

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATIVE WORKING BEHAVIOR

by Ngatimun Ngatimun

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Review Article

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATIVE WORKING BEHAVIOR

Ngatimun

Faculty of Economics-Panca Marga University Probolinggo, Indonesia

E-mail: imun_bp@upm.ac.id

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the direct and indirect impact of inclusive leadership (INL) on innovative working behavior (IWB) of employees. For testing the indirect impact, the study used psychological safety (PSS) as a mediator. For this purpose, study collected the data from a sample of 342 blue-collar workers of 130 small, medium and large firms of Indonesia. Study used cluster sampling technique and data are gathered through questionnaire. The study applied structural equation modeling and path analysis for testing the proposed hypotheses of the study. Significance of the path coefficients are tested through bootstrapping. The findings show that PSS mediates the positive relationship between INL and IWB.

Key Words: Psychological safety; Inclusive leadership; Innovative working behavior; Indonesia; SEM.

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PRELIMINARY

Research Background

Now a days, survival of organizations is difficult due to challenging business environment (Carmeli et al., 2014). If organizations want to be successful, they must promote innovation (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Innovation is an essential factor that supports the technical changes (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Innovations occur when new ideas, thoughts or products are developed or implemented by the employees of organization that are the main factors of the innovative behavior of employees (IWB) (Zhang, Tsui & Wang, 2011). Existing studies showed significant contributions of IWB in improving the business conditions (Jaussi & Dionne, 2003; Atwater & Carmeli, 2009). IWB is defined as the extra role behavior of employees that assists any organization in the accommodation of new challenges (Sternberg, 1988).

During the last decades, several studies highlighted the factors, having significant contributions in IWB. Studies showed that IWB is influenced by different factors including leadership (Gong et al., 2012), working environment (George, 2008), job characteristics (Detert & Edmondson, 2011), personal differences (Rank, Pace & Frese, 2004), and job demand (West and Richter, 2015). Particularly, Edmondson (2004) proposed role of leader is the most important factor that plays a prominent role in the IWB of employees. Hence, researchers start investigating the issue that why this role is prominent. Authors identified that the role is prominent due to IWB's multiple nature (Mumford & Hunter, 2005; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Furthermore, researchers indicated that IWB means doing something unique or creative which involves a high risk that may harm organization (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). But on the other side, creativity or uniqueness may lead to organization success as well (Carmeli, Dutton & Hardin, 2009). Thus, if an organization demand innovation from its employees, then it has to provide them the degree of independence for promoting their IWB (Edmondson, 2004).

Degree of independence rises if leaders are supporting their employees (Jaussi & Dionne, 2003). Many researchers showed the significant contributions of leaders in promoting employee's IWB (Mumford & Hunter, 2005; Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Dorenbosch, Engen, & Verhagen, 2005; Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004) because leaders support their employees and encourage them to do something innovative. They also provide them sufficient information and resources which in turn encourage employees IWB (Sanders et al., 2010). Leadership

has many kinds; inclusive leadership (INL) is one of them. This study contributes to the existing literature by investigating the relationship between INL and IWB. Few studies have been found that worked on the affiliation between INL and IWB but it received very less focus by existing researchers.

INL is defined as leaders who show reflectiveness, openness and accessibility in their relations with their employees (Carmeli et al., 2014). They help their employees in the process of decision making and readily available to their followers so that they can discuss anything regarding their job. They also encourage and support the new ideas of employees (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). They facilitate their employees by making them the provision of all tangible and intangible resources of the organization. Therefore, it seems that INL promotes IWB of employees.

However, IWB is a non-routine behavior, which naturally escapes the classical approaches or working by implementing new approaches. Therefore, employees need psychological safety (PSS) so that they can easily express and implement their innovative thoughts and ideas (Wan, Williamson & Yin, 2015). PSS is an estate where worker of any organization feels that they can easily take risk for doing something innovative because they feel themselves safe, and they do not feel any restriction in expressing their new ideas or thoughts (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). PSS is only promoted by leaders with inclusive nature. Particularly, Nembhard & Edmondson (2006) proposed that when leaders perceived employees by their self-value, then they observe high level of PSS. Furthermore, PSS increases IWB (Carmeli, Tran & Park, 2015). Therefore, this study anticipated the mediating role of PSS on the association between INL and IWB. Hence, the present study examines the direct effect of INL on IWB, and also examines that how this relation is mediated through PSS by conducting the study in Indonesian context. This is also a unique approach as no study has been found that investigates the relationship among these variables in Indonesian context.

Remaining paper is arranged as follow: section 2 presents the review of existing literature and construction of hypothesis, section 3 presents methodology, section 4 is about empirical results, section 5 describes the discussions, conclusions and policy implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INL is defined as leaders who show reflectiveness, openness and accessibility in their relations with their followers (Carmeli et al., 2014). INL seizes efforts by leaders to embrace others in their thoughts and considerations in which their opinions and perception strength will be absent (Nemhard & Edmondson, 2006). So, employees may speak openly in any discussion and endorse their new ideas (i.e., IWB) (Dorenbosch, Engen, & Verhagen, 2005). Thus, this study emphasis on the positive effects of INL in enhancing IWB of employees. IWB is defined as the behavior of individuals concerning the introduction of new products, thoughts, procedures, or innovation. INL is one of the most important factors, having significant effects on employee's IWB (Mumford & Hunter, 2005; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Existing researchers worked on the association between INL and IWB and found positive relation. Studies proposed that inclusive leaders affect IWB in several ways. Firstly, they are the role model for their juniors, hence, encourage them for IWB (Jaussi & Dionne, 2003). Secondly, they make the provision of essential information and assets to their subordinates for enhancing their IWB (Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004). Thirdly, they motivate their followers to be more creative (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009). Lastly, they provided personal support to their followers for improving their creative performance (Mumford & Hunter, 2005). INL is reflected as a main agent of organizational change. So, whenever leaders demonstrate any new idea, employees of the organization perceive it as organizational support for improving their IWB (Jhong et al., 2011). Leaders who validate the appearances of INL, endorses justice of input and output of all workers of the organization (Hollander, 2012). Inclusive leaders never work to employees, but they work with employees and inspires them of endorsing their new ideas (Sanders et al., 2010). Usually, INL focused on the inclusive process where they challenge the guarantee of the contribution of employees in proving input to their working organization. This type of behavior of leaders promotes IWB and encourage their fellows to do something creative. Hence the study proposed that:

H1: There is positive relationship between INL and IWB.

PSS is defined as the observations of individuals regarding the magnitude of taking personal risks in their working organization (Edmondson, 2004). Existing studies suggested that the behavior of leaders having significant contributions in PSS approaches (Nemhard & Edmondson, 2006). Particularly, Edmondson (2004) said that when leader shows reflectiveness, openness and accessibility, they are probable to assist the progress of PSS among its followers. Leaders motivate followers for developing new thoughts and take risk by establishing the significance of such behaviors and promising followers that there will not be appearances of negative consequences from such behavior. Being open and accessible will allow them to converse such beliefs. However, when leader will be friendly to their followers, and if he encourages new ideas of his juniors, then employees will probable to feel safe in developing new ideas by taking risk and therefore the IWB of employees will improve. Similarly, availability of leader to his employees will send a strong indication that he will encourage the creativity of employees. Employees feel themselves safe. This notion was empirically tested by existing studies (i.e., Carmeli, Dutton & Hardin, 2009; Carmeli, Tran & Park, 2015; Nemhard & Edmondson, 2006). The study revealed positive association between INL and PSS. Studies proposed that when employees perceived that their work is appreciated by the leaders, then they feel satisfied, and hence a sense of PSS is developed in their minds. It is therefore proposed that:

H2: There is positive relationship between INL and PSS.

IWB is defined as the production of new products, ideas or processes that are unique, different and useful for engaging organization (Sternberg, 1988). IWB can be a risky exertion because it involves new products or ideas, so that there might be possibility of their failure. Existing studies revealed that

IWB is related with organizational innovation (Rank, Pace & Frese, 2004) which is only occurs when employees feel themselves safe in order to take such steps that involve risk which is only possible through psychological safety (Edmondson, 2004). In a review of organizational innovation, George (2008) indicated that PSS is one of the most essential factors that significantly contributes in the IWB of employees. West and Richter (2008) investigated the influence of psychological threat (PT) on IWB of employees and revealed negative association between PT and IWB. PT means that employees are unsafe, and they have a threat of taking risk, because if the idea will not work, then their job will be on risk. In these situations, employees will avoid for taking risk in order to make innovations. Burke et al., (2006) worked on relationship between PSS and IWB and revealed positive relationship between PSS and IWB and suggested that if employees are feeling PSS, they feel free to take any kind of risk after discussing their behavior with their leader. Accordingly, the study anticipates that:

H3: There is positive relationship between PSS and IWB.

PSS is an estate where workers of an organization feels that they can easily take risk for doing something innovative because they feel themselves safe, and they do not feel any restriction in expressing their new ideas or thoughts (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). Moreover, employees demand PSS, so that they can easily express their new ideas instead of following classical methods of doing the job (Kessel, Hannemann-Weber, & Kratzer, 2012). In an innovational context, sometimes employees have to take some risks, that might affect badly to the organization (i.e., organizational failure) because innovation is linked with high risk (Mathisen, Einarsen & Mykdetun, 2012). But sometimes it is possible that these innovative ideas positively affect the organization (i.e., organizational success) because these ideas are purely unique, and never implemented before (Gong et al., 2012). There is a need of someone to whom employees may discuss their ideas before their implementation; that is a leader. Every organization has a leader, if that leader has an inclusive nature then he will encourage the IWB of employees by providing them PSS. If the leader is not providing PSS to their followers then they will not agree to take risks. Therefore, PSS plays a mediating role in the relationship between INL and IWB, and formulates the fourth hypothesis as:

H4: PSS mediates the relationship between INL and IWB.

RESEARCH METHODS

Participants and Data Collection

The study gathered data from 342 blue-collar workers of 130 small, medium and large firms of Indonesia. For obtaining the data, the study used cluster sampling method, because it is not possible to collect the data from each individual. The study prepared a questionnaire for quantifying the relationship among INL, PSS of blue-collar workers and their IWB. Questionnaire was based on 5-type Likert scale, that started from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Questionnaire was divided into two portions. First portion comprised of demographic information consisting on 6 items, including information about gender, age, qualification, experience, department; in which an employee is working (i.e., sales, HR, operations) and hierarchical level (i.e., entry or middle). Second portion of questionnaire was consisted on 6 items of INL, 8 items of PSS and 7 items of IWB. Participation of employees in the survey was deliberated, if they did not want to answer, then nobody will force them to fill the questionnaire. Respondents received an endorsement for the questionnaire and an essential discretion was attained.

Variables

Inclusive leadership (INL): The study used INL as an independent variable. Total six elements of INL were adopted from the study of Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv (2010). Participants were requested to rate the item for their straight managers. The sample of an item was: "The manager is open

to hearing new ideas”.

Innovative work behavior (IWB): The study used IWB as a dependent variable of the study. Total seven items of IWB were adapted from the study of Brown et al., (2005) through which the innovative behavior of employees was measured. IWB were measured through two dimensions; idea creation and idea promotion. The sample of items were: “At work, I sometimes come up with innovative and creative notions” (idea creation), “At work, I sometimes propose my creative ideas and try to convince others.” (idea promotion).

Psychological safety (PSS): PSS is a mediating variable of the study consisting on eight items, measured through the scale of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999). This scale measured the spread to which a person as an employee feels psychologically safe to taking risks, and openly discussion of issues. The sample of item was: “It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help”..

Analytical Techniques and Model Specification The study analyzed the data through SMART PLS. The study applied structural equation modeling (SEM) for testing the proposed hypothesis of the study. SEM has extensive use as it has a capability to establish multipurpose regression and correlation on a model. Moreover, SEM comprises on two models, measurement model and structural model. Measurement model tests confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), reliability and validity (convergent, discriminate and construct) of the data while structural model tests the collinearity issues, goodness of fit and significance. Furthermore, study applies path analysis for testing the direct and indirect effects. Following econometric models are used for testing the proposed hypothesis:

$$IWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1(INL) + \mu \dots\dots (Eq. 1)$$

$$PSS = \beta_0 + \beta_1(INL) + \mu \dots\dots (Eq. 2)$$

$$IWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1(PSS) + \mu \dots\dots (Eq. 3)$$

$$IWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1(INL) + \beta_2(PSS) + \mu \dots\dots (Eq. 4)$$

Where: “IWB is innovative working behavior, PSS is psychological safety, INL is inclusive leadership; β_0 is constant and β_1 and β_2 are coefficients, while μ is error term”..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 demonstrates the results of descriptive statistics of survey items, comprises on the values of mean, median and standard deviation, and on the minimum and maximum responses of participants. Results indicate that the study was based on a survey of 21 items, responses of 16 items vary from one to five, response of 2 items vary from one to four and two to five. The survey was accomplished by Likert-type 5-point questions and multidimensional questions. Mean score of different items range from 2.000 to 4.402 and the values of standard deviation range from 0.818 to 1.265.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Items	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD
INL1	2.000	2	1	4	0.875
INL2	3.451	4	1	5	0.995
INL3	3.462	4	1	5	1.040
INL4	3.492	4	1	5	0.953
INL5	3.648	4	1	5	1.038
INL6	3.504	4	1	5	0.925
PSS1	3.383	4	1	5	0.905
PSS2	3.413	4	1	5	0.870
PSS3	3.530	4	1	5	1.011
PSS4	3.436	4	1	5	0.963
PSS5	3.163	3	1	5	1.131

PSS6	3.311	4	1	5	1.265
PSS7	4.402	5	2	5	0.865
PSS8	3.072	3	1	5	1.240
IWB1	3.045	3	1	5	1.124
IWB2	2.648	3	1	5	0.853
IWB3	2.833	3	1	5	0.725
IWB4	2.814	3	1	4	0.879
IWB5	3.864	4	2	5	1.028
IWB6	2.636	3	1	5	0.915
IWB7	2.723	3	1	5	0.818

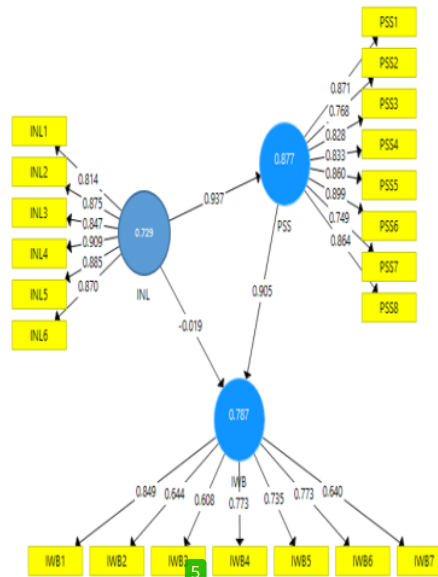


Figure 1: Measurement Model

Figure 1 shows the measurement model of the study. Three latent variables (i.e. IWB, PSS and INL) are include in measurement model. This model is used for testing the reliability and validity of items and constructs. It comprises on CFA, including convergent validity, discriminate and construct validity along with reliability and average variance.

Results of CFA are shown in Table 2. In primary research, there might be possibility that data are not reliable valid for further analysis. So, it is necessary condition to test the reliability and validity of items and construct of data. CFA checks the reliability and validity of the data along with AVE.

Loading values in Table 2 shows the convergent validity of each item including in constructs. According to Hair et al., (2011) there will be presence of convergent validity in the data if loading value are exceeding from 0.4. While if value is less than 0.4, then we have to exclude that item from the construct for making the data valid. In this study the loading value of each item of construct, highest loading value of (INL=0.909), (PSS=0.899), (WB=0.849), lowest loading value of (INL=0.814), (PSS=0.749), (WB=0.608) are greater than 0.4. Hence, it is concluded that each item of construct possesses convergent validity. Furthermore, values of AVE represent the convergent validity of constructs. Value of AVE must exceed 0.5 in order to satisfying the condition of convergent validity of constructs. AVE coefficient of all

constructs (INL=0.772), (PSS=0.689), (WB=0.714) exceeds 0.5. It is concluded that convergent validity is present in constructs. Construct validity is measured through the coefficient of CR. Value of CR must exceed 0.5, as it is the necessary condition of construct validity. All the values of CR in Table 1 (INL=0.772), (PSS = 0.698), (IWB= 0.714) exceeds 0.5. Therefore, it is concluded that construct validity is present in the data.

Reliability of data is measured through Cronbach's alpha (α). In order to possess reliability of data, the value of α must be greater than 0.4. If the value is greater than 0.8, then it is proposed that the data are highly reliable, while if value exceeds 0.9, then the data will be extra ordinary reliable. (Hair et al, 2011). α values in Table 1 (INL=0.934), (PSS=0.938), (WB=0.845) show that the data of INL and PSS are extra ordinary reliable as its value exceeds 0.9 and the data of WB are highly reliable as value exceeds 0.8.

In SEM there might be the possibility of the problem of multicollinearity. Therefore, study use VIF for testing the collinearity issues among items. Results of VIF (shown in table 2) show that the highest value of VIF is 4.012 while the lowest VIF value is 1.343. As all the values are less than 5, so there is no multicollinearity in data

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Constructs	Items	Loadings	α	CR	AVE	VIF
INL	INL1	0.814	0.934	0.948	0.772	2.356
	INL2	0.875				3.525
	INL3	0.847				2.605
	INL4	0.909				2.443
	INL5	0.885				3.306
	INL6	0.870				3.037
PSS	PSS1	0.871	0.938	0.949	0.698	2.547
	PSS2	0.768				1.511
	PSS3	0.828				1.343
	PSS4	0.833				2.083
	PSS5	0.860				1.718
	PSS6	0.899				2.018
	PSS7	0.749				1.673
	PSS8	0.864				3.402
WB	IWB1	0.849	0.845	0.883	0.714	2.204
	IWB2	0.644				2.677
	IWB3	0.608				3.024
	IWB4	0.773				3.296
	IWB5	0.735				3.456
	IWB6	0.773				1.948
	IWB7	0.640				4.012

Results of discriminate validity are shown in Table 3. The study uses FLC criteria for measuring the discriminate validity of the data. According to this criterion, there will be presence

of discriminate validity in data if the diagonal values (shown in bold) exceed from remaining values. Diagonal values in Table 3 (0.867, 0.887, 0.836) exceed from remaining values (0.828, 0.787, 0.772). Hence, showing discriminate validity in the data.

Table 3: Discriminate validity: Fornier-Lacker Criterion (FLC)

	INL	IWB	PSS
INL	0.867		
IWB	0.828	0.887	
PSS	0.787	0.772	0.836

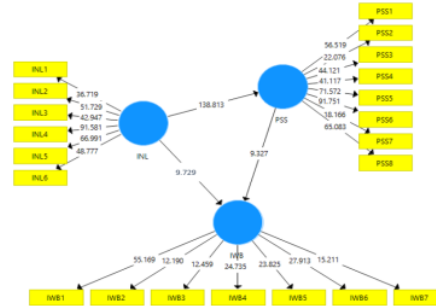


Figure 2: Structural Model

After getting confirm that the data is reliable and valid, the study used the structural model for testing the proposed hypothesis of study. Structural model (Figure 2) is obtained through bootstrapping process. There are three latent variables including in structural model along with t statistics which tells about the significance of the results. Structural model comprises on collinearity issues and path modeling. Path modeling helps in the obtaining direct and indirect results.

Table 4 elaborated the results of path modeling which is used to obtain the direct and indirect results. Moreover, it is used to test the proposed hypotheses of the study. Significance of path coefficient is tested through the process of bootstrapping. Results of direct effect tests 3 hypothesis of the study. Path coefficient of H1 shows that IWB is significantly influenced by INL. Coefficient of INL is 0.729 which indicated that if there is 1-unit increase in INL, then on average, IWB will increase by 0.729 units. Hence, H1 is supported. Path coefficient of H2 also indicated significant affiliation between INL and PSS. Particularly, the coefficient of INL suggests that 1-unit increase in INL leads 0.937 units increase in PSS. So, H2 is also supported. Similarly, the path coefficient of H3 revealed significant impact of PSS on IWB, for instance, 1-unit increase will increase IWB by on average 0.905 units. H3 is also supported. The main hypothesis of the study (H4) is tested through indirect effect. Results show that PSS significantly mediates the relationship between INL and IWB. Particularly, 1-unit increase in INL will increase IWB by 0.629 units. It is interesting to note that when there is no mediating role of PSS in the association between INL and IWB, then 1-unit change in IWB leads 0.729-unit change in IWB (H1), but now this change is reduced. Which means mediation exists. Hence, H4 is also supported.

Table 4: Direct and Indirect effects

Direct Effects					
Hypothesis	Path	Beta	T-Statistics	P-Value	Decision
H1	INL → IWB	0.729	9.729	0.000	✓

H2	INL→PSS	0.937	138.813	0.000	✓
H3	PSS→IWB	0.905	9.327	0.000	✓
Indirect Effects					
H4	INL→PSS→IWB	0.629	9.184	0.000	✓

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Now a days, survival of organizations is difficult due to challenging business environment. Those organizations who want to be successful must promote innovation. Innovations occur when new ideas, thoughts or products are developed or implemented by the employees of organization that are the main factors of the innovative behavior of employees (IWB). However, IWB is a non-routine behavior, therefore, employees need psychological safety (PSS) so that they can easily express and implement their innovative thoughts and ideas (Carmeli, Dutton, & Gardin, 2009). PSS is promoted by INL. Therefore, present study aims to investigate the impact of INL on IWB and to explore the mediating role of PSS on the association between INL and IWB. For this purpose, study gathered the data from 342 blue-collar workers of 130 small, medium and large firms of Indonesia through cluster sampling method. The study analyzed the data through SMART PLS. The study applied SEM and path modeling for testing the proposed hypothesis of the study. Significance of the path coefficients are tested through bootstrapping.

Results of the study indicated a positive relationship between INL and IWB because leaders having inclusive nature help their employees in the process of decision making and readily available to their followers so that they can discuss anything regarding their job. They also encourage and support the new ideas of employees which in turn promote employee's IWB. Results are consistent with (Dorenbosch, Engen, & Verhagen, 2005; Carmeli et al., 2014; Mumford & Hunter, 2005; Stogdill & Gilson, 2004). Moreover, results also show that PSS plays a mediating role in the association between INL and IWB. IWB is a non-routine behavior, therefore, employees need psychological safety (PSS) so that they can easily express their new ideas and thoughts, thus, PSS promotes IWB. Results are consistent with (Rank, Pace & Frese, 2004; Edmondson, 2004)

The study has several implications. INL confirms the assistance of employees IWB. It is necessary that organizational administration should understand that how the IWB in employees can be substituted. The study suggests that organizational administration promote the INL by highlighting sincerity, accessibility and availability in order to allow their employees to freely discuss their new thoughts and ideas. Hence, it is essential for leaders that they begin training programs for maintaining the close relations with their employee.

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