Impact of Employee Inclusion on Corporate Resilience: A Theoretical Framework

Jyotsna Singh
Research Scholar
Christ University, Delhi
Email: jyotsna.singh@res.christuniversity.in

Joji chandran
Professor and Head
Christ university, Delhi

Abstract-
In a world shaken by COVID 19 pandemic, organizations are waking up to the fact that turbulences and complexities are a routine part of organizational existence. Thus, they increasingly focus on building organizational resilienceto manage unexpected events and thrive under turbulent times. Recent research also pointsout that employee inclusion plays an essential role in making an organization more reliable and resilient. However, despite having multiple studies on organizational resilience and employee inclusion within the organizations, no study has ever been conducted to link these two constructs. This study will address the following research gaps by responding to the following questions:
1- What is the impact of Employee inclusion on developing corporate resilience?
2- How does that influence the management of Resilience Enhancing Employee Inclusion?
These questions shall be answered by linking existing research on Employee inclusion and Corporate Resilience. By developing a theoretical framework and formulating propositions, this paper shall strive to provide a foundation for future empirical research. Besides this, the paper shall also be helpful in gaining a fresh perspective in the domain of organizational resilience.

Keywords: Organizational Resilience, Employee Inclusion, Management of Resilience Enhancing Employee Inclusion

1- Introduction-

COVID-19, termed as a 'Force Majeure, acted as a catalyst in bringing to the fore the need for resilient firms. The turbulence and complexity presented by COVID-19 is an eyeopener for firms to create systems to deal with such unexpected events. To ensure sustainable success, firms require the development of corporate resilience, which can technically be described as the ability to effectively cope with unforeseen events and develop lessons from those events, thereby creating dynamic competenciesdirected towards the facilitation of organizational change (Duchek 2014). Corporate resilience helps develop crisis management competencies and provide a competitive edge (Havard Business Review 2003; Sheffi 2005) and success in the long term (Coutu 2002).

To create corporate resilience, firms must invest in enough resources that improve resilience characteristics, such as financial reserves, diversity, and positive connections.(Valikangas and Romme 2013). Manyresearch also highlights the role of *employee inclusion* in developing corporate resilience (Baral 2013, Hong and Page 2004). Employee inclusion is defined (Guillaume et al., 2015) as "the degree to which an employee thinks that he or she is a valuable member of the workgroup as a result of experiences that satisfy his/her desire for belonging and distinctiveness." (Lau et al.,2005).Research on employee inclusion has demonstrated that an increased feeling of employee inclusion influences organizational outcomes like performance (Nishii et al., 2018).Accordingly, this research paper employee inclusion can enhance corporate competencies that underpin corporate resilience and can be developed inside work units.

While much research has been conducted on the impact of employee inclusion on workplace atmosphere and group performance, there is still more to be done(Gardner et al. 2014;Adams, Byron G et al.2019; van Knippenberg and Mell 2016; Srikanth et al. 2016; Guillaume et al. 2015),the relationship between employee inclusion and organizational resilience has largely been overlooked.COVID-19 has offered the business a unique opportunity to strengthen employee inclusion and inclusive products that can help build a more resilient world.

The research aim of this paper is to fill the existing research gaps in previous research by finding answers to the following questions-

1- How important is employee inclusion in the developing resilience competency in organizations?

2- What does this signify in resilience instensifyinginclusivity management?

This study combines excerpts from interviews with inclusiveness leaders across Indian corporates to answer these questions conceptually. First, this paper offers theoretical background for employee inclusion and corporate resilience within organizations.Second, the study examines the importance of employee inclusion in creating corporate resilience through a process-based conception of corporate resilience.The study develops a conceptual framework by connecting previous research and literature on organizational resilience and employee inclusion outcomes.

This paper demonstrates how employee inclusion may improve a company's resilience competencies via a three-stage process (anticipation, coping and adaptation).Additionally,

the research indicates the primary components of Resilience-intensifyinginclusiveness management (RIIM), thereby increasing the possibility of employee inclusion.The study contributes to future empirical research by formulating propositions and providing insight into effective corporate resilience management.

2- Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Previous Corporate Resilience Research

2.1.1 The term "Resilience."

Historically, the term "resilience" was applied to various disciplines, including material sciences, psychology, and ecology. (Williams et al., 2017).In organizations,resilience is considered a crucial success factor in uncertain and turbulent times,equipping the organizations with necessary survival and coping skills (Perrott 2009). A resilient organization can quickly respond to any uncertainty in the environment and flourish in the face of adversity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Linnenluecke, 2015). While corporate resilience is a complex, multidimensional, and multifarious concept, the notion and meaning of resilience are very context-dependent. (Bhamra et al 2011; Swalha 2015; Linnenluecke 2017; Duchek 2019)

2.1.2 The Resilience Process

The term "resilience" is used in management research to refer to several concepts and views. (Burnard and Bhamra 2011; Duchek 2014, 2019; Linnenluecke 2017).The earliest management research studiesdescribed resilience as an ex post facto outcome (Boin and van Eten 2013). From an ex post facto perspective, resilience is defined as an ability to recover, thereby restricting it to a post adverse event phase (Williams 2017). Subsequent and more recent research has established resilience as a process that results in resilient outcomes (Sutcliffe et al., 2003; Burnard and Bhamra, 2011; Duchek, 2019). Thus, seeing resilience through the process lens elucidates "resilience's dynamic character as a relationship between the environment and the organization" (William et al., 2017 p.20). In summation, it can be stated that resilience is the capacity to cope with bad situations not just after they occur but also before and during them.

2.1.3 Resilience Development Stages

Very few studies have been undertaken to understand better the resilience process (Linnenluecke and Griffiths 2012; Duchek 2014, 2019, Williams et al. 2017). Each study defines resilience as a mechanism that connects resources to outcomes. They also believe that resilience grows from one crisis to the next.

According to previous studies, resilience is a three-stage process, with each stage referring to a particular time period, such as prior to, during, and after an unfavourable occurrence (Linnenluecke and Griffiths 2012; Duchek 2012,2019). These stages are referred to as-

1- *Anticipation stage*- The period before the occurrence of an adverse event is known as the anticipation stage (Kendra and Wachtendorf 2003; Somers 2009; Burnard and Bhamra 2011; Duchek 2019). Anticipation can be defined as the unique competence to observe the internal

and external environments and developments to the extent possible to prepare for any adverse event or warning signals (Teixeira and Werther 2013; Duchek 2019).

2- *Coping stage* – It refers to the time period during the adverse phase and calls for the development and implementation of solutions to deal with the adverse event (Duchek 2019)

3- *The adaptation stage* refers to the time after the adverse event and focuses on developing new competencies to deal with future events based on the lessons learnt from the event (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

Thus, to build corporate resilience, it is pertinent to develop a process to constantly monitor the environment, solve problems during the coping stage and learn and improve for the future.To increase the organization's overall resilience, it is critical to strengthen its groups and work teams (Williams et al., 2011).Employee inclusion thus plays an essential role in building the trust and cohesion in work teams that would further augment the competencies and resilience of the organization.

2.2 Previous research on Employee Inclusion

2.2.1 The Concept of Employee Inclusion

Employee inclusiveness is a complicated and ever-changing notion (Cahill Pope, Patricia 2019). Early studies utilized the term 'employee inclusion' to refer to the degree to which workers are 'allowed to participate and empowered to contribute fully to work teams.' (Miller,1998).Employee inclusion can also be described as 'the degree to which an employee is embraced, welcomed, and considered a team member' (Hope Pelledet al.1999). The additional study defines employee inclusion as 'the degree to which an individual feels connected to essential organizational operations allowing him access to information and resources, a sense of connectedness with co-workers and superiors, and a sense of participation in decision-making' (Stretch, 2000). According to a more recent study, employee inclusion is both a process and a condition (Dobusch 2014).

Inclusion as a Process can be defined as 'an ongoing process of change and integration' whereas as a condition,it can be a result, such as a sense of belongingness' (Deloitte Research Report, Australia 2012).

Employee inclusion is driven by the perception of fairness and respect, inculcating a sense of belongingness within the employees (Nair et al. 2104).An employee acquires the feeling of inclusion with equality and participation vis a vis other reference groups within the organization. Fairness in terms of pay, reward etc., inculcates a feeling of being valued in the employee. Being valued and having a sense of belongingness are essential elements of inclusion (Kendra 2018). Besides this, being appreciated by the organization and having a say in the decision-making process makes an employee feel connected. A feeling of connectedness is another crucial element of inclusion (Carden 2018).

2.2.2 Theoreticalconceptualization of Inclusion

Employee inclusion is conceptualized in different ways; we can use a range of theories, including social identity theory, optimum distinctiveness theory, and the desire for belongingness theory, to explain the notion of employee inclusion (Nair et al.,2014). As per the notions of social identity

theory, a person's self-concept is generated from membership in a particular social group, particularly those with a higher perceived social identity. Thus, social identity underlies the need of an employee to feel included in the work teams. (Tajfel 1982; Fredman & Bernardo 2013).

The optimal distinctiveness theory state that employees seek acceptance by valued work teams to optimize their need for belongingness and individuation (Brewer 1991; Pickett et al. 2002).

Psychologists have identified inclusion as a feeling of acceptance within a workgroup and being treated as an insider in the workteam while maintaining a sense of individuality and uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011).

Thus, employees' feelings of exclusion or inclusion vary depending on the degree of uniqueness and belonging they experienced in their workgroups. (Shore et al., 2011). When employees' requirements for belongingness and individuality are addressed, they feel included.

An employee who feels included helps in taking greater responsibility during a crisis and thus adds to the resilience of the corporate (Duchek 2019).Employee perceptions of inclusion and exclusion and their effect on resiliencemay be written as two-by-two matrix (Nair et al, 2014), as illustrated in Figure 1.

Differentiation *Non-Member* OK to be different BUT Minority feels alienated/ stereotyped An alienated group doesn't feel motivated to display heterogeneous perspectives during a crisis.	**Inclusion** *Member and it's OK to stand out* Minority feels accepted, and uniqueness is celebrated. It helps generate new ideas during a crisis and adds to the creativity and different cognitive mindsets.
Expulsion *Non-Member and* *Minorities have a strong desire to blend in.* Unique ideas creativity of minority aren't expressed,thereby reducing crisis management potential	**Assimilation/Blending** Minorities have a solid need to fit in, and they are only accepted if they look, speak, and think like others. Low motivation for unique ideas during a crisis

Low   Need for belongingness   High

Figure 1- Inclusion as a concept based on individuality and belonging and its impact on Resilience

(Adapted- Shore et al. 2011, Nair et al.,2014)

3- The relationship between corporate inclusiveness and resilience: An illustration of theoretical Framework

This section will present the paper's theoretical framework for the possible connections between employee inclusion and resilience (see Fig 2); this is the product of a combination of previous research on the possible results of employee engagement in work teams and existing research on the creation of corporate resilience components. The study leverages the findings of a qualitative interview with ten inclusion specialists to bolster and support the research's theoretical assertions.These specialists are human resource managers responsible for employee inclusion in big, multinational, and publicly traded India-based corporations.

The study argues, in detail, that if handled properly, employee inclusion may play a critical role in increasing business resilience. The paper examined how employee inclusion may affect the three process stages of corporate resilience. It was based on a broad understanding of employee inclusion in work teams based on uniqueness and belongingness (Shore et al., 2011; Nair et al., 2014) and a process-oriented view of resilience (Williams et al., 2017). The study argues that employee participation may develop and enhancecriticalcompetencies associated with these phases.

The model is structured around resilience process stages and highlights the capacities within each stage of resilience (anticipation, coping, and adaptation) that are impacted by employee inclusion. The model elucidates the mechanisms behind these capacities and draws on results from resilience and inclusion research to demonstrate the critical role of employee inclusion in developing these resilience components (Fig. 2 illustrates the primary impacts; propositions 1-3). Additionally, the model proposes a strategy for resilience-intensifying inclusiveness management. It is generally established that the beneficial effects of employee inclusion do not occur on their own; consequently, appropriate inclusion management is required to maximize employee inclusion (see moderating effects in Fig 2; proposition 4).

3.1 Employee inclusion's effects on Corporate Resilience

Although prior research has shown that employee inclusion may contribute to corporate resilience (Shore et al. 2011; Nair et al. 2014; Gomes et al. 2014), no study has been undertakenon how employee inclusion might strengthen corporate's resilience. The paper will highlight the significant impacts of employee inclusion on various resilience competencies, drawing on past research on employee inclusion and corporate resilience.

The expanded knowledge base associated with inclusive work teams serves as the foundation for all known impacts of employee inclusion (Vogus et al.,2003; Nair et al., 2014). As seen in Fig 1,

employee inclusion in work teams fosters the development of diverse viewpoints, diverse cognitive attitudes, and innovation. (Shore et al. 2011)
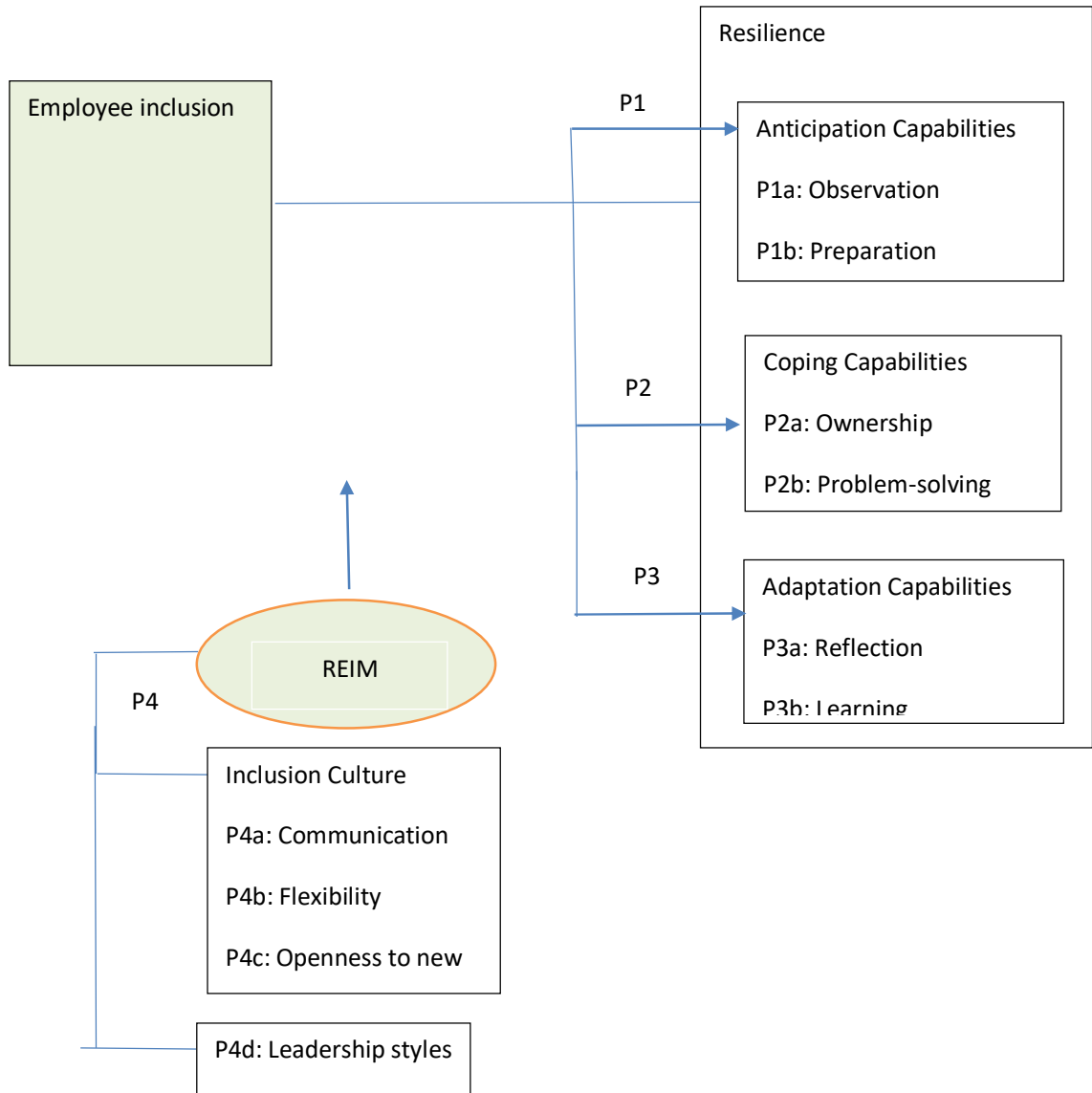
Employee inclusion creates a pool of creative resources that may assist in developing novel solutions rather than infecting the business with groupthink during times of crisis. This is consistent with the psychological theory of inclusion, leading to better problem-solving skills (Weick 1987). Additionally, our experts believe that inclusive work units may help in building corporate resilience by assuming responsibility during times of crisis:

If I have an inclusive work team, it helps buildan atmosphere of trust and creativity. This creates trust, and ownership towards the organization adds to the problem-solving skills that enhance the firm's resilience. (Expert C)

Additionally, the paper will demonstrate how employee inclusion might impact the three-stage organizational resilience process (Anticipation, coping and adaptation). After each section, discovered effects are stated as propositions.

3.1.1 Anticipatory Competence

When seen through a process-based lens, resilience is not limited to post-event learning; instead, it is positioned earlier and involves having capacities prior to adversity (Williams et al., 2017). Numerous writers have referred to the pre-event stage of resilience as the anticipation phase (Burnard and Bhamra 2011; Duchek 2014,2019). Anticipation demonstrates that resilience has preventative competencies (Duchek 2019). Mallack (1998) identified six factors (goal-directed solution-seeking, avoidance of danger, critical situational awareness, members of the team's ability to fulfil multiple tasks, degree of reliance on information sources, and resources accessibility) that resilient firms should proactively develop. Employee inclusion may have a positive effect on two components of the anticipatory stage:-

1- Surveillance of the business environment to identify pertinent facts-
   Employee inclusion can be helpful in the observation of both external and internal developments and the identification of potential warning signs (Duchek, 2019). According to researchers such as Nair (2014) and Shore (2011), inclusive work teams have a greater capacity for perceiving environmental variances because their heterogeneity and mutual acceptance boost their ability to detect, register, and control complexity. According to Page (2014), inclusivity helps preserve cognitive variety, which may increase one's capacity to anticipate.

According to research on inclusiveness in top management work teams, inclusiveness enables a more thorough scanning of the surroundings in a complex context (Cho 2006).

According to our experts, inclusive work units may help build resilience due to their inherent sensitivity and more diversified assessment of a range of possible threats in the corporate environment.

"The more inclusive a team is, the more accurate is the perception of trends and risks" (Expert J)

"It has always been my experience that inclusive work teams are better at scanning the environment due to their acceptance and recognition of different perspectives" (Expert I)

2- Preparation for future developments-Additionally, employee inclusion may help the business prepare for unforeseen situations. According to resilience experts, organizations may establish resilience by adequately planning for and building the broad capacities, knowledge, and functions necessary to deal with any adverse occurrence. (Wildavsky 1991; Kendra and Wachtendorf 2003). Inclusive work teams help prepare for future development as they help build healthy coalitions that serve as bulwarks during emergencies (Nair et al., 2014). Anticipatory innovation is easier to make in an inclusive work team due to their openness to communication. Thus, employee inclusion can help build preparatory abilities that enhance an organization's resilience.

While employee inclusion does not guarantee that organizations will anticipate every threat (Duchek, 2019) and do not always result in a reduction in the number or severity of critical events, the inclusive organization may be able to scan better and observe the environment, identify potential warning signs, and assist in better preparation for adverse events. This means that employee inclusion helps in building a resilient potential.

Proposition 1: Employee participation benefits the development of anticipatory competence by enhancing (a) environmental scanning and monitoring of significant changes. b) the foresight of future events.

3.1.2 Coping Competence

It is practically difficult to anticipate every key future event. (Lengnick-Hall and Beck2005), as a result, organizations must acquire coping abilities to deal with important events after their occurrence. Coping is described as developing and implementing competence to solve particular problems. (Duchek 2014, 2019). Employee inclusion can help in building specific coping competencies like –

1- Ownership- Coping with a crisis requires a combination of immediate action and complete ownership. (Weick et al., 2015). Only when people feel personally attached to the crisis can they understand the situation better and act decisively (Weick 1993; Weick 2009). Ownership competencies help all the employees in the organization to assume responsibility and understand adverse events and thus help in problem-solving.

Employee inclusion plays a vital role in collective ownership. People at every level need to assume ownership during a crisis so that the performance of all the organization's functions happen smoothly (Stephens et al., 2013)also argue thatemployee inclusion is critical for instilling a feeling of collective responsibility, which may aid in the development of resilience capacities.

Additionally, our specialists assert that an inclusive work environment increases the capacity for decisive action due to the feeling of belongingness and ownership developed by the inclusion of all the employees.

"The feeling of belongingness and ownership are woven in a culture of inclusion helps in quick action, decisive and responsible behaviour by the employees during a crisis" (Expert A)

"Due to inclusiveness, the groupthink gets reduced, ownership and responsible behaviour gets enhanced, and creative problem-solving gets promoted" (Expert F)

2- Problem-Solving- Crisis management is enhanced with creative problem solvingbecause crises are inherently complicated and cannot be quickly resolved by conventional

approaches. This requires creativity within the organization and an atmosphere of trust and openness. Research on inclusion demonstrates that employee inclusion enhances communication, knowledge sharing, coordination, and conflict resolution within the organization (Svenson 1999; Nair et al. 2014; Duchek 2019).

The most noted use of inclusion for crisis management in the resilience literature is the creation of suitable and creative solutions in the event of a crisis (Duchek, 2019). However, researchers from the social-categorization perspective have argued that inclusiveness may not enhance the problem-solving skills of the organization due to the presence of ingroups and outgroups that may cause the group process to be disrupted (van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007). This indicates that inclusion can slow down the problem-solving process, especially in crises where teams must act quickly. Thus, inclusion management is critical to ensuring that inclusion has a beneficial effect. Recent studies demonstrate the importance of inclusive culture in enhancing the positive impact of inclusiveness through communication, openness to new ideas and flexibility (Nair et al. 2014).

Our experts strongly advocate that inclusive work-teams have better problem-solving potential in crises:

"Having a heterogeneous and inclusive workteam help in building coping competency due to diverse viewpoints with little to no groupthink" (Expert D).

"Minorities have a different set of experiences, which give a new perspective at solving novel problems. To my mind, inclusion enables a business to address problems and obstacles effectively". (Expert G).

"For quick problem solving,you need a diverse group of thinkers to pool their experiences and suggest appropriate ideas swiftly and creatively, which frequently occurs in an inclusive workplace.". (Expert C).

Overall, it can be suggested that employee inclusion plays a crucial role in the corporate coping process (Duchek, 2019).In response to unexpected critical events (Duchek,2019), employee inclusion can promote coping competencies by enhancing collective ownership and problem-solving skills. Thus, the following proposition can be formulated:

Proposition 2: Employee inclusion has a beneficial effect on the growth of an organization's coping competencies by increasing the organization's (a) ownership and (b) problem-solving aptitude.

3.1.3 Adaptation competence-

Adaptation competencies do not just mean the restoration of the day to day functionality of the organization; it instead includes the development of new

competencieslearnt after the crisis to prepare for future events (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2011; Duchek 2014, 2019).Organizations may benefit from prior crises and improve their preparedness for future ones. For adapting successfully, both cognitive and behavioural skills need to be learnt by the

organizations. Thus, not only should organizations reflect on the crisis, but they should also incorporate the lessons learned to widen the knowledge base on crisis management.

Employee inclusion may help organizations reflect on and learn from crises. (Duchek 2019).

1- Reflection- Prior research on inclusion has demonstrated that inclusive work teams can reflect more effectively on the crises they have experienced. For instance, Sun et al. (2016) has shown that an inclusive work team can help focus on the potential causes and perform a more detailed analysis of the crisis due to diverse experiences and an environment of trust and belongingness. Van Knippenberg and Schippers (2003) also argue that reflection on a crisis is more nuanced and analytical in a workteam where the need for belongingness and need for uniqueness are fulfilled, which often happens in an inclusive team (See Fig 1). Thus, inclusive groups which are outcome-oriented are more reflective than groups with minor inclusion.

2- Learning- Crisis is often a unique opportunity to learn new perspectives, and this learning is essential for developing resilient competencies. Learning at the level of groups is an interactive process that often involves asking questions, analyzing the results, seeking feedback, and discussing errors or unexpected outcomes. These things can comfortably occur in an inclusive work team with an inclusive climate where openness and communication are prevalent, and questioning is encouraged. Inclusive work teams promote organizational logic instead of individual blame or targeting minority employee groups (Catino 2008). Research on team learning has also pointed out that more inclusive teams tend to have constructive dialogues and better feedback systems that enhance the learning competencies(Miedema, 2010).

Numerous experts emphasize that inclusive teams foster a more thorough reflectionand better team learning that can be utilized to improve the organization's crisis management capacity.

"Inclusive teams help retain the lessons learnt as they are more involved in responding to the crises and document the lessons through constructive feedback systems" (Expert H).

"Reflection at the crisis and learning from it is a crucial feature of inclusive work team as they collect and compile various perspectives most realistically and honestly" (Expert B).

"In my opinion, assimilative, differentiated or exclusive work-teams cannot survive a crisis due to infighting, groupthink and mistrust whereas an inclusive team is better suited not just to weather a crisis but also to reflect upon it and learn from it." (Expert E).

Thus, employee inclusion can contribute to adaptation competencies. Inclusion helps broaden the knowledge base and prepare the organization for the next crisis (Duchek, 2019).

Proposition 3: Employee participation benefits the development of adaption competence by increasing (a) reflection on and (b) learnings from crises.

3.2 Resilience-intensifying inclusiveness management (RIIM)

Inclusion is a double-edged sword and can provide both positive and negative results (Amyar et al.,2019). Thus, it is crucial to have resilience-intensifying inclusiveness management in the form of

1- Inclusive Culture- When an organization possesses a culture of inclusiveness, it displays the following cultural aspects:
   a) Individuals from diverse social groups can speak freely, without fear of being judged or stereotyped; their opinions are heard and valued, and they are permitted to participate in the organization's fundamental operations. (Booysen et al. 2013)
   b) A multicultural, inclusive organization has *enough flexibility* to allow the members of different groups to shape the organization's strategy and operating systems. (Detert 2007)
   c) Openness to new ideas is promoted to bring creativity and problem-solving skills within the organization. (Nair et al. 2014)
2- Leadership styles In the context of resilience, transformative leadership has been considered as a means of strengthening resilience. (Harland et al. 2005; Morgan et al. 2015). Transformative leadership is associated with more significant positive effects of employee inclusion and lesser adverse effects of the same (Nair et al., 2014).

Thus, it can be propositioned that:

Proposition 4: By establishing an inclusive culture that appreciates diversity, resilience-intensifying inclusiveness management may favourably modify the relationship between inclusion and resilience through(a) open communication, (b) flexibility, (c) openness to new ideas and (d) an appropriate leadership style.

4 Implications and prospects

To our knowledge, this is one of the earliest papersto establish a systematic relationship between two notions of employee inclusion and resilience. The paper presents a theoretical framework for resiliencebased on a processapproach (Duchek 2019; Williams 2017) and discusses the possible implications of employee inclusion on organizational resilience competencies. Numerous theoretical ramifications for future research and practical implications for inclusion management are possible from our findings; they are discussed in the following sections.

4.1 Theoretical implications

This paper explains how we may benefit from various lines of study to improve our knowledge of organizational resilience. It demonstrates, in particular, that we may add to the available repository on inclusion research to enhance theunderstanding of the resilienceprocess within organizations (Duchek, 2019). Additionally, this article adheres to Duchek's process-based resilience approach (2014,2019). The relationship between inclusivity and organizational resilience is an intriguing issue that warrants additional examination. While this research work examined the relationship between inclusiveness and organizational resilience on a broad level, more research may discuss specific areas in greater detail.Besides this, further research can also

be conducted on reverse connections and interrelationships on the moderators like inclusion culture and leadership styles.

4.2 Practical implications

The conclusions of this paper have a number of consequences for HR managers. The paper proposes a need for employee inclusion within the workteams, as employee inclusion can enhance corporate resilience. Thus, organizations should not attempt to avoid multicultural teams;instead, they should promote inclusiveness within their workteams (Duchek, 2019). This can be realized with a culture of openness, fairness and open-minded HR policies. Transformative leadership style can enhance the organization's resilience, and it may be argued that inclusion management should be considered a cultural shift in firms' organizational development objectives, especially in turbulent times that the world is currently witnessing.

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