

Inclusive Leadership with Relation to Employee Engagement: Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

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Abstract

The review on employee engagement shows the importance of leadership and employees' psychological empowerment. Literature on leadership taxonomies suggests the influential role of inclusive leadership in employee engagement. According to emerging literature, there is a scarcity of studies with empirical relationships to inclusive leadership and employee engagement in general, and in developing countries in particular. Grounded in social exchange theory, this study aims to study the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement. Moreover, this study also investigates the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement. To test the relationship between the mentioned variables, three hypotheses were developed and validated through quantitative methodology by employing structure equation modelling via SmartPLS software. For this purpose, data was collected from employees working in different organisations in Afghanistan. Data collection was made possible through an online data collection method. Links were shared among employees who were identified as students at Kardan University. A total of 223 responses were received and analysed for the proposed relationships among constructs. The results of this study revealed that inclusive leadership significantly influences employee engagement. Findings also show that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement.

Keywords: Inclusive leadership, psychological empowerment, employee engagement, perceived responses, organizations in Afghanistan.

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Introduction

Unrelated, some employees and their individual behaviour are preoccupied with business success or failure. Confirming that employees' participation is mandatory to put effort with the right behaviour will be critical in providing the business they need in conditions of recession, inactivity, or quicker growth (Beckerman and Ilmakunnas, 2012). The administration needs to train their employees' engagement philosophy inside their duty atmosphere, which obviously develops as the finest organization to work for. Meanwhile, people are placed at the center of the organization's purpose (Gratton, 2000). Therefore, the daily time or hour in which an organization spends or musts extensive time building the capacity and competence of each individual, all the employees will put in their effort to develop and achieve organizational goals.

A wide pool of literature is already available, depicting the knowledge of how to handle tough situations in an organization. Employees who are engaged enough with their work enjoy working with their team members and leaders in the organization (Macey and Schneider, 2010). Thus, engaged employees involved in

their work have an energetic, enjoyable, and effective connection with their work (Kahn, 1990; Macey and Schneider, 2008). Previous research in this regard has typically adopted one of two approaches to understanding experiences of engagement. One approach is Kahn's (1990, 1992) psychological conditions of engagement, where the employee needs to have sufficiently meaningful work, personal resources available, and feel psychologically safe to remain engaged in their work (May et al., 2004; Rich et al., in press). A second approach is the job demands-resources model, in which the handiness of constructive job resources primes for engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2007; Mauno et al., 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Reshuffling the academic literature, scholars have noted that academic research lags behind practitioner developments (Macey and Schneider, 2008; Robinson et al., 2004). This is particularly prominent with respect to the role of inclusive leadership in employee engagement.

The foregoing background information shows that lack of employee engagement is a serious phenomenon. As mentioned in the background section, prior studies in this regard have investigated many influential factors. However, leadership and its various taxonomies have been found to have more influence on employee engagement than any other factor. 2016 (Ioannidou, Karagiorgos, & Alexandris). Along similar lines, recent literature (source) has also established a relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement in various settings. In the same vein, prior studies also suggest psychological empowerment as one of the main constructs as an underlying mechanism between inclusive leadership and various individual-level constructs such as employee innovative work behavior, employee job satisfaction, and organization citizenship behaviour (Choi, Tran, & Park, 2015), Randel et al. (2017). However, psychological empowerment as an underlying mechanism between inclusive leadership and employee engagement has been relatively little investigated in the past, specifically in developing countries like Afghanistan. Therefore, this study argues that inclusive leadership affects employees' psychological empowerment, which in turn affects employee engagement.

Hence, the current study, through the lens of social exchange theory, conceivably claims a mediation effect of psychological empowerment between inclusive leadership and employee engagement in the context of Afghanistan as a war-ravaged country. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first endeavour in the context of Afghanistan. The rationale for selecting organizations in Afghanistan is because of the decline in employee engagement, which affects the organization's expectations. Every organization has a vision of growth and sustainability. Thus, in today's contemporary world, organizations are represented by leaders on one hand and employees on the other hand. Organizations seek to have engaged employees and spend substantial resources to enhance employee engagement. As employees are recruited to perform their roles and duties, organizations lead the process through their leadership or leaders. Theoretically, leadership is a key antecedent of engagement, yet there is no research directly linking leader behaviour and follower engagement. To accomplish this, each employee must be engaged and believe in the organizational drivers, beliefs, and values. This study will address the problem of employee disengagement in organizations in Afghanistan. For the same purpose, the study investigates the role of inclusive leadership in psychological empowerment; and

determine the impact of psychological empowerment on employee engagement. Furthermore, the role of psychological empowerment in mediating the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement is also examined.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical Background or Theoretical Underpinnings

This study draws relationships between variables based on Social Exchange Theory (SET), which refers to when a person makes a service or certain behaviour that is of ascertain value to another person, the receiver is known to respond with something similar to treasured (Blau, 1964). Therefore, the leader and employee's relationship is identified as mutuality (Strom et al., 2014). Initially, SET is an implied two-sided, equally dependent, and equally rewarding process linking "transaction" or simply "exchange" (Blau, 1964). Furthermore, the association between exchanging parties is linked to SET (Copanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It should be noted that SET, like transaction leadership, is a mutual process; however, inclusive leadership differs from transactional leadership by emphasising clear roadmaps to active followership and their limitations. (Hollander, 2008). This study argues that IL effects psychological empowerment and it further influences employee engagement. Psychological empowerment as a mediator in this association: inclusive leadership and work engagements are relatively described from the lens of Social Exchange Theory in this study. Blou (1964): When one person obtains a favour or performs some action that is of approximate value to another person, the person in receipt is recognized to respond with something similarly appreciated (Blau, 1964). Thus, the leader and employees' associations are supposed to develop into a mutuality of behaviour (Strom et al., 2014). Essentially, SET is a two-sided, mutually dependent, and equally rewarding procedure connecting "transaction" and "exchange" (Balu, 1964). Furthermore, the identification of the relationship among exchanging associates is connected to Social Exchange Theory (Copanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

2.2 Inclusive Leadership Concept

Inclusive leadership is observed as necessary to enable and support belongingness and distinctiveness (Randel et al., 2016). Inclusive leadership reflects team members' variances and helps them belong to the organization, whereas highlighting the essentials to integrate toward shared essentials and achievements, which is fundamental to transformational leadership (Randel et al., 2018). For example, inclusive leadership inspires each individual to voice their thoughts and viewpoints within the team, obviously motivating each individual to discuss and exchange varied views and ideas. At the same time, inclusive leadership focuses both on motivating and appreciating uniqueness and certifying the belongingness of each individual. It is different from other leadership styles such as transformation and authentic leadership (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014; Randel et al., 2018). Inclusive leadership, in this respect, delivers the essential circumstances for a team to equal individual needs for distinctiveness, belongingness and goals to achieve both positive and negative consequences of team variety.

2.3 Employee Engagement Concept

On the basis of this, it is also explained that the one who is encouraged within their job role, has completed their knowledge and is comfortable within the organization and shows highly loyal towards a company is called an "engaged employee." However, the literature on this theme is not without its critics. Purcell (2014) confronted the thinking and importance being placed on employee engagement by academics and human resource experts, stating that how employee engagement has been explained in the past means that engaged employees are exclusively absorbed in their work and their work individually,

With no concern for what is going on in their external lives, they have no idea what makes it difficult to find really engaged employees as they are "rare bread". In contrast to this, the philosophy of employee engagement has more advantages than disadvantages. With the changing level of inquiry and the cost of disengaged employees, companies are realizing their benefits and responding with certain techniques to engage their employees.

Organizations strive to increase employees' discretionary efforts by keeping them engaged within their roles and aligning them closely with the objectives of managerial goals and to boost organization performance (Rees, Alfes, and Gatenby, 2013). Leaders know that engaged employees will contribute to greater business outcomes. Sorenson (2013) solidifies this by reporting that "companies with an average of 9.3 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee in 2010-2011 experienced 147% higher EPS compared with their competition in 2011-2012". Over the years, EE has been given many definitions. Early research developed the idea of worker engagement and defined it as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn 1990, p.694). He also suggested employees feel psychologically safe within their peers, roles, and abilities, where they can be themselves, regardless of their status or image, and without judgement, will influence EE. It is clear to see the link between EE and the traits inclusive leaders should display as a way in which to foster true EE. More recently, Saks (2006, p. 602) focused on worker engagement, concluding that "employee engagement is not an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles." The author also places an emphasis on the cognitive and emotional expressions during role performance. This outlook was inclusive of early work by Kahn (1990) and developed the meaning of EE. Following this, much work has been carried out trying to hone in on what EE is, in essence. MacLeod and Clarke (2010, p. 27) defined EE as "a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, and able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being". Based on this, an engaged employee is someone who is motivated in their role, understands how their role fits within the organization, and demonstrates loyalty to the organization.

2.4 Employee Turnover

If engagement has positive outcomes for organizations, employee disengagement must come at a cost. Kahn (1990) believes disengagement is when

people have no self-commitment or sense of belonging to the organization and withdraw from interaction with others and the organization. Crabtree (2005) notes that there are three types of employees: engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged.

Engaged employees are passionate and feel a strong connection to the organization. Through this, they have a drive for innovation and are willing to help the organization move forward with its success. The middle layer of this construct is employees who are not engaged. In general, they are checked out of the organization, putting little energy and passion behind their work. Lastly, employees that are actively disengaged are visibly unhappy at work and will undermine what other engaged colleagues are doing and trying to achieve. The cost of employee disengagement can come in the millions. Poor management can cause a number of things, one of them being employee disengagement, costing the U.S. an average of \$105 billion every year. This reinforces the need to actively engage employees and specifically through their closest link, their management. Therefore, engagement has to play an active role in the strategic priorities of any organization.

2.5 Psychological Empowerment Concept

The emphasis of this article is on psychological empowerment (PE). PE has been operationalized as an individual's cognitive state considered by the feeling of expertise, perceived control, and objective achievement. Psychological empowerment is therefore considered as a multi-dimensional paradigm reflecting the various approaches to being psychologically empowered. It is also concerning the positive influence of the ideology of personal competency and a directive approach to life with a detailed understanding of the socio-legal environment. That's explained in detail in a social action concept which includes capacity development, social change, and combining.

2.6 Psychological Empowerment and Inclusive Leadership

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) claimed that empowerment was a multi-layered idea that contained four sets of cognitions that indicated competence, self-determination, meaningfulness, and impact. Spreitzer (1995) further declared this conceptualization and declared psychological empowerment as "a form of intrinsic motivation that indicates a proactive orientation toward managing our work in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact" (Spreitzer, 1995); meaning is mentioned to the level at which principles and opinions of an employee are suitable with the strains of a job (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The second surface of psychological empowerment was competence, nearer to the idea of self-efficacy, which reproduced the certainty of an individual in an employee about how they could successfully achieve any action or talent in the workplace. Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014 (Ioannidou, Karagiorgos, & Alexandris, 2016; Ioannidou, Karagiorgos, & Alexandris, 2016), Randel et al., 2017, Randel et al., 2018.

H1: Inclusive leadership has a positive, significant effect on psychological empowerment.

2.7 Employee Engagement and Psychological Empowerment

A meta-analysis directed by Seibert et al. (2011) discovered many important consequences connected with psychological empowerment. Some of these consequences included high performance management practises (such as decentralization power and participative decision making etc.), leadership (such as manager, transformational leadership), socio-political support (such as fairness awareness and organizational support etc.), and work design appearances (such as work enhancement, work engagement). Moreover, it was emphasized that when each individual is psychologically empowered, the above-mentioned consequences are successfully connected with psychological empowerment through research, then it is noticeable to determine that such followers would be involved in the organization (Seibert, Wang & Courtright, 2011). But very little research has connected these two variables to each other in this study. Based on the observation that there is an insignificant association between impact (one of the cognitions for psychological empowerment) and involvement, Albrecht and Andreetta (2011) recently disapproved any linkage between engagement and empowerment. However, Bhatnagar (2012) later linked these two variables and found that psychological empowerment is indeed a predictor of work engagement. Sharma and Garg (2017) also reconfirm this association (for the IT sector), establishing a positive association between these two variables. Recently, a study also assumed this positive association between psychological empowerment and employee engagement for this updated set of respondents. Hereafter, since the entitlement of past researchers, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: Psychological empowerment has a positive, significant effect on employee engagement.

2.8 Inclusive Leadership and Employee Engagement: The Role of Psychological Empowerment as a Mediator

Throughout the literature to date, researchers have found that particular leadership traits can impact an individual's engagement (Roberson, Elaine, and Strickland, 2010; Abdullah, Zaffar, Haque, and Rubab, 2019). Previous research on inclusive leadership and employee engagement has shown that clear and accessible inclusive leaders provide employees with ample opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and cognitive capacity (Carmeli et al., 2010). These, in the future, have been established to influence both official and personal resources, emphasising feelings of work engagement (Kopperud et al., 2014).

Psychological empowerment as a moderator in this relationship—Inclusive Leadership and work engagements are relatively described through the lens of Social Exchange Theory in this study. Blou (1964): When one person obtains a favour or performs some action that is of approximate value to another person, the person in receipt is recognized to respond with something similarly appreciated (Blau, 1964). Thus, the leader and employees' associations are supposed to develop into a mutuality of behaviour (Strom et al., 2014). Essentially, SET is a two-sided, mutually dependent, and equally rewarding procedure connecting "transaction" and "exchange" (Balu, 1964). Furthermore, the identification of the relationship between exchanging associates may be related to

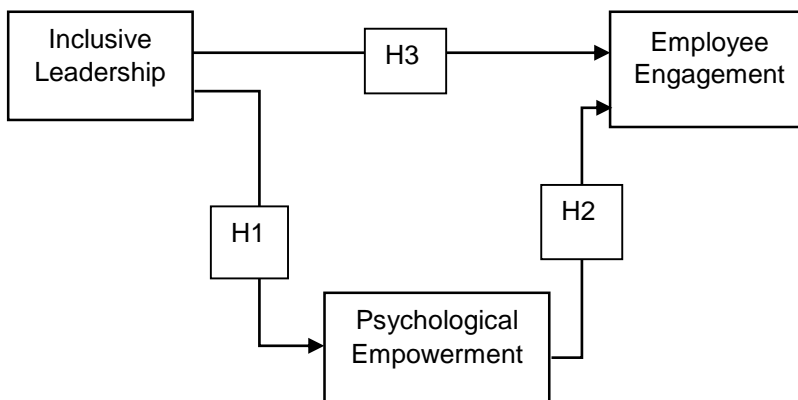
SET (Copanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, based on the aforementioned literature and SET, the following hypotheses guide this study:

H3: Inclusive leadership positively influences employee engagement but indirectly via psychological empowerment.

2.9 Model of research

This research model is based on the social exchange (SET) theory, which presumes that when a person makes a service or certain behaviour that is of certain value to another person, the receiver is known to respond with something similar to treasure (Blau, 1964). Therefore, the leader and employee's relationship is identified as mutuality (Strom et al., 2014). Initially, SET is an implied two-sided, equally dependent, and equally rewarding process linking "transaction" or simply "exchange" (Blau, 1964). Furthermore, the association between exchanging parties is linked to SET (Copanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It should be noted that SET, like transaction leadership, is a mutual process; however, inclusive leadership differs from transactional leadership by emphasising clear roadmaps to active followership and their limitations. (Hollander, 2008). This study argues that IL effects psychological empowerment and it further influences employee engagement. Psychological empowerment as a mediator in this association— inclusive leadership and work engagements are relatively described from the lens of Social Exchange Theory in this study. Blou (1994) mentions that when an individual achieves a favour or some action that is of approximately value to another individual, the individual in receipt is recognized to respond with something similarly appreciated (Blau,1964). Thus, the leader and employees' associations are supposed to develop into a mutuality of behaviour (Strom et al., 2014). Essentially, SET is a two-sided, mutually dependent, and equally rewarding procedure connecting "transaction" and "exchange" (Balou,1964). Furthermore, the identification of the relationship between exchanging associates may be related to SET (Copanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The rationale behind the selection is that inclusive leadership would empower employees by involving them in various aspects, and that, in turn, would lead to employee engagement. The following figure depicts the same relationship as the research model of the current study.

Figure 2.1 Research Model



Source: Author's compilation

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy and Methodology

This research focuses on the positivism research philosophy. For the analysis part, the quantitative data approach has been evaluated and assessed. Positivism research philosophy helps to assess data correctly, as per this study. As per the grounding philosophy defined, it is essential to know the various approaches from a research method perspective. There are two main approaches: inductive and deductive theory. For this study, the researchers have decided that a deductive approach is most appropriate as they can analyse the collected data in line with the objectives of the study. (Thoman, 2006).

3.2 Research Plan

The quantitative method is a deductive approach and experiential in nature. It tests and measures the exact research question, with organized responses. Naturally, via a large sample size. Traditionally, quantitative approaches are used in the method of surveys, and the outcomes are assessable and generalizable (Zikmund, et al., 2013).

3.2.1: Analytical Unit

The unit of analysis is the individual level, which includes employees who are working in Kabul-based organizations, including private and public. It is worth mentioning that the unit of analysis in this study is individual level employees working in different service-based organizations in Afghanistan, which has been used as a sample. In the current study, the purpose is to test hypotheses among the constructs of study to address the problem of employee engagement as an individual level construct. Hence, the current study findings are generalized to the individual level. However, the sample of the study has not spared the current study limitations on generalizing findings with confidence. public and private sector organizations in Afghanistan. This study focused on inclusive leadership influences on employee engagement. So that's why the individual levels of employees have been targeted.

3.2.2 Study Population and Sample

Data collection is carried out by employees of Kabul working in different organizations. Therefore, this study assumed a population as unknown; however, data collection is made possible by using 223 units as the sample size. The respondents were students at Kardan University and, at the same time, employees working in organizations in Afghanistan, including private and public.

3.3 Sample Method of the Study

3.3.1 Instrumentation and Operationalization of the Variables

In this analysis, close-ended questionnaires were used to test three variables. On the Likert scale, which has choices from one to five, the questionnaire will be analyzed. The researcher strongly disagrees with one extreme and strongly agrees with the other. Adopted one dependent variable that is employee engagement, one independent variable that is inclusive leadership, and one mediating variable that is psychological empowerment.

3.3.2 Inclusive Leadership

A self-reported measure was managed to measure the level of an inclusive leader. A 9-item measure designed to assess three dimensions of inclusive leadership; openness (3-items), availability (4 items), and accessibility (2-items) (Carmeli et al., 2010) was adopted. Targeted employees were asked to assess, on a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = not at all; 5 = to a large extent), the extent that their leader displays openness and is available and accessible for them at work. I should mention that inclusive leadership has been measured through a one-dimensional approach.

3.3.3 Employee Engagement

To test employee engagement, a scale from Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova (2006) was adopted in this study. The measure contained engagement – a total of a 6-item measure. Respondents were presented with all 6 items to measure their overall engagement levels. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) the extent to which they agree. Higher aggregate scores indicate higher levels of engagement.

3.3.4 Psychological Empowerment

It included three items taken from Alge and Bradley (2006), Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014), Ioannidou, Karagiorgos, and Alexandris, 2016), Randel et al., 2017), and Randel et al., 2018. Targeted employees were presented with all 3 items to measure the overall psychological engagement level of the employees. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, everyday) the extent to which they agree. Higher aggregate scores indicate higher levels of engagement.

Table 1: Instrumentation of Variables

Variables	N of items	Source
Psychological empowerment	3	Alge, Bradley (2006)
Employee Engagement	5	Saks, A. M. (2006).
Inclusive Leadership	9	Carmeli et al., (2010)

Source: Author's compilation

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Data Screening

In the present study, data was collected through an online survey distribution. At the initial stage, the online questionnaire was designed via Google Form and forwarded through email. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, comprising demographic questions, and the second part consisted of items related to each construct of the study. In response, employees of different organizations, both private and public-sector organizations, responded and a total of 223 forms were received, confirming the response rate of 75 percent based on the total number of shared links with 295 respondents. There are 223 total receipts of forms. Moreover, there was no need for screening data as online data collection required respondents to rate all the items before submission.

3.5 Reliability and Validity of the Study

For measuring reliability and validity of the variables' data, a measurement model is used, whereas convergent validity, through loadings, average variance extracted, and composite reliability, has been ensured in the current study. Whereas, discriminant validity has been ensured through heterotrait and monotrait procedures.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The following methods are applied for analyzing data in the current study; including respondents' profile analysis; non-response data analysis through Leven's test; multivariate data normality through Mardia's method; analyzing measurement models using convergent and discriminant validity; and application of structure model through SMART-PLS3 for testing hypotheses.

4. Analysis and Results

4.1 Participants

The total respondents targeted were 295, and they received 223 responses, covering 75 percent of the response rate of the study. Each individual who submitted the questionnaire was a total of 223 grown people who have been asked about their tenure, timing, and entrée to an instance supervisor or manager. The total sample size included 187 males and 34 females, and the genders of the remaining 6 respondents were not clear. Respondents ranged from 21-above 51 years old. The sample contained 37.2% of respondents ranging from 21–30 years old, 50.2% of respondents among 31–40 years old, and 11.7% of respondents among 41–50 years old, and 4% of respondents above 51 years old.

4.2 Variation in Common Methods

This study started collecting data using a single source and first confirmed the issue of common method bias by the following suggestions by Kock and Lynn (2012) and Kock (2015) by testing the full collinearity. In this way, or method, each variable is retreated against a common variable and if the VIF 3.3, then there is no bias among the single source data. The analysis produced a VIF of less than 3.3, so single source bias is not a problem with our data.

Table 2: Full Collinearity

EEG	PE	IL
3.00	1.589	2.644

Note: EEG = Employee Engagement, PE = Psychological Empowerment, IL = Inclusive Leadership,

4.3 Measurement Model

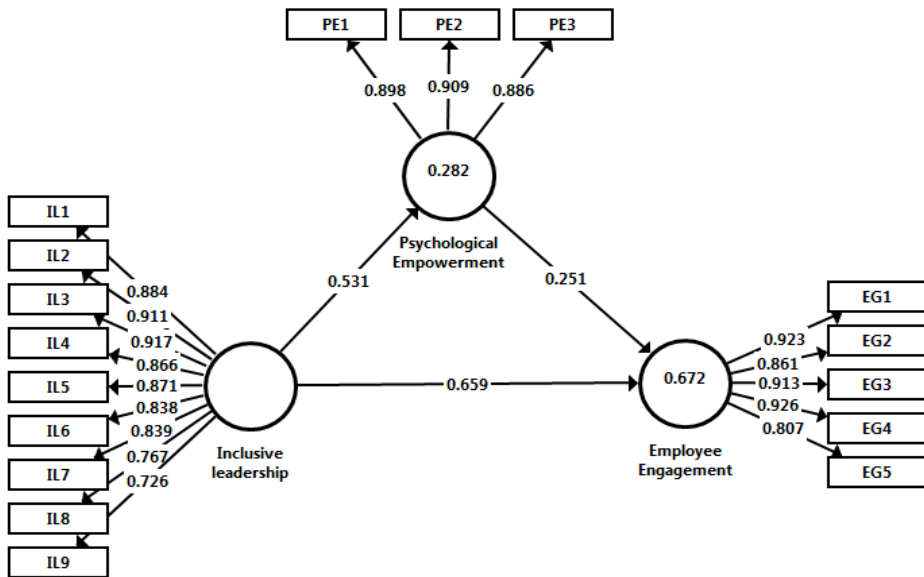
Following the suggestions of Anderson and Gerbing, the 2-step approach model is tested. Initially, the study tested the measurement model by following the guidelines of Ramayah et al. (2018) and Hair et al. (2019) to test the validity and reliability of the instruments used. Herewith, the structural model is employed to test the developed hypothesis. For furtherance, loadings were assessed, composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) for the measurement model. The values of loadings should be 0.5, the composite

reliability (CR) 0.7, and the average variance extracted (AVE) should be 0.5. whereas Table 3, which includes the actual results, indicates that all the values are higher than the standard.

Table 3: Measurement Model (Convergent Validity)

Employee Engagement	Loadings	CR	AVE
EG1	0.923	0.949	0.787
EG2	0.861		
EG3	0.913		
EG4	0.926		
EG5	0.807		
Inclusive leadership		0.958	0.72
IL1	0.884		
IL2	0.911		
IL3	0.917		
IL4	0.866		
IL5	0.871		
IL6	0.838		
IL7	0.839		
IL8	0.767		
IL9	0.726		
Psychological Empowerment		0.926	0.806
PE1	0.898		
PE2	0.909		
PE3	0.886		

Figure 2: Loadings



Going forward, I also assessed the discriminant validity using the HTMT criterion, which was suggested by Henseler et al. (2015). As per standard, the HTMT values suggested should be 0.85 for the stricter criterion and the mode lenient criterion should be 0.90. However, the HTMT values of the actual assessment results, as indicated in Table 4, are all lower than the stricter criterion of 0.85. In conclusion, we identify that the respondents understood that the three constructs are distinct, and together, these validity tests have shown that the measurement items are both valid and reliable.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Constructs	1	2	3
Employee Engagement	1		
Inclusive leadership	0.838	1	
Psychological Empowerment	0.664	0.577	1

4.5 Structure Model

As suggested by Hair et al. (2017) and Cain et al. (2017), multivariate skewness and kurtosis have been assessed. The results showed that the data collected was not multivariate normal, as Mardia’s multivariate skewness (= 5.115, p 0.01) and Mardia’s multivariate kurtosis (= 62.566, p 0.01). Therefore, following the suggestions of Hair et al. (2019), the path coefficients, the standard errors, t-values, and p-values for the structural model were reported using a 5,000-sample re-sample bootstrapping procedure (Ramayah et al. 2018). Also, based on the criticism of Hahn and Ang (2017), p-values are not good criteria for testing the significance of a hypothesis and they suggest using a combination of criteria such as p-values, confidence intervals, and effect sizes. Table 5 shows the summary of the criteria that have been used to test the hypotheses developed.

Initially, I tested the effects of inclusive leadership and psychological empowerment on employee engagement. The R2 was 0.67, indicating that inclusive leadership and psychological empowerment explained 67% of the variance in employee engagement.

For testing direct and indirect (mediation) hypotheses, I followed the suggestions of Preacher and Hayes by bootstrapping the indirect effect. In this situation, if the confidence interval doesn’t stride to 0, it can be concluded that there is significant mediation.

The results of the assessment in Table 6 indicate that below, all values were significant:

- Psychological Empowerment -> Inclusive Leadership (= 531, p 0.1)
- Employee Engagement -> Psychological Empowerment (= 251, p 0.05)
- Employee Engagement (= 133, p 0.05) -> Inclusive Leadership (= 133, p 0.05)

Table 5: Structure model/ Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Beta	Std. Error	T Value	P Value	BCILL	BCIUL	f2
Inclusive leadership-> Employee Engagement	0.659	0.068	9.746	0	0.522	0.747	0.951
H1 Inclusive leadership-> Psychological Empowerment	0.531	0.071	7.481	0	0.411	0.643	0.392
H2 Psychological Empowerment-> Employee Engagement	0.251	0.065	3.88	0	0.167	0.389	0.138
H3 Inclusive leadership-> Employee Engagement	0.133	0.041	3.277	0.001	0.084	0.221	N/A

4.6 Summary of Findings

As mentioned earlier, this study was designed to investigate the effect of inclusive leadership on employee engagement via the mediating role of psychological empowerment. A quantitative methodology was employed for the same purpose. Data has been collected through five-point Likert scale items adopted from previous studies. Based on the results presented, inclusive leadership is positively and significantly related to psychological empowerment. Similarly, psychological empowerment in relation to employee engagement was found to be positive and significant. Likewise, the mediating role of psychological empowerment between inclusive leadership and employee engagement is also supported by a positive and meaningful relationship. The following section discusses the findings of the current study in relation to the literature.

4.7 Psychological Empowerment and Inclusive Leadership

The first hypothesis of the current study was to investigate the influence of IL on PE. The study found a positive and significant relationship, which supported the first hypothesis of the study. The findings of the study show alignment with previous studies (Randel et al., 2017, Choi, Tran, & Park, 2015, Salib, 2014). Inclusive leaders assigned power to followers (Nishii & Mayer, 2009), where followers appreciated better self-sufficiency to carry out their work activities on their own. Inclusive leaders enjoy followers in job settings (Salib, 2014), and followers have the benefit of being involved in intelligence gathering that is better empowered (Randel et al., 2017). Therefore, inclusive leadership refined a helpful internal situation, which was also maintained by the idea of CET (Deci, 1975), and accordingly, followers felt inner incentive in the form of psychological empowerment.

4.8 Psychological Empowerment and Employee Engagement

The second hypothesis of the study was to investigate the direct influence of psychological empowerment on employee engagement. The present study also found a positive and significant relationship between the mentioned constructs. Therefore, current literature reveals complete alignment with previous literature (Seibert, Wang & Courtright, 2011; Sharma and Garg, 2017). Hence, it is emphasised that when each individual is psychologically empowered, the consequences mentioned above are successfully connected with psychological empowerment through research. It is noticeable to determine that such followers would be involved in the organization (Seibert, Wang & Courtright, 2011).

4.9 Inclusive leadership and Employee Engagement: The Role of Psychological Empowerment as a Moderator

The third hypothesis of the current study was to investigate the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between IL and EE. The results show that psychological empowerment significantly and positively mediates the relationship between the mentioned constructs. The present study results are consistent with preceding studies (Carmeli et al., 2010; Rubab, 2019;

Kopperud et al., 2014). Hence, if leaders provide emotional and intellectual support, this helps employees be more creative. Previous literature suggests that IL behaviour does have an impact on EE in some shape or form. Based on previous studies (Choi et al., 2015; Malik et al. 2017), IL affects employee engagement, while current research supports psychological empowerment as a mediating variable.

5. Conclusion

Based on social exchange theory, this study was designed to test the direct relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement. This study also investigated the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement. Three hypotheses were developed and are being tested in the current study. The study employed quantitative methodology by employing structure equation modelling via SMART PLS software. For this purpose, data was collected from employees working in different organizations in Afghanistan. Data collection was made possible through an online data collection method. Links were shared among employees who were identified as students at Kardan University. A total of 223 responses were received and analyzed for the proposed relationships among constructs. The results of this study revealed that inclusive leadership significantly influences employee engagement. Findings also show that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement. It is worth mentioning that the findings and results are based on 223 responses of employees working in different organizations in Afghanistan, and therefore, the findings of the study should be generalized with caution.

5.1 Study Limitations and Prospects

Like other research studies, this research also has some limitations. First, this study has collected data from individuals working in various organizations in Afghanistan, irrespective of consideration of private or public organizations. As a result, the generalization of the study should be approached with caution. Second, the sample of the study was not enough to represent the different organizations in Afghanistan. Third, this study has used a self-reported survey design, and therefore, common method variance may be assumed to be an issue in terms of finding generalizability. Fourth, this study has adopted a cross-section study design where data collection is made possible at one point of time. Therefore, it has limitations in terms of data collection at one point in time. Future research may employ longitudinal and experimental research designs to collect data at various points in time to conclude the mediating role of psychological empowerment between constructs undertaken in the current study.

5.2 Study Recommendations

Future research should use the same model to test in both private and public organizations. Moreover, future research may consider more individual-level constructs such as trust, perceived organization support, and psychological climate. Future research may consider the same model through the lenses of ability motivation, opportunity theory, resource-based theory, and self-determination theory.

5.3 Study Implications

This research investigates IL, EE, and PE. According to the study, IL behavior, namely that of immediate supervisors, helps encourage and facilitate reciprocating engagement behaviour in their colleagues by building relationships that lead to employees feeling a sense of belonging, support, and being valued for their unique contributions. Despite previous research that has examined IL and employee behaviour (i.e., creativity and helping behavior; Carmeil et al., 2010; Randel et al., 2016), The outcomes of this study contribute to the evidence and help clarify the positive influence of IL traits like modelling, openness, availability, and accessibility have on employees' motivation, engagement, and drive at work. As a result, organizations can begin to see IL as a successful leadership approach that can improve employee behaviour and interpersonal relationships.

The research of IL and EE is vital, but the impact of IL and diversity climate on participation may be just as important. The major impacts of both IL and PE on EE were found to be significant. In terms of IL, this indicates that people who work for a leader who is inclusive are more likely to show high levels of engagement at their workplace. Similarly, in the case of PE Studying IL and EE is serious, but IL's diversity climate on engagement might be similarly necessary as well. The major impacts of both IL and PE on EE were found to be significant. In terms of IL, this indicates that people who work for a leader who is inclusive are more likely to show high levels of engagement at their workplace. Similarly, in PE, employees who perceive a safe and fair working environment (psychological diversity climate) are more likely to be happy and pleased with their jobs.

However, it is claimed elsewhere (Randel et al., 2016) that IL and PE can definitely help employee behaviour once sensibly considered compatible IL and PE signals to their employees. Although we found that IL and PE should be encouraged and used to improve EE, despite the lack of evidence found in our study, it is vital to commit time, effort, and attention to spreading consistent IL and PE messaging to their personnel. Focusing on enhancing communication can make it simpler to maintain consistency between an IL style and PE in the workplace. Whitworth (2011) found that communication channels (i.e., face-to-face communication, phone calls, emails, print publications, etc.) are an important part of internal communication networks and are used to persuade followers. As a result, communication between all members of the company should be strengthened, and leaders should be transparent and attentive to other leaders as well as all other employees in order to promote and maintain an environment that is consistent with the leaders' inclusivity. Furthermore, (DeNisi, 2014), as a result, some of these 48 challenges/issues may or may not be at the top of an organization's priority list. In this scenario, it's probable that the employees in this study's sample have worked in an organization or a place (i.e., an organization in California) where diversity and inclusion challenges or issues are prominent.

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