ABSTRACT

Background:

The importance of effectively working in diverse cultural contexts is becoming increasingly evident, especially in today's interconnected global society. In addition, ninety per cent of the most influential business executives from 68 nations have identified multicultural leadership as the top priority for the senior management teams of the 21st century. In front of a workforce more multicultural than ever before, with people from various ethnic, racial, and cultural environments, leaders need to navigate cultural and societal differences and build on them. Since the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic on March 11, 2020, the work-from-anywhere phenomenon has conquered the globe and propelled multicultural leadership to become the new standard in today's fast-paced and polycentric world. Taking this into account, a considerable amount of emphasis was placed on the factors that impact and influence multicultural leadership in an effort to explain the interconnections that would maximize results and promote a healthier company's culture and growth.

Purpose:

This study aims to investigate the impact and effects of cultural intelligence and knowledge dynamics on multicultural leadership in an organizational context. It seeks to contribute to a greater comprehension of the factors influencing multicultural leadership and driving business performance. Ultimately, this research could be valuable in helping organizations identify the competencies and characteristics required for effective multicultural leadership and providing guidance on cultivating and leveraging these qualities. Furthermore, aside from providing support to practitioners within the multicultural leadership *arena*, this study's primary objective is to share significant insights with other cross-disciplinary researchers and students. This thesis can inform and build future topic-related research and educational endeavors by disseminating the findings and contributing to the body of knowledge on multicultural leadership.

Methods:

After a systemic and bibliometric literature review, the methodology was based on mixed-methods research. In the first phase, during our qualitative analysis, we approached 15 multicultural leaders

as subjects of study and conducted semi-structured interviews. Through this, we better understood how cultural intelligence and knowledge dynamics affect and impact multicultural leadership. We conducted a thematic content analysis in conjunction with a cross-case and network analysis to ascertain the similarities and differences between the cases. A quantitative analysis based on 396 validated questionnaires with global amplitude has been carried out in order to provide more robust evidence not only on the influence of cultural intelligence, knowledge dynamics and organizational context on multinational leadership but also in regards the possible influence of knowledge dynamics and organizational context on cultural intelligence. As a constructive result of the presented analysis, four of the five main hypothesized relationships fit and validate the proposed model.

Conclusions:

According to the study's findings, cultural intelligence, knowledge dynamics, and organizational context are the main vectors of multinational leadership with demonstrated impacting roles. Also, the influence of knowledge dynamics on cultural intelligence was investigated and proven, while our research did not positively showcase the direct connection between organizational context and cultural intelligence. The results of this study make significant contributions to both the academic community and the business world. In terms of academic research, being the first study to examine how organizational context, knowledge dynamics, and cultural intelligence affect multicultural leadership paved the way for subsequent studies related to the enhancements of global management. From the business perspective, our thesis provides multicultural leadership with new levers to maximize revenues and accelerate growth while building on an agile company's culture.