

**Inclusive leadership as a precursor for thriving at work and innovative work behaviour among hospitality industry employees**

**ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

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**DIKSHA DHAR**

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Under the guidance of

**Dr. LATA BAJPAI SINGH**

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

Department of Rural Management, School of Management Studies

**BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY  
VIDYA VIHAR, RAEBARELI ROAD, LUCKNOW-226025  
UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA**

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# ABSTRACT

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## INTRODUCTION

In current times, due to surge in dynamic and turbulent business surrounding it is becoming difficult for organization to sustain and prosper (Chowhan, 2017; Lauser, 2010). In such an environment, it becomes imperative on prioritizing innovation and to develop a workplace where employees feel a sense of belongingness (Newman *et al.*, 2017) which enhances a constructive mental state leading to individual Learning and vitality (Spreitzer *et al.*, 2005) thereby resulting in accomplishment of organizational goals. This phenomena includes role and effectiveness of leaders in developing Inclusive leadership style i.e., a set of behaviour which focusses on developing a sense of belongingness among the people working in the organization. It is essential for leaders to identify what their employees value and care about and giving greater autonomy in decision making because a work environment which focuses only on getting things done may lead to burnout, exhaustion and having a negative feeling towards their organisation and eventually cease to exist. (Hernandez *et al.*, 2015). It has been seen that organizations which embraces inclusive ideas and practises of employees makes them feel psychologically safe i.e., an employee being open to try new things and take chances without the fear of having undesirable effects to his or her self esteem, status or career (Kahn, 1990). A psychologically safe employee will have increased level of learning and enthusiasm which will further encourage an employee to introduce innovative ideas at workplace (Yang *et al.*, 2019).

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Hospitality industry occupy a pivotal place in shaping the overall economy of a country which is driven by rendering services such as fooding and lodging, event

planning and so on that make people delighted and contented. Thus, efforts are made by business concerns to make it a hit by satisfying existing customers and carrying out innovative practises to attract potential customers. In such an exercise, business firms often turn a blind eye to the needs and wants of employees who hold an important place in shaping and reshaping the industry because they are the ones who directly come in contact with customers and can provide crucial insights regarding their overall experiences which can be instrumental in triggering organizational success. Hence, this study will highlight the need for effective implementation of human resource practises and help in providing a road map for experienced and budding leaders to develop an open culture and creating a conducive environment where employees can develop a sense of belongingness which in turn will increase their productivity.

## **RESEARCH GAP**

- Despite the growing importance of Inclusive Leadership, there is a scant of studies which stressed its effects on Innovative work behavior. Maximum literature has mainly been concentrated on transformational leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier 1999, Islam *et al.*, 2021, Pieterse *et al.*, 2010), charismatic leadership (Michaelis *et al.*, 2009), entrepreneurial leadership (Iqbal *et al.*, 2020), servant leadership (Iqbal *et al.*, 2020), Authentic leadership (Hsiung, 2012), ethical leadership (Yidong and Xinxin, 2013), influence based leadership (Krause, 2004), transactional leadership (Pieterse *et al.*, 2010) and so forth.
- Extensive research has revealed that majority articles on the impact of Inclusive leadership on Innovative work behaviour have primarily been focused more on telecommunication companies (Choi *et al.*, 2017), Textile industry (Javed *et al.*, 2019; Javed *et al.*, 2018), R & D organization (Siyal *et al.*, 2021), IT sector (Mansoor *et al.*, 2021), healthcare sector (Shakil *et al.*, 2021) and so on. To our

knowledge there exists no study on research articles related to Inclusive leadership and its various outcomes in context of hotel industry at Assam.

- In recent years, studies on the advantages of Inclusive leadership on Innovative work behaviour is limited with the mediating mechanism of psychological safety. Prior studies have unveiled that a wealth of studies has been dominated with the mediating role of intrinsic motivation(Siyal *et al.*, 2021) , creative self efficacy (Javed *et al.*, 2021), employee engagement (Mansoor *et al.*, 2021), psychological empowerment (Javed *et al.*, 2019), perceived organizational support (Qi *et al.*, 2019), psychological capital (Fang *et al.*, 2019), knowledge sharing (Schoonus, 2018), leader-member exchange(Javed *et al.*, 2018)and so forth. Additionally, in the context of psychological safety majority of the articles has been conducted mainly from western context (Javed *et al.*, 2019; Carmeli *et al.*, 2010).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

On the basis of the literature gap found in the area of research, following research questions have been framed to pursue in the presented study-

1. Does inclusive leadership ensure thriving at work among the employees?
2. Does inclusive leadership cause innovative work behaviour among the employees?
3. What is the role of psychological safety on the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among the employees?
4. What is the role of psychological safety on the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour of the employees?

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To examine the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees.

2. To examine the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour.
3. To examine the mediating effect of psychological safety in the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees.
4. To examine the mediating effect of psychological safety in the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour among employees.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

1. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees.  
H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees.
2. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour among employees.  
H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour among employees.
3. H<sub>0</sub>: Psychological safety does not mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees.  
H<sub>1</sub>: Psychological safety mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees.
4. H<sub>0</sub>: Psychological safety does not mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour among employees.  
H<sub>1</sub>: Psychological safety mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour among employees.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design is a framework within which a research is conducted. It acts as a blueprint for the collection, analysis and implication of data. This research employs descriptive cum causal research design since it is concerned with describing the characteristics of the respondents that are gathered with the help of survey and thereby explaining the direct and indirect relationship between variables.

### **Sampling technique**

Sample selection is a method for making statistical inferences and estimating the characteristics of the entire population by focusing on a subset of the population.

The technique of selecting a sample are classified into- *Probability Sampling and Non-probability Sampling*. In Probability sampling, each item of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample whereas under Non-probability Sampling only a selected item from the population are chosen by the researcher for constituting the sample. This study employs Non-probability sampling technique using purposive/ judgemental sampling considering the compatibility of the research objectives. The rationale behind selection of this sampling technique is because hotel employees from Guwahati were only selected and not their manager/ supervisor i.e., relying on our own judgement.

### **Sample size and its Determination**

In this study, only those respondents were selected who were currently working at different hotels at Guwahati and data was collected using standardized close ended questionnaires. The mode of language used in the questionnaire was English but certain respondents required translation of certain questions in native language i.e., Assamese

which was translated accordingly. The sample size is 380 and it has been calculated using Slovin's formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

where,

n= Sample size

N= Total population

e= Error tolerance or probability of committing error in selecting a sample from the population.

Here,

N= 16000(Economic Survey 2017-18)

e= 5%

Confidence level= 95%

The proposed sample size was 376 but we could successfully collect data from 380 respondents.

## Sampling Unit

Sampling unit refers to the individual unit of the population which make up a sample. The sampling unit of this study included employees of different hotels at Guwahati.

## STATISTICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Different statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, correlation, exploratory factor analysis and mediation test using PLS-SEM has been used.

## FINDINGS

Objectives	Research questions	Findings
To examine the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees	Does inclusive leadership ensure thriving at work among the employees?	From the study it is evident that Inclusive leadership positively and significantly co-relates with thriving at work ( $\beta=0.531$ , $p<0.005$ )
To examine the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour among employees	Does inclusive leadership cause innovative work behaviour among the employees?	The study revealed that inclusive leadership has a positive link with innovative work behaviour ( $\beta=0.62$ , $p<0.005$ )
To examine the mediating effect of psychological safety in the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among employees	What is the role of psychological safety on the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work among the employees?	The study illuminated that there exists significant mediating effect of psychological safety in the relationship between inclusive leadership and thriving at work ( $\beta=0.051$ , $p<0.005$ )
To examine the mediating effect of psychological safety in the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour among employees	What is the role of psychological safety on the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour of the employees?	The study highlighted that there is no significant mediating effect of psychological safety in the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour ( $\beta=-0.006$ , $p>0.005$ )

## **IMPLICATIONS**

In current times of hyper competitive business environment it has become of utmost importance for organizations to embrace creative methods in order to stay competitive. In such a pursuit, leadership is perceived to be one of the crucial factor in stimulating innovation and enthusiasm by creating psychologically safe environment for employees. Thus, this work adds to the pool of knowledge in several ways. First, our study has found that supportive behaviour of leaders develops a positive perception in the minds of employees which leads to innovative outcomes. Additionally, it highlights the necessity of developing a psychologically safe environment where employees can speak up without fear of retaliation. This enhances their zeal of learning which leads to beneficial outcomes for organizations. Furthermore, this study helps in expanding our knowledge on the beneficial outcomes of thriving which flourishes when leaders exhibit inclusiveness at work. Thus this study will deepen our understanding in encouraging leaders and management practitioners to create a positive and psychologically safe environment where employees can freely voice their views which will enable in building a cordial relationships among members withing the organization.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In a dynamic environment, innovation plays a crucial role in expediting growth and continuity of business firms. Implementing innovation is risky and predominantly requires employees changing their ways of thinking and acting. Equally important, it is the duty of the leaders to tolerate and respect employees viewpoints and providing them adequate opportunities to give their feedback and choice. This study aimed at analysing the interconnection between Inclusive leadership on innovative work behaviour and thriving at work with the mediation effect of psychological safety in the hospitality sector at Guwahati.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Despite the significant contribution made by this literature, our study has a number of limitations. First, our study concentrated on collecting data from one source i.e., employees which might fail to increase the confidence in the results due to single source effects. Additionally our data was gathered from hotel industry employees at Guwahati (A city at Assam) only. This can cause a concern of generalizability in multiple cultural contexts. Furthermore, our research study focussed on studying the association between inclusive leadership and innovative work behaviour using one intervening variable i.e., psychological safety only. . Lastly this study was conducted with a smaller sample size due to the ill effects of COVID-19 pandemic which affected the business to a larger extent resulting in layoffs or terminating employees from workplace.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Despite the significant contribution made by this study, this research has some potential future directions which can act as a road map for other researchers. First, future research can test this relationship with a larger sample size which will be beneficial in generalizing the outcome of the study. Secondly, there is a urgency to test this relationship across different cultural contexts in order to conclude for similar behavioural outcomes. Last but not the least, this to the best of our understanding is the first study which is taking into consideration psychological safety as an intervening variable in describing the relationship between Inclusive leadership on Innovative work behaviour and thriving at work in the context of hospitality industry at Guwahati. Accordingly, future studies can consider studying similar relationship using other mediating variable to explore and enrich the outcome of the study.

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