The Effect of Leader Inclusiveness on Innovative Work Behavior: The mediator role of Leader-Member Exchange

Dina Sidani  
_Saint-Joseph University of Beirut_, dina.sidani@usj.edu.lb

Bissane Harb  
_Saint-Joseph University of Beirut_, bissane.harbbaghdadi@usj.edu.lb

Eleonora Veglianti  
eleonora.veglianti@univ-catholille.fr

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The Effect of Leader Inclusiveness on Innovative Work Behavior: The mediator role of Leader-Member Exchange

Dina Sidani¹, Bissane Harb² and Eleonora Veglianti³

¹Saint-Joseph University of Beirut – Faculty of Business and Management - dina.sidani@usj.edu.lb
²Saint-Joseph University of Beirut – Faculty of Business and Management - bissane.harbbaghdadi@usj.edu.lb
³FGES, Université Catholique de Lille, 59800 Lille, France - eleonora.veglianti@univ-catholille.fr

Abstract. Referring to the social exchange theory and to leader-member exchange theory, the purpose of this study is to investigate how inclusive leadership influences innovative work behavior by testing leader-member exchange (LMX) as a mediator. A quantitative study was carried out in 10 service-based organizations in Lebanon with 187 subordinates and their supervisors. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple and multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that inclusive leadership is positively associated with IWB and that LMX mediates the relationship between the two variables. This paper contributes in many ways. First, it provides further support to the importance of relational leadership in influencing behaviors within the organization. Second, it contributes to the growing body of research on the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior. Third, it helps to understand the mechanism of leader-member exchange through which inclusive leadership can influence innovative work behavior. These findings highlight the fact that human resource management and managers need to consider how high-quality leader-member exchanges based on communication, openness and trust can promote IWB. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed as well as the indications for future studies.

Keywords: Inclusive Leadership – Innovative Work Behaviour - Leader Member Exchange – Lebanon

1 Introduction

In the current competitive environment characterized by turbulence, globalization and rapid technological change, it has become more challenging for organizations to survive and flourish [1] and [2]. In order to be successful in such an environment, organizations need to focus more on innovation. In order to become more innovative, they have to capitalize on their employees’ ability to innovate [3]. Employees can create, promote, and implement novel ideas, which represent the key elements of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) [4]. The IWB can be considered as
employees’ extra role behaviors developed in a dynamic work environment [5]. Research has shown that IWB was of critical importance to the organizations [6]. It contributes to maintain and improve their competitiveness [7] and helps them to meet new challenges in a complex environment [8]. Previous works have indicated many determinants of employees’ innovative behaviors [9] and [10]. Leadership has been considered as one of the most important factors that affect innovation in organizations [3]. In fact, leaders have, in general, a powerful source of influence on employees’ work behaviors [11], and innovative work behavior is no exception [3].

Many researches have been conducted on the relationship between traditional leadership styles and IWB [12] and recent studies have explored the effect of different types of leadership (paternalistic, transformational) on innovative work behavior through LMX [13] and [14], but few, if none research, has investigated the relationship between Inclusive leadership (IL) and innovative work behavior (IWB). Previous studies have examined the impact of transformational leadership [15] and [16], ethical leadership [17] and paternalistic leadership [18] on employee innovative behavior. These studies focused mainly on a leader-centric approach which emphasizes the role of leader’s traits such as character and charisma in promoting IWB [5]. Thus, the relationship between (IL) and (IWB) need further investigation [11]. Furthermore, previous researches neglected the role of exchanges between leaders and employees in fostering IWB [19]. In order to address this gap in the literature, this study aims to investigate how inclusive leadership may influence and stimulate innovative work behavior by referring to the social exchange theory.

Inclusive Leadership refers to leaders who manifest openness, accessibility, and availability in their relationship with their followers [20]. It emphasizes participative behaviors and sends clear signal that innovation is welcomed and appreciated. We examine the relationship between IL and IWB using leader-member exchange (LMX) as a mediator in order to understand and identify the organizational factors that can influence and promote innovative work behavior. Thus, we refer to the relational approach [5] and [21] which focuses on the characteristics of the leaders, employees’ attitudes and behaviors and their relationship with the leader. Our paper aims to suggest some insights and provide answers to the following questions: What role the inclusive leadership plays in enabling and enhancing employee innovative work behavior? What is the direct relationship between IL and (IWB)? How does the LMX mediate the relationship between IL and IWB?

We will adopt the services sector in Lebanon as field of application for our research. In fact, services are considered as the most dominant sector of the Lebanese economy, representing 74.7% of the country’s GDP and employing more than two-thirds of the workforce. The country faces many macroeconomic issues, social problems, and many political challenges. Within this challenging environment, the established service organizations should focus more on innovation and should develop the innovation abilities of their key workforce. This has proven to be crucial for the resolution of the crisis and the reinvigoration of the economy.

Therefore, to answer our research questions, we will first present the two key concepts of our research: the inclusive leadership and the IWB. Then, we will elucidate the relationship between the two concepts. Finally, we will discuss the mediating role of LMX by examining the impact of IL on LMX, and the impact of LMX on IWB. In the theoretical part, we will generate our hypotheses. In a second step, we will adopt a
random questionnaire survey method to test our hypotheses, by collecting data from supervisors-subordinates’ dyads working in 10 service-based organizations in Lebanon. Finally, we will discuss the theoretical and practical contributions of the study.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Inclusive Leadership (IL) and Employee Innovative Behavior (IWB)

Inclusive Leadership (IL)
Nembhard and Edmondson [20] were the first to introduce the concept of inclusive leadership in management and to present it as a style of leadership. They defined it as words and deeds exhibited by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others’ contributions. Hollander [21] highlighted the followers’ perceptions of the role of leadership and defined inclusive leadership as “a win-win situation with a common goal and vision of interdependent relationships”. Inclusive leaders support and assist their employees and provide them with the necessary resources that allow them to perform their work with autonomy and discretion [22]. They invite their followers to share their views and input and include them in discussions and decisions in which their voices are genuinely valued [20]. As such, we can say that inclusive leadership represents an important aspect of relational leadership. Furthermore, Inclusive leadership focuses on accepting employees for who they are, allowing them to contribute their unique abilities and views, and encouraging them to engage in organizational activities [23]. By ensuring that all members feel recognized and appreciated in their uniqueness and differences [21].

The crucial issue which underlies inclusive leadership is related to the basic needs of belongingness and of being valued for uniqueness. This important question has not been addressed by other leadership approaches. Inclusive leadership follows a right-based approach since the needs of belongingness and uniqueness represent basic human needs [24]. Thus, the respect of human right must underpin the inclusive leadership approach. According to [25], inclusive leadership aims to achieve the common good of humankind by taking into consideration everyone’s dignity and worth.

Furthermore, the concept of inclusive leadership has gained popularity in previous research without being based on a clear and specific theoretical framework [24]. Later, many studies have tried to provide a theoretical grounding to the concept bases on optimal distinctiveness theory and social identity theory [26], [24] and [27]. These theories assume that individuals need to maintain and develop interpersonal relationships (needs for belongingness) and to preserve a distinctive sense of self (needs for uniqueness) in order to feel a sense of inclusion. They want to be simultaneously similar and different from others [28]. Leaders’ behaviors that encourage subordinates to exchange information and perspectives promote their perception of inclusion. Consequently, this could indirectly contribute to positive work outcomes. Inclusive leadership reduces the pressure of maintaining consensus and, therefore, increases the degree to which employees develop creative ideas and engage in innovative work behaviors [22] and [29]. At this stage, we need to outline what is Innovative Work Behavior.
Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB)
According to Liu [30], innovative work behavior (IWB) refers to the process by which employees discover problems, generate innovative ideas, promote, and implement them during the life of the organization. Jansen [4] defined IWB as an initiation, deliberate introduction and application of novel and valuable ideas, procedures and products that are useful to the organization. In general, previous studies distinguish between two main phases in the innovation process: the generation of a creative idea and its successful implementation [31] and [32]. Scott and Bruce [8] believed that IWB includes three phases: recognizing problems and creating solution, promoting innovative ideas, and generating innovative standards or models that can be used in large quantities. IWB is performed for the benefit of the organization, and several employee innovative behaviors may help organizations to become more innovative [6] and [33].

In this research, we will adopt Scott and Bruce’s [8] and Jansen’s innovation approaches [4]. They considered IWB as one-dimensional construct that includes both idea generation and application behavior. So, we will suppose that the difference between leaders’ behaviors during these phases is invisible.

2.2 Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behaviour

In today’s organizations, one of the most important roles of leadership is to cultivate innovative behavior [34] and [35]. Previous studies shows that employees’ innovative behavior is significantly related to leadership style. Inclusive leadership creates a favorable work environment characterized by challenges, openness and diversities; this positive working atmosphere motivates employees to generate creative thoughts and to perform innovatively [22]. Moreover, when leaders are available to employees, they motivate them to develop new ideas and give them constructive feedback in order to further stimulate them to perform IWB [36]. Therefore, inclusive leaders encourage employees to perform IWB by showing them their support and their accessibility [37].

From theoretical perspectives, inclusive leadership is related to intrinsic motivation and this could contribute to increase the development of innovative behaviors among employees [38]. Thus, when inclusive leaders provide employees with support and encouragement to take initiative and explore innovative solutions, the latter get more autonomy and freedom, and consequently they become more motivate to engage in innovative behavior [39]. In addition, employees who participate in discussions and decisions would be more able to propose and implement innovative ideas [6], [20] and [40]. Furthermore, based on the LMX theory, a high-quality exchange relationship between leader and follower is associated with innovativeness [41]. Inclusive leaders develop a good relationship with followers exhibited through good communication, openness, availability, accessibility and trust. They could facilitate employees’ perception of belongingness and maintain their uniqueness which lead to enhance their contribution to organization innovation processes [24], [13] and [14].

Finally, previous researches have confirmed the role of inclusive leadership attributes such as openness, availability, and accessibility in promoting innovative work behavior [23] and [5]. These attributes play a crucial role in encouraging employee to
propose and implement innovative ideas by giving them a sufficient room of manoeuvre and a greater participation in decision-making [6] and [20]. Thus, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 1: IL has a positive influence on IWB

2.3 Inclusive Leadership and Leader Member Exchange (LMX)

In their study, [5] define LMX as the relationship between employees and their immediate supervisor. The LMX theory supposes that leaders do not adopt the same style in their interactions with their followers and develop a different relationship with each one of them. Liden and Maslyn [42] distinguish between four dimensions of LMX: loyalty, affect, perceived contribution, and professional respect. The social support of the leader is considered as the most important determinant in his relationship with his followers.

Based on the social exchange theory and the social identity theory [28], we argued that leaders’ inclusiveness increases the quality of LMX. Inclusive leadership would satisfy the needs for belongingness and preserves the needs for uniqueness, which contribute to a higher quality of LMX. Employees tend to reciprocate their leaders’ inclusive behaviors by showing more identification and commitment resulting in a higher quality of LMX [43]. Thus, inclusive leadership develops a mature relationship with employees [5] based on trust, consideration, open communication, and mutual understanding [22]. It shows consideration for the followers, which encourages them to engage vigorously in different work activities. This could lead to surpass the leader-follower communication gaps [22]. Furthermore, inclusive leadership fosters emotional attachment and interpersonal links with employees [21]. This relational facet of inclusive leadership may be another source for a high-quality exchange relationship between leaders and followers.

2.4 LMX and IWB

LMX is a strong descriptive theory which describes work units with reference to role theory [41] and Blau’s theory of social exchange [44]. Social exchange theory represents an explanatory mechanism to examine the relationship between inclusive leadership and IWB. In fact, social exchange theory predicts that the reciprocal exchange between leader and follower can lead to many organizational outcomes, such as organizational citizenship behaviors, job performance or turnover intentions [45]. The social exchange theory argues that the relationship between leadership style and attitudes and behaviors of followers is mediated by the nature of the relationship between the leader and his followers [46].

Thus, in the light of social exchange theory, it could be concluded that there is a relationship between LMX and a set of attitudes and behaviors at work. The quality of exchanges between leader and followers is therefore associated with several important organizational outcomes. For instance, high-quality LMX motivates employees to spend more time on non-routine tasks, and consequently encourage them to propose and set up their new views. Furthermore, when employees maintain a strong
relationship with their leaders, they are more likely to experience high autonomy in the organization and therefore, develop discretionary behavior such as IWB.

Most recently, Tastan and Davouli [47] studied the association between LMX and IWB with the moderation of trust in the leader and noted a positive relationship between LMX and IWB. Javeda et al. [5] also found a positive relationship between LMX and IWB while investigating the mediating role of LMX. Finally, based on the theory of social exchange and the inclusive leadership approach, we propose that the quality of interpersonal exchanges between the leader and his followers intervene in the relationship between IL and IWB. The following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2: LMX mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovate work behavior.

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample and procedure

Data were collected through a convenience sampling of followers and supervisors working in 10 service-based organizations in Lebanon such as banks, financial software companies, and commercial companies. These organizations are highly exposed to change and innovation challenges through their activity in the Lebanese market. They should continually update and develop their methods and processes in order to face the increased competition and remain in the market.

Following the methodology adopted in previous studies [5] and [23], data regarding predictors and outcomes were collected separately. The following procedure was adopted in order to minimize the impact of memory and common method variance bias. Data regarding the independent variable (IL) was collected in Time 1, and data regarding the mediator variable (LMX) and dependent variable (IWB) was collected at Time 2 (after two months). As our study was time-lagged, and data collection was both from supervisors and employees, the data collection was free from social desirable bias [48] and [49]. In time 1, one of the authors met the company’s owner and presented the subject of the study. After understanding the purpose of the research, the owner gave approval for data collection in his organization. The owner received the questionnaire and gave it to the Head of Human Resources who sent to the authors a list of potential respondents belonging to different departments. Employees filled the questionnaire regarding their demographics characteristics (age, gender, education, tenure) and their perception of inclusive leadership. Two months later, in time 2, the same employees were asked to rate the quality of their relationship with their supervisor (LMX). In addition, the supervisor of each employee who has participated in the survey was asked to rate his subordinate’s innovative work behavior because it seems more valuable and credible to let the supervisor rates this variable. As a result, the authors obtained completed filled questionnaires from 187 employees. Thus, the data collected from 187 supervisor-subordinate dyads was used to test the research hypotheses.
To avoid any possible bias that could be due to the non-normality of the factors, the data collected was first tested for normality, and we obtained the values of skewness and kurtosis between -2 and 2.

### 3.2 Measures

Scale of Inclusive Leadership (IL): Inclusive leadership was assessed using the nine-items scale that was developed by Carmeli et al. [22]. Many other researchers have used this scale and noted it as high reliability [50] and [5].

Scale of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB): Innovative Work Behavior was measured using the six-items scale proposed by Scott and Bruce [8] which is the most widely used in the literature.

Scale of Leader Member Exchange (LMX): LMX was measured using a seven-items scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien [51], adapted from Graen and Scandura [41].
3.3 **Demographic factors**

Demographic characteristics of employees such as age, gender, education and work experience in the organization are presented in Table 1. We used the demographic variables of the employees in the study as control variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>25 and below</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>40.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56 and above</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Experience</td>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-10 years</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 years and more</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Principal component analysis and coefficient of reliability

We used the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to extract the items that do not fit the conditions for each concept (IL, LMX and IWB). Principal Component Analysis, or PCA, is a dimensionality-reduction method that is often used to reduce the dimensionality of large data sets, by transforming a large set of variables into a smaller one that still contains most of the information in the large set.

Reducing the number of variables of a data set naturally comes at the expense of accuracy, but the trick in dimensionality reduction is to trade a little accuracy for simplicity. Because smaller data sets are easier to explore and visualize and make analyzing data much easier and faster for machine learning algorithms without extraneous variables to process.

Thus, PCA aims to reduce the number of variables of a data set while preserving as much information as possible and extracting the items that do not fit for each dimension (the sum of squared factor loadings is less than 0.6). The reliability of the study Cronbach alpha for IL is 0.904, for IWB is 0.81 and for LMX is 0.916. Therefore, we can conclude that the retained items have good internal consistency.

3.5 Test of the hypotheses

In a second step, we have to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Inclusive Leadership has a positive influence on Innovative Work Behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Leader Member Exchange mediates the relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

To verify these hypotheses, we used Baron and Kenny (1986) method. As such, we adopted a four-step approach by conducting several regression analyses and by examining the significance of the coefficients at each step.

H1: Inclusive leadership has a positive influence on employee innovative work behavior (IWB)

H2: Leader-member exchange mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior.
4 Results

The results show that inclusive leadership is positively related to innovative work behavior (B= 0.226; SE= 0.054; p<0.01). The first hypothesis has been verified and the first condition of Baron and Kenny for the mediation has been realized. Inclusive leadership is positively related to LMX (B= 0.799; SE= 0.049; p<0.01) and LMX is positively related to IWB (B =0.347; SE= 0.049; p<0.01). Finally, regressions result of Model 4 show that complete mediation is present since inclusive leadership is positively related to innovative work behavior through LMX (B= 0.442; SE= 0.076; p<0.01). Complete mediation is present when the independent variable (IL) has no longer influence on the dependent variable (IWB) after the mediator LMX has been controlled and all above conditions has been met. Thus, the second hypothesis is verified.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Leadership</td>
<td>3.8235</td>
<td>.78088</td>
<td>-.825</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Work Behavior</td>
<td>3.7825</td>
<td>.60484</td>
<td>-.065</td>
<td>-.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader-Member Exchange</td>
<td>3.7709</td>
<td>.81060</td>
<td>-1.003</td>
<td>1.410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviations and Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Inclusive Leadership</td>
<td>3.8235</td>
<td>.78088</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Innovative Work Behavior</td>
<td>3.7825</td>
<td>.60484</td>
<td>0.292**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Leader-Member Exchange</td>
<td>3.7709</td>
<td>.81060</td>
<td>0.770**</td>
<td>0.466**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p<0.

Table 4. Unstandardized coefficients for research mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 Inclusive Leadership →</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Work Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 Inclusive Leadership →</td>
<td>0.799</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3 LMX → Innovative Work Behavior</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4 Inclusive Leadership IWB</td>
<td>0.442</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.127</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model 1: The sig value from ANOVA table is almost 0 <0.01 and so the independent variable is shown to significantly influence the dependent variable in the first regression equation. The first hypothesis has been verified and so the first condition of Baron and Kenny for the mediation.

Model 2: The sig value from ANOVA table is almost 0 <0.01 and so the independent variable (IL) is shown to significantly influence the mediator variable (LMX).

Model 3: The sig value from ANOVA table is almost 0 <0.01 and so the mediator variable (LMX) is shown to significantly influence the dependent variable (IWB).

Model 4: The sig value from ANOVA table is almost 0 <0.01 and so the mediator variable (LMX) and the independent variable (IL) is shown to significantly influence the dependent variable (IWB).

### Table 5. Summary of the 4 Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>5.789</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.789</td>
<td>17.202</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>72.439</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>72.439</td>
<td>269.226</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>14.753</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.753</td>
<td>51.215</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4</td>
<td>15.499</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.499</td>
<td>27.136</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6 Indirect Effects - Two Tailed Significance (BC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IL mean</th>
<th>LMX_mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LMX_mean</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWB_mean</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To be more accurate about the indirect effect we used the bootstrapping approach with 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals to test the mediating effects of LMX between IL and IWB. The bootstrapping technique is a nonparametric technique adopted to assess the indirect effects [52]. It is considered powerful and convenient since it makes no assumptions on the shape of the distribution [53]. The result shows that the Sig-value between the two variables (IL) and (IWB) is (0.004<0.01) (Table 6). Thus, the indirect effect between (IL) and (IWB) is statistically significant.

### 5 Discussion and conclusion

In this study, we aim to examine the relationship between inclusive leadership, leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. The results showed that IL is significantly associated with IWB (H1). This is consistent with previous work that
highlighted the role of IL on stimulating IWB [5] and [23]. However, the results indicated that inclusive behaviors of leaders play a crucial role especially in generating innovative ideas among Lebanese employees. This could be due to the existence of several organizational and environmental factors, which limit the implementation of innovative ideas and processes within the Lebanese organizations.

The findings also confirmed that LMX plays a mediating role between IL and IWB (H2). In fact, when employees perceive leader’s openness, availability and accessibility, positive exchange occurs, and they tend to reciprocate by developing innovative behavior. Consequently, employees need to feel a high-quality relationship with their leader to challenge the existing work standards and to look for new work techniques and methods [4]. Inclusive leaders encourage employees to innovate by making them realize that they can easily communicate their ideas [22].

Furthermore, the study revealed that, in the Lebanese context, among the three dimensions of inclusive leadership, leaders’ availability has a significant influence on employee innovative behavior through LMX. This outcome might be attributed to the importance of the relational factors within the Lebanese culture. In fact, these factors meet the needs for social recognition, affiliation and sociability. These values are strongly appreciated and emphasized by the Lebanese people, and find their root in their culture, which promotes the exchanges, the communication with others and the conviviality [54]. Although the Lebanese leader is not always open to hearing new ideas, he is however available to communicate with his followers and discuss with them all problems related to work. Thus, the interpersonal relationships play a key role in the organizations and contribute, in some cases, to the development of high-quality exchange between leaders and followers and consequently to the promotion of IWB [40].

Theoretical Implications
The findings of the study indicated that inclusive leadership was positively linked to IWB (H1). In doing so, the study contributes to both leadership and IWB literature in many ways. Firstly, it provides further support to the importance of relational leadership in influencing behaviors in the organizations [22] and emphasizes on a specific aspect of relational leadership, namely the inclusive leadership. Secondly, it provides insight on the determinants of IWB. Thus, by examining the effect of IL on IWB, it supports the notion that situational factors enhance IWB [50], [5] and [55]. Therefore, our investigation suggests that inclusive leadership is a situational factor, which enhances IWB.

The findings confirmed that LMX plays a mediating role in the relationship between IL and IWB (H2). By doing so, the study provides further support to previous studies that have demonstrated that IL contributes to a higher quality of LMX [56], [21] and [43]. It also confirmed the role of LMX in enhancing employees innovative work behavior. Therefore, the study lends support to previous studies that have pointed out the role of leader’s characteristics and the quality of his relationship with his followers in developing innovative work behavior [21] and [5].

Furthermore, the study investigates the mechanism by which inclusive leadership may affect innovative work behavior. It reveals that IL, by stressing on building high-quality LMX, affects employees’ IWB [31]. Thus, the indirect effect of inclusive leadership on the IWB through LMX is a further contribution to the literature on IWB.
By confirming the mediating role of LMX in the association between IL and IWB, the findings support the leaders’ process view [5]. They also highlight the role of social exchange theory of Blau [44] as explanatory mechanisms of the development of IWB. The latter assumes that employees become more motivated to show extra role behaviors, such as IWB, when they perceive leadership in terms of quality relationship, [36]. Finally, we can conclude that this research adds insights to the concept of inclusive leadership and help to explain how this form of leadership could contribute to the development of innovation in the organizations.

Practical Implications
The findings related to the direct association between IL and IWB (H1) have several implications. Human resources management needs to emphasize on leaders’ characteristics, like being available, accessible and open, that could promote Innovative Work Behavior. Also, our results show that organizational factor like leader-member exchange (LMX) constitute an interesting predictor of IWB, while mediating the relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Innovative work behavior. These results provide interesting insights to practitioners who are encouraged to develop innovation application programs that aim to to incite leaders spread innovation within the organization. Their openness, accessibility and availability would create a favorable environment to emphasize and encourage IWB.

Moreover, the findings related to the mediating role of LMX (H2) highlight the mechanism through which inclusive leadership develop innovative behaviors. Thus, managers are invited and encouraged to build closer relationships with their subordinates, further based on trust and social exchange. If they want to motivate them to generate and implement innovative ideas at work, they have to rely on social exchanges. This study provides interesting insights regarding HR practices concerning innovative organizational climate; innovation is fostered not only by an inclusive leadership style, promoting participation and inclusiveness, but also by the quality of the dyad that exists and which develops between the leader and each of other member of the organization [57].

Limitations and Future Research
In terms of sampling, we are aware of the limitations of our research. Even though the sampling method does not guarantee that the sample represent the population (as a convenience sample), this research provides us with some insights about the role of LMX on IWB that can be tested at a larger scale.

In addition, future studies can investigate how the four dimensions of LMX proposed by Liden and Maslyn [42] (1998) - loyalty, affect, perceived contribution and professional respect - may influence innovative work behavior and how these different dimensions of LMX are related to inclusive behaviors of leaders. Moreover, future studies may investigate other mechanisms that intervene between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior which will help enhance our understanding of the role of inclusive leadership in promoting IWB.

What is more, this study was conducted exclusively within the Lebanese services sector, which is a very dynamic and innovative one in Lebanon. Future studies can adopt other sectors as field of investigation, and, thus, they will give more insights related to the underlying mechanisms that emphasize IWB in the Lebanese context.
References


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