

Exploring Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Models Related to Inclusiveness: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Inclusiveness has emerged as a multidimensional construct central to contemporary discourses in education, organizational studies, development policy, and social justice. This review synthesizes theoretical and empirical perspectives underpinning inclusiveness, exploring how various frameworks conceptualize equitable participation, representation and access. Drawing on foundational theories including Social Justice Theory (Rawls, Fraser), the Human Rights-Based Approach, the Capability Approach (Sen, Nussbaum), Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Learning Theory and the Social Model of Disability—the paper situates inclusiveness within moral, structural, Educational and participatory paradigms. It further integrates models from education (Index for Inclusion, Universal Design for Learning), organizational studies (Organizational Inclusion and Inclusive Leadership Models) and development policy (Inclusive Development Frameworks) to illustrate operational pathways for inclusive practice. Comparative analysis reveals convergences around principles of equity, belonging and empowerment, while highlighting theoretical and methodological gaps, particularly in measuring intersectional and digital dimensions of inclusion. Emerging scholarship points toward integrated frameworks combining ecological, digital, and intersectional perspectives aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The review concludes that inclusiveness should be re-envisioned not merely as integration into existing systems but as a transformative, systemic process that restructures institutions and power relations. It calls for context-sensitive, mixed-method approaches to theorizing and evaluating inclusiveness across education sectors and global contexts.

Keywords: *Inclusiveness, Social Justice Theory, Capability Approach, Inclusive Education, Organizational Inclusion, Intersectionality, Human Rights-Based Approach*

Inclusiveness has emerged as a pivotal construct in contemporary scholarship and practice, cutting across disciplines such as education, organizational management, development studies, social policy and public administration. At its core, inclusiveness encompasses the principles of **equity, participation, accessibility and social justice**,

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positioning it as both a moral imperative and a pragmatic framework for fostering cohesive, equitable societies (Ainscow, 2020; Booth & Ainscow, 2016). It signifies deliberate efforts to ensure that every individual regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, or other identity markers can participate fully and meaningfully in social, educational, political, and economic systems.

Conceptually, inclusiveness extends beyond the notion of *integration* or mere *participation* to encompass transformation of structures, cultures and relationships that perpetuate exclusion. It implies a systemic commitment to removing barriers that prevent individuals and groups from realizing their potential and contributing to collective well-being. Thus, inclusiveness is both a **process**, the continuous endeavour to promote equitable participation and an **outcome**, the realization of just, participatory and accessible systems. This duality situates inclusiveness as a dynamic and context-dependent construct, reflecting societal shifts towards diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) frameworks (Slee, 2018).

Theoretically, the idea of inclusiveness is grounded in **human rights, social justice and participatory development paradigms**. Human rights perspectives frame inclusion as a fundamental entitlement rooted in dignity, equality and non-discrimination, as articulated in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** and the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)**. From the standpoint of social justice, inclusiveness embodies fair distribution of opportunities, recognition of diverse identities and representation in decision-making processes (Fraser, 2009; Rawls, 1971). The participatory development tradition, meanwhile, conceptualizes inclusion as empowerment through voice, agency and collective action, emphasizing the importance of involving marginalized communities in shaping their futures (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000).

In educational contexts, inclusiveness has evolved from the integration of learners with disabilities to a broader agenda of creating learning environments that accommodate diversity and promote equitable participation for all students (Booth & Ainscow, 2016; UNESCO, 2017). Within organizations, it is increasingly viewed as a determinant of performance, innovation, and employee well-being, linked to concepts such as inclusive leadership, belongingness and organizational justice (Ferdman, 2014; Shore et al., 2011). In development and policy domains, inclusiveness underpins the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10, and 16, which collectively aim to promote inclusive growth, education, and governance.

Despite its wide application, inclusiveness remains a **contested and evolving concept**. Scholars debate its operationalization, measurement, and theoretical boundaries, highlighting tensions between universalist and contextual interpretations, as well as between policy rhetoric and practical implementation. Consequently, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive synthesis of the major theories and models that inform understandings of inclusiveness across disciplines.

This literature review responds to that need by examining key theoretical perspectives and conceptual models that underpin the study and practice of inclusiveness. It explores the evolution of the construct through foundational frameworks such as the Social Justice Theory, Capability Approach, Human Rights-Based Approach, Social Model of Disability and Ecological Systems Theory—while also analysing applied models like the Index for Inclusion, **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** and organizational inclusion frameworks.

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By integrating theoretical, empirical and cross-sectoral insights, the review aims to deepen understanding of inclusiveness as both a **transformative principle** and a **systemic responsibility** essential to achieving equitable and sustainable societies.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF INCLUSIVENESS

Defining Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness refers to deliberate efforts to involve marginalized or underrepresented groups in mainstream social, economic, educational and political structures. It emphasizes equity (fairness in process) and equality (fairness in outcomes) (Sen, 1999). In practice, inclusiveness challenges exclusionary systems by promoting access, participation, representation and belonging (Slee, 2018).

Dimensions of Inclusiveness

Scholars Booth & Ainscow, 2016; Fraser, 2009 identify multiple interrelated dimensions: Structural inclusiveness – Policies, laws and institutional reforms that support inclusion. Social inclusiveness – Relationships, attitude and values that encourage participation. Cultural inclusiveness – Recognition of diverse identities, languages and traditions. Economic inclusiveness – Equitable access to resources and opportunities.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES RELATED TO INCLUSIVENESS

Social Justice Theory

Grounded in the works of John Rawls (1971) and Nancy Fraser (2009), social justice theory views inclusiveness as the fair distribution of resources, opportunities and rights. Rawls' Theory of Justice emphasizes "justice as fairness," asserting that inequalities are acceptable only if they benefit the least advantaged. Fraser (2009) expands this view with a tripartite model of justice: redistribution (economic), recognition (cultural) and representation (political)—a framework widely applied in inclusive education and social policy.

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

The HRBA conceptualizes inclusiveness as a fundamental human right. Rooted in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** and **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)**, this approach emphasizes participation, accountability, and non-discrimination. In education and development sectors, HRBA frameworks guide policy to ensure all individuals have equal access to opportunities and dignity (UNESCO, 2017).

Capability Approach (Amartya Sen, 1999; Martha Nussbaum, 2000)

Sen's Capability Approach frames inclusiveness as expanding individuals' freedoms to achieve well-being. Rather than focusing solely on resources, it emphasizes people's capabilities to function—the real opportunities available to them. Inclusiveness, in this view, involves removing social, economic and institutional barriers that limit individuals' capabilities to lead the lives they value.

Social Model of Disability

Contrasting with the medical model, the social model (Oliver, 1990) locates disability not within the individual but within societal barriers. Inclusiveness here involves restructuring environments, attitude and systems to accommodate diverse abilities. This model profoundly shaped inclusive education and workplace accessibility movements.

Critical Theory and Inclusive Praxis

Influenced by **Paulo Freire's (1970)** critical pedagogy, this perspective interprets inclusiveness as a transformative process that empowers marginalized groups to challenge oppressive structures. Inclusiveness is not merely integration but liberation—an ongoing process of critical reflection, dialogue and co-creation of equitable systems.

Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989)

Intersectionality posits that inclusion cannot be achieved by addressing single identity categories (e.g., gender or race) in isolation. Instead, social identities intersect to produce unique experiences of privilege and exclusion. This theory informs inclusive policies sensitive to overlapping systems of oppression.

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Bronfenbrenner's model underscores the multilayered nature of inclusion. Inclusiveness is shaped by interactions among the microsystem (individual/family), mesosystem (community/institutions), exosystemic (policies/structures) and macrosystem (cultural norms/values). This framework is widely used in education and community development to design systemic inclusive interventions.

Organizational Inclusion Framework (Ferdman, 2014; Shore et al., 2011)

In organizational studies, inclusion is defined as the degree to which employees feel valued and belonging while maintaining their uniqueness. The Inclusion Framework (**Shore et al., 2011**) identifies two critical components: Belongingness – being accepted within the group. Uniqueness – being recognized for individual differences. **Ferdman (2014)** extends this to inclusive leadership and culture, emphasizing authentic participation and systemic fairness.

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB, 1991)

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed in 1991, is one of the most widely used psychological models for predicting and explaining human behaviour in various domains, including education. TPB asserts that an individual's behaviour is primarily determined by their **intention** to perform that behaviour, which in turn is influenced by three constructs: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. This model assumes that human beings are rational actors who systematically use available information to make decisions and that behaviour is a function of deliberate planning rather than spontaneous action.

The TPB evolved from the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which only included attitude and subjective norms as predictors of behavioural intention. Ajzen extended this by adding perceived behavioural control to account for situations where individuals may not have complete volitional control over their actions. In the context of teaching, this addition is particularly relevant, as educators often operate within constraints such as institutional policies, lack of resources, or large class sizes that affect their ability to act on their intentions.

1. TPB Components and their Educational Relevance

Attitude towards the behaviour refers to the degree to which a teacher evaluates inclusive practices positively or negatively. This evaluation is based on beliefs about the outcomes of inclusive teaching, such as improved learning for all students, better classroom cohesion, or increased workload and classroom complexity. If a teacher believes that inclusion leads to

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better student engagement and academic equity, they are more likely to hold a favourable attitude toward adopting inclusive strategies.

Subjective norms involve perceived social pressures to perform or avoid certain behaviours. In schools, these pressures may come from principals, colleagues, parents, the local community, or educational authorities. If a teacher believes that respected colleagues or supervisors support inclusive education, they are more likely to feel compelled to adopt such practices themselves, even if their personal attitude is neutral or slightly negative.

Perceived behavioural control reflects the teacher's confidence in their ability to successfully carry out inclusive teaching. It encompasses their beliefs about whether they have the necessary skills, knowledge, support, and classroom resources. This element is closely tied to **self-efficacy**, a concept that is further developed in Bandura's Social Learning Theory. In TPB, higher perceived behavioural control increases the likelihood that an intention will translate into real behaviour. The following image clearly depicts Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

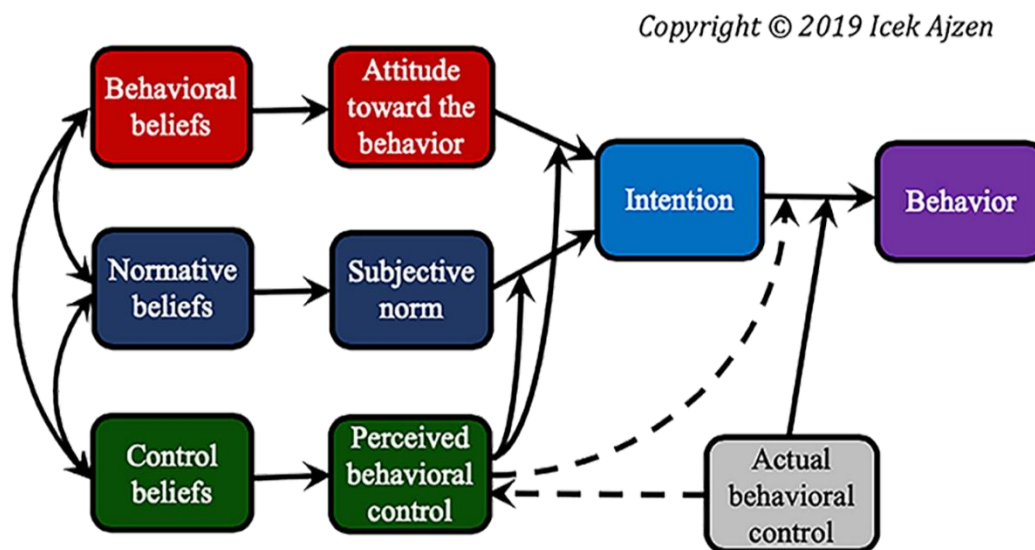


Fig. 1. Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour

2. Application of TPB to Inclusive Education

TPB has been widely used in educational research to understand various teacher behaviours, including curriculum implementation, classroom management and adoption of new technologies. In the context of inclusive education, TPB provides a strong explanatory model for how teachers' intentions to adopt inclusive practices are formed and translated into action.

Several empirical studies have applied TPB to investigate teacher behaviour toward inclusion. Research has found that teachers with positive attitudes, strong support systems (subjective norms) and high perceived behavioural control are significantly more likely to develop intentions to use inclusive strategies and, consequently, actually implement them. For example, a study by **Loreman et al. (2014)** found that the strongest predictors of inclusive teaching behaviour among primary school teachers were positive attitudes toward disability and high perceived behavioural control in adapting lessons.

In practice, this means that even if a teacher supports inclusive education ideologically, they may hesitate to implement it if they feel unprepared or unsupported. Conversely, a teacher with only a moderately positive attitude but high support from peers and school leadership may demonstrate more consistent inclusive behaviour. The balance of these three components determines whether intention is strong and whether it ultimately results in classroom change.

3. Relevance of TPB in the Context of Odisha

Odisha, like many Indian states, is striving to align with national and international mandates for inclusive education. However, the actual success of these policies depends largely on teacher buy-in and implementation. TPB provides a valuable lens for understanding how secondary school teachers of Odisha form their intentions around inclusive practices.

Cultural factors, resource availability, and administrative expectations significantly affect the three TPB constructs in the Odisha context. For instance, subjective norms may be influenced by hierarchical relationships with headmasters or expectations set by government inspectors. Attitudes may be shaped by traditional beliefs about disability and academic performance. Perceived behavioural control is likely affected by factors such as training opportunities, class size, and availability of teaching aids.

In this study, TPB helps identify which of these factors most strongly influence teachers' decisions to implement inclusive strategies. It also allows for the identification of potential gaps—for instance, strong attitudes but low perceived control—which may guide interventions such as targeted teacher training or mentorship programs.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT)

1. Overview of SLT

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) offers a powerful explanation for how people learn through observing others and modelling behaviours. Unlike traditional behaviourist theories that emphasized conditioning and reinforcement, SLT posits that learning can occur in a social context without direct reinforcement. It highlights the importance of observation, imitation and modelling in acquiring new behaviours.

SLT emphasizes the concept of reciprocal determinism, which suggests that personal factors (such as beliefs and attitudes), behavioural patterns and environmental influences continuously interact and influence each other. This holistic perspective is particularly useful in educational settings, where teacher behaviour is shaped not only by internal beliefs but also by the social and institutional environment.

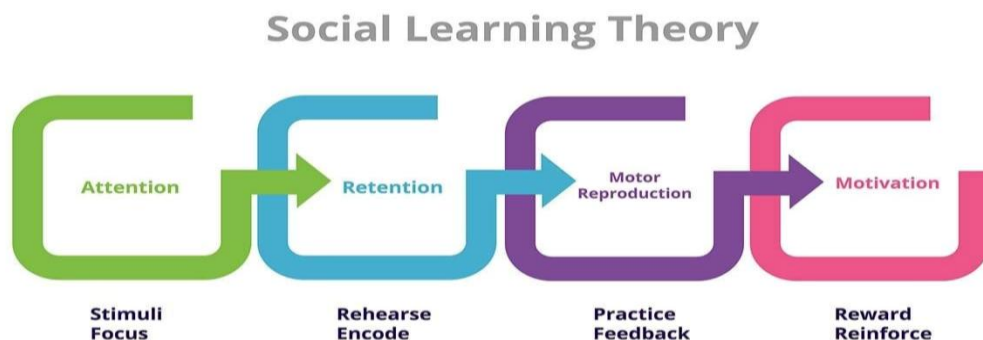


Fig. 2 Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT)

2. Key Concepts: Observational Learning and Self-Efficacy

Two core concepts in SLT i.e. observational learning and self-efficacy are especially relevant to the current study. Observational learning refers to the process by which individuals learn new behaviours by watching others. For teachers, this can occur through observing colleagues in professional development workshops, during co-teaching arrangements or informally within their own schools. When teachers witness the successful implementation of inclusive strategies by their peers, they are more likely to try these strategies themselves.

Self-efficacy, another key component of SLT, refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to perform a specific task. Bandura argued that self-efficacy influences not only whether people engage in a behaviour but also how much effort they invest and how persistent they are when faced with challenges. For teachers, self-efficacy in inclusive education means believing that they can effectively teach students with diverse needs. High self-efficacy is associated with greater willingness to adapt teaching styles, differentiate instruction, and seek out resources.

3. SLT and Teacher Behaviour in Inclusive Classrooms

Social Learning Theory provides a lens through which to understand how teachers adopt and sustain inclusive practices in the classroom. When teachers see their peers successfully implementing inclusive strategies, especially in similar teaching environments, they are more likely to adopt these strategies themselves. This modelling process can be more influential than formal training alone because it provides practical, context-relevant examples of how to deal with challenges in inclusive classrooms.

Moreover, school environments that encourage collaboration, reflection and experimentation serve as fertile ground for the application of SLT. Teachers who receive support from peers, mentors, or leadership are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy. In contrast, teachers working in isolating or punitive environments may lack both role models and confidence, reducing the likelihood that they will engage in inclusive practices, even if they understand their importance.

4. Relevance of SLT to Indian and Odisha Contexts

In Indian schools—and particularly in Odisha—teacher professional development is often top-down and theoretical. SLT highlights the importance of learning in context, through meaningful interaction with peers and observation of best practices. In many rural or under-resourced secondary schools in Odisha, formal training opportunities may be limited. However, informal learning through peer observation and shared experiences can still play a powerful role.

For instance, schools that promote peer learning communities or mentoring systems can foster observational learning. Teachers in these environments are more likely to witness the benefits of inclusive teaching, receive feedback and build confidence in their own abilities. Self-efficacy, reinforced through social support and visible success stories, can become a catalyst for sustained change in classroom practice.

SLT also helps explain variations in inclusive implementation across different schools. Even when two schools are given identical training programs or materials, differences in staff culture, leadership style and peer dynamics can lead to vastly different outcomes in actual

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practice. Understanding these social learning mechanisms is critical to tailoring interventions that go beyond policy mandates and truly impact classroom behaviour.

Integrating TPB and SLT: A Combined Theoretical Model

While Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) originate from different psychological traditions—TPB from rational-action theory and SLT from social-cognitive learning—they complement each other in meaningful ways. TPB primarily focuses on **internal cognitive processes** that influence intention and behaviour, whereas SLT highlights the **social context and environmental factors** that shape learning and motivation. When combined, these theories provide a rich, multidimensional framework to understand how and why teachers adopt inclusive practices. The synergy between the two becomes clear when we look at key overlapping constructs. For example, **perceived behavioural control** in TPB closely parallels **self-efficacy** in SLT. Both refer to an individual's belief in their capacity to carry out a given behaviour—in this case, implementing inclusive teaching strategies. Similarly, TPB's **subjective norms** resonate with SLT's emphasis on **modelling and social influence**. In both theories, individuals are influenced by the behaviours, expectations, and feedback of others around them.

Additionally, TPB assumes that intention is a reliable predictor of behaviour, but it is less concerned with how those intentions are formed and reinforced in real-world social contexts. This is where SLT adds critical depth. SLT explains how behaviours are modelled, how beliefs about one's abilities are shaped through experience and how environmental reinforcement (or lack thereof) can strengthen or weaken behavioural patterns over time. In effect, TPB explains why a teacher might form the intention to be inclusive, while SLT explains how that intention translates or fails to translate into consistent classroom action.

A Conceptual Model for Understanding Teachers' Inclusive Practices

Integrating TPB and SLT results in a conceptual model where **teacher behaviour is influenced by both personal beliefs and social-environmental learning processes**. The model can be visualized as follows:

1. **Attitude** towards inclusive education (TPB) are influenced not just by internal values but also by prior exposure to successful inclusion (SLT).
2. **Subjective norms** (TPB) are shaped by the observed behaviours of peers and the school culture (SLT), reinforcing what is considered acceptable or desirable.
3. **Perceived behavioural control** (TPB) is strengthened or weakened by experiences of success or failure in the classroom and by the degree of peer and institutional support, which ties directly to **self-efficacy** (SLT).
4. **Behavioural intention** (TPB), when aligned with high self-efficacy and supported by modelled behaviour and reinforcement (SLT), leads to **actual inclusive practice**.

In this model, external environmental inputs—such as mentorship, training, collaboration and school leadership—feed into the social learning process. At the same time, internal beliefs and rational evaluations guide the formation of intention. The **feedback loop** is critical: as teachers implement inclusive strategies and observe their effectiveness (or challenges), they revise their beliefs, intentions, and behaviours accordingly.

This model is particularly useful for identifying points of intervention. For instance, if a teacher has a positive attitude towards inclusion but low self-efficacy, the school can provide

targeted peer mentoring to enhance observational learning and confidence. Alternatively, if a teacher has high self-efficacy but perceives negative social norms, efforts can be made to foster a more inclusive school culture and administrative support.

MODELS OF INCLUSIVENESS

Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2016)

Developed for educational contexts, this model promotes inclusive school development through three dimensions: Creating inclusive cultures Producing inclusive policies Evolving inclusive practices It serves as both a diagnostic and developmental tool for fostering inclusive environments.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Rooted in cognitive neuroscience and design theory, UDL (CAST, 2018) promotes flexible learning environments that accommodate diverse learners. It is structured around: Multiple means of representation Multiple means of action and expression Multiple means of engagement This model operationalizes inclusiveness through curriculum design and accessibility.

Inclusive Development Model (World Bank, 2013; UNDP, 2017)

The Inclusive Development Model integrates economic growth with social equity. It posits that growth is inclusive when it enhances participation, equity and sustainability. It is guided by indicators such as inclusive income growth, access to services and reduction in multidimensional poverty.

Inclusive Education Model (Ainscow & Miles, 2008)

The Inclusive Education Model proposed by Ainscow and Miles (2008) conceptualizes inclusion as a **continuous process of identifying and reducing barriers to learning and participation** for *all* students, rather than a fixed state or a program confined to learners with disabilities. It represents a paradigm shift from a deficit-oriented approach to one that views diversity as a resource for enriching learning environments. The model is grounded in principles of **equity, participation and collaboration**, emphasizing that inclusion must be embedded across all dimensions of school life—culture, policy and practice.

The model operates through **four interrelated stages**:

1. **Identifying barriers**—recognizing factors within the school's structures, curricula, or attitudes that hinder participation and achievement;
2. **Developing strategies**—formulating evidence-based approaches to overcome these barriers;
3. **Implementing changes**—translating inclusive principles into classroom and institutional practices;
4. **Reviewing outcomes**—evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to ensure continuous improvement.

Crucially, the model promotes **system-wide reform** rather than isolated adjustments for individual learners. It calls for shared responsibility among educators, administrators and communities, highlighting the importance of leadership, teacher collaboration and inclusive pedagogy. Moreover, it aligns with global frameworks such as UNESCO's (2017) *Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education*, reinforcing that inclusive education is not a special initiative but a **fundamental characteristic of quality education**. In essence, the

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model situates inclusion as an evolving, context-sensitive process that transforms schools into learning communities where **every learner feels valued, capable and empowered to succeed**.

Inclusive Leadership Model (Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Hollander, 2009)

Inclusive leadership emphasizes the critical role of leaders in shaping organizational climates where **all members feel respected, valued and authentically included**. It is grounded in the principle that effective leadership extends beyond diversity representation to ensuring that diverse voices are genuinely integrated into decision-making and organizational learning processes. The model is particularly influential within the broader **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)** frameworks, where leadership behaviour is viewed as a primary determinant of whether inclusion is realized at both structural and interpersonal levels.

According to **Nishii and Mayer (2009)**, inclusive leaders are characterized by **openness, accessibility and availability**, fostering psychological safety that encourages team members to express divergent perspectives without fear of marginalization. **Hollander (2009)** conceptualizes inclusive leadership as a **two-way social exchange**, wherein leaders and followers mutually influence one another through respect, fairness and shared responsibility. This approach reframes leadership not as a position of authority but as a relational process that sustains inclusiveness through ongoing dialogue, empathy, and shared power.

Subsequent research (**Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010; Shore et al., 2011; Randel et al., 2018**) expands the model to highlight **three foundational dimensions**:

1. **Fairness and equity in decision-making** – ensuring transparency and impartiality in the distribution of resources and opportunities.
2. **Empowerment and voice** – actively inviting and valuing contributions from all members, especially those from underrepresented groups.
3. **Belongingness and uniqueness** – balancing the need for social inclusion with the recognition of individual distinctiveness, thereby fostering innovation and engagement.

Inclusive leadership is also linked to **transformational and servant leadership theories**, sharing an emphasis on empathy, ethical behaviour and collective purpose, but differing in its explicit attention to diversity dynamics and power asymmetries. Empirical studies demonstrate that inclusive leadership correlates positively with **team innovation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and psychological safety (Choi et al., 2017; Randel et al., 2018)**.

In contemporary organizations, inclusive leadership is increasingly operationalized through **inclusive communication practices, participatory decision-making, and equitable talent development systems**. Digital-era leadership models further extend inclusivity into virtual and hybrid environments, emphasizing trust-building, cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability in diverse global teams (**Ashikali et al., 2020**).

Overall, the Inclusive Leadership Model represents a **systemic and behavioural approach** to inclusion, positioning leaders as catalysts of cultural transformation who model inclusivity, challenge bias and institutionalize equity at every organizational level.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THEORIES AND MODELS

Table 1 Comparative Analysis of Theories and Models

Framework	Framework	Framework	Framework
Social Justice Theory	Policy and equity	Fairness, redistribution, representation	Abstract; lacks operational tools
Capability Approach	Development and empowerment	Freedom, agency, opportunity	Measurement complexity
Social Model of Disability	Disability inclusion	Barrier removal, societal reform	May overlook individual support needs
Intersectionality	Diversity and identity	Overlapping systems of oppression	Complex operationalization
Index for Inclusion	Education	Culture, policy, practice	Context-specific; requires adaptation
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Curriculum design	Flexibility, accessibility, engagement	Implementation challenges
Organizational Inclusion Model	Workplace inclusion	Belongingness, uniqueness	May neglect systemic inequities

Emerging Perspectives

Recent scholarship introduces intersectional inclusiveness frameworks, combining digital, cultural and ecological dimensions (Schuelka & Johnstone, 2022). Digital inclusiveness (OECD, 2021) has gained importance in post-pandemic contexts, emphasizing equitable access to technology and digital literacy. Similarly, inclusive sustainability models integrate environmental justice with social inclusion, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10, and 16).

Even a systematic literature review of theoretical frameworks and conceptual models related to **inclusiveness** from **educational and psychological perspectives** reveals an evolving understanding that emphasizes equity, diversity and participation as central to inclusive practice. From an **educational standpoint**, frameworks such as **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**, **Social Constructivism** and **Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory** highlight how inclusive environments adapt teaching methods, curriculum design, and institutional structures to accommodate varied learner needs. Psychologically, theories like **Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory**, **Bandura’s Social Learning Theory** and the **Theory of Planned Behaviour** underscore the role of motivation, self-efficacy and social interaction in fostering inclusive mindsets and behaviours. Emerging perspectives increasingly integrate **intersectionality** and **Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)** to address systemic barriers, power dynamics, and identity formation within inclusive contexts. Collectively, these frameworks reflect a shift from deficit-based approaches toward **strength-based, participatory and context-sensitive models** that promote belonging, psychological safety and holistic development for all learners.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Inclusiveness is a multifaceted construct rooted in theories of justice, capability and equity. The reviewed frameworks highlight the transition from integration (mere participation) to transformation (systemic inclusion). Future research should focus on contextualizing inclusiveness across cultures and systems, developing mixed-method tools for assessing inclusiveness and integrating digital, ecological and intersectional perspectives into inclusion theory. The convergence of these models underscores inclusiveness as both a moral imperative and a systemic responsibility, central to sustainable and equitable societies.

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Conflict of Interest

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