

# Nexuses between Inclusive Leadership style and Employee Innovative Behavior: Exploring Mediated Moderating Model in Service Sector

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*Various aspects of innovation in working behaviours are now an emerging trend, but the role of leadership is also important in these scenarios. Innovation is not limited to theoretical aspects but also employees and managers are also employing in the organizations. Objective of current study is to elaborate the influence of inclusive leadership directly on employee's innovative behaviour and also through mediating role of employee engagement and perceived organizational support. Not only this, study also explores the strengthening influence of leader emotional intelligence on these relationships in shape of mediated moderation model. For model evaluation quantitative research type was being utilized by collecting quantitative data through close ended structured questionnaire adopted from existing literature. Target audience was employees from hospitality sector by specifying towards restaurant industry of Pakistan. Sample size for current study was 335 respondents on the bases of Krejcie & Morgan recommendation. Due to unavailability of sampling frame employee intercept based sampling technique was utilized for the sake of data collection. Findings elaborate well that beside the significance of direct impact of inclusive leadership on employee's innovative behaviour, perceived organizational support and employee engagement are positive strong intervening factors for this relationships. Moreover it is also being observed that emotionally intelligent leader is a significant strengthening factor for direct impact of inclusive leadership on innovative behaviour. Implicating the findings of current study will be beneficiary for service sector employees and provide guidance to leaders in firm that how they can develop engagement in employees and promote innovative behaviour.*

**Keywords:** Inclusive Leadership, Employee Engagement, Innovative Behaviour, Emotional Intelligent Leader.

## Introduction

### Background

Changing in employee's needs and identification of those needs by employer is a tough task now days due to comparative market trends. Leaders are using their inclusive and wide-ranging skills to make customer satisfied with them and engaged them with organization (Chowhan, Pries, & Mann, 2017; Hu et al., 2017). Studies uncover the truth that innovation now days not just related to professionals of research and development, to survive in a comparative market firms have to lead and train their employees that each of you have to work and think innovatively in this world of technological innovations (Zafar & Zafar, 2019), this also bring engagement factor in the employees which ultimately provide benefits towards business (Valaei, Nikhashemi, & Javan, 2017).

This point of view of inclusive leadership was progressively reasonable for researching imaginative conditions as it gave the focal point to synchronous examination of both leadership and worker conduct in mutually deciding IWB (Choi, Tran, & Park, 2015). Dissimilar to the customary 'pioneer driven' approach in which the emphasis was on the pioneer's frame of mind and conduct while expecting the supporter's attributes to be homogenous in the social point of view, consideration was paid to the qualities of the pioneer, workers' mentality and practices and their association with the pioneer. As it were, the social leadership approach made and persuaded workers to commonly deal with the unpredictable difficulties of IWB (Maslyn, Schyns, & Farmer, 2017).

Employee innovative behaviour refers towards presentation of innovative idea by employees in front of their leader. Literature argued that support to innovation in any organization refers towards positive growth trends in business. Study by Bysted & Hansen, was conducted recently by targeting private and public organizations existing in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, study revealed that firms in these countries majorly prefer and appreciate the innovative behaviour of employees. Individual inventive conduct is significant for superior associations (Bysted & Hansen, 2015).

Business performance is affected mostly by the leadership style and innovativeness even if there are other variables causing business performance to get affected. Currently all the businesses throughout the world are facing considerable pressure put by competition which has caused the forced need of innovativeness and innovation to come in play and these concepts have made their position secured in the scope of business strategies (Yıldız, Baştürk, & Boz, 2014).

Much of the attention is encompassed and attracted by leadership and its effects in organizations in relation to perceived performance and innovation. A very Positive impact of leadership upon perceived performance and innovation is being highlighted. There is need of more research to be done on large organizations, as well as in different countries for the purpose of generalizability of the findings. Use of self-reported form for leadership behavior was made that could have resulted in biasness. It was proposed that in future surveys leadership questionnaires should be filled up directly by the employees so that a more objective result for leadership perception could be attained (İşcan, Ersarı, & Naktiyok, 2014).

Studies on intellectual assessment hypothesis proposed that it was in reality natural inspiration (for this situation mental strengthening) that enabled people to feel

independence, competency, which means and criticism in their work, which thusly influenced their IWB (Javed et al., 2017a). CET system clarified that representatives assessed the outer elements to carry on with a specific goal in mind. Correspondingly, in the milieu of advancement, workers assessed the outside setting to discover support for their IWB. In the event that representatives found strong feeling, at that point they felt extraordinary inspiration to indicate IWB (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013). Comprehensive pioneers gave a strong outer setting by inspiring representatives to share their place of perspectives with respect to new changes (Choi et al., 2015) and also to deviant (Zafar & Mahmood, 2022).

Employees are basic assets of any association, and a reasonable competitive advantage can't be accomplished without their genuine interest, fulfillment and creativity. Enhancing the traditional leadership styles and support by the organization, to influence employees to observe that they are significant resources of their associations and that their welfare is important. This movement will push for workers to put more exertion into their job and spur creativity (Suifan, Abdallah, & Al Janini, 2018). Worker engagement is additionally a key factor for creative conduct and reception of the business advances (Bailey et al., 2017). Another investigation via Carter et al., was directed to gauge the impact of representative commitment level on business execution just as individual level occupation execution of workers, study gives the rule to troughs by giving outcomes that pioneers ought to think about both self-efficacy and ought to likewise draw in the workers in business and with their employments by enabling them, giving them ground to investigate their inventive thoughts which eventually give advantages to business (Carter et al., 2018).

According to the theory of social exchange, if the organization provides support for the employee, then the employee will produce a sense of obligation for the organization, which will increase the employee's work engagement, to achieve the objectives of the organization (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Literature explored the knowledge employee relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement the results show that organizational support has a direct impact not only on the employee work engagement, but also indirectly through psychological capital (Chang, 2015). Furthermore studies found that when a specific organization value employee contributions and concerns about employee benefits, employees will feel that the organization is trustworthy and that employees will have higher work engagement (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Employees with high perceived organizational support can obtain more recognition from the organization.

Creativity is extremely minded boggling wonder and sets of individual and logical elements impacts. Existence of emotional intelligence in leaders can be a noteworthy wellspring of employee creativity. People with emotional intelligence apply their intellect and sentiments both to strap up their aptitude to imagine and made something innovative and valuable. Over the recent few years, leader emotional intelligence has been receiving considerable attention within domain of social sciences studies. In order to reduce misconception and to organize burgeoning scholars consider emotional intelligence by considering both traits emotional self-efficacy and cognitive-emotional ability (Hu et al., 2022). These EI traits encompass various abilities, values and performance measures. Employees and leaders with abnormal state of emotional intelligence have the higher ability to think one of a kind ways, evaluate various

decisions, and turn out with unique contemplations in their work life (Hu et al., 2022). At the point when individuals have better aptitudes to control their own enthusiastic state and to use their own specific feeling when in doubt for dynamic essentialness, it could extend the ability to offer more new worthwhile thoughts in the work environment (Tsai & Lee, 2014).

With existence of literature regarding inclusive leadership and employee innovative behaviour, calls for researchers were also being found in literature (Bani-Melhem, Zeffane, & Albaity, 2018). Another research also conducted to measuring the nexuses between leadership styles and employees innovative behaviour, they also direct to add other mediating constructs between relationships of these variables (Hou, Li, & Yuan, 2018). Some other scholars also second this paucity identification and direct to consider some moderator along with organizational support regarding matters of innovative behaviour (Baloch, Nadeem, & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2019; Javed et al., 2017b).

Although industry is already working with inclusive leadership to get innovative work behavior but desired results are yet not generated, so objective of research is to explore the impact of inclusive leadership directly on innovative behaviour of employees and also to explore the mediating role of employee engagement and perceived organizational support. Secondly this study will also provide empirical grounds regarding moderating role of emotional intelligence on these relationships with the help of a mediated moderation model. This objective building also provide the some research questions, **RQ<sub>1</sub>**: What is the direct influence of inclusive leadership on innovative behaviour? **RQ<sub>2</sub>**: is there any mediating role of employee engagement and perceived organizational support between the direct relationship of leadership and innovation? Lastly **RQ<sub>3</sub>**: How emotional intelligence moderates various relationships of the model?

To accomplish above stated research objectives and respond possible underlying research questions, current study organized in 5 major sections. After introductory section 1, research constructs were established in Section 2 along with hypotheses building from literature and identified gap from that. Section 3 includes the methodological perspectives of research, by providing detailed description about target audience and data collection methods. Section 4 is about data analysis and checking structure and measurement model. Lastly section 5 elaborating about the findings and discussion along with outlining the theoretical and practical implication of the research, limitations which could be footprints for future researchers are also provided afterward.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Background

The idea of **Inclusive Leadership** was initially used in the field of the administration and leadership by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), which was characterized as the "words and deeds by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006)." Successively, literature characterized this leadership style as a winning combination for all concerned having shared goal and vision having mutually dependent affiliation (Randel et al., 2018). Moreover, an inclusive leader was measured as assuming a key job in framing a comprehensive association featuring inclusiveness. Ordinarily, this leadership contains three depths (Ye, Wang, & Li, 2018):

1. Leaders endured representatives' perspectives and disappointments by listening mindfully to their perspectives, soundly endured their blunders, and gave consolation and direction to care staff when they commit errors.
2. Leaders perceived and prepared representatives by regarding and concentrating on worker preparing and commending accomplishments as opposed to showing desire.
3. Leaders treated representatives genuinely, thought about their needs and premiums, demonstrated a reasonable disposition towards workers, and guaranteed that they share profit.

Innovation can be described as a process by which the people put their efforts to develop new ideas and apply the tested outcomes of these ideas for better performance (Ali et al., 2021). The conceptual basis of innovation implies that it is a multi-stage process of problem recognition, idea generation, establishing support for ideas, and implementation of the idea or technology (Ali et al., 2021). The process of innovation which is stated above is greatly affected by individual motivation, personality and initial information, and organizational supportive mechanisms (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). These characteristics of the individuals including innovative behavior are intensely influenced by leader's behavior.

Engagement concept in employees was initially developed by Kahn in 1990's at an architecture firm under a camp study. Literature defined that employees is engaged when they align company goals along with their individual goals to perform. Literature defined engagement as employees loyal work behaviour towards his organization and task (Mone & London, 2018). Gallup organization conducted a number of studies to measure engagement level of employee globally. Study revealed that if employees are not engaged with organization than they firm have to be ready for negative perception development in employees and they ultimately spread negative words regarding organization this negativity is the key hurdle in engagement development in employees (Gallup Jr & Anderson, 2018; Zafar & Mahmood, 2022).

Perceived organizational support was raised by Eisenberger, who argues that Perceived organizational supports the perception that employees are concerned about their contribution to the organization and their interests (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Ling believes that the perceived organizational support refers to the extent to which employees feel the organization's support for their work, and whether they agree with their interests and values. He divided the perceived organizational support into three dimensions: working support, employee value identification and caring interests (Zheng & Wu, 2018). Perceived organizational support can meet the psychological needs of employees. Employees will judge the organization's support according to their feelings (Ahmad & Zafar, 2018). Based on the theory of social exchange, if employees feel the organization's support for their work, then employees will return to the organization, the employees will work harder for the purpose of the organization.

The degree to which employee perceives about the concerns of organization for its welfare and contribution is considered as organizational support (Zagenczyk et al., 2020). Attitude and support of leaders towards their subordinates and degree of support by subordinate's significantly considered as antecedent for perceived organizational support of employees (Qi et al., 2019). In this way, literature represent that IL will

affect engagement of employees towards their work since what separates IL is its concentration to address workers issues, though different kinds of leadership marginally contrast in center. For instance, 14 Transformational leaders have style that is progressively dependent on the pioneer's drive and Transactional administration stresses on the pioneers' trade of remunerations with its devotees (Abbasi, 2018; DeMatthews et al., 2021).

Emotional intelligence is also a considerable factor for employee's psychological perspectives and innovativeness. Existing literature elaborates positive existence of leader emotional intelligence for the enhancing organizational performance (Begum et al., 2022), whereas it isn't just one theme which is crucial for performance enhancement. Not only this, researchers also explore the significant role of emotional intelligence for building innovative behaviour in subordinates (Hou et al., 2020).

### Hypotheses Development

Literature also conducted to measure the impact of inclusive leadership style on employee innovative behavior on employee engagement and further studies also shows that it has influence on employee's perception of organizational support (Qi et al., 2019; Wang, Chen, & Li, 2021; Wu & Li, 2023). Like recently literature revealed that leader who are inclusive in their leadership style will encourage employees more on thinking innovatively and engage them with organization, not just in R&D they prefer that each employee of the firm think innovatively to provide better service towards customers (Javed et al., 2017b; Wang et al., 2015). Efficient leaders tend to promote effective organizational functioning thus by empowering assisting and supporting the individuals, teams and organizations in order to give a good performance (Shakil, Memon, & Ting, 2021). The role of the entrepreneurial leader is increasingly becoming an important determinant of innovation, as leadership in small organizations has been recognized as the central element in influencing the firm's competitive advantage (Saleem, Shahab, & Irshad, 2023).

Literature examines the influence of leadership and innovative work behaviour and results provide the guidance for professionals that that should consider inclusive leadership with leaders (Javed et al., 2017b). In recent some years due to highly competitive environment various scholars enlighten the internal mechanism between inclusive leadership and employee innovative behavior through social exchange theory in various contextual settings, authors also second earlier findings by providing a strong empirical justification regarding positive predictive effect of inclusive leadership on innovativeness (Guo, Jin, & Yim, 2022; Shafaei & Nejati, 2023; Wu & Li, 2023). Summarizing the whole literature provides number of insightful understanding regarding leadership and mechanism regarding innovative work behaviour but the studies also call for research for in-depth insides regarding these concepts (Wu & Li, 2023; Zhang, Zhang, & Zainal, 2023; Zhao et al., 2023), these theoretical grounds also direct researcher to propose the following hypothesis;

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *There is a positive direct influence of inclusive leadership on employee innovative behavior.*

Literature provides findings regarding inclusive leaders by showing that inclusive leader provide opportunities for learning and development for employees as well as

work harder on development of their employee's cognitive abilities (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010). Shuck and Herd (2012) stated that an inferred consideration by the top leaders of corporate on the conveyance of worker's need is critical to making them engaged with work (Shuck & Herd, 2012). This also provides support in enhancing personal as well as work related feelings of engagement of an individual (Kopperud, Martinsen, & Humborstad, 2014). Recently study by Choi et al. (2015) discussed that for development of work engagement between employees, leadership plays a vital role, moreover they discussed that leader's behaviour acts as motivational driver for employees to support and enhance their engagement factors (Choi et al., 2015). At the end of the day, IL might be appropriate to encouraging EE since it creates connections at all degrees of the associations with the goal that undertakings are finished for common advantage (Sugiyama et al., 2016).

Initially, theoretical aspect approved well enough regarding consideration of mediating role of employee engagement for building innovative behaviour (Lu, Yu, & Shan, 2022), recently some of researcher consider this mediator between the relationship of innovative behaviour and leadership style. Research conducted in various contextual settings elaborates that various factors of work engagement are significantly intervening the leadership and innovative work behaviour (Bannay, Hadi, & Amanah, 2020; Lu et al., 2022; Soetantyo & Ardiyanti, 2018). These findings also directs practioners that promoting engagement factor in the organization eventually benefit for long run in shape of positive behavioural change and innovativeness. On these theoretical bases, current study proposed the relationship as:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Employee engagement mediates the relationship of inclusive leadership and employee innovative behavior.*

Studies have also found positive and significant nexuses between help & support of leaders which is towards subordinates and organizational support perception of employees (Aslan, 2019; Maidawati, Musnadi, & Ali, 2019). Inclusive type of leaders take care about employees matters and provide them supportive leadership qualities at work environment (Hudie, Yun, & Fuqiang, 2017). Not only this inclusive leader also builds the employees perception to think about the firm will support them as organizational support (Yu & Frenkel, 2013). Literature argued that employee and organization relationship in sense of employee engagement with firm can be enhanced by allowing the employees to express their innovative ideas (Yu et al., 2018). Study by Ahmad & Zafar also conducted and show that perceived organizational support can also use as mediation, furthermore study shows that organizational support in employee's mindset will positively associated with leader's relation and provide employees a push to think innovative ideas (Ahmad & Zafar, 2018).

Organizational support also found to be significant relationship with leadership style like recent study by Eva et al., concluded that perception of employees regarding support by firm will affect positively their relationship with their leader (Eva et al., 2020). Various research studies had been conducted to assure the validation of the mediating role of perceived organizational support for different leadership styles and innovative work behaviour, like a research in the context of Gaziantep founded it as a positive influencer for this relationship (Aslan, 2019), another research second these findings by empirically proving the partial mediation of organizational support in

Chinese context (Qi et al., 2019). Beside these, scholars also assure the usability of POS as mediator between other leadership styles and innovative behaviour to affirm the convergence of these constructs (Ekmekcioglu & Öner, 2023; Rahmat, 2022; Suifan et al., 2018; Wu, Yuan, & Yen, 2023). According to literature following hypothesis is to be proposed:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *Perceived organizational support mediates the relationship of inclusive leadership and employee innovative behavior.*

Innovation is basically concerned with variations, comprising of the practices of creativity and enhancement of different products, services, concepts of ideas, and procedures. Creativity means the capability to produce innovative and unique ideas and effective solutions to the problems. Organizations having the employees having creative ability can does create additional value and retain the innovative atmosphere thus being there in the competition (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014). The tough to leader emotional intelligence was initially discussed by Salovey & Mayer in late 90's, being a corporate leadership is a challenging role and having emotionally intelligence personality trait is considered as a strong influencing factor. Emotional intelligence in leaders refers toward the leader's ability to guide their subordinates through identification and utilization of own or other's positive emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Effective leaders can easily determine by their emotional understanding and relevance with their psychological intelligence.

At the senior level of management, emotional intelligence is more important and significant than the rational intelligence (Goleman, 2021). Moreover, emotional intelligence also allow to accurate emotional inference and use of knowledge about feelings and emotions to raise thinking abilities. Literature also identify that emotional intelligence in the leaders can be useful for increasing employee performance and innovativeness (Băeșu & Bejinaru, 2015; Jie, Martínez, & Crespo, 2020; Shahhosseini et al., 2012; Yang, Díaz, & Hsu, 2021). Studies discusthe strong influential power of emotional intelligence on business success along with various forms of leaderships styles (Ishfaq & Abbasi, 2022), literature also second these findings by elaborating that organizations can enhance innovative work behaviours by concentrating on emotional competencies of employees and leaders (Malik, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022; Thapa et al., 2023).

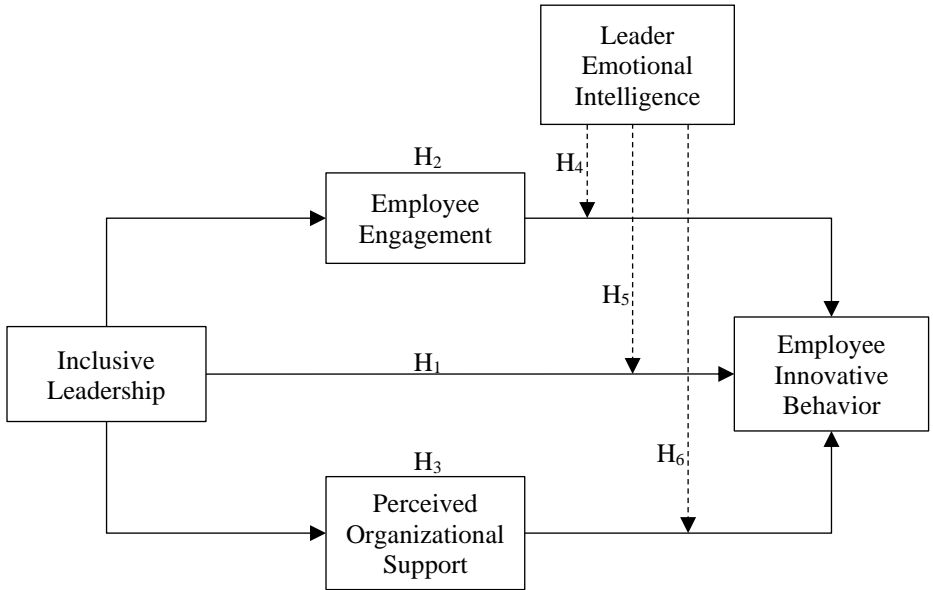
Talking about moderation of leader emotional intelligence, research explored the significance moderation of emotional intelligence for organizational performance authors founded it is a significant strengthening factor (Kundi et al., 2022; Thapa & Parimoo, 2022). A research also counters these findings by providing insignificant moderation of emotional intelligence (Johari et al., 2022). All these and numerous others emphasize on moderation of emotional intelligence but paucity observed for these relationships on innovative work behaviour and in the theme of leader emotional intelligence, on these bases current study proposed hypotheses as:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *Leader emotional intelligence moderates the relation between employee engagement and employee innovative behavior.*

**H<sub>5</sub>:** *Leader emotional intelligence moderates the relation between inclusive leadership and employee innovative behavior.*

**H<sub>6</sub>:** *Leader emotional intelligence moderates relation between perceived organizational support and employee innovative behavior.*





**Figure 1.** *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or bolster a hypothesis of a research examine. Framework portrays the hypotheses that clarify why the research issue under investigation exists (Abend, 2008). In current research Figure 1 represents mediated-moderation model to elaborate the linkage between leadership, employee's perspectives, innovation and emotional intelligence.

### Research Design and Methodology

Current research utilized positivist research approach by explanatory research method to explain the results obtained through quantitative data analysis. Study is deductive in nature and utilized survey based technique which is most common and a reliable approach in social sciences studies due to enormous range of data from a diverse population. Target population for study comprised on the management level employees of 3 and 4 stars hotels of various hotels and restaurants operating in major cities of Pakistan, especially Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi, more specifically hotels and restaurants near Gwadar Karachi because that is considered to be major hub. Reason behind this selection is to assure multi-cultural responses for current research.

According to the officials of hotel industry and available list, 109 hotels located in Lahore, 43 hotels located in Karachi and 89 hotels located in Islamabad, so total targeted hotels are 241 hotels including three and four stars. Records show that on average on managerial level each hotel has approximately 10 to 11 employees, which shows aggregated total targeted employees' population is 2,600. Sample from selected total population is of 335 respondents according to sample size calculation (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). This sample is collected through simple random sampling with replacement of selecting a random employee as per his/her willingness to respond to research instrument.

### Tool for Data Collection

The data for this research is collected through the adopted questionnaire. In the start of the questionnaire there is some information for the respondents about the research. Then there are two sections in the questionnaire. One section consists of the information about respondents i.e. gender, age, education. The second section consists of five parts. In the first part researcher ask the questions about the inclusive leadership which was measured through 8-items adopted from Carmeli et al. (2010) sample item was “My manager is open to hearing new ideas” further used by Hirak et al. (2012), 9-items were adopted to measure employee engagement with a sample item “I am willing to really push myself to reach challenging work goals” (Gupta & Kumar, 2013; Thomas, 2007). Perceived organizational support was measured by 8-items scale adopted from Lynch, Eisenberger, and Armeli (1999), having a sample item “My organization strongly considers my goals and values”, employee innovative behavior was measured by 9-items scale “I create new ideas for difficult issues” adopted from Choi, Tran, and Kang (2017). Lastly to sample item “I feel that the supervisor can sense the emotions of employees” is to measure emotional intelligence with 6-items scale adopted from existing literature (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998; Law, Wong, & Song, 2004). Elements of all construct, excluded the first section, determined on a five-point Likert scale limiting from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were distributed among the employees of the hotels and the number of questionnaires was 335, those were distributed among the employees personally, through help of friend and relative and with the help of email, and they have been asked to show their opinion about their leader, head of department or any person to whom they report about their work in the workplace. Response rate was well enough by having 312 valid responses at the end of the day. To analyze the collected data Structural Equation Modeling Technique was utilized with the help of SmartPLS software (Hair Jr et al., 2016). Confirmatory factor analysis is used for the consecutive hypothesis testing i.e. to perform data verification through which a clear-cut idea can get about the structure of data for a set of variables. For the descriptive statistics SPSS software has been used and the collected data through questionnaires was entered in a separate sheet of SPSS.

**Table 1.** Respondent's demographic Characteristics (n=312)

Particulars	Description	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	292	93.6%
	Female	20	6.4%
Age	18-24 Years	62	19.9%
	25-31 Years	199	63.8%
	32-38 Years	39	12.5%
	39-45 Years	11	3.5%
	45 Years & Above	1	.3%
Education	Matric/Inter	79	25.3%
	Graduation	101	32.4%
	Master	130	41.7%
	M.Phil. /PhD	2	.6%

First analysis of study was to explain the demographic results regarding three questions asked from respondents. As explained that data was collected from targeted audience through close ended questionnaire. First section consists on demographic section which contains demographic questions regarding Gender, Age, and education level. From total 335 responses useful and completely filled responses were 312 means having a response rate more than 90% which is considered as a valid and well enough response-rate. Result shows that from total 312 valid responses majority responses are male having age of 15 to 31 years and having master degree qualification.

## **Data Analysis and Preparation**

### **Model Assessment by SEM Approach**

In Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) studies model assessment is the right next step to data collection. Study described model valuation as per it is being known as a procedure for systematic assessment of the hypothesis being articulated by the structural model by means of the congregated data (Shmueli et al., 2019; Widayastuti, 2021). Merely the objective of model assessment is to evaluate the structural model either it attains the eminence prerequisites of the particular empirical research. Partial Least Square approach is considered to evaluate SEM; it is an approach that could be used for the sake of model evaluation by means of computing the estimations of the model parameters either if it doesn't deliver an already established universal goodness-of-fit (GOF) criterion (Hair Jr et al., 2021). For this model confirmatory factor analysis was considered to evaluate the reflective measurement and structural model. Reason behind is that all the constructs are established in earlier literature and current study empirically tests the integration of those constructs (Goretzko, Siemund, & Sterner, 2023).

### **Measurement Model Evaluation**

Measurement model or outer model evaluation done to assure the goodness of items used to measure each variable of model. For this reflective evaluation Models are assessed through the aspects internal consistency through reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity, collinearity statistics, model fitness and lastly measure the significance of structural model (Hair et al., 2022; Radomir et al., 2023). Reliability analysis basically shows the consistency of data that time to time use will show the same results. Here reliability of data was being analysed through three criteria Cronbach's Alpha, rho\_A and composite reliability and criteria is that value should be at least 0.6 which shows that data is reliable enough (Hair et al., 2022). From these three criteria's composite reliability is being considered most important as recommended by Hair et al. (2012). Results in Table 2 show that data is well enough reliable to consider for further model evaluation.

Next for validation of instrument, convergent and discriminant validity is to be evaluate Table 2 shows the results of convergent validity as well. Convergent validity talks about the convergent or correlation of constructs and items means it measure that constructs and items should be theoretically correlated to some certain extent. For this, factor loading and average variance extracted is measures. Factor analysis or item reliability analysis is the very first step for measuring convergent validity. This basically shows that item is measuring what it's supposed to be measure in existing literature. Hair et al recommended that for reflective model value of each item should be greater than 0.7. Here they also recommended that 0.6 is also acceptable when existence of that item didn't disturb reliability statistics (Hair et al.,

2022). Whereas, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is defined as mean value of squared loadings of items with respect to each variable and its criteria is that value for each variable should be greater than 0.5. Table show the results of both criteria, initially it shows the reliable items which are filtered as per deletion recommendation of Hair et al. (2022) on the bases of having less factor loading value, on these bases AVE values are also well enough.

**Table 2.** Measurement Model Evaluation

Variables	Reliable Items	Factor Loading	Outer VIF	Inner VIF	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
<b>Inclusive Leadership</b>	<b>IL1</b>	0.74	2.05	2.54	0.51	0.84	0.84	0.88
	<b>IL2</b>	0.74	2.04					
	<b>IL3</b>	0.78	2.28					
	<b>IL4</b>	0.66	1.45					
	<b>IL5</b>	0.71	1.76					
	<b>IL6</b>	0.70	2.27					
	<b>IL7</b>	0.64	1.97					
<b>Employee Engagement</b>	<b>EE1</b>	0.74	2.19	2.73	0.60	0.89	0.89	0.91
	<b>EE2</b>	0.67	2.12					
	<b>EE3</b>	0.76	2.81					
	<b>EE4</b>	0.82	2.59					
	<b>EE5</b>	0.80	2.95					
	<b>EE6</b>	0.86	4.29					
	<b>EE7</b>	0.78	2.43					
<b>Perceived Organizational Support</b>	<b>POS1</b>	0.87	3.07	1.43	0.62	0.87	0.92	0.91
	<b>POS2</b>	0.86	2.26					
	<b>POS3</b>	0.87	3.27					
	<b>POS5</b>	0.87	2.43					
	<b>POS6</b>	0.87	3.30					
	<b>POS7</b>	0.76	1.02					
	<b>POS8</b>	0.78	1.88					
<b>Employee Innovative Behavior</b>	<b>EIB1</b>	0.72	2.54	-	0.54	0.89	0.91	0.90
	<b>EIB2</b>	0.71	2.53					
	<b>EIB3</b>	0.77	3.45					
	<b>EIB4</b>	0.70	3.10					
	<b>EIB5</b>	0.75	2.42					
	<b>EIB6</b>	0.77	3.96					
	<b>EIB7</b>	0.72	4.91					
	<b>EIB8</b>	0.71	2.63					
<b>Leader Emotional Intelligence</b>	<b>EI2</b>	0.73	1.93	2.36	0.58	0.91	0.91	0.92
	<b>EI3</b>	0.76	2.13					
	<b>EI4</b>	0.78	2.40					
	<b>EI5</b>	0.77	2.20					
	<b>EI6</b>	0.86	3.25					

\*\*\* Note:SRMR for Saturated Model= 0.01, Estimated Model = 0.03

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) also measured to assure the extent to which variance of estimated regression coefficients is enhanced as comparatively to situation when the predictor variables are not being linearly related. It considers evaluation of both structural model and measurement model, criteria for both inner and outer model is same that value should be less than 5. In Table 2 the values fall in between 1.02–4.9 for outer model, and 1.43–2.73 for inner model i.e. structural model which neglects the existence of Multicollinearity in model (Hair et al., 2022). Lastly model fitness through Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) to support goodness of model measurement is also assured to explain the difference amongst the observed correlation and predicted correlation of underlying variables (Hair et al., 2022). Its value should be less than 0.10 which is being considered to be a good fit value; footnote of Table 2 provided detailed value which met the acceptance criteria.

**Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criteria Measure**

	<b>Emp_Eng</b>	<b>Emp_Inno_Beh</b>	<b>Inc_Lead</b>	<b>Per_Org_Sup</b>	<b>Emo_Int</b>
<b>Emp_Eng</b>	<b>0.78</b>				
<b>Emp_Inno_Beh</b>	0.50	<b>0.73</b>			
<b>Inc_Lead</b>	0.63	0.51	<b>0.71</b>		
<b>Per_Org_Sup</b>	0.66	0.63	0.70	<b>0.79</b>	
<b>Emo_Int</b>	0.42	0.47	0.23	0.56	<b>0.76</b>

Measurement of discriminant validity to assure the theoretical difference between construct is done through Fornell-Larcker criteria shown in Table 3, which show that the variable which is measured through his items is added variance to theoretical model. For this criteria is that each variable should have maximum AVE square root than others latent variables and should be greater than 0.7. Secondly author also preferred to consider Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) analysis to assure in-depth discriminant validity. Hair et al. (2022) suggested that maximum variance value for each construct should be 0.9. As per demonstration in Table 4 values are well enough aligned with threshold criteria which assure the appropriateness of validation.

**Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Analysis**

	<b>Emp_Eng</b>	<b>Emp_Inno_Beh</b>	<b>Inc_Lead</b>	<b>Per_Org_Sup</b>	<b>Emo_Int</b>
<b>Emp_Eng</b>					
<b>Emp_Inno_Beh</b>	0.59				
<b>Inc_Lead</b>	0.72	0.53			
<b>Per_Org_Sup</b>	0.79	0.64	0.80		
<b>Emo_Int</b>	0.79	0.43	0.82	0.85	

### Structural Model Evaluation

Coefficient values between the variables are considered to be the most sig. criteria to measure the power of model, this value shows the relationship power between independents and dependent variables and sign with them is showing the direction of relationship (Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). Here two models are supposed to be shown inner and outer model, inner talk about relationship between constructs whereas outer showing regarding items used to measure constructs.

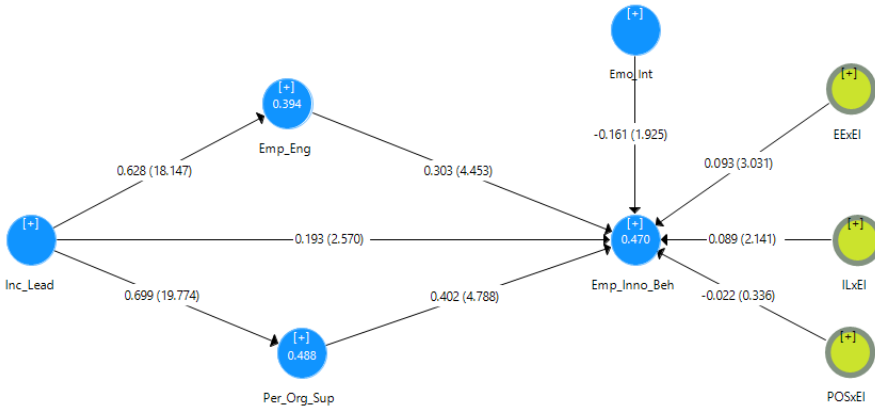


Figure 2. SEM Model Evaluation

Figure 2 shows inner structural model evaluation through path coefficient, t statistics and R<sup>2</sup> values for all possible dependent variables. Path coefficient shows the direction and strength of the relationship between IV and DV. Like inclusive leadership directly influencing employee innovative behaviour by the value of 0.193 which shows with the 100% raise in innovative behaviour will resulting into increase in employee innovative behaviour by 19.3% or vice-versa.

Next the goodness of PLS regression model is being predicted by measuring the R square (Ramayah, Lo, & Tarmizi, 2013). Hair et al. (2022) recommended that R square greater than 0.3 is being considerable good. Furthermore, they also segregate values into four major criteria, like if R<sup>2</sup> is less than 0.3 this means a weak size of effect, between 0.3 - 0.5 shows low size effect, value between 0.5 – 0.7 shows a the reasonable and strong impact and value greater than 0.7 shows the strongest impact size (Frost, 2013). Summarizing the whole the considerable value of R<sup>2</sup> starts from 0.3 (Hair et al., 2014). Above Figure also shows the R<sup>2</sup> values, here in present model the dependent variable is employee innovative behaviour, the R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.470 means that innovative behaviour is measured 47% in present model through its independent variables existing in theoretical framework.

Table 5. Hypotheses Analysis

Hypotheses	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Result
<b>Direct Impact</b>				
H <sub>1</sub> : Inc_Lead ->Emp_Inno_Beh	0.193	2.570	0.010	Significant
<b>Mediation Impact</b>				
H <sub>2</sub> : Inc_Lead ->Emp_Eng ->Emp_Inno_Beh	0.190	4.366	0.000	Significant
H <sub>3</sub> : Inc_Lead ->Per_Org_Sup ->Emp_Inno_Beh	0.281	4.618	0.000	Significant
<b>Moderation Impact</b>				
H <sub>4</sub> : EExEI ->(EI Mod Emp_Eng->Emp_Inno_Beh)	0.093	3.031	0.001	Significant
H <sub>5</sub> : ILxEI->(EI Mod Inc_Lead ->Emp_Inno_Beh)	0.089	2.141	0.015	Significant
H <sub>6</sub> : POSxEI->(EI Mod Per_Org_Sup ->Emp_Inno_Beh)	-0.022	0.336	0.737	Non-Significant

Predictive power of structural model is being measured through path coefficient (Beta β) values between the relationships of variables (Table 5). For this magnitude and

direction of relationship is measured i.e. if the value of coefficient is positive means that by increase in independent variable, dependent will also be change positively and vice versa. The strongest influence is of mediating role of perceived organizational support between inclusive leadership and employee innovative behaviour by having 0.281 showing 28.1% impact for this path. Table also showing significance testing results, as per criteria significance based on p-value and t statistics the p value should be less than 0.05 and t statistics should be greater than 1.96 (Hair et al., 2022).

### **Discussions, Implications, and Future Directions**

In the present research the model of the research is evaluated by the Mediated moderation modeling through SEM technique. Different tests have been applied to check the fitness of the model, the hypotheses testing has been made through bootstrapping technique in the PLS. This research includes the testing of different constructs; Inclusive Leadership (IL), Employee Innovative Behavior (EIB), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Employee Engagement (EE) and Emotional Intelligence (EI). For this purpose, current research testing the mediation of perceived organizational support and employee engagement and moderation of emotional intelligence between the direct relationship of inclusive leadership and employee innovative behavior.

First direct influence of inclusive leadership on employee innovative behaviour itsfounded to be positively significant. These findings are also aligned with existing literature, some earlier studies also signifies this positive association (Javed et al., 2017b; Wang et al., 2015). It can also be observed that inclusiveness factor in a leader is considered as innovation booster for the employees (Qi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021; Wu & Li, 2023). An efficient leader also tending to promote effective organizational functioning thus by supporting the individuals, teams and organizations will eventually a good gesture for the firm (Saleem et al., 2023; Shakil et al., 2021).

The mediating of employee engagement and perceived organizational support between inclusive leadership and employee innovative behaviour were also seemed to be significant to fill the theoretical gap, but perceived organizational support is more having stronger influence than employee engagement and direct impact of inclusive leadership as well. This mediation was also being recommended by Tran and Choi (2019) in current model. Initially, some recent studies consider this mediator between the relationship of other leadership style and innovative behaviour (Lu et al., 2022), and also mediation of perceived organizational support in various developed contexts (Ekmekcioglu & Öner, 2023; Eva et al., 2020; Rahmat, 2022; Wu et al., 2023).

Lastly moderating role of emotional intelligence was also being considered in current research and explored its significance which was also a theoretical paucity (Baloch et al., 2019; Javed et al., 2017b). Emotional intelligence is seemed to be more important than the rational intelligence at senior managerial (Goleman, 2021). Existing literature also support these findings by explaining the influential power of emotional intelligence on business success along with various forms of leaderships styles (Malik, 2022; Thapa et al., 2023).

As the researcher's point of view current research also contribute to theoretical aspects in different ways. First and foremost identifying and empirically filling the theoretical and contextual gap. Beside mediation and moderation according to researcher's limited knowledge and observation a compiled model was being ignored.

The research also add value towards literature of these constructs and an integrated model beside the separate relationships of these variables discussed in earlier literature (Bannay et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2022).

Beside the positive theoretical contributions, current research also directs some implications toward various managerial levels employees, leaders and practioners. Initially the compiled model represents that the leader behaviour should be comprehensive and supportive. The perception of having the organizational support is seemed to be a key success factor for raise of innovative behaviours in employees. Lastly emotional intelligence is also a strengthening factor for which directs that leaders and managers should be inclusive supportive, and emotionally intelligent to deal with various sort of organizational matters.

This study has given important contribution in the leadership literature but still, it has some limitations which direct towards provision of future directions as footprints for future researchers. Firstly, the present study has cross-sectional method of data collection but the same study can also be made in future on longitudinal basis to better understand the innovative performance of the employees in the organization. Next sample is collected from three cities of Pakistan i.e. Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad, which cannot be representative of the whole population. Future studies can have a large sample size, covering all cities of Pakistan. Lastly, some theoretical aspects could be ignored, so future research should consider other moderators related to employees personality traits to measure the change adoptability and innovativeness in employees.

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