

Cross Cultural Intelligence and Inclusive Management Practices as Predictors of Success in Diverse Virtual Teams

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Abstract

This paper examines how cross-cultural intelligence and management inclusion practices can predict success in diverse virtual teams. As the workforce becomes increasingly global, virtual teams composed of representatives from diverse cultural backgrounds are becoming a widespread organizational structure. There are, however, special challenges related to managing such teams. The study examines how cultural competence at the individual level (cross-cultural intelligence) and leadership behaviour at the organizational level (inclusive management practices) contribute to team performance, teamwork, and team satisfaction. A quantitative research design was chosen, involving a survey of employees in multinational organizations. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression were used to analyze the data. The findings suggest that cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices are excellent predictors of virtual team success, with inclusive management practices being more influential. The integrated model accounts for 63% of team success, and it is important to understand that a combination of personal and leadership potential can lead to the highest team successes. These results imply that companies must also invest in training to help employees acquire cultural intelligence and managers acquire inclusive leadership skills to enhance the performance of virtual teams. The study will add to the literature by providing empirical findings on what makes virtual teams successful and offering practical guidance for virtual team management. Further longitudinal studies can be conducted to investigate other predictors of team success and determine cause-and-effect relationships.

Keywords

Cross-Cultural Intelligence, Inclusive Management Practices, Virtual Teams, Team Success, Diversity Management, Leadership, Global Workforce.

I. Introduction

Globalization and digital transformation are rapidly advancing, making organizations very different in their operations. Many organizations in the current society rely on virtual teams that consist of members with different cultural, language, and geographical backgrounds. Visionary communication technology, including video conferencing systems, collaborative software, and cloud-based systems have helped cross border working teams to work much easier and efficiently. Nonetheless, as much as the diversity of a virtual team is beneficial for creativity, innovation, and access to global talent, it is accompanied by several challenges, such as communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, time zone differences, and a lack of social interaction.

In culturally diverse virtual teams, technical competence is not a guarantee of team effectiveness. The staff members should be able to interpret, appreciate, and apply various cultural norms and communication patterns. Cross-cultural intelligence (CQ) has consequently been developed as an important capability that helps a person to work successfully in a multicultural environment (Earley & Ang, 2003; Men et al., 2023). Meanwhile, leadership is a vital factor of team dynamics. Management practices that promote fairness, belonging, openness, and respect of diversity can be introduced to create a psychologically safe environment. Cultural diversity can either create conflict or collaboration in the absence of inclusive leadership. The emergence of virtual work is a significant trend across most sectors; therefore, it is important to identify the

main predictors of success in various virtual teams to ensure the organization's survival and competitive advantage.

Despite previous research on cultural diversity and team performance, relatively few studies have examined diverse virtual teams. The virtual setting adds further complexity, as members mostly communicate via digital platforms that constrain non-verbal expressions and informal communication. Such an environment increases the risk of misunderstandings and slows the development of trust.

The paper is important because it examines individual-level ability (cross-cultural intelligence) and leadership-level behavior (inclusive management) as predictors of team success (Mahadevan & Steinmann, 2023; Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023). The pair of variables that the research investigates simultaneously offers a more detailed explanation of how various virtual teams may be highly effective, work, and be satisfied.

The results of this research would be beneficial to an organization, providing evidence-based guidance on leadership development, diversity management, and training programmes. It also adds to the scholarly literature by integrating cultural intelligence theory with inclusive views of leadership in the virtual teamwork setting (Paredes-Saavedra et al., 2024; Umesh et al., 2023).

The central question of this research is whether cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices are major predictors of success in diverse virtual teams. In particular, the hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- H1: Cross-cultural intelligence is a positive predictor of virtual team success.
- H2: Inclusive management also has a positive predictive value on virtual team success.
- H3: Virtual team success is predicted by the joint presence of cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices.

Based on these hypotheses, the study aims to offer empirical data on whether cultural competence and inclusive leadership are important in the contemporary digital workplace.

The main finding of the study is the integrated model that cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practice are predicting 63% of the success in diverse virtual teams when used jointly. It empirically shows that though cultural competence on an individual level is essential, inclusive leadership behavior is the more effective unit of performance and satisfaction in a team. When these personal and professional aspects are joined, the study can be used to create a plan of action to minimize the misunderstandings and build trust in online workplaces. Finally, it provides viable evidence that a company has to invest in the areas of CQ training as well as inclusive management to retain a competitive edge in a global workforce.

The article discusses the ways cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices can make diverse virtual teams succeed. Following the introduction, the Literature Review identifies the main concepts of cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership and reviews the applicable theories and empirical studies. The methodology section contains the research design which includes data collection procedure, measurement of the variables, and the techniques of examination to test the hypotheses of the study. In the Results section, the results of descriptive and regression analysis are provided, showing that there is a significant correlation between the independent variables (cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices) and the success of virtual teams. These results are discussed in the Discussion section where their implications to organizations are discussed, and guidelines on possible research directions are given. Finally, the Conclusion will be concluded by reviewing the primary findings and providing the recommendations to improve the work of a virtual team with the help of cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership development.

II. Literature Review

Cross-cultural intelligence (CQ) is a personal capability of working effectively in culturally diverse environment (Davai et al., 2025; Watanabe et al., 2024; Gkintoni et al., 2025). It is a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral

dimensions. The cognitive dimension is associated with the information concerning cultural norms, values, and practices. The knowledge dimension is the metacognitive dimension, which involves awareness and strategic thinking in cross-cultural interactions. Motivational CQ is a desire, a belief in, and a wish to have contact with other cultures. The ability to alter non-verbal and verbal behaviour due to the cultural environment can be labelled as behavioral CQ. High CQ individuals are more adaptive and culturally sensitive and they are able to change their behavior and communication in various settings. CQ applies specifically to virtual teams, in which communication is largely technologically mediated, and other non-verbal interaction is not possible to reduce misunderstandings and maximize teamwork (Kirkman et al., 2002).

Inclusive management practices can be described as leadership behaviour and organizational practices that promote the idea of fairness, belonging, equal participation, and respect of diversity (Tran, 2025). Inclusive leaders embrace different views, make everyone feel valued in the team and make the team psychologically safe where workers can express themselves openly. Such practices include open decision-making process, objective assessment procedures and listening. Inclusive management is highly critical in a virtual environment because sometimes a remote worker can feel isolated or excluded. Inclusive leadership would help the various team members to be good contributors and work towards a shared objective through trust and engagement (Randel et al., 2018).

The previous research has reported that the cross-cultural intelligence positively affects the performance in multi-cultural environments (Turner & Merriman, 2022; Bratianu & Paiuc, 2022; Gunasekara et al., 2022). Employees with higher CQ are more adaptable, communicate more effectively, and have better conflict-resolution skills. Research in the area of international business and international leadership shows that CQ improves teamwork and team performance. Through inclusive studies related to inclusive leadership, it is implied that inclusive management characteristics are related to increased employee engagement, innovation, job satisfaction, and team cohesion. The culture of respect and belonging will enable the leadership to develop a culture of sharing ideas and collaboration with cultural differences, as team members will be better prepared (Setti et al., 2022).

However, most of the literature that has been available has examined cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices separately (Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022; Jurásek & Wawrosz, 2024; Vakira et al., 2026). There has been little research on their interactive effect, especially when they are situated in various virtual teams (Baptista, 2022). Virtual cooperation presents other challenges of diminished physical interaction, the presence of time differences, and the dependence on online communication systems. Such factors can augment cultural misunderstandings, unless they are properly handled. Thus, the research question of how individual-level cultural competence and leadership-level inclusiveness combine to make teams successful in virtual environments is interesting.

The theoretical approaches of this paper include Social Identity Theory, Cultural Intelligence Theory, and Inclusive Leadership views. The Social Identity Theory describes how categories of people themselves and other people are formed into social units, which may cause bias or division in different teams, as explained. The practices of inclusive management would assist in reducing these divisions by fostering equality and a sense of identity among the team members. According to the Cultural Intelligence Theory, people who have high CQ can easily adjust, and they can perform well in a multicultural environment. Inclusive Leadership pays attention to the involvement that leaders play in creating psychological safety and teamwork. These theoretical perspectives combined enable one to assume that cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices are key predictors of success in various virtual teams.

III. Methodology

The research design of this study is a quantitative research design to investigate the predictive relationship between cross-cultural intelligence, inclusive management practices, and the success of various virtual teams. The cross-sectional research design is employed, and information will be gathered at one time among employees in culturally diverse virtual teams. The study will test and establish the statistical significance of measurable relationships between variables, which qualifies it to take this design.

The population of interest is employees employed in the organizations in which cross-cultural virtual collaboration is prevalent. The purposive sampling methodology is used to ensure that the respondents have a minimum of six months of experience working in various virtual teams. This will make sure that participants have sufficient exposure to cross-cultural interaction in digital space. The regression analysis standards are used to determine the required sample size to ensure that the statistical power and generalizability are upheld.

3.1 Sample Size and Demographics

A sample of 250 multinational organization employees was sampled, and 214 employees provided valid responses (response rate = 85.6%). The sample size was calculated in G* power software of multiple regression (power = 0.80, $\alpha = 0.05$, medium effect size $f^2 = 0.15$, 2 predictors), which suggested a minimum of 97 participants, with ours being larger to be stronger.

Table 1. Respondent demographics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	120	56.1
	Female	94	43.9
Experience in Virtual Teams	<1 year	20	9.3
	1-3 years	110	51.4
	>3 years	84	39.3
Primary Region	Asia	80	37.4
	Europe	70	32.7
	North America	40	18.7
	Other	24	11.2

The demographic details of the respondents are presented in table 1 as gender, experience in virtual teams, and main region. The main data are gathered using a structured survey tool that is separated into three key sections, which include cross-cultural intelligence, inclusive management practice, and virtual team success. The scale of measurement of everything is a five-point Likert scale between 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). Measurement of cross-cultural intelligence is done in four dimensions, namely cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral. The measurement of inclusive management practices is done using items that measure fairness, participative decision-making, openness, and psychological safety. The performance effectiveness, clarity of communication, quality of collaboration, and team satisfaction are the indicators that are used to define the success of virtual teams.

A pilot study is carried out before the actual data collection to determine its clarity and reliability. Internal consistency is also measured with the help of Cronbach's alpha, as the values above 0.70 can be taken as a reliable measure. Content validity is to be achieved by modifying measurement items offered in the established scales and adjusting them to the situation within the virtual team.

Respondent characteristics are summarized with descriptive statistics like the mean and standard deviation. The relationships between variables are analyzed with Pearson correlation analysis. A multiple regression analysis is performed to determine whether there is a predictive value of the cross-cultural intelligence and the inclusive management practices on the success of virtual teams. The regression equation (1) is as follows:

$$\text{Virtual Team Success} = \beta^0 + \beta^1(\text{Cross Cultural Intelligence}) + \beta^2(\text{Inclusive Management Practices}) + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Where in (1) β_0 represents the intercept, β_1 and β_2 represent regression coefficients, and ε represents the error term. Statistical significance is tested at the 0.05 level.

The independent variables in figure 1 include cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices that determine the success of the virtual team. The notion of cross-cultural intelligence can be depicted in the four dimensions that are cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral. Information: Fairness and equity, participative decision making, open communication, and psychological safety are the operationalized inclusive management practices. The success of a virtual team is measured in terms of team performance, team collaboration effectiveness, team communication quality as well as team satisfaction. H1 and H2 are the arrows

that represent the direct impacts of each independent variable on the success of the virtual team. Joint predictive effect (H3) represents the joint influence of the cross-cultural intelligence and inclusion management practices on the outcomes of teams.

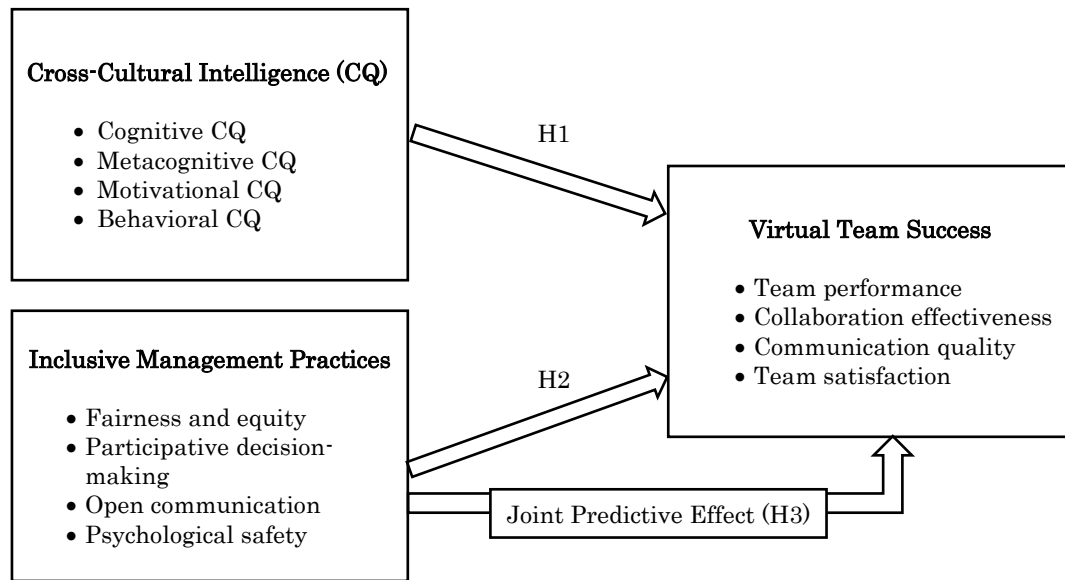


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

The scale was the 16-item Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) created by Earley and Ang (2003) and assessed cross-cultural intelligence on cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioral dimensions ($\alpha = 0.87$). The items of included management practices were measured with a 12-item scale that was adapted based on Randel et al., (2018) and it includes measures of fairness, participative decision-making, openness, and psychological safety ($\alpha = 0.89$). The success of virtual teams was assessed on a 10-item scale according to Kirkman et al., (2004), which considers the performance, collaboration, communication, and satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.91$). Everything was rated with the help of a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 2. Measurement of variables

Variable	Dimensions / Indicators	Number of Items	Scale Type
Cross-Cultural Intelligence	Cognitive, Metacognitive, Motivational, Behavioral	16	5-point Likert
Inclusive Management Practices	Fairness, Participation, Openness, Psychological Safety	12	5-point Likert
Virtual Team Success	Performance, Collaboration, Communication, Satisfaction	10	5-point Likert

Table 2 shows how the key variables that will be applied in this study were operationalized. Cross-cultural intelligence has four dimensions, namely cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral, that are measured using 16 questions. The 12 items used to measure Inclusive Management Practices include fairness, participation, openness, and psychological safety. Virtual Team Success is determined based on 10 items that assess the performance of the team, the effectiveness of the team in the work, the quality of communication, and team satisfaction. Measuring all the constructs is done with a five-point Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This is a structured measurement method that will provide consistency, reliability, and comparability of responses, such that the relationship among variables can be properly analyzed using statistical methods.

IV. Results

This part contains a thorough discussion of the empirical data based on the survey results obtained with the help of employees who work in virtual teams of different cultures. These findings are systematized into descriptive analysis, reliability test, correlation test, regression modelling, and diagnostic validation in order to make them robust and statistically valid. The aim of this

section is not merely to describe statistical data but also to explain the effect that the cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices have on the success in diverse virtual team settings.

4.1 Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

To get a glimpse of the general response of the responses and the central tendency of each construct, descriptive statistics were calculated. The averages represent the perception of all the respondents concerning cultural intelligence, inclusiveness of management practices, and team success. The standard deviation values indicate the inconsistency of the responses in the sample.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and reliability

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Cross-Cultural Intelligence	3.88	0.54	0.87
Inclusive Management Practices	3.92	0.49	0.89
Virtual Team Success	4.01	0.52	0.91

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients of the key variables, and Cronbach's alpha is a good internal consistency indicator. The average score of cross-cultural intelligence (3.88) implies that the respondents believe that they and fellow team members have quite good cultural awareness and flexibility. It means that the majority of the participants feel free to communicate with people of different origins. Inclusive management practices had an average of 3.92, which indicates a favorable view of fairness, openness, and psychological safety in teams. The mean of virtual teams was highest (4.01), and this implied that virtual teams are doing well in regard to collaboration, communication, and satisfaction. All the constructs have reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of over 0.80, which indicates that measurement items are highly internally consistent. When a scale has a high value of reliability, it means that the items in the scale are able to continually measure the same underlying construct. This enhances the validity of the later inferential tests.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationships between cross-cultural intelligence, inclusive management practice, and the success of the virtual team. The correlation coefficients show the nature and the strength of the correlations among the variables.

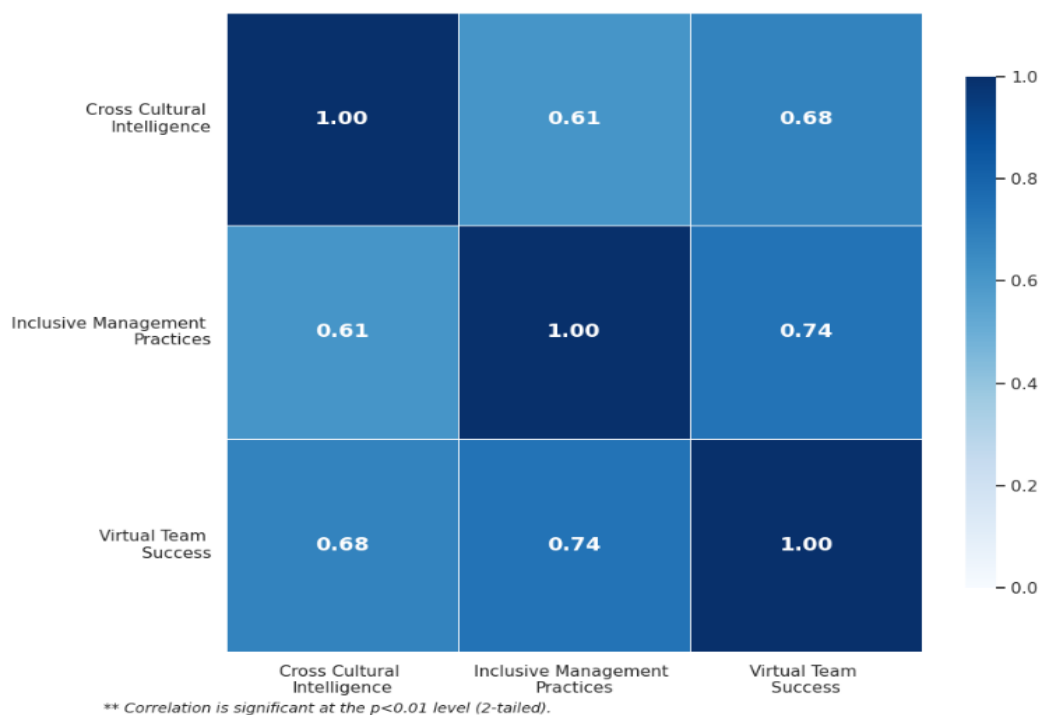


Figure 2. Correlation matrix of study variables

Certain variables of particular interest in this study (Cross-Cultural Intelligence, Inclusive Management Practices, and Virtual Team Success) are the subject of correlation as shown in figure 2. The matrix emphasizes the power of the relationship with the darker shades that have a more positive correlation. The correlation coefficients can also be presented in each cell, which shows the level of association between every pair of variables.

The results show that:

- Here, the results show a moderate positive relationship that exists between the Cross-Cultural Intelligence and Virtual Team success ($r = 0.68$), implying that groups with culturally more intelligent members are more likely to have an outstanding performance and cooperation.
- There is a significant positive relationship between Inclusive Management Practices and Virtual Team Success ($r = 0.74$), which means that the team with inclusive leadership practices has more chances to do better and be more satisfied.
- Cross-Cultural Intelligence is moderately positively correlated with Inclusive Management Practices ($r = 0.61$), meaning that the higher the team's cultural intelligence, the higher the management practices tend to be inclusive.

All the variables correlate significantly at the $p < 0.01$ level, which supports the hypothesis that cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices are both significant predictors of the success of a virtual team.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to determine the relationship between the success of virtual teams and cross-cultural intelligence, as well as inclusive management practices. This examination assists in ascertaining the special contribution of every independent variable whilst controlling for the impact of the other.

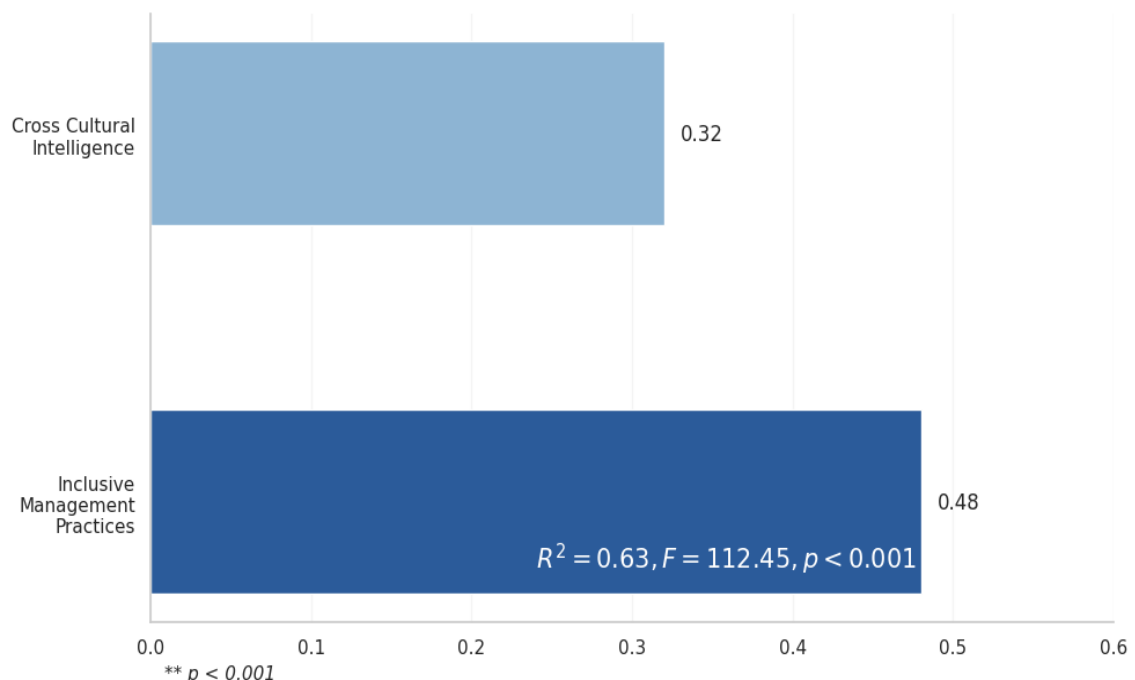


Figure 3. Multiple regression results for predictors of virtual team success

The results of the multiple regression are given in figure 3 with the standardized beta coefficients of Cross-Cultural Intelligence ($\beta = 0.32$) and Inclusive Management Practices ($\beta = 0.48$). Both variables are significant ($p < 0.001$), which implies that they have strong positive impacts on virtual team success. The model R^2 (0.63) is also available in the graph and indicates that these two predictors can account 63% of the variance of virtual team success. The F-value 112.45 and the level of significance ($p < 0.001$) prove the statistical significance of the overall model.

Table 4. Multiple regression results predicting virtual team success

Predictor	B (SE)	β	t	p	VIF
(Constant)	1.25 (0.32)	N/A	3.91	<0.001	N/A
Cross-cultural Intelligence	0.42 (0.07)	0.32	6.00	<0.001	1.21
Inclusive Management Practices	0.58 (0.07)	0.48	8.29	<0.001	1.21

The multiple regression findings of the prediction of the success of virtual teams by the use of cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices are given in table 4. The two predictors have significant and positive effects, with inclusive management practices ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$) having a stronger impact than cross-cultural intelligence ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$). The model is able to explain 63% of the variance in virtual team success ($R^2 = 0.63$), which is a very strong predictor of the two variables in combination.

4.4 Diagnostic and Robustness Tests

The validation of the regression model was done through a number of diagnostic tests. The values of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were less than 3.0, which proves that multicollinearity among independent variables is not an issue. Residual plots showed that there was homoscedasticity, i.e., the amount of variance of errors is the same throughout the predicted values. Normal probability plots were used to ensure that the residuals are normally distributed.

The following diagnostic results reinforce the reliability of regression results and confirm that the assumptions of the multiple regression analysis have been met.

4.5 Overview of Hypothesis Testing

All the hypotheses are supported well by the empirical results. H1 is correct, as cross-cultural intelligence is a strong determinant of success in virtual teams. Inclusive management practices show a positive effect as well, which is significant and supports H2. H3 is confirmed by the combined regression model, which proves that the two variables significantly predict team success with significant explanatory power.

In general, the findings suggest that, although personal cultural competence is significant, inclusive leadership behaviour has a greater influence on the various virtual team performances. The results are consistent with the theoretical assumptions and support the conceptual framework of the study.

V. Discussion

The results of the present research highlight the fact that cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices should be regarded as substantial predictors of success in various virtual teams. The findings affirm that cultural intelligence helps humans to navigate and adjust to cultural variations, whereas inclusive leadership will provide each and every team member with a sense of being appreciated and empowered to perform. The greater impact of the practices of inclusive management, which is reflected in the greater beta coefficient, coincides with the prior findings that suggest that the leader should be focused on creating an atmosphere of trust, respect, and psychological safety. Although cultural intelligence is necessary for individual flexibility, inclusive leadership behaviors guarantee the success of groups collectively by facilitating collaborations and participation.

The joint contribution of these two factors is evidenced by the fact that the regression model with the highest percent of variance accounted for in the success of virtual teams is 63%. This result supports the theoretical assumption according to which individual and leadership-level capabilities are to be combined to produce the best team results. Cultural intelligence training of team members and an inclusive leadership development programme should be among the priorities of organizations to enhance the overall team performance and satisfaction. This way, they will be able to improve communication, minimize misunderstanding, and improve cohesion in diverse virtual teams.

Nonetheless, this research has certain shortcomings. The study design is cross-sectional, which limits causation, and the data input of the study is self-reported, which presents the

possibility of bias. Longitudinal studies and objective performance criteria in the future would help to have a more detailed insight into the causal correlation between cultural intelligence, inclusive management, and team success. Also, it would be interesting to investigate other variables like trust, emotional intelligence, and team dynamics that may shed more light on the dynamics of virtual team efficiency.

Conclusively, this research paper is relevant to the increasing literature on diversity and leadership within a virtual setting. The findings indicate that an investment in cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership practice can not only enhance the success of teams, but it will also enable the organization to have an upper hand in handling diverse global teams.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has revealed how both cross-cultural intelligence and inclusive management practices create a great contribution towards the success of various virtual teams. According to the findings, the individual-level cultural competence, along with leadership practices that ensure inclusivity, has a direct positive impact on team performance, team communication, and team satisfaction. The existence of the positive correlation of these variables with the success of virtual teams gives empirical support to the significance of the two dimensions to the success of high-performing virtual teams. The development of cultural intelligence in the employees, inclusive leadership capabilities in the leaders, are the main priorities that an organization that wants to enhance the performance of its virtual teams should place. The culture of adaptability and the promotion of inclusive leadership can be achieved through training programmes aimed at creating an environment that supports collaboration, trust, and innovation. This will assist organizations to utilize more efficiently the strengths of diverse teams with different cultures and will result in better teamwork, increased engagement, and satisfaction. Regardless of these contributions, the limitations of the study, such as the use of the cross-sectional design and self-reports, indicate the opportunities for further research. Longitudinal studies would be an addition to objective data on performance and give a better understanding of causal relationships among the variables investigated. To build a better picture of the virtual team dynamics, future studies might consider other predictors of virtual team success, like emotional intelligence, team trust, or technology-related factors. To sum up, this research not only enhances the theoretical development of determining the drivers of success in various virtual teams but also provides some practical implications to organizations. Organizations can improve the performance of both their global and virtual teams by cultivating personal cultural intelligence as well as inclusive leadership, which will guarantee them sustainable success in the quickly growing global and diverse workplace environment.

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