggested that workplace diversity with a larger pool of perspectives and resources can be used to build more

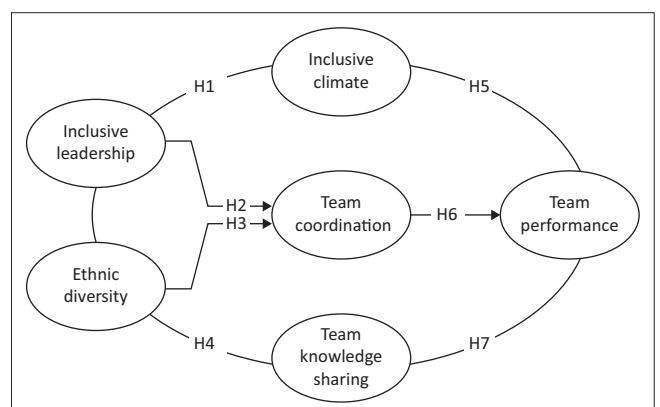


FIGURE 1: Conceptual framework.

efficient and effective coordination, thus achieving optimal performance. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Ethnic diversity has a positive effect on team coordination.

Ethnic diversity within a team can create a rich environment for knowledge exchange. In diverse teams, members bring a variety of experiences, cultural insights and problem-solving approaches that can enhance the quality and breadth of knowledge sharing (Prabhu et al., 2022). Knowledge sharing itself refers to the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge within teams, a concept first introduced by Nonaka (2009). Effective knowledge sharing requires both the active dissemination and active reception of knowledge among team members (Hashim & Tan, 2015).

In diverse work environments, knowledge sharing becomes even more critical. Diversity encourages dynamic discussions, facilitates the exchange of unique perspectives and fosters innovative thinking (Navendra & Beldona, 2019). However, for knowledge sharing to thrive, team members must not only be willing to contribute their own expertise but also be open to learning from others with different backgrounds (Prabhu et al., 2022). In particular, an inclusive attitude is essential in diverse teams to ensure that all voices are valued and diverse perspectives are appreciated. Thus, ethnic diversity can enhance the openness and effectiveness of knowledge sharing within teams, which ultimately contributes to better collaboration and innovative outcomes. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Ethnic diversity has a positive effect on team knowledge sharing.

Team coordination and team performance

According to Ven et al. (1976), coordination is a process in which individuals or groups synchronise their activities in order to achieve common goals. Effective group coordination is essential to ensure that work can be completed on time and to a high standard (Papalexandris, 2024). Team effectiveness depends heavily on clear identification of team priorities and well-established coordination. Paul et al. (2016) emphasised that in an organisation with robust human resource management (HRM) system, coordination plays a key role in realising a shared vision. Similarly, Akhavan Tabassi et al. (2024) mentioned that an effective team synchronises individual inputs to achieve collective outcomes, making coordination a fundamental process in building team performance. Strong group coordination provides benefits for organisations to achieve predetermined goals. Likewise, previous studies state that effective team performance requires integrated inter-group contributions (Meng et al., 2023). This emphasises the importance of inter-group alignment. Previous research results have shown that higher levels of team coordination can influence team performance efficiently and effectively. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Team coordination has a positive effect on team performance.

Knowledge sharing and team performance

Effective team performance is closely related to the extent of knowledge sharing within an organisation (Meng et al., 2023).

When knowledge is actively exchanged in the workplace, it enhances collaboration and fosters innovation, ultimately improving team performance (De Sio et al., 2022). According to Raza and Awang (2020), knowledge sharing behaviour plays a key role in disseminating new insights that contribute to both individual and organisational goals. Usmanova et al. (2020) stated that knowledge represents a critical organisational resource, which involves sharing experiences, skills and expertise to support high-performing teams. Similarly, Jafari et al. (2008) and AlShamsi and Ajmal (2018) emphasised that knowledge sharing facilitates problem-solving and idea developments. It is viewed as a voluntary process that transfers, acquires and reuses existing knowledge to achieve organisational goals. Through mutual sharing of experiences, knowledge sharing can foster a culture of reciprocity that enhances team performance. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Team knowledge sharing has a positive effect on team performance.

The conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 1.

Research Methods

This study relied on a quantitative approach with a survey as a data collection tool to see the relationship between variables. Aligned with the positivism paradigm, this study sought to explore how the relationship between inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity is related to inclusive climate, team coordination and team knowledge sharing, and its impact on team performance. The quantitative approach in this study was chosen because it allows researchers to know the magnitude of the causal relationship of each variable studied (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Cresswell and Cresswell (2017) stated that survey research can be used to describe and measure the relationship between two or more variables.

The unit of analysis in this study was the team (team level) at a private university accredited as 'Unggul', or in West Java province. The teams selected came from five functional units – marketing, administration, student affairs, finance and services – with consideration of the unit's contribution to the success of the organisation. Team selection was carried out by purposive sampling based on two criteria: (1) the team consists of one team leader and at least three members and (2) the team has worked together for at least the past year. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to two sample groups, namely team members and team leaders, via official university communication channels to ensure both accessibility and confidentiality. Participants were assured that their response would be anonymous and used solely for research purposes, which is in accordance with the ethical research standards. Team members filled out questionnaires on inclusive leadership, ethnic diversity, team coordination, team knowledge sharing and inclusive climate, while team leaders filled out questionnaires on team performance. After the data cleaning process, the data used came from 221 team members in 54 teams. The number of

members per team ranged from three to 10 individuals, with an average of five individuals per team. According to the recommendations from Hair et al. (2019), this sample size is sufficient for structural equation modelling analyses.

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to describe the data and initial relationships between variables. Hypothesis testing was conducted using structural equation modelling based on partial least squares (SEM-PLS).

Measurement

This study used a measurement scale adapted from established prior research. Respondents responded to statements on each item using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). *Inclusive leadership* was measured by eight items modified from previous research (Ashikali et al., 2021; Carmeli et al., 2010; Shafaei & Nejati, 2024). An example of an item is 'The leader is very open to hearing new ideas'. Prior studies consistently demonstrated reliability levels exceeding 0.88 for this scale. *Ethnic diversity* was measured by four items adopted and modified from the research Collins and Blau (1979) and Luu et al. (2019); examples of the items are 'Age differences among team members can increase creativity in completing tasks' and 'Diversity of expertise in a team can help improve the quality of work completion'. Previous studies reported high reliability for this scale, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.85.

On the other hand, *inclusive climate* was measured by eight items adopted from Nishii (2013) and Ashikali et al. (2021). Example of an item is 'team members share and learn about each other'. Previous research reported Cronbach's alpha values above 0.80 for similar diversity measures. Then, *team coordination* was measured by five items adopted from previous research (Papalexandris, 2024; Zhang et al., 2011). It focuses on role clarity, synchronisation and task alignment within the team. Reported reliability coefficients for these measures were consistently above 0.85.

Team knowledge sharing was measured using seven items adopted from Chuang et al. (2016) and Lyu (2024), capturing the extent to which team members voluntarily exchange information, skills and expertise. Sample items reflect proactive sharing and openness to learning from others. Previous studies showed Cronbach's alpha values around 0.85 for knowledge sharing measures. Finally, *team performance* was measured by six items adopted from Conger et al. (2000) and Lyu (2024). An example of an item is 'The team works and communicates effectively'. Prior research indicated strong reliability, with alpha values exceeding 0.87.

To ensure the appropriateness and clarity of the measurement instruments for the study context, a pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents from teams with similar characteristics to the target population. The pilot results confirmed the face validity of all instruments and demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Minor wording adjustments were made based on pilot feedback to improve clarity and contextual relevance. In the main study, reliability and validity were further assessed using composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity tests to ensure the robustness of the measurement model.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Universitas Langlangbuana, Bandung, Faculty of Economics and Business Ethics Committee (008/CE-UNLA/V/2024). All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Result and discussion

Respondent profile

The results of the respondent characteristics analysis (Table 1) show that the majority of respondents are male (54.3%), with female representation of 45.7%. Based on length of service, most respondents have work experience between 1 and 10 years (85.9%), with the highest distribution in the 1–5 years category (52.0%). In terms of ethnicity, the majority of respondents are Sundanese (67.9%), followed by Javanese (15.8%) and Betawi (9.0%), while Cirebon (4.5%) and Minangkabau (2.7%) have smaller representation. Respondents are proportionally spread across five functional units, namely marketing (18.1%), administration (21.7%), student affairs (19.0%),

TABLE 1: Respondent profile.

Category	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	120	54.3
Female	101	45.7
Years of work		
< 1	15	6.8
1–5	115	52.0
6–10	75	33.9
> 10	16	7.2
Ethnic group		
Sundanese	150	67.9
Javanese	35	15.8
Betawi	20	9.0
Cirebon	10	4.5
Minangkabau	6	2.7
Functional unit		
Marketing	40	18.1
Administration	48	21.7
Student affairs	42	19.0
Finance	42	19.0
Services	49	22.2

finance (19.0%) and services (22.2%), indicating that data were obtained from various organisational functions relevant to the study.

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the average (M) of the variables in this study ranged from 3.82 to 4.30, with a relatively low standard deviation (SD), indicating a fairly uniform perception among respondents. The correlation between variables shows a positive relationship, with the highest value between inclusive leadership (IL) and ethnic diversity (ED) ($r = 0.790$) and a fairly strong relationship between inclusive climate (IC) and team coordination (TC) ($r = 0.761$) (Table 2).

Data aggregation

The intra-class correlation (ICC) values for all variables ranged from 0.604 to 0.787, indicating a moderate to high level of homogeneity within each team. These adequate ICC values support the retrieval of individual data that have been measured at the individual level to be aggregated to the team-level, justifying that team-level analysis can be conducted validly. The combination of these results provides a strong basis for evaluating the relationships between variables at the team level according to the research model (see Table 2).

Confirmatory factor analysis

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) show that the six-factor model has the best model fit indicators compared to other models. The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) (0.046), unweighted least squares discrepancy (d_ULS) (7.854), geodesic discrepancy (d_G) (2.045) and normed fit index (NFI) (0.921) values in this model indicate a high level of suitability and low residual error. Meanwhile, the three-factor model (SRMR = 0.112, NFI = 0.543) and two-factor model (SRMR = 0.226, NFI = 0.342) show a much lower level of model fit and higher error, with a significant increase in d_ULS and rms Theta, indicating complexity that is not well accommodated. Thus, the six-factor model is the best and most suitable model to be used in this study because it provides results that are most in accordance with the empirical data and reflects stronger measurement validity (see Table 3).

TABLE 2: Descriptive statistics, aggregation indices and correlation.

Variables	M	SD	ICC	1	2	3	4	5	6
Inclusive leadership (IL)	4.210	0.800	0.787	1.000	-	-	-	-	-
Ethnic diversity (ED)	4.300	0.780	0.743	0.790**	1.000	-	-	-	-
Inclusive climate (IC)	3.970	0.980	0.667	0.542**	0.590**	1.000	-	-	-
Team coordination (TC)	3.820	1.020	0.694	0.300**	0.375**	0.761**	1.000	-	-
Team knowledge sharing (TKS)	4.260	0.730	0.626	0.397**	0.488**	0.566**	0.655**	1.000	-
Team performance (TP)	4.130	0.880	0.604	0.403**	0.348**	0.502**	0.602**	0.401**	1.000

Note: All correlations marked with ** are statistically significant at the 1% level.

M, mean; SD, standard deviation; ICC, intra-class correlation.

$p < .01$ (2-tailed).

SRMR, standardised root mean square residual; d_ULS, unweighted least squares discrepancy; d_G, geodesic discrepancy; NFI, normed fit index; inclusive leadership; ED, ethnic diversity; IC, inclusive climate; TC, team coordination; TKS, team knowledge sharing; TP, team performance.

Discriminant validity

The results of the discriminant validity test indicate that the model meets the Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) criteria. Based on the Fornell-Larcker table, the square root of AVE (diagonal) value for each construct is greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs (values outside the diagonal), indicating that each construct has good discriminant. In the HTMT table, all HTMT ratio values are below the threshold of 0.85, which confirms that there is no multicollinearity problem between constructs. Thus, these two tests indicate that each construct in the model has good discriminant validity, so that they can be distinguished from each other empirically (Table 4 and Table 5).

Composite reliability

To assess the internal consistency reliability of the measurement model, CR was calculated for each construct. Following Hair et al. (2019), a CR value above 0.70 is considered acceptable, indicating that the construct items reliably measure the latent variable. As shown in Table 6, all constructs demonstrated strong CR, with CR values ranging

TABLE 3: Confirmatory factor analysis.

Model	SRMR	d_ULS	d_G	NFI	rms θ
Six-factor model	0.046	7.854	2.045	0.921	0.109
Three-factor model (IL+ED, IC+TC+TKS, TP)	0.112	9.304	2.898	0.543	0.169
Two-factor model (IL+ED+IC+TC+TKS, TP)	0.226	37.852	4.764	0.342	0.267

IL, inclusive leadership; ED, ethnic diversity; IC, inclusive climate; TC, team coordination; TKS, team knowledge sharing; TP, team performance; d_ULS, unweighted least squares discrepancy; SRMR, standardised root mean square residual; d_G, geodesic discrepancy; NFI, normed fit index; rms θ , root mean square theta.

TABLE 4: Discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker.

Variable	ED	IC	IL	TC	TKS	TP
ED	0.813	-	-	-	-	-
IC	0.668	0.772	-	-	-	-
IL	0.806	0.649	0.769	-	-	-
TC	0.413	0.633	0.347	0.813	-	-
TKS	0.534	0.564	0.445	0.684	0.812	-
TP	0.483	0.349	0.505	0.605	0.607	0.752

ED, ethnic diversity; IC, inclusive climate; IL, inclusive leadership; TC, team coordination; TKS, team knowledge sharing; TP, team performance.

from 0.841 to 0.923, exceeding the recommended threshold. These results confirm that the measurement model has satisfactory internal consistency.

Hypothesis testing

Structural equation modelling conducted using SmartPLS was used to test the research hypotheses. Based on the test results, inclusive leadership has a significant positive effect on inclusive climate (direct effect = 0.649, $p < 0.001$, 95% confidence interval [CI] = [0.591, 0.708]) and team coordination (direct effect = 0.339, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.245, 0.433]), supporting H1 and H2. In addition, ethnic diversity has a significant positive effect on team coordination (direct effect = 0.382, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.210, 0.554]) and team knowledge sharing (direct effect = 0.534, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.440, 0.627]), supporting H3 and H4 (Table 7).

Furthermore, inclusive climate has a significant positive effect on team performance (direct effect = 0.252, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.101, 0.402]), supporting H5. Team coordination also has a significant positive effect on team performance (direct effect = 0.266, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.142, 0.390]),

TABLE 5: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

Variable	ED	IC	IL	TC	TKS	TP
ED	-	-	-	-	-	-
IC	0.734	-	-	-	-	-
IL	0.814	0.663	-	-	-	-
TC	0.453	0.637	0.357	-	-	-
TKS	0.616	0.709	0.498	0.801	-	-
TP	0.094	0.123	0.079	0.073	0.182	-

ED, ethnic diversity; IC, inclusive climate; IL, inclusive leadership; TC, team coordination; TKS, team knowledge sharing; TP, team performance.

TABLE 6: Composite reliability of construct.

Construct	CR
Inclusive leadership	0.914
Ethnic diversity	0.841
Inclusive climate	0.912
Team coordination	0.887
Team knowledge sharing	0.901
Team performance	0.923

CR, composite reliability.

TABLE 7: Model test.

Path	Effect	Standard error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
Inclusive leadership → Inclusive climate				
Direct effect	0.649	0.032	0.591	0.708
Inclusive leadership → Team coordination				
Direct effect	0.339	0.100	0.245	0.433
Ethnic diversity → Team coordination				
Direct effect	0.382	0.090	0.210	0.554
Ethnic diversity → Team knowledge sharing				
Direct effect	0.534	0.050	0.440	0.627
Inclusive climate → Team performance				
Direct effect	0.252	0.110	0.101	0.402
Team coordination → Team performance				
Direct effect	0.266	0.053	0.142	0.390
Team knowledge sharing → Team performance				
Direct effect	0.569	0.126	0.475	0.664

supporting H6. Finally, team knowledge sharing shows a significant positive effect on team performance (direct effect = 0.569, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI = [0.475, 0.664]), supporting H7 (Table 7).

These results indicate that the variables in the model, such as inclusive climate, team coordination and team knowledge sharing, play an important role as the pathway of influence from inclusive leadership and ethnic diversity on team performance.

Discussion

This study was aimed at exploring factors that can improve team performance in educational organisations, by considering the role of team knowledge sharing, team coordination, inclusive climate, ethnic diversity and inclusive leadership. This study collected data from two different sources, namely team members and team leaders. Team members assess inclusive leadership, ethnic diversity, team coordination, team knowledge sharing and inclusive climate, while the team leader assesses team performance. We tested the first hypothesis, namely the influence of inclusive leadership on inclusive climate. Based on the test results, the findings show that inclusive leadership has a significant positive influence in creating an inclusive work environment. The role of leadership in many organisations makes a significant contribution to creating a better environment. As stated by Shore et al. (2018), Randel et al. (2018) and Meng et al. (2023), the drive to create an inclusive work environment requires attention, encouragement and support from leaders. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted.

The study also found that in addition to inclusive climate, the role of inclusive leadership affects team coordination. The results are in accordance with previous studies conducted by Shafaei et al. (2024) that inclusive leaders can shape employee behaviour to work collaboratively, innovatively and proactively in facing challenges and seizing opportunities to achieve organisational goals. In addition, the findings also found that to achieve team performance, each member must

coordinate their work. Once individuals come together to perform a task, they must manage the interdependence inherent in teamwork to be effective. In this case, the leadership figure plays a significant role in creating performance by coordinating and motivating team members. As explained earlier, ethnic diversity also has a significant influence on building coordination.

The findings show that effective team coordination is built on the ability to unite different perspectives, backgrounds and expertise in the organisation. This is supported by a study by Velinov (2023), which states that ethnic diversity in an organisation can increase creativity that allow employees to solve problems from various perspectives and create an inclusive environment. The findings also show that an inclusive environment can encourage mutual trust, openness and effective communication among team members, thus positively impacting overall team performance. This finding is supported by previous studies by Meng et al. (2023) that an inclusive team climate has a significant positive relationship with team adaptation and team performance. An inclusive climate can facilitate team communication and contribute to the integration of team resources, information and knowledge sharing (Ali et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the findings also found that team coordination plays a crucial role in optimising the impact of an inclusive environment on team performance in the context of a university environment. Effective coordination ensures that each team member understands their roles, responsibilities and shared goals, which ultimately leads to synergy in completing tasks. This finding is supported by Akhavan Tabassi et al. (2024) who found that team coordination refers to the extent to which members are able to integrate their ideas and efforts to achieve predetermined goals. Through good communication and clear division of tasks, effective team coordination can accelerate task completion.

Finally, the findings found that team knowledge sharing significantly influences team performance. The findings in this study indicate that a comfortable and safe organisational environment can encourage each employee to share their knowledge. In accordance with the previous studies (De Sio et al., 2022; Raza & Awang, 2020), team performance built from a knowledge-sharing perspective will be able to help the organisation achieve its desired goals. In the context of educational service organisations, knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in improving performance. The knowledge sharing process allows team members to exchange information that can support the effectiveness of their tasks and responsibilities. Thus, knowledge sharing in the organisation becomes an important foundation for building more effective team performance.

The findings of this study can also be explained through the lens of SET and SIT. Social Exchange Theory suggests that relationships within organisations are built on reciprocal

exchanges of support, trust and resources (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the context of this study, inclusive leadership, the promotion of an inclusive climate and the encouragement of knowledge sharing can be viewed as forms of positive social exchange that foster a sense of obligation among team members to reciprocate through improved coordination, knowledge contribution and ultimately, higher performance. Similarly, SIT posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from their membership in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The establishment of an inclusive climate strengthens team members' identification with the team, as they feel valued for both their uniqueness and belongingness. This enhanced identification promotes collaborative behaviours such as effective coordination and knowledge sharing, thereby boosting team performance. Thus, the integration of SET and SIT provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how leadership and team diversity dynamics jointly influence team effectiveness in educational organisations.

Limitations and future research direction

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that open avenues for future research. Firstly, the data were collected from teams within a single regional and institutional context (i.e. private universities in West Java), which may limit the generalisability of the findings. Future research could replicate the study in different sectors, such as corporate or healthcare settings, or across different cultural and geographical contexts. Secondly, while the current study used cross-sectional data, future studies might benefit from a longitudinal approach to examine how inclusive leadership and team processes evolve over time. In addition, future researchers could explore other mediating or moderating variables, such as psychological safety, team empowerment or digital collaboration tools, that may influence the relationship between leadership, diversity and team performance.

Conclusion

This study explores the factors that can improve team performance so that it can reduce work delays. In this context, the role of leadership becomes crucial to achieve the process and achievement of organisational goals. Through effective team performance, organisational goals can be achieved more optimally. Currently, research that focuses on team management has received much attention in a dynamic environment. The results of this study contribute to the existing literature by revealing that inclusive leadership, ethnic diversity, inclusive environment, coordination and knowledge sharing are factors that can improve team performance in the university context. The results of this study emphasise the importance of organisations to mobilise their abilities in managing resources to create a supportive work environment in improving employee performance. In addition, an inclusive leadership style, it has an impact on members, especially on the aspect of members' self-confidence to complete tasks. This is because inclusive leaders treat subordinates equally, which helps improve team efficacy, which in turn improves team performance.

Theoretically, this study extends the application of SET and SIT to the domain of team performance in educational institutions. By positioning inclusive leadership as a catalyst for reciprocal social exchanges and shared team identity, this study provides empirical support for how leadership practices and diversity dimensions can be effectively leveraged to foster psychological safety, coordination and knowledge sharing – factors that are crucial in enhancing team performance. Furthermore, the integration of these variables into a single framework helps bridge gaps in the literature related to team dynamics, diversity management and inclusive organisational behaviour.

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Competing interests

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Authors' contributions

N.K. was responsible for conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing the original draft, project administration, software and funding acquisition. A.J. was responsible for conceptualisation, visualisation, validation, data curation, resources, writing (review and editing) and supervision.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, N.K., upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

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