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INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TO AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT: A MODERATED- MEDIATION MODEL WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the interrelationships between Psychological Safety (PS), inclusive leadership (IL), psychological ownership (PO), and affective commitment (AC). Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), Psychological Safety Theory (Edmondson, 1999), and Psychological Ownership Theory (Pierce et al., 2001) the research proposes a moderate mediation model in which inclusive leadership enhances affective commitment directly and indirectly through psychological safety, while psychological ownership moderates this indirect relationship. Data collected from 313 employees across various organizations using validated scales and analyzed with the hayes process macro and SPSS (v.25). The findings explored that inclusive leadership had a substantial positive influence on both PS and AC. The connection between AC and IL was partially regulated by PS, and PO substantially moderated this relationship. However, this suggests that employees with higher ownership experience more intense emotional attachment to their employers. The findings of this study offer both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, they enhance the literature on IL by incorporating psychological mechanisms into the leadership-commitment connection, emphasizing the essential roles of inclusion and PO in promoting employee engagement and loyalty. Practically, the results indicate that firms ought to engage in cultivating IL who actively foster psychological safety, encourage voice, and promote shared ownership to bolster emotional commitment and improve overall organizational performance.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive Leadership; Psychological Safety; Psychological Ownership; Affective Commitment; Social Exchange Theory, Psychological Safety Theory, Psychological Ownership Theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, characterized by technological advancements, remote work trends, and heightened global competition grasping the elements that influence employees' emotional commitment to their organizations has emerged as a paramount concern for both academics and practitioners. Concurrently, individuals within organizations increasingly endeavor to protect their well-being and mental health. Recent studies indicate that inclusive leadership (IL) markedly improves employee well-being by alleviating stress and fulfilling psychological demands, therefore fostering workplace flourishing (Liu et al., 2025). Moreover, data substantiates that inclusive leaders excel in cultivating collaborative, inventive, and resilient work environments, particularly in settings experiencing reform or organizational change—by promoting psychological safety (PS) and collective involvement (Li et al., 2022; Atiku, 2024).

Recent studies underscored PS as a crucial mechanism connecting IL to favorable organizational results. IL has been demonstrated to improve team PS, which subsequently mediates the connection to inventive performance (Li et al., 2022). Additional research suggests that psychological safety partially elucidates the mechanism by which IL mitigates psychological distress and enhances employee well-being (Ahmed et al., 2020) and further serves as a mediator in the correlation between IL and voice behavior by affective commitment (AC) (Fatoki, 2024). Comprehensive literature evaluations highlight the significance of PS in promoting learning, innovation, and overall organizational effectiveness (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). Also, empirical studies indicate that IL enhances PS by creating an environment defined by trust, accessibility, and support from leaders (Li et al., 2022; Fatoki, 2024). In organizational contexts, particularly within public sector institutions, PS is essential for promoting open communication, fostering creative problem-solving, and strengthening cultures of continuous improvement that align with priorities of agility, effectiveness, and transparency. Contemporary research indicates that PS enhances AC by mitigating uncertainty, improving relational confidence, and strengthening employees' alignment with organizational values and goals (Noor et al., 2024). This is especially crucial in environments experiencing complex change and transformation initiatives. At the individual level, psychological ownership (PO) is increasingly acknowledged as a fundamental psychological asset that influences employees' perceptions of their firm. When

employees possess a profound feeling of ownership, they regard their work as personally significant and encounter enhanced autonomy and accountability. This enhanced sense of belonging and personal investment fosters intrinsic drive, organizational commitment, and proactive behaviors, including information exchange and creativity. Recent evidence substantiates that (PO) markedly improves extra-role behaviors and organizational commitment, hence promoting advantageous outcomes for both individuals and the organization (Wang et al., 2025). Despite growing research on (IL), the psychological mechanisms and border situations that enable AC to remain unclear. Previous research has concentrated on direct contact or single mediating mechanisms, failing to explain how employees internalize IL behaviors and form lasting emotional bonds. The interactive effect of psychological variables like PO on IL is understudied. Empirical research using PS and ownership as mediating and moderating variables in a coherent moderated mediation framework is scarce. This gap is especially obvious in public sector and change-driven workplaces, where psychological resources and IL are crucial for commitment in organizations.

To address this gap, this study describes an integrated moderated mediation model in which PS explains how IL affects AC and PO explains how this relationship intensifies. This study addresses the need for process-oriented and context-sensitive leadership studies on employee commitment in complex organizations. Two such mechanisms, PS and PO, offer promising explanatory pathways. PS is a collective conviction that the workplace is a safe environment for interpersonal risk-taking, allowing people to express their ideas, admit their errors, and express their viewpoints without concern for adverse repercussions (Edmondson, 1999). PO reflects the perception that one's work or organization belongs to oneself viewed as mine or ours (Pierce et al., 2001). Both constructs establish a basis for comprehending the internalization of inclusive behaviors by employees and the subsequent transformation of these behaviors into a lasting commitment.

The primary goal of the research is to examine the value of IL in the development of AC among employees, with a specific emphasis on the psychological processes and circumstances that influence this relationship. In particular, the research seeks to evaluate PS as the mediator by which IL impacts AC and PO as the moderating variable that enhances the positive connection between IL and PS. The work aims to offer a deeper awareness of the manner in which IL behaviors result in sustained

employee commitment in diverse and dynamic organizational contexts by incorporating moderation and mediation within a single conceptual framework.

The study's originality stems from its dual focus on both process and boundary conditions, offering fresh insights into the interplay between workplace climate, leadership behaviors, and individual psychological states. This approach not only extends existing leadership and commitment theories but also targets a major gap in the literature by integrating mediation-moderation dynamics into a unified model. The value of this study lies in its integrated examination of IL, PS, PO, and AC within a single theoretical framework, as few studies have simultaneously addressed the mediating and moderating mechanisms that collectively explain how and under what conditions IL fosters AC. Therefore, this work gives a deeper awareness and context-sensitive comprehension of leadership's impact on employee commitment. The findings are expected to yield novel implications for leadership development, organizational culture design, and retention strategies in diverse and rapidly changing work environments.

This investigation makes substantial practical and theoretical contributions to the fields of organizational behavior and leadership by advancing a nuanced, integrated understanding of how IL fosters AC. Theoretically, it deepens current knowledge by identifying PS as a critical mediating approach that explores how IL behaviors translate into stronger emotional bonds between staff members and their organizations. In addition, the study introduces PO as a moderating condition that clarifies when IL is most effective in enhancing PS and, consequently, AC.

The results provide useful guidance for HR practitioners and leaders who are interested in enhancing organizational performance, retention, and employee engagement. Recognizing the pivotal effect of PS, organizations can build leadership development programs that promote inclusive behaviors such as active listening, openness to diverse perspectives, and equitable participation in decision-making that cultivates a safe and supportive work environment. Furthermore, acknowledging the moderating influence of PO underscores the importance of nurturing ownership-oriented cultures through job design, empowerment, and participatory practices. These evidence-based strategies not only enhance AC but also promote resilience and sustained engagement, which are indispensable for the sustained prosperity of an

organization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Background

The work has established three scientific theories, which not only enhance academic comprehension but also provide practical recommendations on the effectiveness of leadership in various organizational contexts.

2.1.1. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964):

(SET) serves as a fundamental paradigm for elucidating interpersonal and organizational behavior. The theory asserts that social relationships evolve through exchanges that create duties founded on reciprocity, mutual benefit, and trust. SET posits that individuals assess their relationships based on the accompanying rewards and costs, often reciprocating positive treatment with favorable attitudes and behaviors.

In organizational settings, Social Exchange Theory posits that when employees perceive support, equity, and respect from their leaders or organizations, they feel compelled to reciprocate with favorable outcomes, including increased commitment, enhanced engagement, superior performance, and positive work behavior. This reciprocal process is non-contractual and is instead founded on implicit expectations, societal conventions, and a shared understanding.

2.1.2. Psychological Safety Theory (Edmondson, 1999)

Edmondson (1999) introduced Psychological Safety Theory as a foundational concept in organizational behavior. Defined as the belief among team members that interpersonal risk-taking is safe. Individuals feel comfortable expressing their opinions, asking questions, seeking feedback, and admitting mistakes in psychologically safe environments without fear of rejection, embarrassment, or negative consequences. Edmondson (1999) notes that such environments promote open communication, learning-oriented behaviors, and collaboration, enabling teams to engage in constructive dialogue and continuous improvement. When employees trust that their input will be valued instead of judged, they are more likely to contribute ideas and contribute fully to team performance. PS highlights the importance of innovation, knowledge sharing, and overall team performance.

Psychological Ownership Theory (Pierce et al.,

2001)

According to (Pierce et al., 2001) PO emerges when three fundamental needs are satisfied: control, intimate knowledge, and self-identity. In order to develop PO, employees must be able to control their work (control), possess a deep understanding of their tasks (knowledge), and see their work as aligned with their values and identity (self-identity). PO in organizations increases commitment, engagement, proactive action, and reduces withdrawal. Leadership studies show that inclusive leaders develop PO by providing autonomy, information, support, and engagement circumstances that meet the theory's key principles. (Nguyen et al., 2024).

2.2. IL is Positively Related to PS

IL is defined by openness, accessibility, and availability, as well as a clear appreciation for diversity and employee input. Leaders that engage in inclusive actions demonstrate tolerance for employees' distinct viewpoints while concurrently fostering a sense of belonging within the group (Korkmaz et al., 2022).

In parallel, PS indicates a condition of diminished interpersonal risk when individuals feel empowered to voice concerns, inquire, report mistakes, and contest established norms without apprehension of humiliation or retribution (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). Within contemporary organizations these two concepts are increasingly regarded as interdependent: leadership practices that encourage involvement and safeguard expression are perceived as fundamental precursors to PS inside work units and teams. Over the past three years, empirical research has shown that IL promotes PS in organizations. (Li et al., 2022) discovered that IL positively correlated with individual and team PS, which subsequently mediated the association between IL and innovative performance. Also, with multi-source data from 20 Chinese firms, (Siyal, 2023) showed that IL indirectly increased employee job engagement through PS, while leader trust magnified the direct effect. These studies demonstrate that IL supports PS in administrative and service-oriented enterprises. (Shafaei et al., 2024) conducted a study on employees across several organizational contexts and discovered that IL mitigated workplace bullying through serial mediation involving PS and self-esteem, while also affirming that IL enhanced PS. This indicates that inclusive leaders foster secure relational environments and enhance pleasant atmospheres. The findings illustrate social exchange theory: equity, inclusion, and leadership support mitigate

interpersonal risk and enhance PS, influencing employees' perceptions and interactions with the firm. Additional support is derived from public-sector and health-care environments that structurally mirror numerous administrative entities engaged in national transformation initiatives. El-Ashry et al. (2025) discovered that IL significantly enhances PS among nurses, with PS serving as a mediator between IL and implicit absenteeism.

In their study on gender diversity and contextual performance, (Ahmed and Sadiq, 2025) found that IL and PS collectively mediated the relationship between gender diversity and contextual performance, underscoring the importance of IL in fostering psychologically safe environments that encourage employees to exert discretionary effort. The findings indicate that in hospitals, government agencies, hospitality companies, and multi-company samples, IL consistently predicts elevated levels of PS, thus offering robust empirical support for the assertion of a positive correlation between these constructs in modern organizational and administrative contexts. Based on this accumulated theoretical and empirical evidence, the present study advances the following hypothesis:

(H1): Inclusive Leadership is positively related to Psychological Safety.

2.3. IL is Positively Related to AC

IL is theorized to strengthen employees' AC their emotional bond with and desire to remain in the organization because inclusive leaders communicate respect for uniqueness and belonging, model fairness, and invite voice, thereby activating reciprocity (social exchange) and identification processes that anchor attachment to the organization (Liu, Chen, & Zhang, 2024). So AC defines an employee's emotional bond, identification with, and engagement in the organization (Van van Heijden & Mulder, 2023). Employees who believe that their firm safeguards them from interpersonal injury and values their input, they are more inclined to respond with loyalty and long-term commitment, in accordance with social exchange and conservation-of-resources theories. Empirical research from various administrative and organizational contexts substantiates this rationale (Moreno-Menéndez et al., 2025). Complementing this, a large sample study reported that IL boosts work engagement with affective organizational commitment, indicating that inclusive leader cues translate into stronger emotional attachment that, in turn, energizes involvement at work (Ly, 2024). Evidence from hospitality small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

shows a serial path IL, PS, AC, employee voice underscoring how inclusion first lowers interpersonal risk, then deepens emotional attachment that supports speaking up, a pattern fully consistent with AC's proximal role (Fatoki, 2024). A meta-analysis outlet shows IL reliably enhances positive employee states (e.g., perceived inclusion, organizational identification, PS) that theory and data link tightly to AC and retention-relevant outcomes (Li et al., 2024). Further studies across sectors inclusive climates and leader availability satisfy needs for belonging and value recognition, which elevates well-being and commitment, especially when leaders pair inclusion with developmental feedback and fair treatment (Liu et al., 2024). Related work in knowledge-intensive contexts finds that IL fosters trust and reduces knowledge hiding, with AC operating as a boundary-strengthening factor again pointing to the centrality of AC in translating inclusive cues into sustained, prosocial attachment to the organization (Abbasi, Rashidi, & Ghani, 2022). Research converges on a clear conclusion by signalling respect, openness, and value congruence. IL reliably strengthens employees' AC, which then mediates key downstream outcomes such as engagement, voice, and proactive behavior, thereby:

(H2): Inclusive leadership is positively related to Affective Commitment.

2.4. PS is Positively Related to AC

In psychologically secure environments, employees can acknowledge errors, seek assistance, and question established norms, so improving their work experience and reinforcing favourable work attitudes. Recent integrative reviews indicate that PS not only enhances learning and performance but also positively influences employees' emotional responses to their organization, such as trust, identification, and attachment essential components of AC (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023).

(Li et al., 2022) conducted an extensive multi-hospital study in China, revealing that PS significantly predicted AC among hospital personnel, with job satisfaction and job burnout serving as complete mediators; employees who experienced a sense of safety reported higher job satisfaction and lower burnout, thereby augmenting their AC. Comparable results are observed in educational and knowledge-intensive settings that mirror numerous public and semi-public entities affected by national reform initiatives. A study of college educators in India revealed a significant positive correlation between PS and AC, suggesting

that faculty members who had more PS exhibited a heightened emotional attachment to their institutions (John & Manikandan, 2023). (Pinho and Colston, 2024) demonstrated that PS mediates the relationship between organizational fairness, diversity, and inclusion, and AC in the higher-education sector in the United Kingdom, indicating that inclusive and equitable practices enhance commitment chiefly when they foster a psychologically safe environment. These findings suggest that PS is a fundamental psychological condition that transforms organizational behaviors into lasting emotional connections with the organization. (Fatoki, 2024) discovered that, within South African organizations, PS and AC function as serial mediators between IL and employee voice behavior, indicating that PS is positively correlated with AC and that both constructs collectively elucidate proactive, discretionary contributions in the workplace. (Noor, 2024) demonstrated that workplace ostracism diminishes AC by eroding employees' PS, highlighting that reduced PS correlates with diminished emotional attachment to the business. These findings indicate that PS serves as a crucial socio-emotional resource that protects employees from interpersonal dangers and consequently maintains commitment.

Recent theoretical and empirical contributions converge on the notion that PS is a fundamental precursor of AC in contemporary organizations. Psychologically secure environments indicate that the organization prioritizes its people, safeguards them from interpersonal risks, and encourages their involvement in enhancement and innovation, resulting in increased emotional attachment, loyalty, and retention among employees. In alignment with the conceptual framework of our investigation, we offer the subsequent hypothesis

(H3): Psychological Safety is positively related to Affective Commitment.

2.5. The Mediating Role of PS

PS is widely recognized as a key socio-cognitive process linking leadership practices to employee success (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). PS links leadership approaches employees' emotional and behavioural responses in modern administrative and organizational environments of rapid digitization, higher performance standards, and complex stakeholder demands.

PS serves as a mediator, according to recent empirical research in corporate settings. In administrative and service-oriented firms in South Africa, (Fatoki, 2024) found that PS was a critical

mediator between IL and employee voice behavior. Leaders who promoted open communication and took measures to prevent interpersonal hazards saw an increase in employees' willingness to speak out and take the initiative. According to research conducted in the healthcare sector by (El-Ashry et al.,2025), the link between IL and implicit absenteeism was fully mitigated by PS, indicating that IL can lessen negative outcomes by first fostering PS. In the context of organizational research conducted in hybrid and remote work settings that are quite similar to administrative organizations going through structural transformation. According to (Mohase et al ,2025), when there is no direct supervision, the main way for leadership to be effective is through PS. This is because, in remote and hybrid settings, PS mediated the influence of IL on employee voice. Similarly, (Vakira et al. 2023) found that PS was a mediator between IL and employee engagement in the hotel industry. This finding supports the idea that employees are more emotionally and cognitively prepared for work when they are in secure interpersonal environments.

According to research by (Pinho and Colston ,2024), PS mediates the relationship between organizational fairness, inclusivity, and AC among employees in higher education institutions. This finding has important implications for organizational transformation initiatives centered around justice, diversity, and inclusion. This suggests that when workers feel psychologically comfortable participating and expressing their opinions, only then do fairness and inclusion strengthen commitment. According to Social Exchange Theory (SET), which states that psychologically safe workplaces aid in developing stronger attachments, the mediation pattern is in line with this theory. According to SET, employees respond positively to supportive leadership.

Recent research indicates that PS serves as a crucial mediator between IL and outcomes associated with commitment. AC is cultivated when employees can convert leader behaviors into significant psychological feelings such as trust, belonging, and emotional stability. The mediating role of PS in administrative and organizational contexts undergoing performance transformation underscores its strategic significance in enhancing engagement with corporate objectives and the overall workforce. In light with this discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

(H4): Psychological Safety plays mediate role in the relationship between Inclusive leadership and Affective Commitment.

2.6. *The Moderating Role of PO*

Recent reviews of business research concerning PO suggest that this construct exerts substantial attitudinal and motivational effects, exceeding those of traditional attachment constructs such as organizational commitment and identification (Kim, 2024; Renz, 2024). PO is associated with heightened responsibility, stewardship, and a dedicated commitment to safeguarding and advancing organizational interests. This suggests that employees exhibiting heightened levels of PO are more inclined to allocate their personal resources to their work and the organization. Increasingly, research in administrative and organizational contexts is examining PO as a boundary condition that influences employee responses to positive leadership practices and work environments.

Favourable conditions, such as supportive leadership, adequate employment, or innovative roles, can be more efficiently converted into enhanced attitudes and behaviours through the facilitation of PO. (Batoon et al., 2022; Kim, 2024) assert that this occurs when employees see a greater investment in and responsibility for the organization's objectives. At the same time, growing evidence shows that IL cultivates PO feelings of "this is mine/ours" toward the job or organization by treating people fairly, recognizing their unique contributions, and enabling self-development (Zeng et al., 2023). Also, recent research shows that PO moderates organizational interactions. (Wang et al.,2025) found that PO increased job crafting's indirect effect on innovative behavior through organizational commitment in AI and non-AI departments. The results show that workers who experience more PO are more motivated to create new things. (Rosid ,2024) found that organizational-based psychological ownership significantly affected the relationship between authentic leadership and subordinate outcomes, while (Lin ,2025) found that authentic leadership moderated the effect of PO on organizational change readiness, supporting the idea that leadership and psychological ownership collaborate to shape employee responses to change initiatives. Concurrently, research by Hsieh (2024) and Dahlawi (2025) found that when people feel more ownership over their work, they are more invested, take more responsibility, and perform better on tasks. This lends credence to the premise that PO is an essential motivator in modern businesses. (Wang et al.,2024) show that PO boosts supportive organizational cultures' effects on employee outcomes where IL' psychologically safe environments work better when employees feel

deeply invested in their company. So, these employees are more likely to turn safety signals into increased engagement and commitment. Drawing on this theoretical rationale and recent empirical evidence, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

(H5): Psychological Ownership moderates the role in the relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety

2.7. The Moderated Mediation Model

Recent organizational research increasingly utilizes moderated mediation models to elucidate the intricate mechanisms by which leadership influences employee outcomes. Leadership typically functions not through direct influence, but via psychological mediators that transmit its effects, alongside boundary conditions that dictate the strength of these effects (Hayes, 2022). Research in administrative and service-oriented settings indicates that leadership improves outcomes by PS, with contextual or individual factors influencing the magnitude of this indirect effect (Kyambade et al., 2024; Jabbar & Hussain, 2023). These findings highlight the necessity of examining leadership processes as conditional and dynamic, rather than linear. PS often serves as a key mediator within these frameworks. Research indicates that supportive leadership styles, including ethical, servant, and knowledge-based leadership, enhance desirable behaviors by reinforcing PS. This reinforcement allows employees to express their voice, innovate, and thrive (Jiang et al., 2024). Conditional process studies indicate that PS functions not only as an outcome of leadership but also as a mechanism for the transmission of leadership effects. Research on IL supports this perspective, indicating that PS is a key factor through which inclusive leaders enhance engagement, promote voice, and decrease absenteeism (El-Ashry et al., 2025; Mohase et al., 2025). PO has emerged as a significant moderator influencing employee responses to leadership and organizational contexts. Employees with a pronounced sense of ownership

regarding their work or organization are more inclined to internalize supportive conditions, leading to enhanced commitment and discretionary behaviors. Empirical studies demonstrate that PO enhances the impact of job crafting on commitment (Wang, 2025), influences employee responses to organizational demands (Kim & Chung, 2023). The findings identify PO as a significant personal resource that interacts with leadership-induced psychological states. Recent research indicates that PS and PO collaboratively influence the indirect effects of leadership, based on the synthesis of evidence from both streams. PS functions as the mechanism by which IL improves AC, with PO reinforcing this mediated relationship. Employees exhibiting high PO are more inclined to perceive psychologically safe environments as opportunities for contribution, investment, and deeper commitment, in contrast to those with low PO. The moderated mediation model indicates that the indirect effect of IL on affective commitment by PS is significantly enhanced at higher levels of PO. The subsequent hypothesis is suggested for more research considering these factors:

(H6): The indirect link between Inclusive Leadership and Affect Commitment with Psychological Safety is moderated by Psychological Ownership, such that the link is stronger when workers have high Psychological Ownership rather than low.

3. RESEARCH MODEL

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the indirect influence through the PS, the direct influence of IL on AC, the modulating effect of PO in the connection between IL and PS, and the mediated effect of PO in the indirect influence of IL on AC with the PS. A literature review was conducted by compiling information and data from scientific journals that are pertinent to the investigation. This part suggests a conceptual framework to elucidate the objectives of this investigation, as depicted in the accompanying figure (Figure 1).

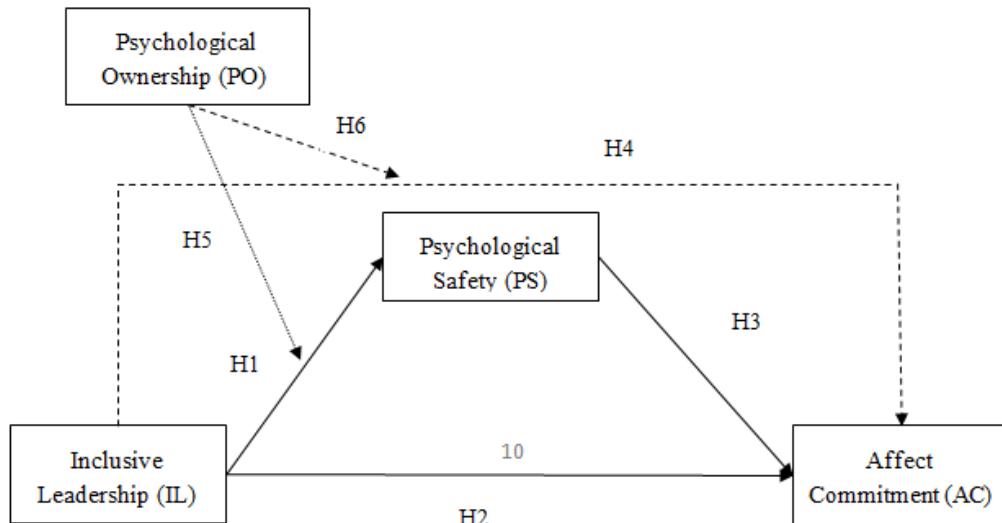


Figure 1: Research Model.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sample and Data Collection

The target population consisted of currently employed people in both managerial and non-managerial roles, as individual judgments of IL, PC, PO, AC were evaluated. To effectively reach this population, data were gathered with an Internet-based crowdsourcing platform (connect.cloudresearch.com/researcher), renowned in international research for its stringent participant screening, superior data controls, and extensive access to a diverse array of working adults throughout the United States. Despite the study being done in a Saudi university, the utilization of a U.S.-based sample is methodologically warranted, as Cloud Research provides dependable, diverse, and professionally vetted participants appropriate for theory-testing research. Modern organizational and psychological research often utilizes international panels to augment statistical power, reduce sampling bias, and offer increased variability across critical constructs elements vital for structural equation modelling and broadly applicable theoretical conclusions. The sampling frame comprised personnel from organizations that authorized participation, guaranteeing representation across all industries. A simple random sampling method was employed to guarantee that all eligible participants possessed an equal likelihood of selection. Data was collected by a structured questionnaire distributed electronically, with paper-based alternatives offered when required to address varying degrees of technological accessibility.

4.2. Variables Measurement and Questionnaire Design

This research utilized a questionnaire survey to gather the necessary data, which was then analysed with SPSS version 25.0 Statistics was used to examine the gathered data (Micro-SPSS) to assess the descriptive patterns and structural correlations among the variables under investigation. The instrument comprised two components: (1) sociodemographic data and (2) standardized assessments of the primary constructs. All statements were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), allowing participants to express their level of agreement with each statement. In accordance with ethical study protocols, participation was voluntary, and all replies were handled with utmost secrecy and anonymity. IL measure: The nine-item measure, devised by Carmeli et al. (2010), was employed in the current study. The metric is designed to evaluate three key aspects of IL: openness, accessibility, and availability. Sample items include "the manager is amenable to engaging in discussions regarding the desired objectives and novel methods of achieving them" (openness) and "the manager is accessible to address professional inquiries that I am interested in communicating with him/her" (availability). The same scale was employed by numerous scientists (e.g., Ye et al., 2019; Javed et al., 2019), who reported high levels of reliability in their research.

PS measure: The seven-item scale devised by Edmondson (1999) was employed in the current study. " Sample items are " If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you", "It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help ". AC measure: The seven-item scale devised by Meyer,

Allen, & Smith (1993) was employed in this study. " Sample items are " I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization", "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me". PO measure: The seven-item scale devised by Van Dyne, L., & Pierce, J. L. (2004), was employed in this study. " Sample items are " Most of the people that work for this organization feel as though they own the company ", "I sense that this organization is our company ". Affect Commitment (AC) measure: measured using the seven-item developed by Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993) and the same scale was used in the current study. " Sample items are " I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization", "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me".

Attitude toward the colour blue (ATCB) measure: The researcher inserted the seven-item scale created and advised by (Miller & Simmering, 2022) as a significant statistical technique to identify the Common Method Variance (CMV) using the questionnaire. Examples of items on this scale include "I enjoy the color blue" and "The colour blue is magnificent." This Sustainability measure was completed by Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal respondents using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 5 indicating "strongly agree."

Control variables: The demographic data included in the questionnaire, such as employees' age, gender, education, work experience, and career grades, were used as control variables. Any latent variables in this study were measured using scales already validated in the literature (Zhang et al., 2023).

4.3. Data Analysis Procedure

The study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey approach utilizing validated multi-item scales for each construct. SPSS version 25.0 Statistics was used to examine the gathered data (Micro-SPSS). The analysis proceeds in three stages:

Preliminary Analysis: After data cleaning to eliminate erroneous or incomplete responses, variables were coded. The sample was profiled using descriptive statistics, including standard deviations, means, and frequency distributions. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of each construct; values greater than 0.70 were considered satisfactory (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

4.4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics.

Factor		N	%
Gender	Male	162	51.76
	Female	151	48.24

Correlation and Assumption Testing: Pearson correlation analyses were performed to evaluate the relationships among the main variables IL, PS, AC, and PO. Normality, linearity, and multicollinearity assumptions were checked before hypothesis testing.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis: To test the direct effects (H1, H2, H3), hierarchical regression was applied by entering control variables (e.g., gender, age, education, and work experience) in the first block, followed by independent variables in subsequent blocks. This approach helped assess the incremental variance explained by IL, PS, and PO beyond the control variables.

The purpose of this research is to link IL to (AC) with the interplay of (PS) and (PO). Data was collected using Google Forms through this online crowdsourcing tool offers supplementary data collection

capabilities (connect.cloudresearch.com/researcher). Then analyzed using SPSS version 25.0. The data was inspected for any errors during the data collection. The internal consistency method was used to test the validation of the scales with consideration of Cronbach's alpha. The frequencies, percentages, meaning, and standard deviation were used to describe the variables. With a relatively large sample size (N = 313), Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships among the study variables, as parametric tests are considered appropriate when sample size is sufficiently large and assumptions of normality are reasonably met. (Field, 2018). The multiple regression was conducted to test the prediction of all variables on AC. The Sobel test was used to test the mediation effect. The mediation moderation regression was conducted with the Hayes process macro method. A p 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

4.4. Result

The software SPSS offers an extensive array of statistical tools that were utilized for data screening, descriptive statistical analysis, reliability evaluations, and investigations of correlations among the study variables., internal consistency, and prediction relationships between independent and dependent variables. These analytical approaches guaranteed the rigor and authenticity of the study's empirical results.

Age	20 – 29 years old	47	15.02
	30 – 39 years old	116	37.06
	40 – 49 years old	85	27.16
	50 – 59 years old	55	17.57
	60 years and older	10	3.19
work experience	Less than 1 year	9	2.88
	1 year to 9 years	134	42.81
	20 years to 29 years	125	39.94
	30 years and more	45	14.38
years of tenure with the leader	Less than 6 months	15	4.79
	6 months to 1 year	9	2.88
	1 to 3 years	67	21.41
	3 to 6 years	83	26.52
	More than 6 years	139	44.41
years of tenure with the company	Less than 6 months	22	7.03
	6 months to 1 year	21	6.71
	1 to 3 years	120	38.34
	3 to 6 years	76	24.28
	More than 6 years	74	23.64
Education level	High school	56	17.89
	Associate degree	42	13.42
	Bachelor	142	45.37
	Master	62	19.81
	PhD	11	3.51

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1. The sample consisted of 162 males (51.76%) and 151 females (48.24%), showing a nearly equal distribution between male and female participants. Most respondents were in the 30–39 years category (116; 37.06%), followed by those aged 40–49 years (85; 27.16%) and 20–29 years (47; 15.02%). Participants aged 50–59 years constituted 17.57% (55), while the smallest group was those 60 years and older (10; 3.19%). In terms of work experience, the largest proportion of respondents reported 1 to 9 years of experience (134; 42.81%), followed by 20 to 29 years (125; 39.94%). A smaller group had 30 years or more (45; 14.38%), and only 9 respondents (2.88%) reported less than 1 year of experience. Regarding tenure with the current leader, 139 respondents (44.41%) had worked with their leader for more than 6 years. Another sizable proportion (83; 26.52%) reported 3 to 6 years, while 67 (21.41%) had 1 to 3 years. Fewer participants indicated shorter durations, such as less than 6 months (15; 4.79%) or 6 months to 1 year (9; 2.88%). For organizational tenure, 120 respondents (38.38%) reported 1 to 3 years, 76 (24.28%) had 3 to 6 years, and 74 (23.64%) had more than 6 years. A smaller share reported less than 6 months (22; 7.03%) and 6 months to 1 year (21; 6.71%). The educational background of participants showed that the majority held a bachelor's degree (142; 45.37%). This was followed by respondents with a master's degree (62; 19.81%), a high school diploma (56; 17.89%), and an associate degree (42; 13.42%). Only 11 participants (3.51%) reported holding a PhD.

Overall, the demographic distribution indicates that the study sample is relatively balanced by gender, concentrated in the 30–49-year age range, with varied work and organizational tenures, and a predominance of respondents with higher education (bachelor's or master's degrees).

Table 2: The Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Coefficients, And Intercorrelations.

Variable	Mean	St. d. Deviation	Cronbach's alpha	L	I	O	P	S	P	A	C
Inclusive Leadership (IL)	3.98	0.94	0.96	1.00							
Psychological Ownership (PO)	3.19	0.90	0.95	0.70 ^{5**}	1.00						
Psychological Safety (PS)	3.13	0.88	0.89	0.79 ^{6**}	0.76 ^{7**}	1.00					
Affective commitment (AC)	3.31	0.99	0.90	0.75 ^{5**}	0.74 ^{5**}	0.78 ^{1**}	1.00				

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and intercorrelations among the study variables, including IL, PO, PS and AC.

The results show that the mean score for IL was the highest ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.94$), indicating that participants generally perceived their leaders as inclusive, open, and fair.

This was followed by PO ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.90$), AC ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.99$), and PS ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.88$), representing a moderate perception of safety in expressing ideas and concerns without fear of negative consequences, which is typical in many traditional organizational contexts.

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha values for all

constructs were high, ranging from .89 PS to .96 IL, exceeding the recommended threshold of .70, and thus confirming the internal consistency and reliability of the measures. (Hair et al., 2010). Indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability of the measures. These coefficients are comparable to, or higher than, those reported in previous studies using similar scales.

Correlations: All study variables were positively and significantly correlated. IL showed strong correlations with PS ($r = 0.796$, $p < .01$), AC ($r = 0.755$, $p < .01$), and PO ($r = 0.705$, $p < .01$). PO was strongly correlated with both PS ($r = 0.767$, $p < .01$) and AC ($r = 0.745$, $p < .01$). Similarly, PS demonstrated a high correlation with AC ($r = 0.781$, $p < .01$). These significant positive correlations indicate that higher perceptions of IL are associated with stronger PO, greater PS, and stronger AC among employees.

4.5. Hypotheses Results:

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the proposed structural model of the study analyzed. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of IL on PS, as well as to determine the moderating effect of the interaction between PO and IL (Moderation).

Table 3: The Multiple Regression Analysis (1).

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.
IL	0.365	6.664***	0.000
PS	0.490	8.943***	0.000
DV=Affective Commitment			
* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$			

H1: IL is positively related to AC

As shown in Table 3, IL and AC were also significant and positive ($\beta = 0.365$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the role of IL in cultivating employee loyalty and attachment. This finding reinforces the role of IL in cultivating employee loyalty, identification, and willingness to remain with the organization, and aligns with prior study linking supportive leadership styles to higher AC. Thus, H1 is supported.

H2: PS is positively related to AC

As shown in Table 3, PS exerted a significant positive effect on AC ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that employees who feel safe and supported within their organizations expressing their views, admitting mistakes, and taking interpersonal risks without fear of ridicule or punishment usually show greater emotional commitment to their organization. Accordingly, H2 is supported

Table 4: The Multiple Regression Analysis (2).

Model		Beta	t	Sig.
Model (1) R ² =0.718 ; Adjusted R ² =0.716 F=394.85 2***	IL	0.506	11.915***	0.000
	PO	0.411	9.662***	0.000
Model (2) R ² =0.726 ; Adjusted R ² =0.724 F=273.45 3***	IL	0.516	12.271***	0.000
	PO	0.412	9.812***	0.000
Moderation		0.292	3.059**	0.002
DV=Psychological Safety Moderation=Psychological Ownership				
* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$				

H3: IL is positively related to PS:

As shown in Table 3, IL demonstrated a strong and positive effect on PS ($\beta = 0.506$, $p < .001$), indicating that leaders who exhibit inclusiveness foster a greater sense of safety among employees. Thus, H3 is supported

H4: Psychological Safety plays a mediating role in the relationship between Inclusive leadership and affective commitment.

Based on the previous hypotheses, the mediation was approved, and to test the mediation status, the Sobel test was conducted as follows:

$Z\text{-value} = a^*b / \text{SQRT}(b^2*sa^2 + a^2*sb^2)$, where a is the path coefficient from IL to PS, b is the path coefficient from PS to AC, and sa and sb are their respective standard errors (MacKinnon et al., 2007).

Input:	Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a 0.506	Sobel test: 9.9116738	0.02501495	0
b 0.490	Aroian test: 9.90028884	0.02504371	0
sa 0.03	Goodman test: 9.92309813	0.02498615	0
sb 0.04	Reset all	Calculate	

This test is available on the website, and it was used as follows:

The results of the Sobel test indicated that the indirect effect was statistically significant, supporting the presence of partial mediation (Edmondson, 1999; Hayes, 2018). Thus, H4 is supported

H5: PO moderates the relationship between IL and PS

In Model 1, IL ($\beta = 0.506$, $p < .001$) and PO ($\beta = 0.411$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted AC. When the moderation term was added in Model 2, both IL ($\beta = 0.516$, $p < .001$) and PO ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < .001$) remained significant predictors. The moderation effect was also

significant ($\beta = 0.292$, $p = 0.002$), indicating that the moderating variable had a small but significant positive moderating effect with a small change in R² from 0.718 to 0.726. These findings are theoretically consistent with PO which posits that employees with more psychological resources are better positioned to leverage supportive leadership behaviors into positive psychological states. Thus, H5 is supported.

H6: The indirect relationship between IIL and AC with PPS is moderated by PO, such that the relationship is stronger when employees have high PO rather than low.

The study tested a moderate mediation model using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 7) because it enables the simultaneous examination of mediation and moderation effects and provides bootstrapped confidence intervals for conditional indirect effects, thereby offering a robust and theory-consistent approach for testing moderated mediation models (Hayes, 2018). The overall model explained a substantial proportion of the variance in AC. The R² score for the full model was 0.696, showing that approximately 69.6% of the variation in AC was explained by (IL), (PS), and (PO) including the interaction term. Behavioral research (Cohen, 1988; Hayes, 2018) reflects a strong model fit with this level of explained variance. Conditional indirect-effect analysis revealed that the indirect relationship between IL and AC with PS was stronger at high levels of PO (indirect effect = 0.20, 95% CI [0.13, 0.35]) than at low levels (indirect effect = 0.12, 95% CI [0.07, 0.18]). The index of moderated mediation was statistically significant (index = 0.04, 95% CI [0.02, 0.09]), as its confidence interval did not include zero, confirming that the strength of the indirect effect depends on PO (Hayes, 2018). Thus, H6 is supported.

4.6. Discussion

This study investigates the influence of IL on (AC), both directly and indirectly with (PS), while also exploring how PO amplifies these effects, drawing on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), PS Theory (Edmondson, 1999), and Psychological Ownership Theory (Pierce et al., 2001). The results robustly endorse the suggested conditional process model and provide novel insights into how relational leadership behaviours foster socio-emotional conditions that enhance employee attachment. In accordance with Social Exchange Theory, the findings indicated that IL is a strong predictor of AC. SET posits that when leaders exhibit fairness, transparency, and respect towards employees, these actions are perceived as relational investments that warrant reciprocation through loyalty and emotional

attachment (Blau, 1964). Recent empirical research substantiates this relationship mechanism: inclusive leaders foster sentiments of respect, belonging, and value recognition, hence augmenting employees' AC (Fatoki, 2024; Moreno-Menéndez et al., 2025). The notable IL, AC correlation identified in this study corresponds with the theoretical framework, suggesting that inclusive leaders foster a social milieu that promotes employees' development of stronger emotional connections with the firm.

The results indicated that IL substantially improves PS, corroborating the fundamental tenets of Psychological Safety Theory. Edmondson (1999) posits that PS arises in interpersonal environments where leaders promote expression, learning, and interpersonal risk-taking devoid of retribution. Inclusive leaders embody these traits by encouraging involvement, demonstrating receptiveness to varied perspectives, and addressing errors without punitive measures. Recent data substantiates that IL enhances PS within organizational contexts (Li et al., 2022; Shafaei et al., 2024; El-Ashry et al., 2025). The significant predictive influence identified in this study substantiates the role of IL as a relational precursor to PS, affirming Edmondson's thesis in the context of administrative and service-oriented institutions.

Consistent with both Social Exchange Theory and Psychological Safety Theory, the findings further indicated that PS is a robust predictor of adaptive change. PS cultivates trust, emotional stability, and perceived organizational support, all of which enhances affective attachment (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). Li et al. (2022) shown that PS markedly enhances AC by fostering well-being and diminishing burnout. Pinho and Colston (2024) shown that initiatives promoting fairness, inclusiveness, and diversity provide increased commitment solely when employees perceive a psychologically safe environment. The pronounced PS, AC effect in this study thus substantiates that PS is a fundamental socioemotional resource that transforms leadership actions into commitment. The mediation analysis indicated that PS partially mediates the association between IL and AC, suggesting that inclusive leaders primarily boost AC via fostering psychologically safe environments. This pattern is substantiated by recent research indicating that IL affects good outcomes such as engagement, voice, and well-being by influencing PS (Fatoki, 2024; Vakira et al., 2023; Mohase et al., 2025). This research theoretically unifies SET and PST by demonstrating that supportive leadership actions (SET) foster emotional and cognitive safety conditions (PST),

hence enhancing employees' organizational attachment.

Finally, the moderating role of PO is directly aligned with Psychological Ownership Theory. Pierce et al. (2001) assert that PO embodies a psychological condition when individuals experience a sense of ownership toward their work or organization. Employees with elevated levels of PO exhibit more motivation, accountability, and receptiveness to supportive leadership. The notable interaction between IL and PO in predicting PS identified in this study corroborates this rationale. IL proved more successful in fostering PS when employees possessed a preexisting feeling of ownership. Recent empirical research substantiates this theoretical framework by demonstrating that PO enhances the impact of positive leadership on employee outcomes, including engagement, innovation, and organizational citizenship (Zeng et al., 2023; Wang, 2025). The moderated mediation findings further validated that the indirect effect of IL on AC with PS was more pronounced at elevated levels of PO, demonstrating that PO functions as a motivational resource that amplifies employees' responsiveness to relational signals from leaders.

Collectively, these data offer cohesive validation for the three theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. Social Exchange Theory elucidates the relational foundation of IL's direct impact on AC; PS Theory delineates the process by which IL fosters emotional attachment; and Psychological Ownership Theory explains why certain employees derive greater advantages from IL than their counterparts. Collectively considered, the data indicates that IL enhances emotional commitment by fostering psychologically safe environments, with this effect being significantly more pronounced for employees who possess a strong sense of ownership towards their organization.

4.6.1. Theoretical Implications

This work contributes to the theoretical framework of IL by integrating PS and PO into a single moderated-mediation framework. Although these constructs have been examined separately in previous research (Dahleez et al., 2023; Qi et al., 2019), the present study offers empirical evidence for their collaborative interaction. However, this illustrates that IL not only fosters security and transparency but also enhances employees' internalized sense of accountability and belonging. The present study offers empirical evidence for their joint, conditional operation in shaping AC. The results show that IL promotes security and

transparency while simultaneously enhancing employees' internalized accountability and sense of belonging by increasing PO and PS (Ahmed et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2023). In this way, the study extends prior work that has typically treated PS and PO as independent antecedents or mediators by demonstrating that PO can amplify the PS pathway through which IL translates into commitment outcomes.

Integrating Psychological Ownership Theory (Avey et al., 2009; Pierce et al., 2001) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) shows that inclusive management exerts both direct and indirect influences on AC, dependent on employees' psychological states. This corresponds with recent meta-analyses and reviews on IL and PO, which have advocated for more sophisticated models that incorporate both mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions (Korkmaz et al., 2022; Li, Ling, & Zhu, 2024; Renz, 2024). The current findings enhance theoretical discussions by demonstrating that inclusion-oriented leadership is most effective when it concurrently engages cognitive mechanisms (ownership, responsibility) and emotional mechanisms (safety, trust), which are upheld by employee commitment and well-being (Hu et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022; Liu, Chen, & Zhang, 2024). By placing this conditional process within a non-Western context, the study contributes to cross-cultural evidence that PS and PO serve as essential psychological resources in the Conservation of Resources framework (Hobfoll, 1989) and as need-satisfying conditions in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), thereby enhancing the applicability of these frameworks across varied institutional environments.

4.6.2. Practical Implications

From a managerial standpoint, the study highlights the strategic value of fostering IL behaviors such as openness, active listening, and valuing diverse input as mechanisms for building psychologically safe and emotionally attached workforces. Leaders who actively involve team members in decisions and recognize individual contributions can strengthen employees' sense of PO, thereby enhancing their loyalty, voice and engagement (Abbasi et al., 2022). The findings suggest that organizations seeking to reduce knowledge hiding, burnout and turnover intentions should prioritize leadership styles that combine inclusion with the creation of a safe, respectful climate (Li et al., 2022). In practice, this means that IL is not merely a "soft" leadership ideal but a strategic

lever for cultivating AC and sustaining performance over time (Fatoki, 2024).

Organizations should therefore integrate inclusivity into leadership development programs by emphasizing relational transparency, empathy, and fairness as core competencies. Concrete actions include training leaders to create psychologically safe spaces for dialogue, designing reward and appraisal systems that reinforce participative decision-making, and implementing recognition mechanisms that foster ownership and shared accountability (Dong, 2024). HR practices can further operationalize these insights by incorporating PS and PO metrics into climate surveys and leadership 360-degree feedback, and by using them as criteria in selection and promotion decisions for supervisory roles (Li, Ling, & Zhu, 2024). Ultimately, these practices can enhance AC and decrease attrition intentions, thereby facilitating sustainable organizational achievement and innovation, particularly in knowledge-intensive and service-oriented sectors where inclusion, voice and commitment are critical to long-term success.

4.7. Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

However, this investigation is susceptible to numerous limitations, despite its robust findings. At first, the utilization of self-reported cross-sectional data might induce bias and restrict causal inference. The temporal relationships between PS, IL, and commitment should be validated through the use of longitudinal or multi-source approaches in future studies (Hu et al., 2022). Furthermore, future research should explicitly address common method bias and endogeneity by incorporating time-lagged designs, experimental manipulations, or objective performance indicators (Hayes, 2018; Korkmaz et al., 2022).

Second, the research's context is limited to a single cultural setting, which may affect generalizability. Comparative cross-cultural studies

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could examine whether cultural dimensions such as collectivism or power distance moderate the observed relationships (Wang & Ning, 2024). Third, the model could be extended by including additional mediators such as trust, empowerment, or perceived organizational support to offer a more thorough comprehension of the pathways that connect IL to commitment (Qi et al., 2019; Dahleez et al., 2023). Also, longitudinal data collection could add value in future research. Finally, qualitative work could offer richer insights into how employees interpret inclusivity and ownership in everyday interactions, particularly in digital or hybrid work environments where relational cues are less visible (Liu et al., 2024).

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the study shows that IL significantly enhances AC, both indirectly and directly with PS, and that PO intensifies this effect. These results bolster the argument that leadership that prioritizes inclusivity fosters psychologically safe conditions that encourage employees' emotional engagement and dedication.

The findings indicate that IL serves as a significant leadership resource, with its impact enhanced when organizations intentionally foster both PS and PO as complementary mechanisms.

Theoretically, this work expands SET by demonstrating that employees' perceptions of inclusion and fairness evoke reciprocal loyalty, while psychologically owning their work amplifies that reciprocity. Practically, it underscores that inclusion, participation, and ownership are not merely moral imperatives but strategic levers that drive commitment, retention, and organizational effectiveness. In many contexts, knowledge-intensive services, investing in IL capabilities may therefore be viewed as a core component of organizational resilience and sustainable value creation rather than an optional HR initiative.

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