**The Nature and Impact of Inclusive and Non-Inclusive Micro-Behaviours on Minority Ethnic Organisational Members**

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Autobiographical note: Doyin Atewologun obtained her PhD from the International Centre for Women Leaders, Cranfield School of Management, titled ‘An examination of the identity work of senior minority ethnic women and men following episodes of identity salience at work’. Her research papers won awards from the Academy of Management and British Academy of Management in 2011. She is now a Lecturer at City University, London on the MSc in Organizational Psychology.

Key words: Inclusion, Micro-behaviours, leadership, inclusive practice, non-inclusive practice

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Purpose: This paper examines how organizational members and leaders engage in inclusive practices and the impact on minority organizational members. Everyday positive and negative micro-behaviours reinforce inclusion of similar others and/or sustain exclusion of those who are different (Rowe, 2008). The study focuses on the practice of inclusion at the micro-level in organizations. The paper contributes to understanding how inclusive work cultures are challenged or sustained, and the individual-level implications of this.

Methodology: The paper draws on an empirical study of experiences of inclusion and non-inclusion reported by minority ethnic professionals in two UK organisations. Twelve minority ethnic men and twelve minority ethnic women reported episodes that prompted them to think about being senior minority ethnic women and men (recorded in journals and discussed further in interviews). Analysis of the episodes focused on incidents that sustained or challenged respondents’ perceptions of inclusion in the organisation.

Findings: Forty-three incidents of inclusion and non-inclusion were elicited from the data, comprising a range of inclusive and non-inclusive behaviours from leaders, colleagues and clients. Minority ethnic women and men responded in two key ways - ‘Accommodating’ or ‘Refuting’ perceptions of inclusion and non-inclusion. While ‘Accommodating’ or ‘Refuting’, they employed tactics that resulted in positive, self-affirming or negative self-challenging outcomes.

Limitations and Implications: The paper adopts an in-depth interpretive approach to a limited number of episodes experienced by minority ethnic individuals. It offers insight into subjective experiences and work practices, but makes no claim about causality or predictability. It offers two key implications for the inclusion literature. It sheds light on the nature of interpersonal practices of inclusion (typically from majority or privileged organisational members). It also indicates that overtly positive (i.e. inclusive) or negative (i.e. non-inclusive) practices are complex, and not necessarily interpreted as mutually exclusive categories of positive/inclusive and non-positive/exclusive experiences. The study shows that minority ethnic women and men demonstrate agency in perceptions of, and responses to, practices of inclusion and exclusion in organizations, offering a framework for examining these responses. It also suggests that some responsibility for challenging and sustaining inclusive work cultures lies outside formal ‘leadership’ positions or those perceived as having the authority to speak to these issues (e.g. Diversity & Inclusion professionals, Diversity Champions, members of minority groups). It offers insight for colleagues, line managers and team leaders to demonstrate relationship-based, follower-focused leadership by learning about the ubiquitous nature of micro-behaviours and the subtle (and sometimes low effort) methods of promoting affirming and inclusive cultures demonstrated in this study.

Originality/Value: The study contributes to inclusion literature in three unique ways. It focuses on the micro-level to understand how inclusion manifests itself in the lived experience of minority organisational members. It elaborates on the differential responses of minority ethnic individuals to positive (i.e. inclusive) as well as negative (i.e. non-inclusive) episodes. It also applies a unique methodology (journals with interviews) to track experiences of inclusion in organisations.