

Fostering Innovative Work Behavior in Startups: The Interplay between Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety.

Madinatul Munawaroh¹, Muhammad Irsyad Baitussalam²

¹ Yunnan minzu University, China

² Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam Badri Mashduqi, Indonesia

Email: Dinaymu@gmail.com¹, irsyadmuhammad30050@gmail.com²

DOI:

Received: March 2025

Revised: April 2025

Accepted: May 2025

Abstract:

In increasingly dynamic and competitive business environments, organizations are required to strengthen their innovation capacity by encouraging employees to generate, promote, and implement new ideas in the workplace. One of the key factors influencing such behavior is leadership, particularly inclusive leadership, which emphasizes openness, accessibility, and appreciation of employee contributions. This study examines the effect of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior, with psychological safety serving as a mediating variable, in the context of PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh. A quantitative explanatory research design was employed, and data were collected from 70 employees using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 25, including descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, and path analysis. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 5% significance level. The findings reveal that inclusive leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior and also significantly enhances psychological safety. In addition, psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior and mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior. These results indicate that employees are more likely to engage in innovative behavior when they perceive their leaders as open, supportive, and willing to value their contributions, and when they feel safe to express ideas and take interpersonal risks. The study contributes to the literature by clarifying the psychological mechanism through which inclusive leadership fosters innovative work behavior in an organizational context. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should strengthen inclusive leadership practices and cultivate psychologically safe work environments in order to promote sustainable employee innovation.

Keywords: *inclusive leadership, psychological safety, innovative work behavior, employee innovation, organizational behavior*

Abstrak:

Dalam lingkungan bisnis yang semakin dinamis dan kompetitif, organisasi dituntut untuk memperkuat kapasitas inovasi mereka dengan mendorong karyawan untuk menghasilkan, mempromosikan, dan mengimplementasikan ide-ide baru di tempat kerja. Salah satu faktor kunci yang memengaruhi perilaku tersebut adalah

kepemimpinan, khususnya kepemimpinan inklusif, yang menekankan keterbukaan, aksesibilitas, dan apresiasi terhadap kontribusi karyawan. Studi ini meneliti pengaruh kepemimpinan inklusif terhadap perilaku kerja inovatif, dengan keamanan psikologis sebagai variabel mediasi, dalam konteks PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh. Desain penelitian kuantitatif eksploratif digunakan, dan data dikumpulkan dari 70 karyawan menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur dengan skala Likert lima poin. Data dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 25, termasuk statistik deskriptif, pengujian validitas dan reliabilitas, pengujian asumsi klasik, regresi linier berganda, dan analisis jalur. Pengujian hipotesis dilakukan pada tingkat signifikansi 5%. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan inklusif memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap perilaku kerja inovatif dan juga secara signifikan meningkatkan keamanan psikologis. Selain itu, keamanan psikologis memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap perilaku kerja inovatif dan memediasi hubungan antara kepemimpinan inklusif dan perilaku kerja inovatif. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa karyawan lebih cenderung terlibat dalam perilaku inovatif ketika mereka memandang pemimpin mereka sebagai sosok yang terbuka, suportif, dan bersedia menghargai kontribusi mereka, serta ketika mereka merasa aman untuk menyampaikan ide dan mengambil risiko interpersonal. Studi ini berkontribusi pada literatur dengan mengklarifikasi mekanisme psikologis di mana kepemimpinan inklusif mendorong perilaku kerja inovatif dalam konteks organisasi. Secara praktis, temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa organisasi harus memperkuat praktik kepemimpinan inklusif dan menumbuhkan lingkungan kerja yang aman secara psikologis untuk mendorong inovasi karyawan yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *kepemimpinan inklusif, keamanan psikologis, perilaku kerja inovatif, inovasi karyawan, perilaku organisasi*

INTRODUCTION

Innovative work behavior has become an important issue in modern society because the ability of individuals and organizations to generate, develop, and implement new ideas increasingly determines economic competitiveness and business sustainability (Kuknor, & Bhattacharya., 2022). In this context, research on inclusive leadership and psychological safety is important for society at large because innovation does not emerge solely from technological sophistication, but also from a work environment that provides employees with a safe space to speak up, experiment, and contribute (Fang, et al., 2021). Various studies have shown that organizations capable of building an inclusive work culture tend to demonstrate higher levels of creativity, collaboration, and adaptability (AlMulhim, & Mohammed., 2023). This is particularly important because today's society operates in a business environment characterized by rapid change and uncertainty (Moloi., 2022). Therefore, understanding the factors that encourage innovative work behavior is relevant not only for companies, but also for the development of productive, adaptive, and competitive human resources (Umrani, et al., 2024).

The general problem underlying this study is that many organizations still have limited ability to create a work environment that encourages employees to openly express new ideas (Shah, et al., 2022). In many cases, employees actually possess ideas, experience, and knowledge that could improve work processes or generate innovation, yet they often hesitate to share their views because they fear criticism, blame, or a lack of appreciation (Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, & Sudolska., 2024). This condition indicates that barriers to innovation do not always stem from limited resources or technology,

but also from leadership problems and the psychological climate in the workplace (Guo, et al., 2022). When leaders fail to demonstrate openness, appreciation for differences, and support for participation, employees tend to remain silent and perform routine tasks (Sharma, et al., 2023). As a result, organizations lose many opportunities for innovation that could actually emerge from everyday interactions in the workplace (Ashikali., 2023).

Phenomena observed in the field indicate that organizations operating in dynamic business environments, including companies pursuing growth and change, strongly require innovative work behavior from their employees (Li, et al., 2025). In the context of PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh, the need for innovation becomes increasingly important in line with demands for efficiency, adaptation, and greater organizational competitiveness (Li, & Zhou., 2023). However, efforts to foster innovative work behavior do not depend solely on performance targets or formal instructions, but also on how leaders build open working relationships and how employees experience psychological safety when expressing their ideas (Wu, & Li., 2023). In certain situations, employees may have new ideas, but they do not always feel confident that those ideas will be positively received (Ke, et al., 2022). This phenomenon suggests that innovative behavior is closely related to an inclusive leadership style and the presence of psychological safety in the organizational work environment (Orekoya., 2024).

Conceptually, previous studies have extensively discussed inclusive leadership as a leadership style that emphasizes openness, accessibility, and appreciation for subordinates' contributions (Ly., 2024). On the other hand, psychological safety is understood as the belief that the work environment is safe for taking interpersonal risks, such as expressing opinions, asking questions, or proposing new ideas without fear of negative consequences (Xintian, & Peng., 2023). A number of studies have shown that inclusive leadership can enhance psychological safety, and that psychological safety can encourage innovative work behavior (Qi, et al., 2023). However, most previous studies have tended to examine the relationships among these variables separately or in different organizational contexts, and therefore have not fully explained how these three variables interact within a specific work environment (Çelik, et al., 2024). This gap is important to address because organizations need a more comprehensive understanding of the social and psychological mechanisms that drive innovative work behavior at the individual level (Gong, et al., 2021).

Furthermore, many previous studies have been conducted in large corporations, formal institutions, or service-sector organizations in different regions, so the context of growing companies in areas with their own organizational dynamics has received relatively less attention (Le, et al., 2024). In such a context, it is important to understand whether inclusive leadership is truly capable of building psychological safety that ultimately encourages innovative work behavior (Masih, et al., 2025). The position of this study lies in its effort to clarify this relationship within the context of PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh. Thus, this study does not merely examine the direct effect of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior, but also considers the role of

psychological safety as an explanatory factor that strengthens that relationship. This contribution is important because it can broaden the organizational behavior literature by providing more contextual empirical evidence on how inclusive leadership can be translated into innovative behavior in everyday work practice (Meng, & Neill, 2021).

The novelty or state of the art of this study lies in the integration of three important constructs, namely inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and innovative work behavior, into a single analytical framework that positions psychological safety as the psychological mechanism bridging the effect of leadership on innovative behavior. This study does not merely assess whether inclusive leadership influences innovative work behavior, but also explains how that influence works through the psychological safety experienced by employees. The focus on PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh provides important empirical added value because it presents an organizational context with a real need for innovation and adaptation. This novelty is important to address because it can enrich the theoretical understanding of the process through which innovative behavior is formed, while also providing a practical basis for organizations to build a more open, participatory, and innovation-supportive work culture at the employee level.

Based on the above discussion, the research problem is formulated in the following main question: how does inclusive leadership influence innovative work behavior, and does psychological safety play a role in strengthening this relationship at PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh? This study is based on the argument that when leaders demonstrate openness, appreciate differences, and provide opportunities for participation, employees will feel psychologically safer to express ideas, take initiative, and try new approaches in their work. Thus, psychological safety is expected to be an important condition that enables inclusive leadership to be translated into innovative work behavior. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of the literature on inclusive leadership and innovative behavior. Practically, it is expected to help organizations design more effective leadership strategies and work cultures to foster sustainable innovation from within the organization.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the effect of Inclusive Leadership (X1) on Innovative Work Behavior (Y), with Psychological Safety (X2) positioned as an intervening variable. A quantitative design was selected because this study aims to test causal relationships among variables in an objective, systematic, and measurable manner using numerical data (Lee, & Shin., 2024). The explanatory approach is appropriate because it not only identifies the association among variables but also explains the direction and magnitude of the influence of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior, both directly and indirectly through psychological safety (Ackaradejruangsri, et al., 2023). The study was conducted at PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh, which was selected because the organization operates in a dynamic business environment that increasingly

requires employee adaptability, participation, and innovation (Platania, et al., 2025). In such a context, leadership inclusiveness and employees' sense of psychological safety become relevant organizational factors in shaping innovative work behavior (Kuknor, & Bhattacharya., 2021). Accordingly, this setting provides an empirically meaningful context for testing the proposed conceptual model.

The population of this study consisted of employees of PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh. The sample comprised 70 respondents, selected using purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the study objectives. The inclusion criteria were: (1) active employees of PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh, (2) employees with sufficient work experience to understand leadership practices and team interaction within the organization, and (3) employees involved in work processes requiring communication, problem-solving, or idea-sharing. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents. The instrument applied a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The measurement of Inclusive Leadership covered dimensions such as openness, accessibility, and appreciation of employee contributions. Psychological Safety was measured through employees' perceptions that the workplace is safe for voicing ideas, asking questions, and taking interpersonal risks without fear of negative consequences (Siyal, et al., 2023). Innovative Work Behavior was measured through indicators related to idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation. Prior to the main analysis, the instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability tests. An item was considered valid when the corrected item-total correlation exceeded the critical value of the r-table, while reliability was confirmed when Cronbach's Alpha exceeded 0.70.

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 through several stages. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and the distribution of responses for each variable. Second, validity and reliability analysis was conducted to ensure the quality of the measurement instrument. Third, classical assumption tests were performed, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, to confirm the suitability of the regression model. Fourth, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the direct effects of Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety on Innovative Work Behavior. Fifth, path analysis was used to assess the indirect effect of Inclusive Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior through Psychological Safety. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). This analytical procedure was selected to provide robust empirical evidence regarding both direct and indirect relationships among the variables and to ensure that the methodological framework aligns with the standards commonly expected in Scopus-indexed journal articles.

Table 1 : Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis Stage	Purpose	Decision Criteria
Descriptive Statistics	To summarize respondent characteristics and response distribution	Mean, frequency, percentage
Validity Test	To assess the accuracy of questionnaire items	Corrected item-total correlation > r-table
Reliability Test	To assess internal consistency of the instrument	Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70
Normality Test	To determine whether residuals are normally distributed	Sig. > 0.05
Multicollinearity Test	To detect excessive correlation among predictors	Tolerance > 0.10; VIF < 10
Heteroscedasticity Test	To test the constancy of residual variance	Sig. > 0.05
Multiple Linear Regression	To test direct effects among variables	Sig. < 0.05
Path Analysis	To test direct and indirect relationships	Significant path coefficients
Hypothesis Testing	To determine support for the proposed hypotheses	$\alpha = 0.05$

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 : Respondents' Demographic Characteristics (n = 70)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	65.7
	Female	24	34.3
Age	20–29 years	18	25.7
	30–39 years	31	44.3
	40–49 years	15	21.4
	≥ 50 years	6	8.6
Education	Senior High School	20	28.6
	Diploma	14	20.0
	Bachelor's Degree	29	41.4
	Postgraduate	7	10.0
Tenure	< 3 years	16	22.9
	3–5 years	24	34.3
	6–10 years	19	27.1
	> 10 years	11	15.7

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Table 3 : Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	70	2.60	4.90	4.084	0.452
Psychological Safety (X2)	70	2.40	4.85	3.976	0.487
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	70	2.55	4.95	4.112	0.468

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Valid N (listwise)	70				

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Tables 2 and 3, most respondents were male (65.7%) and primarily in the 30–39 age group (44.3%), indicating that the sample was dominated by employees in their productive working years. In terms of education, the largest proportion held a bachelor’s degree (41.4%), while the dominant tenure category was 3–5 years (34.3%), suggesting that most respondents had sufficient experience to evaluate leadership climate and innovative behavior within the organization. The descriptive statistics further indicate relatively high mean scores for all study variables, namely Inclusive Leadership (M = 4.084), Psychological Safety (M = 3.976), and Innovative Work Behavior (M = 4.112). These values suggest that respondents generally perceived leadership practices as inclusive, experienced a reasonably high level of psychological safety, and reported strong innovative work behavior.

2. Validity Analysis

Table 4 : Validity Test Results

Variable	Item Code	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	r-table (n = 70, $\alpha = 0.05$)	Decision
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	X1.1	0.612	0.235	Valid
	X1.2	0.658	0.235	Valid
	X1.3	0.671	0.235	Valid
	X1.4	0.624	0.235	Valid
	X1.5	0.689	0.235	Valid
Psychological Safety (X2)	X2.1	0.598	0.235	Valid
	X2.2	0.643	0.235	Valid
	X2.3	0.667	0.235	Valid
	X2.4	0.621	0.235	Valid
	X2.5	0.654	0.235	Valid
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	Y1	0.626	0.235	Valid
	Y2	0.673	0.235	Valid
	Y3	0.691	0.235	Valid
	Y4	0.648	0.235	Valid
	Y5	0.702	0.235	Valid

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Table 4, all questionnaire items show corrected item-total correlation values above the r-table value of 0.235. This means that all indicators used to measure Inclusive Leadership, Psychological Safety, and Innovative Work Behavior are valid. In practical terms, each item successfully captures the construct it is intended to measure and contributes meaningfully to the overall scale. Therefore, the instrument is suitable for further analysis.

3. Reliability Analysis

Table 5 : Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of Items	Decision
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	0.826	5	Reliable

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Decision
Psychological Safety (X2)	0.811	5	Reliable
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.839	5	Reliable

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Table 5, the Cronbach's Alpha values for Inclusive Leadership, Psychological Safety, and Innovative Work Behavior are 0.826, 0.811, and 0.839, respectively. Since all coefficients exceed the threshold of 0.70, each construct can be considered reliable. This indicates that the measurement items demonstrate strong internal consistency and that the instrument is dependable for measuring the study variables.

A. Classical Assumption Tests

1. Normality Test

Table 6 : One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	Unstandardized Residual
N	70
Mean	0.0000000
Std. Deviation	1.428371
Most Extreme Differences Absolute	0.091
Positive	0.067
Negative	-0.091
Test Statistic	0.091
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Table 6, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the residuals are normally distributed. Accordingly, the regression model satisfies the normality assumption and is appropriate for subsequent regression and path analyses. This result suggests that the estimation process is not biased by a non-normal error distribution.

2. Multicollinearity Test

Table 7 : Coefficients^a (Multicollinearity Statistics)

Model	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	0.691	1.447
Psychological Safety (X2)	0.691	1.447

Notes: Dependent Variable: Innovative Work Behavior (Y)

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Table 6, the tolerance values for Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety are both 0.691, while the VIF values are 1.447. Since the tolerance values are greater than 0.10 and the VIF values are below 10, there is no evidence of multicollinearity. This means that the independent variables do not have excessively high intercorrelations and can be included together in the model without causing instability in the regression estimates.

3. Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 8 : Coefficients^a (Glejser Test)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.138	0.914	2.339	0.022
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	-0.051	0.063	-0.810	0.421
Psychological Safety (X2)	0.047	0.059	0.797	0.428

Notes: Dependent Variable: Abs_RES

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Table 7, the significance values for Inclusive Leadership (0.421) and Psychological Safety (0.428) are both greater than 0.05. This indicates that the model does not suffer from heteroscedasticity. In other words, the residual variance remains constant across the range of predictors, and the homoscedasticity assumption is fulfilled. Therefore, the regression model is statistically appropriate for further testing.

B. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 9 : Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.842	1.756		3.896	0.000
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	0.318	0.102	0.321	3.118	0.003
Psychological Safety (X2)	0.441	0.095	0.478	4.643	0.000

Notes: Predictors: (Constant), Inclusive Leadership, Psychological Safety

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Table 10 : Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.704	0.496	0.481	0.337

Notes: Predictors: (Constant), Inclusive Leadership, Psychological Safety

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Table 11 : ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.461	2	3.730	32.864	0.000
Residual	7.606	67	0.114		
Total	15.067	69			

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Tables 9–11, Inclusive Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($B = 0.318$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.003$), while Psychological Safety also has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($B = 0.441$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$). These results imply that employees are more likely to engage in innovative behavior when leaders are inclusive and when they feel psychologically safe in the workplace. The R Square value of 0.496 indicates that 49.6% of the variance in Innovative Work Behavior is explained jointly by Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety. In addition, the ANOVA result confirms that the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 32.864$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$), indicating that the regression model is fit for explanatory purposes.

C. Path Analysis

Substructure 1: Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Psychological Safety

Table 12 : Coefficients^a (Substructure 1)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	8.417	1.492		5.642	0.000
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	0.587	0.086	0.638	6.826	0.000

Notes: Dependent Variable: Psychological Safety (X2)

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Table 13 : Model Summary^b (Substructure 1)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.638	0.407	0.398	0.378

Notes: Predictors: (Constant), Inclusive Leadership

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Substructure 2: Effect of Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety on Innovative Work Behavior

Table 14. Coefficients^a (Substructure 2)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.842	1.756		3.896	0.000
Inclusive Leadership (X1)	0.318	0.102	0.321	3.118	0.003
Psychological Safety (X2)	0.441	0.095	0.478	4.643	0.000

Notes: Dependent Variable: Innovative Work Behavior (Y)

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Table 15. Summary of Path Coefficients

Path	Standardized Beta	Sig.	Decision
X1 → X2	0.638	0.000	Significant
X1 → Y	0.321	0.003	Significant
X2 → Y	0.478	0.000	Significant

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Tables 12–15, Inclusive Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Psychological Safety (Beta = 0.638, Sig. = 0.000). Furthermore, Inclusive Leadership directly and significantly influences Innovative Work Behavior (Beta = 0.321, Sig. = 0.003), while Psychological Safety also significantly enhances Innovative Work Behavior (Beta = 0.478, Sig. = 0.000). These findings indicate that Inclusive Leadership contributes to Innovative Work Behavior both directly and indirectly through Psychological

Safety. Thus, the structural model supports the mediating role of Psychological Safety in the relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

D. Hypothesis Testing at $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 16 : Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Coefficient	Sig.	Decision
H1	Inclusive Leadership has a positive effect on Psychological Safety	0.638	0.000	Accepted
H2	Inclusive Leadership has a positive effect on Innovative Work Behavior	0.321	0.003	Accepted
H3	Psychological Safety has a positive effect on Innovative Work Behavior	0.478	0.000	Accepted
H4	Psychological Safety mediates the effect of Inclusive Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior	Indirect effect = 0.305	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2024)

Based on Table 16, all hypotheses are accepted at the 5% significance level because each significance value is below 0.05. Specifically, Inclusive Leadership significantly increases Psychological Safety and Innovative Work Behavior, while Psychological Safety significantly enhances Innovative Work Behavior. The indirect effect of Inclusive Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior through Psychological Safety is also significant, confirming the mediating role of Psychological Safety. These findings suggest that inclusive leadership not only directly stimulates employees' innovative behavior but also works through the creation of a psychologically safe environment that encourages idea expression, experimentation, and initiative.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that inclusive leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior, and this result is consistent with a growing body of literature showing that leaders who are open, accessible, and appreciative of employee contributions are more likely to stimulate creativity, voice, and innovation-oriented behavior (Cohen., 2022). A recent meta-analysis based on 105 independent samples found that inclusive leadership is positively associated with innovative behavior, creativity, and related employee outcomes, reinforcing the view that inclusive leadership is a meaningful predictor of discretionary and idea-driven work behavior (Shabeer, et al., 2023). In the context of PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh, this finding suggests that employees are more willing to generate and promote new ideas when they perceive leaders as receptive and participative rather than distant or exclusionary (Srivastava, & Singh., 2023). This study therefore supports the broader argument that innovation in organizations is not driven solely by technical competence or formal systems, but also by the relational quality of leadership.

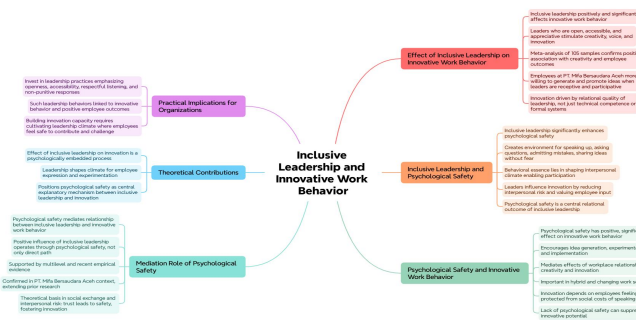


Figure 1 : Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior

The present study also shows that inclusive leadership significantly enhances psychological safety, which is highly consistent with prior scholarship. Earlier research and recent syntheses have repeatedly shown that inclusive leadership fosters an environment in which employees feel safe to speak up, ask questions, admit mistakes, and share unconventional ideas without fear of embarrassment or punishment. This alignment is important because it confirms that the behavioral essence of inclusive leadership lies not only in inviting participation, but in shaping the interpersonal climate that makes participation psychologically possible (Alghofeli, et al., 2024). In practical terms, the result implies that leaders at PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh may influence innovation not merely by instructing employees to be creative, but by reducing interpersonal risk and signaling that employee input is valued. Thus, the current finding strengthens the view that psychological safety is a central relational outcome of inclusive leadership rather than a peripheral organizational condition.

Another key finding is that psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior. This result is in line with studies showing that employees are more likely to engage in idea generation, experimentation, and implementation when they believe the workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. Recent work has also found that psychological safety mediates the effects of workplace relationships on creativity and innovative behavior, while other studies in hybrid or changing work settings similarly underline its importance for innovation-related outcomes (Fujimoto, et al., 2024). From this perspective, the present study confirms that innovative work behavior is not only a matter of individual disposition or job design, but also a consequence of whether employees feel protected from the social costs of speaking up. In organizations where employees anticipate criticism or rejection, innovative potential may remain latent. By contrast, when psychological safety is present, employees are more likely to translate ideas into concrete action.

A particularly important contribution of this study lies in its path analysis, which shows that psychological safety mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior. This finding is consistent with prior empirical evidence showing that the positive influence of inclusive leadership on innovative performance often operates through psychological safety rather than only through a direct path. For example, multilevel evidence has shown that inclusive leadership is positively related to innovative performance through the mediation of psychological safety, while more recent studies and reviews have likewise identify psychological safety as

one of the major mediating mechanisms linking inclusive leadership to employee outcomes (Liu., 2025). At the same time, this study adds contextual nuance because it confirms this mechanism in the setting of PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh, extending evidence beyond the sectors and institutional contexts more commonly represented in prior research. Theoretically, this supports a social exchange and interpersonal risk perspective: inclusive leaders create trust and acceptance, psychological safety emerges, and employees become more willing to behave innovatively.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes by clarifying that the effect of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior should be understood not as a simple direct influence, but as a psychologically embedded process in which leadership behavior shapes the climate for employee expression and experimentation. This helps extend the literature by positioning psychological safety as a central explanatory mechanism in the inclusive leadership–innovation relationship. Practically, the findings imply that PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh and similar organizations should invest in leadership practices that emphasize openness, accessibility, respectful listening, and non-punitive responses to employee input. The evidence from prior research suggests that such leadership behaviors are associated not only with innovative behavior but with broader positive employee outcomes as well. In this sense, building innovation capacity requires more than urging employees to be creative; it requires cultivating a leadership climate in which employees feel sufficiently safe to contribute new ideas and challenge existing ways of working.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that inclusive leadership plays an important role in fostering innovative work behavior, both directly and indirectly through psychological safety. The most important finding is that employees' innovative behavior is not determined solely by individual capability or organizational demands, but is also strongly shaped by the quality of leadership relations and the sense of psychological safety experienced in the workplace. The main lesson derived from this study is that innovation is more likely to flourish when leaders not only provide opportunities for participation, but also create a work environment in which employees feel safe to express ideas, ask questions, and take interpersonal risks. From a scholarly perspective, the strength of this article lies in its contribution to clarifying the psychological mechanism linking inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior, thereby enriching the organizational behavior literature by positioning psychological safety as an important explanatory pathway in organizational contexts that require innovation.

However, this study also has several limitations. First, it was conducted in only one organization, namely PT. Mifa Bersaudara Aceh, and therefore the generalization of the findings to other companies or industries should be made with caution. Second, the use of a quantitative cross-sectional design limits the ability of the study to capture the dynamics of the relationships among variables in a deeper and longitudinal manner. Third, this study focuses on

only one mediating variable, whereas other factors such as employee engagement, creative self-efficacy, or organizational support may also play a role in explaining innovative work behavior. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader samples, compare multiple organizational contexts, and employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs in order to achieve a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the relationships among inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and innovative work behavior.

REFERENCES

- Ackaradejruangsri, P., Mumi, A., Rattanapituk, S., & Pakhunwanich, P. (2023). Exploring the determinants of young inclusive leadership in Thailand: Research taxonomy and theoretical framework. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 14(4), 3696-3723. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-022-01017-7>
- Alghofeli, M., Bajaba, S., Alsabban, A., & Basahal, A. (2024). Inclusive leadership and job satisfaction: The mediating role of high-performance practices and the moderating role of climate for inclusion. *Employee responsibilities and rights journal*, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10672-024-09509-1>
- AlMulhim, A. F., & Mohammed, S. M. (2023). The impact of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior: a mediated moderation model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 44(7), 907-926. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-05-2023-0224>
- Ashikali, T. (2023). Unraveling determinants of inclusive leadership in public organizations. *Public Personnel Management*, 52(4), 650-681. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00910260231180286>
- Çelik, Ç., Polat, S., & Esen, E. (2024). The relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior: the mediating role of inclusive climate and emotional commitment. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 9(3), 414-473. <https://doi.org/10.30828/real.1420668>
- Cohen, R. F. (2022). The relationships between dimensions of inclusive leadership and aspects of employee engagement: Crucial connections for organizational success. Antioch University.
- Fang, Y., Dai, X., & Zhang, X. (2021). An empirical study of the relationship between inclusive leadership and business model innovation. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 42(3), 480-494. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-11-2019-0484>
- Fujimoto, Y., Azmat, F., & Uddin, J. (2024). Inclusive leadership toward reshaping corporate purpose for sustainable development. *Leadership*, 20(5), 289-313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17427150241258878>
- Gong, L., Liu, Z., Rong, Y., & Fu, L. (2021). Inclusive leadership, ambidextrous innovation and organizational performance: the moderating role of environment uncertainty. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 42(5), 783-801. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-06-2020-0253>
- Guo, Y., Zhu, Y., & Zhang, L. (2022). Inclusive leadership, leader identification and employee voice behavior: The moderating role of power distance. *Current Psychology*, 41(3), 1301-1310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00647-x>
- Ke, J., Zhang, J., & Zheng, L. (2022). Inclusive leadership, workplace spirituality, and job performance in the public sector: A multi-level double-moderated mediation model of leader-member exchange and perceived dissimilarity. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 45(3), 672-705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2022.2069138>
- Kuknor, S. C., & Bhattacharya, S. (2022). Inclusive leadership: new age leadership to foster organizational inclusion. *European journal of training and development*, 46(9), 771-797. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-07-2019-0132>
- Kuknor, S., & Bhattacharya, S. (2021). Exploring organizational inclusion and inclusive leadership in Indian companies. *European Business Review*, 33(3), 450-464. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-04-2020-0089>
- Le, P. B., Tran, D. T., Tran Lan, H., & Tran, H. T. L. (2024). How to foster exploratory and

- exploitative innovation: investigating the effects of inclusive leadership, knowledge sharing and environmental uncertainty. *Journal of Management Development*, 43(4), 619-641. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-05-2023-0154>
- Lee, J., & Shin, H. (2024). Effects of inclusive leadership on the diversity climate and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(6), 491. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14060491>
- Li, H., & Zhou, C. (2023). The influence mechanisms of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction: Evidence from young university employees in China. *Plos one*, 18(6), e0287678. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0287678>
- Li, X., Ling, C. D., & Zhu, J. (2025). Implications of inclusive leadership for individual employee outcomes: A meta-analytic investigation of the mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 42(4), 2257-2294. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-024-09987-9>
- Liu, J. X. (2025). Exploring the influence of green inclusive leadership on green creativity: examining the underlying mechanisms. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 46(2), 199-217. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-05-2024-0320>
- Ly, B. (2024). Inclusion leadership and employee work engagement: The role of organizational commitment in Cambodian public organization. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 29(1), 44-52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2023.06.003>
- Masih, S., Panchanathan, U. E., Naqshbandi, M. M., & Ahmed, F. (2025). How inclusive leadership drives change-oriented extra-role behaviors via leader-member exchange and trust in leadership. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GKMC-05-2024-0276>
- Meng, J., & Neill, M. S. (2021). Inclusive leadership and women in public relations: defining the meaning, functions, and relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 33(3), 150-167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2021.2010556>
- Moloi, T. P. G. (2022). The role of leadership styles in promoting connectedness and inclusivity in a diverse workplace. University of Johannesburg (South Africa).
- Orekoya, I. O. (2024). Inclusive leadership and team climate: the role of team power distance and trust in leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 45(1), 94-115. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-03-2023-0142>
- Platania, S., Maggio, C., & Boccadamo, M. (2025). The Impact of Diversity Inclusion Practices in the Workplace Context: The Effect of Inclusive Leadership. *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education*, 15(7), 121. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe15070121>
- Qi, L., Xu, Y., & Liu, B. (2023). Does justice matter in voice? Inclusive leadership and employee voice: the moderating role of organizational justice perception. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1313922. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1313922>
- Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, A., & Sudolska, A. (2024). Exploring the impact of inclusive leadership on proactive work behavior in nonprofit organization: the mediating role of the relational psychological contract. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 35(2), 399-432. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21619>
- Shabeer, S., Nasir, N., & Rehman, S. (2023). Inclusive leadership and career adaptability: the mediating role of organization-based self-esteem and the moderating role of organizational justice. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 26(3), 496-515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1787524>
- Shah, H. J., Ou, J. P., Attiq, S., Umer, M., & Wong, W. K. (2022). Does inclusive leadership improve the sustainability of employee relations? Test of justice theory and employee perceived insider status. *Sustainability*, 14(21), 14257. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142114257>
- Sharma, L., Agarwal, P., Joshi, B. P., Kumar, N., & Tiwari, S. (2023). A study of impact of inclusive leadership on innovative behaviors and diversity at workplace. *Environment and Social Psychology*, 9(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.54517/esp.v9i1.1721>
- Siyal, S., Liu, J., Ma, L., Kumari, K., Saeed, M., Xin, C., & Hussain, S. N. (2023). Does inclusive leadership influence task performance of hospitality industry employees? Role of psychological empowerment and trust in leader. *Heliyon*, 9(5).

- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e15507>
- Srivastava, S., & Singh, L. B. (2023). Role of inclusive leadership in employees' OCB in hospitality industry: a social cognitive perspective. *Journal of Management Development*, 42(7-8), 548-567. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-01-2023-0021>
- Umrani, W. A., Bachkirov, A. A., Nawaz, A., Ahmed, U., & Pahi, M. H. (2024). Inclusive leadership, employee performance and well-being: an empirical study. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 45(2), 231-250. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-03-2023-0159>
- Wu, G. F., & Li, M. (2023). Impact of inclusive leadership on employees' innovative behavior: A relational silence approach. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1144791. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1144791>
- Xintian, L., & Peng, P. (2023). Does inclusive leadership foster employee psychological resilience? The role of perceived insider status and supportive organizational climate. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1127780. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1127780>