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Research Article

A study of impact of inclusive leadership on innovative behaviors and diversity at workplace

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the association of inclusive leadership on innovation and execution of the idea of diversity at the workplace, moreover, this research also assesses the contribution of diversity in the innovative work culture in the banking industry in the national capital region. A conceptual model was designed to assess the association of inclusive leadership on innovation and the idea of diversity and to test the conceptual model, the researcher utilized multi-wave and multi-source data acquired from 5 enterprises 40 respondents each. Inclusionary leadership has a strong good impact on diverse work cultures and innovation, according to the findings. Additionally, diversity was shown to be favorably associated with innovation in the workplace. The researcher has used various scales for Inclusive leadership, diversity at the workplace, and innovative culture. To show the association and impact of factors, confirmatory factor analysis and regression have been used by the researcher.

Keywords: inclusive leadership; diversity; innovation; national capital region

1. Introduction

Markets have become increasingly dynamic, flexible, and changing in the post-modern period, and the natural way for organizations and institutions to adapt to this transition is to become more adaptable, versatile, and evolving as well[1]. In an increasingly competitive market marked by globalization, shorter product life spans, and fast technological improvement, innovation is increasingly recognized as a vital facilitator of competitiveness, performance, and growth. Businesses that are extremely aggressive and technology-driven raise the value of knowledge workers to unprecedented heights[2] Innovation has become the defining characteristic of long-term success and survival for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), as well as a critical source of developing competitive advantages for all organizations over their competitors[3]. Scholars Baregheh et al.[4] and managers have been highlighting the significance of innovation in acquiring a competitive advantage, maintaining growth, and attaining long-term organizational success. According to Schumpeter[5] one of the most important aspects of innovation was when a person had a fresh, original, and creative concept and expanded on it. Given the significance of employee creativity in firms, it was necessary

to find elements that may encourage employee inventive behavior, which referred to employees participating in new activities.

Previous studies[6–8] have shown that majority of the implemented ideas (80%) were innovated by the employees with innovative behavior which gave companies the ability to achieve their goals and grow. A significant amount of scholarship has focused on investigating the characteristics that encourage and facilitate IWB among employees[9].

Mumford and Hunter[10] seen in their study that Leadership is the essential component influencing an organization's creativity and innovation. Leadership is a behavior that promotes employee's attitude and behavior for achieving organizational goals[7]. As employees move from the age of productivity to the age of innovation[11], there is a need to change the way leaders interact with them and inclusive leadership has undoubtedly been identified as the most essential component influencing organizational creativity and innovation[12]The characteristics of a creative workplace that include inclusiveness, openness, individuality, and encouragement of new ideas all fall under the umbrella of inclusive leadership. Unfortunately, there are so few studies examining the link between inclusive leadership and successful innovation. Different from the available literature[13], our study provided fresh theoretic insights into how inclusive leadership influenced employee creative behavior. Innovation necessitated change, which necessitated inclusivity, openness, and support by its very nature (i.e., diversity). Businesses that can create an atmosphere that encourages innovation may gain a long-term competitive edge in the field of innovation. According to the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, suggest that inclusive leadership, which acknowledges employees' input and facilitates their work, can instill leadership trust in employees, who will then feel confident to implement changes in their jobs, thereby not only improving their job resources but also making the job more difficult for them[14]. Employees will be inspired to produce and implement new ideas with these added resources and pleasant feelings.

In recent times, several prevalent challenges such as innovation stagnation, lack of inclusion, diversity biasness have been observed in the workplace, and inclusive leadership and diversity initiatives seek to address these challenges by promoting a more equitable, inclusive, and innovative work environment[15].

Globally, the interrelated concerns of inclusive leadership, creative behavior, and diversity are critical to the success and sustainability of organizations and communities throughout the world. Scholars[16] have emphasized the significance of inclusive leadership as a motivator for developing diverse and equal workplaces. Organizations throughout the world recognize that respecting diversity and establishing inclusive environments not only corresponds with ethical responsibilities, but also improves performance and creativity. Furthermore, Chesbrough[17] argued innovation is increasingly viewed as a global endeavor in which governments and businesses compete globally. Diverse teams with global perspectives are frequently at the front of game-changing inventions, boosting creativity and adaptation. The work of researchers Cox and Blake[18] serves as a testament to the recognition of diversity as a driving force behind institutional resilience and societal and economic advancement on a global scale. They have highlighted how embracing diversity is not only a strategic advantage for organizations but also reflects the interconnected world in which we live. In summary, these interrelated issues are not limited to geographic boundaries but represent common global needs for organizations seeking to thrive in a rapidly changing and diverse world.

Many studies have demonstrated that leadership styles such as paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership, and transformational leadership all have a significant influence on the inventiveness of employee[19–21]. It's still unclear how inclusive leadership affects creativity, notwithstanding this study. Inclusive leadership styles are different from those that aren't. The characteristics of a creative workplace that include inclusiveness, openness, individuality, and encouragement of new ideas all fall under the umbrella of inclusive leadership[14].

2. Theoretical foundation and research hypotheses

2.1. Inclusive leadership

Nembhard and Edmondson[22] first suggested the notion of inclusive leadership in the area of management, which they described as "words and acts by a leader or leaders that imply an invitation and respect for others' contributions". He went on to explain inclusive leadership in terms of a win-win situation characterized by a shared vision and goal of interdependent linkages. A key focus was on how followers see their own and the leader's role in this context[23]. According to Saz-Carranza and Ospina[24], an inclusive leader is someone who admits employees across levels of the business and is accountable for outcomes. In addition, an inclusive leader was seen as critical to the formation of an inclusive organization. Three aspects of inclusive leadership were identified:

- Listening, tolerance, and encouragement: James Macgregor Burns, in his book "Leadership" (1978)[25], emphasized leaders respected workers opinions and failings by listening carefully to what they had to say, logically tolerating their blunders, and encouraging and guiding them when they made mistakes.
- Focusing on Employee development and recognition: Robert K in his essay "The Servant as Leader" (1970)[26] mentioned that rather than expressing envy, leaders respected and taught people by concentrating on employee training and rewarding successes.
- Fair treatment and equity: Linda and Michael[27] discussed that leaders treated workers properly, considering their interests and needs, displaying a fair attitude toward them, and ensuring that revenues were shared.

When compared to other styles of leadership that is theoretically connected, inclusive leadership has a distinct character of acceptance, belonging, uniqueness, and inclusion. Transformational leadership, in particular, concentrated on inspiring and developing people based on the goals of the business, and it was centered on the leader, with no active employee engagement, reciprocal impact, or incentives. In contrast to servant leadership, which aims to help people thrive and develop, inclusive leadership aims to satisfy the needs of all employees by being open and accessible in the workplace[28]. As a result, inclusive leadership training and mentorship promoted a sense of inclusiveness and accessibility, enabling leadership, on the other hand, emphasized leading by example and decentralizing power. Other leadership styles did not adequately capture the core qualities of inclusive management based on the aforementioned differences, and there was minimal overlap between inclusive leadership and current leadership conceptualizations. A few studies[15,18,22,29,30] have studied the connection between inclusive leadership and a company's capacity to inspire innovative behavior among its workers when it comes to researching leadership. It was the goal of this research to determine the effect of diversity characteristics on the innovative behavior of employees.

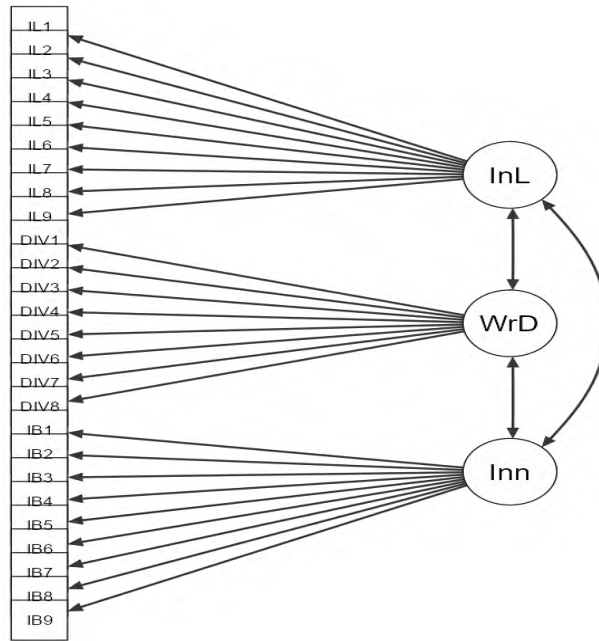**Figure 1** depicts the study design employed to achieve this goal.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

2.2. Inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior

Inclusionary leadership, according to Nembhard and Edmondson[22], is described as "words and behaviors by a leader or leaders that imply an invitation and respect for others' contributions"[31]. Coming to the table at whatever level, being a recognized participant, and being completely responsible for your contribution to the best outcomes is what the term inclusive implies. The notion that "everyone counts"[32] with their access to knowledge and resources[33] triumphed in this inclusion. Nembhard and Mor Barak[22,31] were the first to develop the term "inclusive leadership", stating that it "formed a scenario where views are respected". Leaders' inclusivity was defined as initiatives by leaders to involve people in conversations and decisions when their opinions and viewpoints could otherwise be ignored. Inclusive leaders fostered a supportive environment for all workers while maintaining a high level of impartiality[34]. Inclusive leaders started by showing consideration for others, acknowledging their contributions, and responding to their needs, regardless of the crisis, injustice, or conformist pressures they were facing. Leader-follower interactions were based on a basis of duty in both directions, which generated legitimacy and approval.

Nembhard and Edmondson[22] demonstrated that inclusivity was linked to settings defined by power imbalances, which encouraged behaviors such as asking and acknowledging others' perspectives[22,31]. The quality connection between leaders and followers was based on leaders and workers working together to achieve common objectives, and this was shown by inclusive leaders' emphasis on sharing advantages[35]. As a result, the researchers[22,31,36] concluded workers who had a say in choices and debates freely spoke out, advocated, and implemented new ideas[37]. Leaders that exhibited inclusive leadership traits established a quality connection that fostered fairness of input and output to all workers without depending on the talents of a single individual[23]. Employees were inspired to satisfy innovative work behavior-aligned work requirements because they felt that their efforts were fairly rewarded in a relationship-focused on quality rather than quantity.

Domer[38] and Doos[39] distinguished innovative work behavior from creativity. Innovative Work Behavior refers to the advancement and execution of valuable ideas[40]. Creativity refers to the invention of new ideas [41,42]. Inclusive leaders demonstrated their availability to employees through practical inclusion in work activities[43], which stimulated employees to promote useful ideas[44–46] found that inclusive leaders were

concerned about their followers' interests, expectations, and sentiments, and were eager to help. In particular, inclusive leaders give workers' suggestions considerable attention. Employees were thus more likely to respond by demonstrating extra-role behavior such as innovative work behavior[47,48]. The association between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior was substantiated by social exchange theory in this setting. According to the social exchange hypothesis, supportive and inclusive leadership qualities made workers feel obligated to compensate the leader and company. Employees were motivated to participate actively in issue solving that needed innovative idea development[49].

Additionally, inclusive leaders provided their employees with emotional support, increasing their credibility. As a consequence, inclusive leaders showed that they could make sound decisions based on their principles[22,31,34,43]. Employees were encouraged to demonstrate innovative work behavior as a result of this behavior[50]. One of the most important ways inclusive leaders showed their support for their staff was by taking responsibility for the end outcomes, particularly when innovative ideas failed[22,31,34]. As a result, under the presence of inclusive leadership, workers were encouraged to take chances in innovative work behavior. Researchers discovered that inclusive leadership and innovative work Behavior had a good link. Choi et al.[51] investigated and discovered a favorable association between inclusive leadership and creative behavior among workers of Vietnamese telecommunication businesses. Javed et al.[52] investigated the link between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior between supervisor-subordinate dyads in Pakistan's textile sector. Their studies showed that inclusive leadership has a beneficial impact on innovative work behavior. Employees engaged in creative activities, according to the authors, when they had a positive connection with their bosses, who encouraged them to take chances in the invention, promotion, and execution of new ideas.

Innovative behavior was defined as a set of actions including the invention, promotion, and execution of new ideas for new technologies development. Employee inventive behavior was more concerned with the innovation process than with the innovation output, which was beyond the realm of creativity. To create our theoretical model, we followed research[53] and "drew upon the literature concerning inventive behavior in general, including the literature on creativity." Leadership styles have a long history of influencing employee innovation in companies. Creativity was shown to be correlated with a variety of factors, including autonomy, encouragement from superiors, and a positive work environment[42].

From a theoretical standpoint, inclusive leadership may encourage employee innovation in a variety of ways. For starters, inclusive leaders may energies staff to participate in the creative process. Inclusion is a process of strengthening organizational workers' internal perceptions and a notion connected to intrinsic motivation[54]. Increased motivation led to increased participation in creative activity. Second, organizational support influenced workers' job results, according to organizational support theory. Inclusive leaders were able to give the resources needed for creative behavior, such as knowledge, time, and support. Employees would have greater liberty and flexibility to participate in a creative activity if their supervisor backed them. Boren[55] claimed that inclusion is built on workers' fundamental trust, adding that managers utilize a variety of talents to develop subordinates' behavior capability and potential. Inclusive leadership can help employees feel like they belong in the organization while still maintaining their uniqueness, as they fully contribute to the processes and outcomes of innovation within the organization[56]. Last but not least, leaders who are open to everyone may serve as examples of how to be innovative and inclusive. Inclusive leaders were more likely to participate in quality improvement activities[22]. Open and harmonious communication, accessibility, and offers are all characteristics of inclusive leadership that Carmeli et al.[45] claim to have found in their research. Leadership created an environment where employees felt more accountable, had more decision-making power, and received more information, feedback, and encouragement through appropriate inclusion. Employee

participation in creative work was enhanced by general openness, availability, and accessibility. "Discretionary conduct" was often used to describe the innovative activity. The distinctive characteristics of inclusive leadership modified followers' perceptions of support and encouraged more inventive conduct. As a result, we proposed the following hypothesis based on organizational support theory.

• H_1: Inclusive leadership is related to the innovative behavior of employees at the workplace.

2.3. Inclusive leadership and diversity at the workplace

Additionally, inclusive leaders provided their employees with emotional support, increasing their credibility. As a consequence, inclusive leaders showed that they could make sound decisions based on their principles[57,58].

According to a new study, it's not enough to have a more diverse workforce. To gain the full advantages of diversity, organizations must prioritize the inclusion of a diverse workforce[59,60] Some academics have expressed concern about how to best encourage this kind of diversity. It becomes even more critical to ensure that all members of a team feel valued and included. For inclusion, inclusive environment is essential because it facilitates the use of multiple opinions and ideas that may improve decision-making and team performance. As a consequence, the emphasis has shifted away from just achieving diversity to the need of creating inclusive work environments that appreciate diversity and aid in minority employee integration[61-63].

To cultivate a sense of belonging and individuality, inclusive leadership is deemed essential[56,64]. While transformational leadership emphasizes the need to integrate into the group's goals, inclusive leadership emphasizes the importance of each team member's individuality and fosters a sense of belonging to maximize each member's contributions[56]. By explicitly encouraging team members to communicate their thoughts and perspectives, inclusive leadership enables team members to discuss and exchange different viewpoints. The inclusion of all members of a team is a leader's decision-making fosters a more creative working environment. Other leadership styles such as real leadership and transformational do not place as much emphasis on developing and embracing uniqueness as inclusive leadership does[56,65]. Through the provision of the necessary conditions, inclusive leadership attempts to manage equally the positive and negative effects of team diversity by fostering a sense of belonging among team members.

Inclusive leaders are focused on establishing an environment where all team members may be themselves in a diverse context. Leaders that are open to and appreciative of variety will create an atmosphere where this is the norm[22,56]. Increasing openness to variation and decreasing intergroup prejudice may be achieved by explicitly highlighting the importance of differences[56]. Diverse team members are seen as insiders rather than outsiders, resulting in a greater sense of belonging for them.

This creates an environment in which team members are expected to discuss and trade their distinctive features, as well as utilize them to influence work practices and decision-making. These findings are consistent with the existing research[66-68]. When dealing with issues, leaders must create an environment that encourages the expression of diverse viewpoints[56,65]. Leaders encourage people to communicate their different viewpoints and encourage their colleagues to argue their disagreements.

An argument might be made that inclusive leaders are better at maintaining an inclusive culture while also meeting the needs of all members of their teams, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. The unique viewpoints of all team members are actively considered and sought in an inclusive workplace, so those group processes necessary to harness the potential benefits of a diverse team are also able to do so since all team members are appreciated for who they are. We may say that inclusive leadership will mediate the connection between ethnic and cultural diversity on a team and a welcoming environment, so reducing any negative effects and increasing any beneficial effects. Therefore, the following theory is put forth.

- H$_2$: inclusive leadership encourages the idea of diversity at the workplace to promote innovation within the organization.

2.4. Workplace diversity and innovation at the workplace

An innovative culture is an organization's commitment to exploring new choices or approaches, as well as uncovering new resources and developing new products, to improve its performance[69]. Employees may demonstrate creativity by sharing ideas and methods for their employees when a business has a culture like this. This mindset has been identified as critical to any organization's advancement and success since it invites other points of view, views, and improved performance[70]. This diversity of viewpoints creates an environment among employees that, as a result of the differences, might result in higher levels of output in terms of ideas and solutions for tasks and issues at work. As diversity in the workforce and creative culture are inextricably linked, this is used as a backdrop for the present hypothesis. Employee engagement, team member interchange, and, as a result, performance improves when workers are encouraged to share their ideas. This is accomplished via the right implementation of a work environment that fosters creativity. The established status of workforce diversity, on the other hand, might create settings in which workers are hesitant to share their opinions and feelings for fear of disagreement with other members or a negative reputation.

According to the findings, organizations may pursue employment practices that foster diversity as a strategy to boost the firm's innovativeness[71]. As a consequence of the diversity in the workforce, different viewpoints may interact, resulting in new and inventive ideas. This is referred to as a mediating effect since diversity inside a company and among its employees is connected to increased creativity. Similarly, innovation as a business culture may improve employee performance, implying a mediating relationship with the diversity of the workforce, as previously indicated. Notably, at the company level, research has recognized the expressive mediator (i.e., inventive atmosphere) of workforce diversity-performance connection. According to the findings, educational diversity has a favorable impact on the inventive atmosphere, hence boosting an organization's creativity and efficiency[51]. This also demonstrates a link between an organization's creative culture, its diversity, and its task force, and the result in terms of organizational goals. New ways develop from common ideas as innovation spreads more quickly across varied groups of workers. This is bolstered in this situation since a varied staff will present several opinions for management to consider. As a result, greater levels of performance will be achieved, creating a mediating impact on corporate culture (i.e., innovation).

Recent studies have examined the influence of innovation culture on organizational performance, using institutional culture and organizational consistency as moderators. They discovered that there is a positive correlation between an organization's innovation culture and its performance[72]. This supports the current research's theoretical assumption that there is a direct link between performance and imaginative culture. It has also been revealed that a company's capacity to innovate is an important factor in its success[73]. According to a recent study conducted by Zouaghi and his team[74] concluded that there is a positive correlation between diversity and creative performance when social capital plays a role. Team effectiveness, team satisfaction, and deep-level diversity were examined by Schoss and colleagues[75]. Tripathi and Ghosh[76] assert that the innovation environment exhibits considerable diversity. The use of a creative atmosphere served as a mediator in examining the correlation between team creative outputs and deep-level diversity. In Dubai, researchers looked at the connection between an organization's performance and its creative culture[77]. Organizational performance may be influenced by the mediating factor (innovative culture), but its impact on surface and deep levels of workforce diversity are unclear or contradictory. There are no quantitative measures to support this study, even though it has been addressed qualitatively[78]. Because of the facts presented above, we believe the following options are viable.

- H_3: Diversity in its adequate manner can contribute to the degree of an innovative culture.

3. Conceptual research framework

The conceptual framework in **Figure 1** shows that inclusive leadership is positively related to innovation at the workplace and it encourages the idea of diversity at the workplace to promote innovation within the organization eventually, Diversity in its adequate manner contributes to the degree of an innovative culture too.

4. Research objectives

- To study the association of inclusive leadership and employee innovative behavior.
- To study the impact of inclusive leadership that encourages the idea of diversity at the workplace to promote innovation within the organization.
- To study the contribution of diversity to the degree of an innovative culture/innovative behavior.

5. Research design

This study is descriptive and exploratory in nature, where 15 service-based firms in Delhi National Capital Region, including banks, law offices, Sinopec, and retailing facilities were surveyed. These companies were originally brought to attention via conversations with other scholars and academicians. We used three strategies to reduce the common bias: First, a three-month gap between two-waves was conducted. To lessen the impact of memory and common method variance bias on their findings and increase their robustness, researchers collected data on predictors and outcomes separately. Secondly, a two-source survey with employee-supervisor corresponding was employed, since supervisors' judgments of employee innovative behavior were considerably more significant. Third, a rigorous program control was used throughout the questionnaire (Appendix A) development and distribution process in this study. The department of human resources assisted in conducting each survey. 200 subordinates and their corresponding supervisors were randomly picked at the start of the survey, and all workers were given the option of participating or not. Surveys were provided in a sealed envelope and respondents were urged to submit completed questionnaires directly to the researchers to protect participant anonymity and reduce their fear of exposure and danger of responsibility. Anonymity had been guaranteed. Before being delivered, the survey questions were coded. We sent questionnaires to 200 employees of 5 enterprises and asked them to submit demographic information (e.g., age, education, tenure, and gender) as well as their perceptions of inclusive leadership.

Scaling: The researcher used a nine-item measure created by Carmerli et al.[15] to evaluate inclusive leadership and rated as "IL" by the researcher and, for diversity eight assessment variables have been taken and mentioned as "DIV", and for innovative behavior[79] developed a nine-item scale to assess employee inventiveness rated as "IB".

6. Reliability test

As mentioned in **Table 1** that Cronbach Alpha values are higher than 0.7. It is generally accepted that a reliability score of 0.6–0.7 indicates an adequate level of dependability, while a score of 0.8 or more indicates a very high level of dependability. Cronbach's alpha value for all scales was more than 0.07, indicating that the data is acceptable and credible.

Table 1. Reliability test.

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Inclusive leadership	0.926
Diversity	0.951
Innovative behavior	0.945

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis.

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	*p*	Standard estimate
Inclusive leadership	IL1	0.505	0.0431	11.7	< 0.001	0.73
	IL2	0.582	0.0464	12.5	< 0.001	0.765
	IL3	0.545	0.0446	12.2	< 0.001	0.752
	IL4	0.558	0.041	13.6	< 0.001	0.807
	IL5	0.511	0.0416	12.3	< 0.001	0.756
	IL6	0.541	0.0426	12.7	< 0.001	0.773
	IL7	0.678	0.0529	12.8	< 0.001	0.777
	IL8	0.644	0.0489	13.2	< 0.001	0.791
	IL9	0.559	0.0465	12	< 0.001	0.743
Workplace diversity	DIV1	0.65	0.0549	11.8	< 0.001	0.73
	DIV2	0.742	0.0523	14.2	< 0.001	0.832
	DIV3	0.756	0.0525	14.4	< 0.001	0.837
	DIV4	0.737	0.0513	14.4	< 0.001	0.835
	DIV5	0.658	0.0413	15.9	< 0.001	0.887
	DIV6	0.713	0.0451	15.8	< 0.001	0.883
	DIV7	0.687	0.0443	15.5	< 0.001	0.875
	DIV8	0.654	0.0422	15.5	< 0.001	0.875
Innovation	IB1	0.822	0.0553	14.9	< 0.001	0.851
	IB2	0.77	0.0533	14.4	< 0.001	0.836
	IB3	0.751	0.0524	14.3	< 0.001	0.832
	IB4	0.84	0.0571	14.7	< 0.001	0.846
	IB5	0.888	0.0608	14.6	< 0.001	0.842
	IB6	0.829	0.0632	13.1	< 0.001	0.785
	IB7	0.754	0.0551	13.7	< 0.001	0.807
	IB8	0.749	0.0515	14.5	< 0.001	0.84
	IB9	0.796	0.0576	13.8	< 0.001	0.812

- Inclusive leadership items:
    - IL1: My boss is eager to hear fresh ideas from me;
    - IL2: My boss is always on the lookout for ways to make things run more smoothly at work;
    - IL3: When it comes to achieving the objectives, I have set for myself, my supervisor is willing to discuss them with me;
    - IL4: If you have any concerns, you may talk to my supervisor;
    - IL5: As a member of this team, my supervisor is a constant "presence" who is always ready to help;
    - IL6: I may speak with my supervisor about any work-related issues I'm having;
    - IL7: My supervisor is eager to hear what I have to say and will do so;

- IL8: My supervisor encourages me to seek his/her advice on developing concerns;
- IL9: My supervisor is open to addressing these topics with me.
- Diversity at workplace:
  - DIV1: This company's leadership promotes a diverse workforce;
  - DIV2: Management's actions illustrate that diversity is vital;
  - DIV3: When it comes to increasing the number of people of color in its workforce, one business is serious about doing so;
  - DIV4: This organization promotes a work environment where people are free to be who they are;
    DIV5: This organization recognizes and appreciates the uniqueness of each employee;
  - DIV6: Employees are treated decently by the company's management;
  - DIV7: Employees at this organization are tolerant of others with diverse origins, views, and experiences than they are;
  - DIV8: There are rules or processes in place that promote a diverse and inclusive workplace.
- Innovative behavior items:
  - IB1: Generating fresh approaches to vexing problems;
  - IB2: Seeking for better ways to do your job;
  - IB3: Inventing new ways to solve issues;
  - IB4: Securing the backing of others for new ideas;
  - IB5: Securing support for new concepts;
  - IB6: Enthusing key people of the organization on new ideas;
  - IB7: Making creative ideas into practical applications;
  - IB8: Systematically bringing new ideas into the workplace;
  - IB9: Determining the usefulness of new concepts.

For the assessment of the structure of factors of observed variables confirmatory factor analysis was executed in this study, and the association has been observed between the observed variables and the latent variables. Here in the **Table 2**, this is observed that IL7 and IL8 are the most significant indicator of inclusive leadership whereas IL1 and IL5 Were found most insignificant.

For workplace diversity DIV2, DIV3, DIV4, DIV6 were found most significant as their value was more than 0.7 DIV1, DIV5, and DIV7 were also considered significant as their value was also more than 0.6, workplace diversity items were found significant with workplace diversity.

For innovation at the workplace IB1, IB4, IB5, and IB6 were found most significant as their estimated value was more than 0.06 the items of innovation were found most significant among all the three factors. IB8 was observed least estimation value, still, it was more than 0.07.

7. Factor estimates

In **Table 3**, the *Estimate* value of Workplace Diversity (0.736) shows a strong association with inclusive leadership, which indicates that inclusive leadership encourages workplace diversity, contrary to workplace diversity, Innovation estimation value shows that leadership and innovation do not share strong association, where it is observed that innovation may be affected by some other factors rather inclusive leadership. Workforce diversity also low degree of impact on innovation as its estimation value is 0.289 only. Hence this can be concluded that inclusive leadership is a more significant and deciding factor for innovation at the workplace rather diversity.

Table 3. Test of covariance.

Variable	Estimate	SE	Z	*p*	Standard estimate
Inclusive leadership	1	-	-	-	-
Workplace diversity	0.736	0.037	19.88	< 0.001	0.736
Innovation	0.303	0.0688	4.4	< 0.001	0.303
Workplace diversity	1	-	-	-	-
Innovation	0.289	0.0683	4.24	< 0.001	0.289
Innovation	1	-	-	-	-

As mentioned in **Table 4**, the *R*-value of 0.309 shows a non-significant or low degree of correlation between the predicator i.e., inclusive leadership and diversity and, their impact on dependent variable i.e., innovation. An R^2 value of 0.0955 shows that inclusive leadership and diversity are the factors that impact the innovation at the workplace by 9% only and, there are other factors, other than two, that play important role in the innovation culture within the organization.

Table 4. Linear regression.

S. No	Mode	R^2
1	0.309	0.0955

In **Table 5**, the model coefficients of innovation, which is the dependent variable and predicated by two variables inclusive leadership and diversity, researchers observed that in comparison to diversity, inclusive leadership is significant and has a greater degree of impact on innovative work culture in the organization. If inclusive leadership is to be promoted in the organization it would promote the work culture by 0.311 in the organization, whereas the diversity will help innovation by 0.173.

Table 5. Model coefficients—Innovation.

Predictor	Estimate	SE	*t*	*p*
Intercept	17.414	3.839	4.54	< 0.001
Inclusive leadership	0.311	0.142	2.18	0.03
Diversity	0.173	0.118	1.47	0.142

As mentioned in **Table 6**, the *R*-value of 0.675 shows a significant or positive degree of correlation between the predicative, inclusive leadership, and its impact on dependent variable i.e., Diversity. An R^2 value of 0.455 shows it impacts the diversity at the workplace by 45% only and there are other factors other than inclusive leadership that may impact diversity.

Table 6. Model fit measures.

S. No	Mode	R^2
1	0.675	0.455

Table 7 states that if inclusive leadership is to be promoted in the organizational culture, it encourages the idea of diverse work culture in the organization, the estimated value of Inclusive leadership is to be promoted by 1, it would enhance the diversity by 0.816, *p*-value (< 0.001) was also found significant.

Table 7. Model coefficients—Diversity.

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	5.509	2.2854	2.41	0.017
Inclusive leadership	0.816	0.0634	12.87	< 0.001
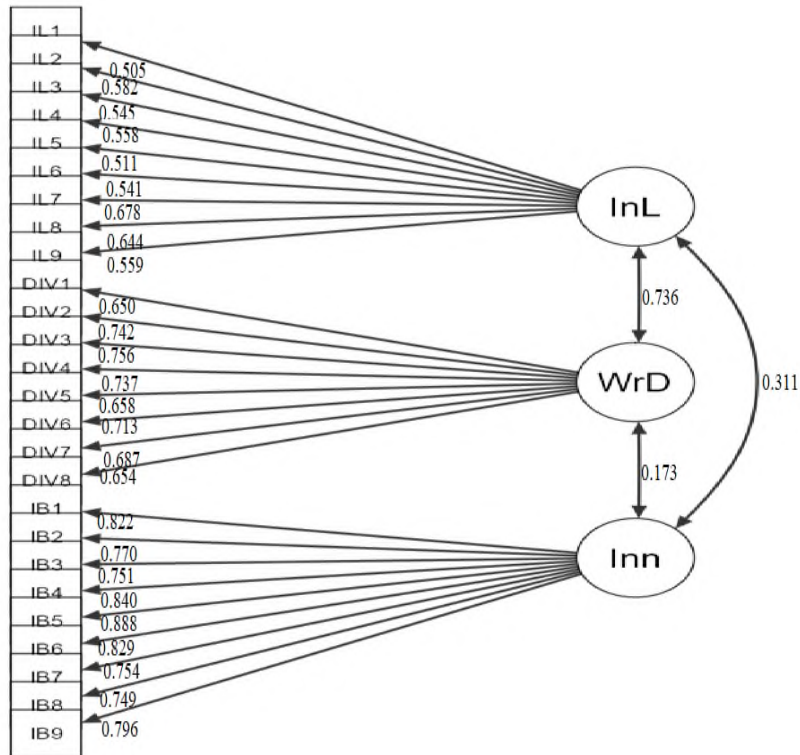
Figure 2. Estimated research framework.

For the assessment of the structure of factors of observed variables confirmatory factor analysis was executed in this study, and the association has been observed between the observed variables and the latent variables. Here in the above **Figure 2**, it is observed that IL7 and IL8 are the most significant indicator of inclusive leadership whereas IL1 and IL5 Were found most insignificant.

For workplace diversity DIV2, DIV3, DIV4, DIV6 were found most significant as their value was more than 0.7, infect DIV1, DIV5, and DIV7 were also considered significant as their value was also more than 0.6, workplace diversity items were found significant with workplace diversity.

For innovation at the workplace IB1, IB4, IB5, and IB6 were found most significant as their estimated value was more than 0.06 the items of innovation were found most significant among all the three factors. IB8 was observed least estimation value, still, it was more than 0.07.

8. Conclusion

These studies were designed to find out how inclusive leadership encourages employees' innovative behaviors and ensures diversity at the workplace, and the researcher found a link among inclusive leadership and the innovative behaviors of employees, moreover impact of diversity was also observed on innovation at the workplace. Employees felt more appreciated and cared for by the business when executives demonstrated greater inclusion in their new ideas, technology, and procedures. As a result, they boosted their creative behavior. Researchers observed that in comparison to diversity, inclusive leadership is significant and has a greater degree of impact on innovative work culture in the organization, apart from this also encourages the

idea of diverse work culture in the organization. Workforce diversity also has a low degree of impact on innovation. Hence this can be concluded that inclusive leadership is a more significant and deciding factor for innovation at the workplace rather diversity.

A varied and inclusive workforce is essential for fostering innovation, igniting creativity, and influencing company strategy and goals. Diverse viewpoints encourage creative problem solving and the development of novel goods, services, and solutions to existing problems. Having a diverse staff is no longer seen as a separate endeavor from the rest of a company's activities; rather, it is seen as a way to attract top talent and attract new consumers. While corporations' attempts to promote diversity and inclusion are a given, organizations nevertheless confront external and internal hurdles in putting these policies and processes in place. Organizations are still grappling with unfavorable attitudes about diversity among their employees, while a bumpy economic recovery has hampered many companies' recruiting attempts. Future challenges include aging workforces, decreasing supply of highly-skilled workers, and the difficulties of managing a multigenerational workforce. However, as long as companies have their "eye on the prize" that is, keeping diversity and inclusion initiatives at the top of their priority list, they will be able to weather these storms and emerge ahead of the competition.

9. Implications

The present research provided several significant theoretical advances. First, the results indicated that inclusive leadership had a significant impact on employee creative behavior, which was in line with previous research showing the relevance of supervisory support in inventive behavior. This empirical study filled up significant gaps in the literature on supportive drivers of employee innovation behavior. Inclusive leadership was likely to be a catalyst for innovation.

The idea of inclusive leadership has gained a lot of attention in recent years; there is still no consensus on the theoretical underpinnings that underpin it. The absence of practical and theoretical consensus on the implementation of inclusive leadership put a limit on its effectiveness. In response to the belief that "the inclusion construct and its underlying theoretical basis require further development" and that "much work remains to advance theory related to our understanding of inclusive leadership" our research was one of the few to examine the impact of inclusive leadership on diversity work culture and employee innovative behaviors.

Evidence showing the favorable effect of inclusive leadership on employee inventive behavior suggested that inclusive leadership may play a key role in tackling creativity determinants. Promoting staff innovation was vital to the organization's long-term competitiveness and success. Our results showed how a company and its leaders may enhance employee creative behavior via inclusive leadership, although individuals had unique attributions and views of leadership styles.

Practical implications

In a dynamic environment, where the competitiveness of the business was based on the innovation of the employees, it was critical to figure out how leaders might encourage their followers to innovate. The theoretical model suggested in this study should help managers better understand how to encourage employees to be more inventive. As previously said, creativity/innovation was dangerous since it required individuals to alter and behave in unconventional ways, as well as bosses to tolerate and accept divergence from standard norms. Since inclusive leadership has been shown to help workers to participate in more creative conduct, managers should acquire inclusive leadership abilities to encourage employees to engage in more innovative activities. We proposed that leadership training programs may assist leaders to understand the value of inclusivity and openness, as well as provide them with the skills they need to support their staff.

Finally, given people's inherent propensity to retain their status quo, identifying characteristics that may assist workers in overcoming this tendency and engaging in more inventive behavior was crucial. According to our research, inclusive leadership is a driver of staff innovation.

10. Limitations and future research

There are a few drawbacks to this research that should be noted. While pointing out the study's shortcomings, we also offered suggestions for further research. The first constraint was the limited sample size from a single company, which may limit the applicability and consequently the application of significant connection findings. The present results may give conservative hypothesis testing estimates, implying possibly bigger impacts in sectors with high levels of innovation (e.g., technology). Future research might improve our understanding by repeating the findings of this study across a variety of sectors with bigger sample size.

Second, although alternative processes may exist, the present research only looked at one link among inclusive leadership and employee creative behavior (e.g., psychological empowerment). Furthermore, investigating boundary factors that may alter the link among inclusive leadership and innovation might be beneficial. Other aspects of employee performance, such as task performance, might be studied in the future.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, LS; methodology, LS and PA; software, NK; validation, LS and NK; formal analysis, NK; investigation, BPJ; resources, ST; data curation, LS; writing—original draft preparation, LS; writing—review and editing, PA and ST; visualization, LS; supervision, PA; project administration, ST. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this study is to collect vital information with regard to the prevalence of diversity management and inclusive practices being adopted at workplace. Your humble cooperation in completing this questionnaire is central to the accomplishment of the research exercise. We apprise that there is no right or wrong answer key to these statements yet it all depends on your experiences and observations till date. Hence, we request you to complete this set of questions while we assure that your responses will be kept confidential and that the outcomes would be used for research purpose only.

(1) Inclusive leadership items

How far you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, please indicate by putting a tick mark (√) in the appropriate column.

S. No	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	My boss is eager to hear fresh ideas from me.					
2	My boss is always on the lookout for ways to make things run more smoothly at work.					
3	When it comes to achieving the objectives, I have set for myself; my supervisor is willing to discuss them with me.					
4	If you have any concerns, you may talk to my supervisor.					
5	As a member of this team, my supervisor is a constant "presence" who is always ready to help.					
6	I may speak with my supervisor about any work-related issues I'm having.					
7	My supervisor is eager to hear what I have to say and will do so.					
8	My supervisor encourages me to seek his/her advice on developing concerns.					
9	My supervisor is open to addressing these topics with me.					

(2) Diversity at workplace

S. No	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	This company's leadership promotes a diverse workforce.					
2	Management's actions illustrate that diversity is vital.					
3	When it comes to increasing the number of people of color in its workforce, one business is serious about doing so.					
4	This organization promotes a work environment where people are free to be who they are.					
5	This organization recognizes and appreciates the uniqueness of each employee.					
6	Employees are treated decently by the company's management.					
7	Employees at this organization are tolerant of others with diverse origins, views, and experiences than they are.					
8	There are rules or processes in place that promote a diverse and inclusive workplace.					

(3) Innovative behavior items

S. No	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Generating fresh approaches to vexing problem.					
2	Seeking for better ways to do your job.					
3	Inventing new ways to solve issues.					
4	Securing the backing of others for new ideas.					
5	Securing support for new concepts.					
6	Enthusing key people of the organization on new ideas.					
7	Making creative ideas into practical applications.					
8	Systematically bringing new ideas into the workplace.					
9	Determining the usefulness of new concepts.					

(4) About yourself

Name of the organization (optional):

Your designation:

A) The respondent's profile

Age	Educational qualification of the investor	Gender
25–30	Graduate	Male
31–35	Post Graduate	Female
36–40	Professional qualifications/doctoral	-

B) Job characteristics and dynamics

In this job role/position since last?	How you reached this position across hierarchy?	Total work experience	Position at time of joining
0–1 year	Internal promotion	3–5 Years	Probationary/Trainee
2–4 years	Joining from other departments	5–10 Years	Clerk/Junior
More than 5 years	External joining	10–15 Years	Manager/Assistant
Organizations changed before joining this one	**Pattern of acquiring the current hierarchal position**	**Average work hours devoted per week**	**Ethnic/Racial groups you feel are co-working here**
One	Delay of more than five years	Less than 50	One–Two
Two	Delay of two-three years	Between 50–70	Two–Five
Three	No delay at all	Near about 100	More than five

C) The employer's profile

Location	Nature of industry/sector	Number of women in corporate board
Gurugram	Banking	None
Faridabad	Health	One
Noida	ICT	Two
New Delhi	FMCG	-
-	Apparel/Fashion	-
-	E-Commerce	-