



# INVESTIGATING HOW INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP IMPACTS TEACHERS' INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The aim of this study is to examine how the leadership style of department heads or principals, which emphasizes inclusivity, influences teachers' innovative work performance and teaching pedagogical skills. Researcher used the quantitative method; data were gathered applying for survey research design through Google form. There were 336 teachers from schools, colleges and universities of Baluchistan and Sindh. Data was used hierarchical regression and descriptive analysis; Researcher confirmed the positive association among inclusive leadership IL and innovative work behavior IWB.*

**Key Words:** Inclusive leadership, Innovative work behavior, Teaching Pedagogy.

## **Introduction**

Teacher Innovative Work Behavior" (IWB) encompasses a multifaceted array of actions aimed at fostering, advocating for, and actualizing distinctive concepts within school environments. Research has consistently showcased IWB as a pivotal element contributing significantly to the achievement and prosperity of educational institutions. (Janssen & psychology, 2000) In the context of creative performance, one's ability to innovate relies heavily on personal attributes, including traits such as openness to new experiences, cognitive approaches, and the specific skills pertinent to creativity. Traditional strategies for augmenting creativity primarily concentrate on two key aspects: the identification and recruitment of individuals with creative



potential and the cultivation of creative abilities through training and development. (Messmann, Mulder, & psychology, 2014). The actions and conduct of teachers exert a substantial influence on the overall atmosphere and ethos within educational institutions. With the advent of modern education, educational establishments are increasingly obligated to transition from traditional physical classrooms to digital learning environments, with an emphasis on attaining educational goals that emphasize creativity and leadership. (Göker & Göker, 2020). Considering the pivotal role teachers play in enhancing the caliber of education, it is imperative to prioritize the individual growth and collaborative development of both educators and teaching teams. This approach is instrumental in fostering the attainment of educational excellence. Innovative behavior stems from work actions that entail potential risks, which may result in teachers incurring costs, despite their intent and purpose to generate and deliver benefits (Rahmawati, Saimima, FajarGhifari, & Medicine). The objective behind the implementation of innovative behavior is to enhance both students' academic achievements and foster a positive working environment. Furthermore, this endeavor establishes a symbiotic relationship between educational institutions and their surrounding communities. Conversely, the primary and most influential determinant influencing student academic performance lies in the contributions and active engagement of teachers in their task performance (Leithwood et al., 2010).

## **Theories and Hypotheses**

### ***Educational Challenges***

In response to the contemporary educational difficulties faced by developing nations, the integration of innovation has become a fundamental endeavor across all facets of academia. In Pakistan, a significant challenge resides in the substantial population of children who remain out of school, where Article 25-A of the Pakistani Constitution mandates the state to furnish free and obligatory high-quality education for children aged between 5 and 16 years. "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such a manner as may be determined by law" (Tara, Khan Rana, & Abbas, 2021). Aligned with this view, educational researchers have shown increasing interest in understanding the elements influencing teachers' inclination towards innovative behavior within educational settings (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

### ***Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior***

In earlier leadership theories, the focal point was on leaders who presided over educational institutions and their interactions with lower-level staff. This perspective within the educational leadership literature gained widespread acceptance over the course of several years. (Pearce & Conger, 2002). Nevertheless, modern approaches and educational leadership theories, including but not limited to servant leadership, shared leadership, ethical leadership, participative leadership, and authentic leadership, have shifted the focus towards the emergence of novel paradigms and ideas in the realm of educational leadership. (Northouse, 2021) Referred to as 'inclusive leadership,' IL is a cutting-edge area in leadership studies. Inclusive leaders consistently offer support to educators, maintain open lines of communication to



facilitate input, and, similarly, educational leaders demonstrate a readiness to engage with and show genuine concern for the emotions, expectations, and interests of both teachers and students. Educational leaders, serving as custodians of innovation, are expected to enhance their skills, assume new responsibilities, take ownership of endeavors that promote creative development, and actively participate in the transformative processes that shape the evolving school culture. However, these challenges are indeed formidable, often discouraging most teachers from embracing innovation in their professional roles. (Choi, Tran, & Kang, 2017). In recent times, there has been a growing recognition of the essential requirement for Inclusive Leadership among all members of staff (Bilimoria, Joy, Liang, & Management, 2008). Carmeli's research sheds light on the significance of the leader-follower dynamic, utilizing this connection to elucidate and introduce the concept of Inclusive Leadership within educational settings. Consequently, Inclusive Leadership is described as the leader's demonstration of transparency, approachability, and readiness to engage in interactions with faculty members. (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010). The concept of Inclusive Leadership (IL) introduces two key aspects: The feeling of fitting in (via social support) and recognizing each individual's distinctiveness (enhancing self-esteem) that a leader provides to their staff or educators. When educators receive recognition and appreciation for their distinct qualities (unique characteristics) and experience a sense of importance within their school environment (feeling like they belong), this positively impacts work-related results, including increased retention rates, higher levels of organizational commitment, and greater job satisfaction (Schoon, McCulloch, Joshi, Wiggins, & Bynner, 2001). Multicultural literature suggests that there is a growing emphasis on the importance of inclusive leadership (IL) in order to achieve improved outcomes within institutions.

### ***Support from Department Head/Principal and Teachers' Innovative Work Behavior***

The prosperity of an organization and the position of the head of the department or school principal are closely intertwined and rely on each other. Principals not only oversee the introduction of fresh ideas but also offer guidance, encouragement, and motivation to teachers to enhance their expertise, abilities, and competencies (Hallinger & Lee, 2013). expanded the responsibilities of school principals, viewing them as innovative leaders who wield significant influence as agents of change within the organization. In this capacity, they guide and lead the staff towards the successful execution of high-quality tasks (Nellitawati & Education, 2018). Additional scholars have proposed that school principals should not only contribute novel, imaginative, and profound intellectual insights to help fulfill the school's vision and mission but also should diligently execute their responsibilities to the utmost of their capabilities (Soleimani, Tebyanian, & Sciences, 2011).

Innovative work behavior among principals can be understood as a motivational and cognitive process manifested through various activities carried out by teachers. Moreover, educators should be capable of undertaking tasks that extend beyond the conventional routines typically associated with classroom and school management. This might involve educators proactively seeking out new technologies, proposing novel approaches to achieve student learning goals, implementing innovative teaching methods, and actively exploring and acquiring resources to



bring new ideas and initiatives to fruition within the school setting (Desivilya, Somech, Lidgoster, & Research, 2010). These actions are commonly known as teachers' innovative work behavior, which can be described as a deliberate effort by a teacher to introduce, advocate for, and put into practice new ideas, products, processes, and methods within their teaching role. This encompasses activities related to group work and classroom activities aimed at enhancing students' performance in school (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

Teachers demonstrate innovation in their work by devising fresh approaches to their teaching pedagogy. This includes the development of novel teaching methods and the transformation of established approaches into innovative classroom ideas. Moreover, discussions around teachers' innovative behavior typically revolve around actions that are self-initiated and forward-looking, with the objective of bringing about positive changes and enhancements in the student learning experience (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Scott and Bruce characterize innovative work behavior as a complex engagement involving the development, introduction, or application of new teaching approaches (Scott & Bruce, 1994) and solutions. The creative behavior displayed by teachers can be regarded as a form of innovative behavior "Because innovative behavior involves not just the creation of novel ideas but also their application in new and unique ways, along with the creation of engaging activities to facilitate student learning (K. M. Pierce et al., 1993). Teacher's innovative work behavior is viewed as an ongoing process of professional development, specifically emphasizing the adoption of innovative techniques to enhance students' outcomes.

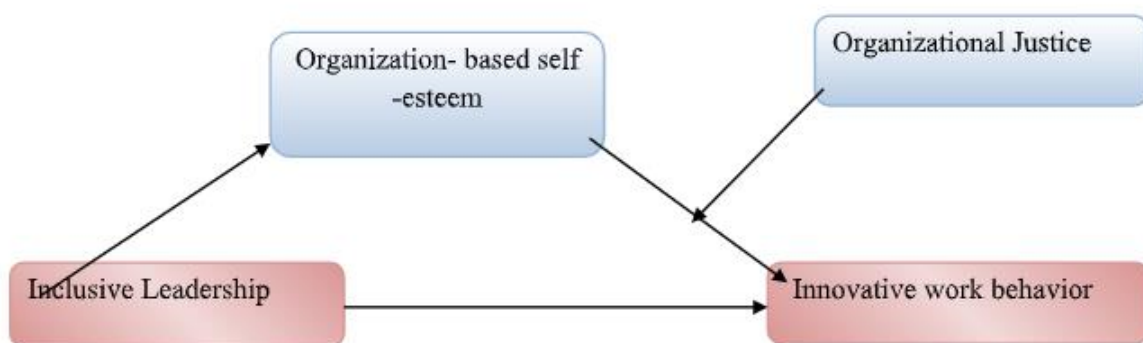


Figure. 1 Theoretical framework

Researchers are intrigued to study the impact of IL on IWB, forming the basis of the following hypotheses:

(H1): Inclusive Leadership is positively related to teachers' innovative work behavior.



### ***Organization-based self-esteem***

A teacher's self-esteem is identified as a personal trait that consistently and significantly influences their classroom behavior, largely shaped by their past school experiences (Tetteh, Attiogbe, & Learning, 2019). These positive outcomes also encompass teachers sharing newfound knowledge with their colleagues, exchanging specific skills, and proposing innovative ideas within the school community. This fosters an increase in teaching proficiency and the expression of voice in educational matters (Chen, Richard, Boncoeur, & Ford Jr, 2020). Work engagement, commitment to the organization, and the general morale within educational institutions (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2019) as well as the improvement of well-being and stress reduction (Costantini et al., 2019) are documented. Teacher engagement initiatives, the organizational framework, enriched job roles, sufficient resources, and the Inclusive Leadership (IL), potentially resulting in favorable consequences for educators and, in turn, enhancing student learning achievements.

Based on the proposed connection between the primary element and the mediator, inclusive leaders encourage diverse viewpoints from teachers and embrace their errors, resulting in a decrease in teachers' emotional dedication to their roles (Zeng, Zhang, Chen, Liu, & Wu, 2020). Teachers become self-assured, upbeat, and adaptable in their schools when leaders value their communication, motivations, and needs. Facilitating teachers' sense of inclusion increases their psychological well-being, which is a result of inclusive leaders. (Fang, Chen, Wang, & Chen, 2019). The principal's admiration and acknowledgement of teachers affects their disposition ((Nembhard, Edmondson, Psychology, & Behavior, 2006). Teachers possess elevated optimism and self-assurance when principals display an accessible and receptive demeanor towards educators and effectively engage with students. Positive leader support also improves faculty identification, which may have an impact on the teacher performance (Arce et al., 2017).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

### ***Inclusive Leadership***

Inclusive Leadership refers to the level at which faculty supposed that the conclusions and actions of the head of department were equitable. Inclusive Leadership refers to non-financial and financial benefits for faculty, this entails fair chances for advancement and rewards, equitable compensation, and an impartial performance assessment system within educational organizations (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Inclusive Leadership consists of three components: Distributive fairness, Procedural fairness, and Interactional fairness. There are four distinct theoretical approaches to explain why teachers respond positively in the context of better Inclusive Leadership. First, the instrumental theory recommends that teachers prefer Inclusive Leadership as justice leads to the expectation of constructive hard & soft components to achieve learning goals (Konovsky et al; 1987). In school, teachers are more imaginative and innovative in their work, and when there's trust between teachers and students, they're more



likely to be willing to take risks and come up with creative ideas, learning areas, group activities, and creating a great learning environment for students (Shabeer, Nasir, & Rehman, 2020).

## METHOD

Researcher used the quantitative method.

### *Sample Selection and Research Procedure*

Participants included academic staff, both from public and private educational institutions, such as schools, colleges, and universities in Sindh and Baluchistan. They were invited to participate in the survey through a Google form. The purpose and advantages of the study were clearly communicated to government and private teachers. The survey was conducted once over a period of one month. A total of 336 teachers received the survey, accompanied by a cover letter ensuring confidentiality.

### *Measures*

Each item was scored on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree"). A nine items was used by the researcher based on the inclusive leadership scale developed by (Carmeli et al., 2010). Innovative work behavior of teachers served as the dependent variable, assessed through a set of five items sourced from (Prieto & Pérez-Santana, 2014).

### *Control Variable*

In conclusion, this research establishes a positive correlation between the support provided by inclusive leadership and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). This highlights the significant role of inclusive leadership as facilitators of knowledge transfer within the teaching staff, encouraging the acquisition and sharing of knowledge. Inclusive leadership is shown to yield favorable outcomes, particularly in enhancing teachers' Innovative Work Behavior (IWB).

### *Data analysis*

After data collection researcher used the regression analysis and descriptive analysis (Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

**Table 1: Responses conducted the independent variable (Inclusive Leadership) from Descriptive Statistics**

Sr#	Items	M	Std. D	N
	Respondent: id	177. 2	101.7	336
1.	Your head of the department / principal open to hearing new ideas.	3.5	1.04	336



2. Your head of the department / principal attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes.	3.1	1.1	336
3. Your head of the department / principal open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them.	3.3	1.0	336
4. Your head of the department / principal available for consultation on problems.	3.0	1.2	336
5. Your head of the department / principal an ongoing 'presence' in this team, someone who is readily available	3.1	1.1	336
6. Your head of the department / principal available for professional questions I would like to consult with him=her.	2.9	1.2	336
7. Your head of the department / principal ready to listen to my requests	3.1	1.2	336
8. Your head of the department / principal encourages me to access him=her on emerging issues.	3.1	1.2	336
9. Your head of the department / principal accessible for discussing emerging problems.	3.1	1.1	336

This table presents descriptive statistics related to the independent variable "Inclusive Leadership" based on responses from 336 respondents. The items in the table are different aspects or statements related to how respondents perceive their head of the department or principal in terms of inclusivity and accessibility. Item 1 (openness to new ideas mean 3.5, Standard Deviation (Std. D)1.04). This indicates that, on average, respondents perceive their head of the department or principal to be moderately open to hearing new ideas (mean of 3.5), with a relatively low level of variability (standard deviation of 1.04). Item 2 (Attentiveness to Opportunities for Improvement): Mean (M) 3.1, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.1. Respondents perceive their head of the department or principal to be moderately attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes, with a moderate level of variability in these perceptions. Item 3 (Openness to Discuss Goals and Ways to Achieve Them) Mean (M): 3.3, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.0. On average, respondents perceive their head of the department or principal to be moderately open to discussing desired goals and new ways to achieve them (mean of 3.3), with relatively low variability. Item 4 (Availability for Problem Consultation) Mean (M) 3.0, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.2. Respondents perceive their head of the department or principal to be moderately available for consultation on problems, with a moderate level of variability in these perceptions. Items 5-9 (Availability and Accessibility): These items all have similar means around 3.1, indicating that respondents perceive their head of the department or principal to be moderately available, accessible, and ready to listen to their requests. The standard deviations are around 1.1-1.2, indicating moderate variability in these perceptions.



**Table 2: Responses conducted the independent variable (Inclusive Leadership) from Correlations**

The table you've provided appears to be a correlation matrix, showing the correlations between

<b>Response Items</b>		<b>IL1</b>	<b>IL2</b>	<b>IL3</b>	<b>IL4</b>	<b>IL5</b>	<b>IL6</b>	<b>IL7</b>	<b>IL8</b>	<b>IL9</b>
Correlations	<b>IL1</b>	1.000	-.076	-.063	.009	-.091	-.104	-.030	-.307	-.073
	<b>IL2</b>	-.076	1.000	-.004	-.161	.020	-.128	-.200	-.030	.003
	<b>IL3</b>	-.063	-.004	1.000	-.134	.038	-.182	-.152	-.075	-.172
	<b>IL4</b>	.009	-.161	-.134	1.000	-.077	-.248	-.074	.019	-.139
	<b>IL5</b>	-.091	.020	.038	-.077	1.000	.021	-.040	-.357	-.385
	<b>IL6</b>	-.104	-.128	-.182	-.248	.021	1.000	-.194	-.031	.056
	<b>IL7</b>	-.030	-.200	-.152	-.074	-.040	-.194	1.000	-.005	-.175
	<b>IL8</b>	-.307	-.030	-.075	.019	-.357	-.031	-.005	1.000	-.188
	<b>IL9</b>	-.073	.003	-.172	-.139	-.385	.056	-.175	-.188	1.000

different response items related to Inclusive Leadership (IL). Each row and column correspond to a specific item (e.g., IL1, IL2, IL3, etc.), and the values in the table represent the correlations between pairs of items. Here's the interpretation of the correlation matrix.

Correlations range from – 1.000 to 1.000, positive correlation (closer to 1.000) indicates a positive relationship between the items, meaning that as one item increases, the other tends to

increase as well. A negative correlation (closer to -1.000) indicates a negative relationship, where as one item increases, the other tends to decrease. Interpersonal correlation items: For example, the correlation between IL1 and IL2 is -0.076, indicating a weak negative relationship between these two items. The correlation between IL4 and IL5 is -0.077, suggesting a weak negative relationship between these items.





**Table 3: Responses conducted the dependent variable (Innovative work behavior) from Descriptive Statistics**

Above table presents descriptive statistics related to the dependent variable "Innovative Work Behaviour" based on responses from 336 respondents. The items in the table are different aspects or statements related to innovative work behaviour, and the table provides the mean, standard deviation, and total number of responses for each item. Here's the interpretation of the table: Mean (M) 3.1, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.1. On average, respondents rate themselves at 3.1, indicating a moderate level of trying to solve problems in different ways, with a moderate level of variability in responses. Mean (M) 3.3, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.2. On average, respondents rate themselves at 3.3, suggesting a moderate level of displaying innovative and creative behaviours, with a moderate level of variability in responses. Mean (M): 3.4, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.1. Respondents rate themselves at 3.4 on average, indicating a moderate level of ability to search for new working methods, techniques, or instruments, with a moderate level of variability. Mean (M) 3.3, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.1. On average, respondents rate themselves at 3.3, suggesting a moderate level of willingness to take the risk of being innovative and creative, with a moderate level of variability in responses. Mean (M) 3.3, Standard Deviation (Std. D) 1.1. Respondents rate themselves at 3.3 on average, indicating a moderate level of ability to anticipate problems and opportunities, with a moderate level of variability in responses. In summary, the descriptive statistics suggest that, on average, respondents perceive themselves to have a moderate level of innovative work behaviour across various dimensions. The standard deviations indicate that there is moderate

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Respondent: id	177.2	101.2	336
I try to solve problems in different ways.	3.1	1.1	336
I show innovative and creative behaviors.	3.3	1.2	336
I am able to search for new working methods, techniques or instruments.	3.4	1.1	336
I am able to take the risk of being innovative and creative.	3.3	1.1	336
I am able to anticipate problems and opportunities.	3.3	1.1	336

variability in the perceptions of respondents for each aspect of IWB.

**Table 4: Responses conducted the independent variable (Inclusive Leadership) from Correlations**



Above table provided is a correlation matrix, showing the Pearson correlation coefficients between different variables. In this case, it appears to show the correlation between the respondent ID and various aspects of Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB). Here's the interpretation of the correlation matrix: Correlations range from -1.000 to 1.000. A positive correlation (closer to 1.000) indicates a positive relationship between the variables, meaning that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase as well. A negative correlation (closer to -1.000) indicates a negative relationship, where as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease. The correlation between Respondent ID and IWB 1 is 0.117, indicating a weak positive relationship. The correlation between IWB 1 and IWB 2 is 0.422, suggesting a moderate positive relationship. The correlation between IWB 3 and IWB 4 is 0.445, suggesting a moderate positive relationship. It appears that there is a weak positive correlation between Respondent ID and the various aspects of Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), indicating a slight tendency for certain respondents to score higher on these aspects. There are moderate positive correlations between the different aspects of Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), suggesting that they are related and tend to increase together. The correlation between IWB 4 and itself seems to be written twice with slightly different correlation values (0.487 and 0.445). This could be a typographical error.

## Discussion

This study delved into the existing literature, exploring the enhancement of teachers' Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) within educational institutions through the cooperative approach of an inclusive leader (IL). The researcher discovered a positive correlation between IL within the head of department and an increase in faculty IWB. Moreover, the study revealed that when head of department or principal provided accommodating support, it positively influenced teachers' IWB within schools, colleges, and universities. The results obtained from regression analysis strongly supported a significant relationship between inclusive leadership and IWB, thus confirming the acceptance of Hypothesis 1. This finding aligns well with previous research. (Watts, Steele, Medeiros, Mumford, & Arts, 2019), In an environment promoting cooperation and improved communication, fostering a collaborative climate, and encouraging

	Respondent- id	IWB 1	IWB 2	IWB 3	IWB 4	IWB 5	
Pearson Correlation	<b>Respondent Id</b>	1.000	.117	.007	.040	.005	.078
	<b>IWB 1</b>	.117	1.000	.422	.442	.467	.266
	<b>IWB 2</b>	.007	.422	1.000	.336	.445	.154
	<b>IWB 3</b>	.040	.442	.336	1.000	.487	.211
	<b>IWB 4</b>	.005	.467	.445	.487	1.000	.160
	<b>IWB 5</b>	.078	.266	.154	.211	.160	1.000

networking among faculty can stimulate the generation of innovative ideas. An effective head



of department not only promotes teamwork but also motivates the team to experiment with novel approaches to enhance work efficiency, develop optimal practices, proactively address challenges, embrace change, adopt innovative methods, and nurture a culture of creativity (Magpili & Pazos, 2018). Likewise, this study aligns with previous research by Bond-Barnard, affirming that effective communication cultivated within a diverse and inclusive leadership framework fosters collaboration, ultimately leading to innovative outcomes (Bond-Barnard, Fletcher, & Steyn, 2018). It would be beneficial for educators to acquire efficient techniques for creative problem-solving through guidance from inclusive leaders, enriching their teaching endeavors. Consequently, implementing coursework and activities within educational institutions focusing on novel collaborative innovation strategies is valuable. This approach encourages creativity within educational environments, promoting the utilization of collaborative creativity exercises within classroom settings.

### ***Theoretical and Practical Contributions***

The results of this research carry significant theoretical implications. To begin with, the researcher modified the dependent variable, which is innovative work behavior (IWB), in this particular model. The study highlighted a favorable correlation between inclusive leadership styles and IWB (Van der Vegt & Janssen, 2003). This gap in research is tackled by utilizing a different methodological approach, wherein supervisors evaluate teachers' IWB teaching skills. This change aims to enhance both external and internal validity. Additionally, scholars have emphasized the need for more thorough investigation into the effects of Inclusive Leadership (IL) (Carmeli et al., 2010). Hence, this study represents a notable expansion. The researcher addressed this gap by incorporating the independent variable of Inclusive Leadership (IL) and the dependent variable of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB).

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

Despite the theoretical advancements made by our research, there are several limitations that could guide future studies. To begin, the data collection involved utilizing Google forms from teachers employed in various educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities. These teachers provided assessments of Inclusive Leadership (IL). Moreover, the study adopted a cross-sectional design, restricting our capacity to probe causality among the variables. Notably, contemporary scholars have highlighted a balanced relationship between Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) and professional identity. (Johari, Abdul Wahat, & Zaremohzzabieh, 2021). Subsequent research endeavors could broaden their scope by involving additional evaluators such as heads of departments or school principals. They might consider employing diverse, objective measures to evaluate teachers' Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). Furthermore, the current study utilized a dyadic relational approach to ascertain the favorable impacts of teachers' organizational-based self-esteem, inadvertently neglecting the substantial roles of leaders in various outcomes at the teacher level. (Johari et al., 2021). There may be additional factors pertinent to predicting a teacher's Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) that warrant attention in future research. The researcher suggests exploring



the relationship between Inclusive Leadership (IL) and proactive personality in forthcoming studies.

### **Conclusion**

In the contemporary era characterized by unrestricted innovation across various boundaries, our study took a step further to explore and analyze the theoretical model that connects Inclusive Leadership (IL) and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). Through our research, we were able to affirm and establish the existence of a positive association between IL and IWB, highlighting the encouraging impact of inclusive leadership on fostering innovative work behavior.



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