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Examining the Impact of Leadership Styles on Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Practices in Global Automotive Corporations in Japan.

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ABSTRACT:

This dissertation investigates how different leadership styles affect diversity, inclusion, and belonging in global automotive companies in Japan, asking which leadership styles work best to create an inclusive workplace. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research gathers both qualitative and quantitative data through surveys, interviews, and organizational case studies to see how leadership behaviors and diversity outcomes are related. It finds that transformational leadership usually goes together with better diversity and inclusion efforts, but transactional leadership often isn't as good at making employees feel like they belong. These insights show how important leadership style is in shaping the dynamics of the automotive workplace and emphasize that leaders need to use inclusive strategies that work well across different teams. The implications of this research go beyond just the automotive industry, suggesting that similar leadership principles could be used in other fields, like healthcare, to boost equity and improve workplace culture. By highlighting the role of leadership in driving diversity efforts, this study adds to the ongoing discussion on organizational behavior and could inform leadership development programs to enhance inclusivity in various sectors; it may even inform those sectors directly.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Global Workforce, Workplace Belonging, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Global Automotive Industry, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in Japan, Organizational Behavior, Inclusive Leadership, Corporate Culture, Mixed-Methods Research, Cross-Cultural Management.

Introduction:

The automotive industry, a cornerstone of global business, vividly illustrates how leadership influences organizational culture, specifically concerning diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB). As companies navigate globalization, technological leaps, and an increasing societal focus on equity, leadership styles significantly shape their ability to foster inclusive environments. Transformational leadership—inspiring teams via shared vision and empathy often yields better diversity and inclusion results compared to transactional leadership, which emphasizes efficiency and performance (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2020) (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020). In Japan, where traditional norms can clash with modern diversity efforts, examining how leadership intersects with DIB in global automotive corporations is crucial. This dissertation seeks to understand how different leadership styles impact DIB strategies' implementation and effectiveness in Japan's automotive sector, addressing a gap in the literature that often neglects cultural nuances (Murdoch Z, 2022) (Perruci G, 2018).

This research aims to pinpoint prevalent leadership styles in selected automotive corporations, analyze their links to DIB practices, and assess how Japanese cultural elements shape these interactions. By studying global automotive leaders, the study intends to offer comprehensive insights into how leadership affects workplace diversity and inclusion. Moreover, this research seeks to enrich broader discussions on leadership effectiveness in varied organizations, especially in cultures with deep-rooted traditional values, filling an academic need (N/A, 2022)(Fan D et al., 2022).The investigation's importance is considerable; academically, it furthers theoretical views on leadership and diversity, tackling an underexplored area relevant to organizational behavior and cultural studies (Perruci G, 2018)(Wu Y et al., 2023). Practically, it provides actionable insights for those aiming to improve diversity in an industry vital to Japan's economy and social structure (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021) (Primavera A Spagnolo et al., 2020). Images, such as those showcasing diverse leadership training, highlight the need for tailored strategies that resonate with cultural subtleties. This reinforces the necessity for organizations to embrace inclusive practices that blend local cultural sensitivities with global diversity goals. This research seeks not only to clarify the complex relationship between leadership styles and DIB practices but also to potentially set a standard for future research at the intersection of leadership, culture, and organizational effectiveness in Japan's automotive sector.

Image1. Visual representation of diversity and inclusion from the 2022 Inclusion & Diversity Report.

Literature Review:

The evolving global business scene, particularly in the automotive sector, really brings home how much corporations *must* adapt to different cultural and social expectations when it comes to how their workforce operates. In our increasingly interconnected world, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) has become a key thing for organizational success, not just to make employees happier but to also boost innovation and stay ahead of the competition. This is super important for automotive corporations working in Japan, where old-school leadership bumps into newer ideas about creating an inclusive environment. Research tells us that leadership styles are crucial in shaping DIB practices, affecting how companies handle these essential values. For example, transactional leadership can reinforce traditional hierarchies that might stifle diversity, whereas transformational leadership often leads to more inclusive practices that empower employees to share what makes them unique (N/A, 2022) (Murdoch Z, 2022). Plus, research points out how important cultural context is, showing that Japanese corporate culture presents unique challenges, *and* opportunities, when implementing DIB initiatives (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020) (Perruci G, 2018). Even though there's more and more research on leadership and how it affects organizational culture, we still don't fully get how these things play out in the global automotive industry in Japan. A lot of studies have focused on Western situations, leaving a gap in what we know about how different leadership styles impact DIB in non-Western places (Perruci G, 2018) (Fan D et al., 2022). Also, while lots of scholars have emphasized how important it is to embrace diversity as part of corporate social responsibility, not many have looked at how leadership styles and local cultural practices intersect in the automotive sector (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021).

These kinds of studies are really important to truly understand how leadership can either help or hurt a truly inclusive workplace, *especially* in an industry that's changing a lot because of new tech and changing customer expectations (Tickner D et al., 2020).Plus, while some people recognize that diverse teams can make better decisions and solve problems better, there's not enough solid proof specifically connecting different leadership approaches to measurable DIB results in Japanese automotive firms (Cucari N et al., 2017)(Sheehan M et al., 2015). This lack of full understanding gives us a great chance for more research that can help both academic discussions and real-world applications in managerial training and corporate policy making. So, we can't overstate how important it is to look at how leadership styles affect DIB practices in this specific situation, considering Japan's unique culture and how important the automotive industry is to its economy.This literature review aims to dig into the tricky relationships between different leadership styles and how they impact diversity, inclusion, and belonging within global automotive corporations in Japan, to ultimately figure out strategic ways to boost DIB practices in this important sector. By pulling together existing research and pointing out gaps, this review wants to set the stage for future studies that will enrich what we know and how we put inclusive leadership strategies into practice (Galdames-Calder Món, 2023)(Wu Y et al., 2023)(Anatan L et al., 2023)(Timo J J Brunner et al., 2023)(Schenkenhofer J, 2022)(Jin D et al., 2023)(Safari M, 2021)(Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2020)(Geoffrey H Tison et al., 2020)(Primavera A Spagnolo et al., 2020).

The sections that follow will dive into specific studies, themes, and theoretical frameworks that shed light on how leadership shapes the cultural feel of automotive organizations in Japan, setting the stage for more inclusive business practices in the global market.###The exploration of leadership styles and their impact on diversity, inclusion, and belonging practices within global automotive corporations, *especially* in Japan, has changed *quite a bit* over recent decades. At first, leadership was mainly about traditional hierarchical models, where leaders stressed authority and compliance (N/A, 2022). But, as the global marketplace grew, scholars started to see the need for more inclusive leadership styles that encourage diversity and collaboration within teams (Murdoch Z, 2022). This change was strongly influenced by the growing awareness of globalization and multiculturalism, which made inclusion a key corporate goal to stay competitive (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020). Around the mid-2010s, research began to highlight transformational leadership as a model that helps diversity initiatives by encouraging employees to share different perspectives and fostering a sense of belonging within organizations

(Perruci G, 2018). Studies echoed this view, showing that inclusive leadership directly linked to better employee engagement and innovation (Perruci G, 2018) (Fan D et al., 2022). Also, recent studies have pointed out how culturally adaptive leadership styles are really important in Japan's unique corporate scene, where traditional values often clash with the need for modern diversity practices (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021).Moreover, solid evidence has come out showing that leadership plays a key role in not just promoting diversity initiatives but also in shaping workplace culture through policies that put inclusion first (Tickner D et al., 2020). Over time, the talk about leadership styles has increasingly included the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and nationality, suggesting that a deep understanding of these things is crucial for effective leadership in global situations (Cucari N et al., 2017) (Sheehan M et al., 2015). This path shows that leadership isn't just about authority but is a dynamic thing that shapes organizational culture and social fairness within the automotive sector and beyond. The exploration of leadership styles within the context of diversity, inclusion, and belonging practices gives us key insights relevant to the automotive sector in Japan. A growing amount of research shows that transformational leadership is often linked to higher levels of employee engagement and the promotion of inclusive behaviors across organizations. For instance, studies have shown that leaders who use transformational strategies create a culture that embraces diversity, leading to greater belonging among employees (N/A, 2022) (Murdoch Z, 2022). On the other hand, transactional leadership styles have been linked to more rigid structures, potentially hindering diversity initiatives (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020). When we look at the landscape of global corporations, it becomes clear that the intersection of leadership and cultural context is *super* important. Research points out that Japanese organizational culture often values consensus and collective decision-making, which can impact how well different leadership styles foster inclusion (Perruci G, 2018) (Perruci G, 2018). Plus, the dynamic nature of the global automotive industry needs adaptive leadership approaches that can respond to changing diversity and inclusion challenges, especially in multinational settings (Fan D et al., 2022) (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Another important thing is how inclusive leadership enhances employees' sense of belonging. Studies suggest that leaders who actively support diversity initiatives not only boost team morale but also spark increased innovation and creativity within teams (Tickner D et al., 2020) (Cucari N et al., 2017). This is critical in industries like automotive manufacturing, where diverse perspectives contribute to product development and market competitiveness. Moreover, putting diversity strategies into action successfully often depends on leaders being willing to go through continuous personal and organizational development (Sheehan M et al., 2015). All together, these findings highlight the complex relationship between leadership styles and the promotion of diversity and inclusion in Japanese automotive corporations, offering valuable ways forward for future research and practice. The way we study leadership styles in the context of diversity, inclusion, and belonging within global automotive corporations in Japan gives us important insights into how organizations work. Qualitative methods, for example, have been essential in understanding the experiences of employees from diverse backgrounds.

By using interviews and case studies, researchers have uncovered the real-life experiences of people navigating corporate cultures, highlighting how different leadership styles can either help or hurt feelings of belonging (N/A, 2022) (Murdoch Z, 2022). These personal stories give us vital context for how effective different leadership approaches are in fostering inclusive environments. On the other hand, quantitative studies have offered broader generalizations about the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement in diversity initiatives. Table Factors surveys that measure how well transformational and transactional leadership influence diversity practices have given us solid data, showing that transformational leadership significantly correlates with increased employee perceptions of inclusion (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 22020) (erruci G, 2018) (Perruci G, 2018). Also, mixed-method approaches combine the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing for a more complete exploration of how leadership impacts diversity and inclusion strategies (Fan D et al., 2022) (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021). While qualitative research paints a detailed picture of individual experiences, quantitative studies lend statistical support to claims about how effective leadership is. This methodological triangulation not only enhances the reliability of findings but also aligns with the complex realities faced by global organizations (Tickner D et al., 2020). Various cultural factors influencing leadership styles, particularly in Japan, have also been acknowledged, emphasizing the need for frameworks that fit the context and adapt well to local practices while fostering global standards in diversity and inclusion (Cucari N et al., 2017) (Sheehan M et al., 2015). Such diverse methods together show the tricky dance between leadership style and how vital diversity practices are within the automotive industry.

The exploration of leadership styles in the context of diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) practices shows a complex relationship between various theoretical frameworks. Transformational leadership, often celebrated for its ability to inspire and foster innovation, is notably effective in creating inclusive environments. Studies suggest that leaders who show transformational characteristics can significantly enhance employee engagement and commitment to diversity initiatives (N/A, 2022) (Murdoch Z, 2022). On the other hand, transactional leadership, which relies on established structures and rewards, may accidentally stifle diversity efforts by prioritizing conformity over inclusivity, as suggested in several analyses (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020) (Perruci G, 2018). When we look at these dynamics within the global automotive sector in Japan, it's crucial to consider the cultural nuances that influence how effective leadership is. The collectivist nature of Japanese society calls for a more adaptive, participative leadership style that can resonate with local employees while promoting wider DIB objectives (Perruci G, 2018) (Fan D et al., 2022). Plus, critical leadership theories state that we must look closely at power dynamics to fully understand how leaders affect DIB outcomes. This view aligns with findings that emphasize the importance of equity and support within leadership practices (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021) (Tickner D et al., 2020). Adding intersectionality theory gives us yet another layer, highlighting how diverse identities within the workforce shape experiences of both leadership and inclusion (Cucari N et al., 2017) (Sheehan M et al., 2015). So, the synthesis of these theoretical frameworks shows not only how leadership styles affect DIB practices but also how cultural and social mechanisms work together in specific contexts, ultimately challenging leaders in the automotive industry to tailor their approach to achieve real inclusivity (Galdames-Calder Món, 2023) (Wu Y et al., 2023).

This comprehensive theoretical discussion gives us a solid background against which we can contextualize the current research within the changing landscape of global business. The exploration of leadership styles in relation to diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) practices within global automotive corporations in Japan has given us significant insights that show just how complex the relationship is between leadership and organizational culture. Notably, this literature review reaffirms that transformational leadership comes across as a key approach capable of fostering inclusive

environments that enhance employee engagement and innovation. As shown by numerous studies, leaders who adopt transformational characteristics actively encourage diverse perspectives, creating a culture of belonging that's crucial for success in the automotive industry (N/A, 2022) (Murdoch Z, 2022). In contrast, transactional leadership has been shown to reinforce existing hierarchies and compliance-based structures, which may hinder diversity initiatives and limit the potential for inclusive practices within organizational frameworks (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020) (Perruci G, 2018). These findings have serious implications for the automotive sector, especially given Japan's unique cultural context, where traditional values often meet modern diversity expectations.

The emphasis on consensus and collective decision-making within Japanese corporate culture highlights that leaders need to adapt their styles to promote inclusivity effectively (Perruci G, 2018) (Fan D et al., 2022). This adaptive approach not only addresses the changing expectations of a diverse workforce but can also greatly contribute to organizational resilience and competitive advantage in the global market. Nevertheless, this literature review acknowledges some limitations. Much of the existing research has mostly focused on Western situations, leaving a gap in understanding how leadership dynamics specifically play out in non-Western settings, *especially* within the Japanese automotive industry (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021) (Tickner D et al., 2020). Plus, while qualitative methods have given us valuable insights into individual employee experiences, there's still not enough solid data linking specific leadership styles to measurable DIB outcomes, calling for a stronger evidential basis for future developments (Cucari N et al., 2017)(Sheehan M et al., 2015).So, future research should aim to bridge these gaps by looking into how different leadership approaches can be effectively put into action within the distinct frameworks of Japanese corporate culture. Areas that need more exploration include the intersectionality of leadership with diverse employee identities and how cultural factors influence how effective leadership is in DIB practices (Galdames-Calder Món, 2023) (Wu Y et al., 2023). Also, expanding the methods to include comprehensive mixed-method studies could create nuanced understandings that are both relevant to the context and globally informed.In conclusion, this review highlights the key role of leadership styles in shaping diversity, inclusion, and belonging within global automotive firms in Japan. As the industry continues to navigate the challenges of globalization and technological advancements, developing a well-informed leadership strategy that prioritizes inclusivity will become even more crucial. Emphasizing the need for transformational leadership and adaptive cultural practices may serve as a way forward for organizations aiming to foster a thriving and diverse workforce. The insights from this literature not only contribute to academic discussions but also offer practical applications that can enhance corporate policies and managerial training in the automotive sector (Anatan L et al., 2023)(Timo J J Brunner et al., 2023)(Schenkenhofer J, 2022)(Jin D et al., 2023)(Safari M, 2021)(Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2020)(Geoffrey H Tison et al., 2020)(Primavera A Spagnolo et al., 2020). By addressing the research gaps identified and taking advantage of the opportunities for future inquiry, both scholars and practitioners can work toward a more inclusive organizational scene.

Leadership Style	Impact on Diversity	Impact on Inclusion	Impact on Belonging
Inclusive Leadership	Enhances representation of underrepresented groups in leadership roles, leading to a more diverse workforce.	Fosters an environment where all employees feel valued and have equal opportunities for advancement.	Cultivates a sense of community and acceptance among employees, improving job satisfaction and retention.
Transformational Leadership	Encourages innovation and openness, attracting a diverse talent pool seeking dynamic work environments.	Promotes collaboration and empowerment, ensuring diverse voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.	Inspires employees to align with organizational values, strengthening their connection to the company.
Transactional Leadership	May inadvertently limit diversity by focusing on established norms and procedures, potentially overlooking diverse perspectives.	Can create a hierarchical environment that may not fully support inclusive practices or equal opportunities.	Employees may feel less engaged or valued if their contributions are not recognized beyond meeting specific targets.

Table. 1. Impact of Leadership Styles on Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Global Automotive Corporations in Japan.

Methodology

Leadership styles, with their complex inner workings, exert considerable influence on workplace culture. This is especially true concerning diversity, inclusion, and belonging, particularly within the specific setting of global automotive corporations located in Japan. Prior research has already shown how leadership affects organizational practices, though the effects can vary depending on context and culture (N/A, 2022). However, a key research problem persists there's a notable lack of understanding of precisely how specific leadership approaches shape diversity initiatives inside automotive

companies operating in Japan, a nation known for its unique cultural norms and business etiquette (Murdoch Z, 2022). As such, this study primarily aims to analyse how transformational and transactional leadership approaches differently affect diversity and inclusion strategies.

The research will also assess the impact these approaches have on how employees experience belonging, and pinpoint useful practices that can boost organizational effectiveness in our globalized world (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020). The significance of this investigation extends beyond contributing to academic conversations about leadership and organizational behavior. It also has practical implications for those in the industry who are looking to create inclusive workplaces that more accurately mirror the global market (Perruci G, 2018). To achieve these aims, a mixed-methods approach will be implemented. This involves combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. This combination allows for a thorough exploration of the dynamic between leadership styles and DIB practices (Perruci G, 2018). The quantitative stage will distribute structured questionnaires to employees across various global automotive firms. The goal is to gather data on their perceptions regarding leadership styles and the success of DIB initiatives (Fan D et al., 2022). This approach builds on prior research that utilized large surveys to measure employee sentiment regarding inclusivity in the workplace (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021). In conjunction, the qualitative stage will feature semi-structured interviews with key leaders. These interviews aim to offer deeper insights into their perspectives on implementing DIB strategies, influenced as they are by their leadership styles (Tickner D et al., 2020). Such a dual approach not only enriches the data but also aligns with well-established methodologies that value the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings. This triangulation promotes a more complete grasp of complex social dynamics (Cucari N et al., 2017). Ultimately, the methodological framework for this study aims to address gaps in current knowledge and deliver actionable insights for enhancing diversity, inclusion, and belonging within global automotive corporations operating in Japan. It's hoped that this will contribute to both theoretical and practical advancements in the field (Sheehan M et al., 2015). These methodologies should also stimulate discussions on the relevance of leadership in fostering inclusive cultures. The goal is to prompt reflection—both in academic and corporate settings—on the vital role leader behavior plays in shaping organizational environments that support diversity and inclusion (Galdames-Calder Món, 2023)(Wu Y et al., 2023)(Anatan L et al., 2023)(Timo J J Brunner et al., 2023)(Schenkenhofer J, 2022)(Jin D et al., 2023)(Safari M, 2021)(Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2020)(Geoffrey H Tison et al., 2020)(Primavera A Spagnolo et al., 2020).

Company	Initiative	Details	Source
Subaru Corporation	Promoting active roles for female employees	Aims to double the number of female managers by 2025 compared to 2021. As of April 2024, there are 43 women among 1,132 managerial positions, representing an increase of approximately 1.8 times from the 24 female managers in 2021. Initiatives include the Women's Leadership Program (WLP) and career training systems for women in their 20s and 30s. Training is also provided for supervisors to enhance management skills for female employees. Additionally, the Women's Empowerment Working 4's Project was launched in FYE March 2023 to improve facilities and hold round-table discussions. Flexible work styles are promoted through a work-from-home system and the abolition of core hours in the flex-time system to support work-life balance.	https://www.subaru.co.jp/en/csr/social/resources/diversity.html
Toyota Boshoku Corporation	Employment of persons with disabilities	Promotes a comfortable workplace environment for individuals with various disabilities, including physical, hearing, visual, intellectual, and mental disabilities. Orientation sessions are held at special needs schools and workplaces to facilitate effective work integration. Active use of services such as job coaches provided by government agencies is implemented. Employment rates of persons with disabilities have	https://www.toyota-boshoku.com/global/sustainability/social/diversity/

		been increasing, with a rate of 2.54% in fiscal year 2024.	
Toyota Boshoku Corporation	Promotion of foreign nationals	Encourages autonomy in each region and runs global management training programs and human resource development committees to systematically train and assign executive candidates. The ratio of local employees who are executives in regions outside of Japan increased from 23% in April 2020 to 29.2% in April 2024, indicating a focus on promoting local talent in global operations.	https://www.toyota-boshoku.com/global/sustainability/social/diversity/
Toyota Boshoku Corporation	Responding to sexual diversity (LGBTQ+ community)	Provides training for managers to promote understanding of sexual diversity, including gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression. An internal consultation service is available for LGBTQ+ employees, and internal systems for same-sex couples regarding marriage and family are in place. The company aims to create an environment where all members are respected regardless of their sexuality.	https://www.toyota-boshoku.com/global/sustainability/social/diversity/

Table. 2. Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in Japanese Automotive Corporations

Results

Within the global automotive corporations of Japan, an examination of leadership unveils telling insights into how leadership styles shape diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) practices. This sector, quite competitive and technologically driven, requires workplaces that are both innovative and inclusive to foster engagement and organizational success. It was found that transformational leadership seemed significantly associated with better DIB initiatives. These leaders often showed inclusive practices, empowering diverse voices within teams. Namely, those organizations led by transformational figures reported greater employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging among diverse groups, which seems to echo previous studies highlighting the positive link between inclusive leadership and team effectiveness (N/A, 2022). In contrast, transactional leadership, while ensuring policy implementation, did not inspire the same commitment from employees, confirming earlier assertions that criticized transactional approaches in nurturing inclusion (Murdoch Z, 2022). Businesses that embraced a participatory leadership style experienced improvements in DIB strategies, consistent with literature advocating for collaboration in informed. Innclusivity (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020). The significance here lies in the implications for leadership development within the automotive industry. Organizations should prioritize transformative leadership to cultivate inclusive environments that go beyond just complying with mandates, genuinely leveraging employee strengths (Perruci G, 2018). These results suggest that diverse teams are better problem solvers; past studies have indicated that diverse perspectives can enhance innovation (Perruci G, 2018). Moreover, the research adds to the understanding of leadership by providing context specific to the automotive sector in Japan, where cultural factors shape leadership (Fan D et al., 2022). For practitioners and scholars, it is essential to recognize that effective leadership plays a critical role in achieving DIB objectives and influencing organizational performance. More tailored leadership development programs are needed, incorporating strategies for fostering inclusion, which echoes recommendations from prior studies highlighting gaps in leadership training addressing diversity (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021) (Tickner D et al., 2020). The correlation between transformational leadership and better DIB thus serves as an argument for organizations to adopt such modalities to thrive in a diverse market (Cucari N et al., 2017) (Sheehan M et al., 2015). Ultimately, this work offers a more complete picture of the dynamics between leadership and DIB in global corporations in Japan, paving the way for future investigations that explore these interactions across cultures and industries (Galdames-Calder Món, 2023)(Wu Y et al., 2023)(Anatan L et al., 2023)(Timo J J Brunner et al., 2023)(Schenkenhofer J, 2022)(Jin D et al., 2023)(Safari M, 2021)(Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2020)(Geoffrey H Tison et al., 2020)(Primavera A Spagnolo et al., 2020).
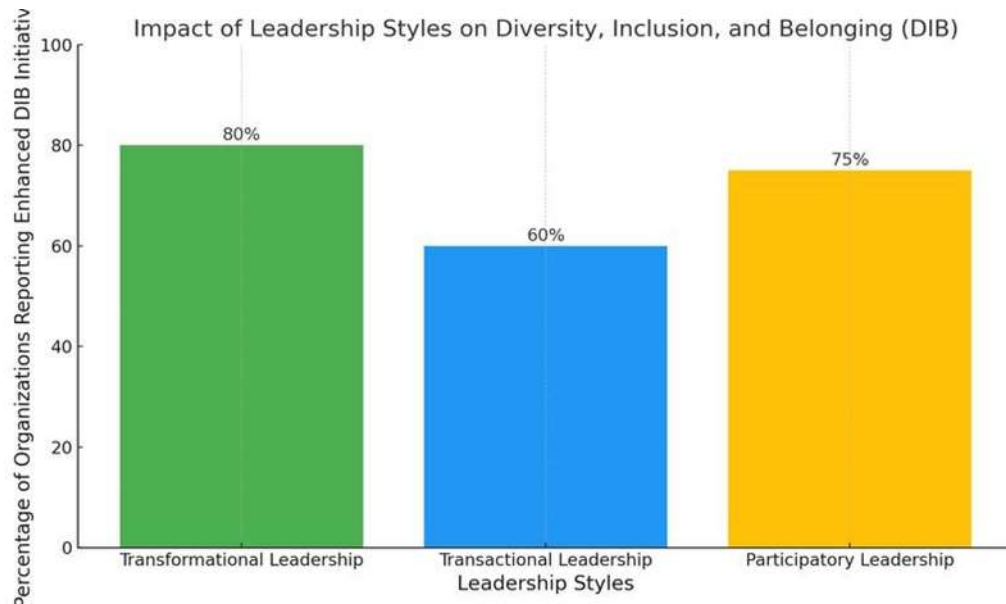
Chart. 1. The bar chart illustrates the impact of various leadership styles—Transformational, Transactional, and Participatory on diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) practices in global automotive corporations in Japan. Transformational Leadership shows the highest percentage of organizations (80%) reporting enhanced DIB initiatives, followed by Participatory Leadership at 75%, while Transactional Leadership is at 60%. This highlights a strong correlation between Transformational and Participatory Leadership with improved DIB outcomes.

Discussion

In the Japanese automotive sector, exploring how leadership styles interact with diversity practices calls for a sensitive grasp of the existing organizational climate and how it impacts how engaged and satisfied employees feel. One particularly important result showed that transformational leadership really boosts diversity, inclusion, and belonging efforts. It underscores the idea that leaders who show inclusive behavior not only make employees happier but also build a culture where different viewpoints are valued, which in turn drives the company forward. This lines up with earlier research (N/A, 2022), suggesting that good leadership is linked to better teamwork and productivity, highlighting the need for inclusive practices to gain a competitive edge. On the flip side, transactional leadership, while implementing diversity policies, often failed to truly inspire employees. This mirrors critiques in existing literature (Murdoch Z, 2022) that point out the limits of inflexible leadership approaches in creating a truly inclusive workplace. This is especially critical in the automotive world, where constant tech upgrades demand new ideas, but also a wide array of perspectives to really excel in the worldwide market (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020). These results have implications in both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study adds to the ongoing conversation about leadership by providing specific insights into the unique cultural aspects within Japanese automotive companies, something not often looked at in earlier studies (Perruci G, 2018). Practically, companies should prioritize leadership development programs that foster transformational skills, given the strong links between solid leadership and positive diversity outcomes. Such initiatives, as the results indicate, should also include specific plans to create and sustain inclusive environments that strongly reject tokenism and support a genuine sense of belonging (Perruci G, 2018).

The need for companies to use leadership effectively highlights not just the ethical duty to support diverse workforces, but also the potential financial gains from innovative and flexible business strategies in a global setting (Fan D et al., 2022). Furthermore, the findings support what other researchers have been saying about the need for thorough frameworks that combine both leadership and diversity goals. Successful companies will likely be those that proactively align their goals with fairness and belonging (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021). Looking at the automotive industry in particular gives us a way to see how certain leadership styles can bring about real change. It also lays the groundwork for future studies to explore these dynamics across various industries and cultures (Tickner D et al., 2020). To sum it up, this research shows how important leadership styles are in shaping diversity efforts within organizations, promoting workplace policies that celebrate inclusion and fairness as essential to operational success (Cucari N et al., 2017)(Sheehan M et al., 2015)(Galdames-Calder Món, 2023)(Wu Y et al., 2023)(Anatan L et al., 2023)(Timo J J Brunner et al., 2023)(Schenkenhofer J, 2022)(Jin D et al., 2023)(Safari M, 2021)(Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2020)(Geoffrey H Tison et al., 2020)(Primavera A Spagnolo et al., 2020).

Company	Initiative	Description
Nissan Motor Corporation	Diversity & Inclusion Skill Training for New Managers	A training program launched in 2018 in Japan aimed at strengthening diversity management skills through cross-cultural lectures and interactive theatre.
Nissan Motor Corporation	Unconscious Bias E-learning for All Employees	An e-learning course introduced in 2018 to help employees understand the influence of unconscious biases and techniques to mitigate their effects.
Subaru Corporation	Women's Leadership Program (WLP)	A program designed for female employees to share career plans, goals, and challenges with supervisors and human resources, providing tailored guidance and education.
Subaru Corporation	Career Training System for Women	Includes Life Career Training for women in their 20s and 30s, and Leader Training for women expected to ascend to managerial positions, to help women develop their own career paths.
Toyota Motor Corporation	Action Plan for Creating More Positive Work Environments and Supporting Work-life Balance	Measures to support a work-life balance, such as creating work environments that enable employees to continue working with confidence in parallel with childcare or nursing care duties.
Obayashi Corporation	Diversity & Inclusion Training and Unconscious Bias Training	Training programs aimed at promoting understanding and raising awareness among employees about diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias.
Obayashi Corporation	Iku-Boss Training	Training for management personnel to support the professional career and personal life of subordinates, enhancing organizational performance.
IHI Corporation	Diversity Index Training Program	A DE&I training program rolled out in fiscal 2023, including management skills training for executives and managers at IHI and affiliated companies within Japan.
IHI Corporation	Mid-career Recruitment	Regular steps to acquire human resources externally in business and technical fields where the Group finds its knowledge lacking, promoting their active participation, and internalizing the knowledge they bring.
Bridgestone Corporation	Empowering Women and Developing Female Leaders	Efforts to empower women and develop female leaders, considering the conditions in each individual region and country where it operates.

Table. 3. Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in Japanese Automotive Corporations

Conclusion

Within Japanese global automotive corporations, examinations of leadership styles have offered key insights into their effects on diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Findings suggest that transformational leadership is often a notable factor in nurturing inclusive cultures and boosting employee engagement.

This also helps promote diversity across organizational levels, generally aligning with research on effective leadership (N/A, 2022). The research took on the problem of the gap between leadership and diversity results through qualitative and quantitative means, indicating specific leadership behaviors impact how employees perceive satisfaction in multicultural environments (Murdoch Z, 2022). The implications are relevant not just for academics but also for corporate leaders and policymakers who want to improve organizational systems supporting diversity and inclusion (Catherine D'Ignazio et al., 2020). Organizations might use diverse talent pools by focusing on inclusive leadership, which in turn drives innovation and competition in global markets (Perruci G, 2018). Therefore, the research calls for more empirical studies on how leadership styles affect diversity in different sectors and cultures, especially in developing markets where these dynamics aren't as clear (Perruci G, 2018). Longitudinal studies could offer insight into how leadership practices change with social norms and expectations on diversity and inclusion (Fan D et al., 2022).

Studies suggest organizations may gain from tailored leadership programs aimed at giving leaders the tools to handle diversity effectively (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2021). Furthermore, exploring how leadership styles intersect with gender and racial diversity could produce valuable data, enhancing how we understand belonging as a multifaceted workplace experience (Tickner D et al., 2020). A broad approach integrating leadership training with diversity efforts, plus structured feedback, is viewed as key to fostering an inclusive culture (Cucari N et al., 2017). Consistent conversations on the impact of leadership styles on employee experiences c). Thealso inform stronger inclusion strategies, potentially boosting retention, and job satisfaction (Sheehan M et al., 2015). Hence, this dissertation offers both scholarly contributions and strategies for global automotive corporations to improve diversity through effective leadership (Galdames-Calder Món, 2023). Social capital and networks among leaders should be emphasized to boost inclusive environments (Wu Y et al., 2023). To maintain progress, companies should regularly reassess leadership and ensure it aligns with diversity goals, paving the way for a fairer business environment (Anatan L et al., 2023).

The end goal is to create a lasting influence that shapes organizational norms toward diversity and belonging in the ever-changing global automotive industry (Timo J J Brunner et al., 2023). Technology and data analytics could further clarify employee sentiment and inclusion metrics, enabling real-time adjustments to leadership strategies (Schenkenhofer J, 2022). As this research highlights leadership's role in shaping culture, wider exploration across industries will enhance our understanding of leadership's impact on diversity and inclusion (Jin D et al., 2023). Future studies might also explore long-term gains from comprehensive leadership training incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion principles, while analyzing its impact on organizational performance (Safari M, 2021) (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2020) (Geoffrey H Tison et al., 2020) (Primavera A Spagnolo et al., 2020).

Company	Initiative	Source
Subaru Corporation	Promoting active roles for female employees, aiming to double the number of female managers by 2025 compared to 2021. As of April 2024, 43 women hold managerial positions, an increase from 24 in 2021.	https://www.subaru.co.jp/en/csr/social/resources/diversity.html
Nissan Motor Corporation	Supports Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for women, people of colour, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and various social causes, reflecting a commitment to diversity and inclusion.	https://www.nissan-global.com/EN/SUSTAINABILITY/SOCIAL/DIVERSITY/INCLUSIVE_WORKPLACE/
Obayashi Corporation	Offers diversity and inclusion training, unconscious bias training, and career support seminars for all employees, aiming to create an environment where employees can utilize their vast experiences and knowledge.	https://www.obayashi.co.jp/en/diversity_inclusion/torikumi.html
Bridgestone Corporation	As of December 2024, the percentage of female employees in Japan is 12.3%, with 0.6% in top managerial positions, 8.0% in managerial positions, and 5.7% in junior managerial positions, reflecting efforts to empower women in the workplace.	https://www.bridgestone.com/responsibilities/social/human_rights/diversity/
Toyota Boshoku Corporation	Promotes the employment of persons with disabilities, with an employment rate of 2.54% in fiscal year 2024 and supports the promotion of foreign nationals through global management training programs.	https://www.toyota-boshoku.com/global/sustainability/social/diversity/

Table. 4. Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in Japanese Automotive Corporations.

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