Impact of Inclusive leadership on Project Success with Mediating Role of Work Engagement and Moderating Role of Person-Job Fit

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Abstract. Purpose: This study finds the impact of inclusive leadership on project success. Furthermore, the mediating role of work engagement and the moderating role of person-job fit in the relationship between inclusive leadership and project success has also been researched.

Design/Methodology/Approach: 334 personnel from various project-based organizations in Pakistan's twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi were used in the data collection.

Findings: The findings show a strong correlation between inclusive leadership and project performance. Additionally, it was discovered that work involvement plays a mediating role. The relationship between inclusive leadership and work engagement is also moderated by person-job fit.

Practical Implications: It's recommended that project manager must exhibit inclusive leadership as it will enhance work engagement which will result in project success. The inclusive leader will undoubtedly be able to increase employee engagement when management ensures a person's job fit.

Originality/Value: This study looked at how inclusive leadership affects a project's success. Additionally, the job fit of the individual acts as the moderator, and employee work engagement serves as the mediator in this interaction.

Key words: Inclusive leadership, project success, person-job fit, work engagement, Pakistan.

1 Introduction

The increased focus and importance placed on leadership over the past several years is justified by the fact that future of a company will be significantly influenced by its leaders, either positively or negatively (Prime et al., 2020). Qualities, behaviors, and impacts of inclusive leaders were examined for our study, team to have a deeper understanding of this intersection. Impacts are defined as having a noticeable effect or influence (Ahmed and Abdullahi, 2017). On the development of genres of inclusive leadership, literature studies have been done by (Thompson and Matkin, 2020). In order to offer a new viewpoint on the ongoing discussion on IL, we decided to research inclusive leaders themselves.

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One of the newly discovered leadership philosophies that have been found to significantly affect project success is inclusive leadership (Abu-Jalil et al., 2017). The idea of inclusive leadership was initially presented by (Edmondson and Mogelof, 2006). According to (Hollander, 2012), inclusive leadership (IL) permits leader-member interaction to the point where leadership engages coworkers and their followers instead of ordering them to carry out necessary responsibilities. Numerous researchers have examined the effects of inclusive leadership, namely work engagement, OCB, inclusion and IWB (Javed et al., 2019; Kuknor and Bhattacharya, 2022; Tran and Choi, 2019; Wang et al., 2019).

Carmeli et al. (2010), claim inclusive leaders create a climate where people feel psychologically at ease to voice their thoughts regularly defy convention by being receptive, personable, and available to staff members who have fresh perspectives. Employees are more open to talking about issues and concerns with executives that are approachable and accessible. Edmondson and Mogelof (2006), observed that the characteristics as IL (openness, availability, and accessibility) are comparable to those discovered in past studies that demonstrated how a leader's sincere concern for their followers fosters employee trust (Burke and Hutchins, 2007).

Despite a large body of literature demonstrating how IL affects PS the mediating functions of other variables but this study only partially focuses on the mediating effect of employee work which is not studied before (Khan et al., 2020; Mohammad et al., 2021). Inclusive leaders recognize that by utilizing their teams' input, they can boost employee work engagement, reduce attrition, and ultimately improve project results (Hollander, 2012). Engagement at work determines an organization's authority. Work is allocated regularly, jobs are assigned fairly, and complaints about the work are effectively handled, all of which contribute significantly to the successful growth of a business (Reknes et al., 2016). The mediated mechanisms by which inclusive leadership enhances project success must therefore be investigated. This study aims to provide a better understanding of how IL affects project performance and employee work engagement looks at it from the perspective of Pakistani project-based enterprises.

The PJF model is traditional basis for hiring (Werbel and DeMarie, 2005). The key to finding a candidate for a certain position in a company is to search for the skills to carry out and the appropriate capabilities. Person-job fit is explained as the intersection of employee's desires, work requirements, and benefits. In addition to knowledge, a PJF's also considers an individual's talents and competencies of fit Edwards and Shipp (2007), the PJF is linked to positive behavior, good work performance, and personal wellbeing (Afsar et al., 2015). This application and improved person job fit raise job satisfaction, which raises job engagement. One of the main elements that could increase worker engagement is leadership. It is recommended that an inclusive leader successfully engages his team at work while the PJF is high in order to achieve this.

1.1 Research Objectives

Some particular destinations to discover:

- To explore the relationship between Inclusive Leadership & Project Success.

- To explore mediating role of Work engagement among Inclusive leadership and Project success.

- To explore moderating role of Person-Job fit among Inclusive Leadership and Work Engagement.

1.2   Significance of the Study

Since leader has a huge impact on projects, on-site leadership has long been a major subject of concern for scholars. Project-based organizations today require inclusive leadership practices to improve their results and performances of project success. This research will be important for organizations to use Inclusive Leadership in Pakistan to enable success in projects through WE and PJF.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Inclusive Leadership and Project Success

Hardest duty in today's world is managing the workforce (Espinoza and Ukleja, 2016). In project-oriented businesses, where resources are unlimited but employment is typically contingent on contracts, the task is made even more difficult. To keep the organization's standards high, the staff must be inspired (Dwivedula et al., 2016). Limiting laws and structural adjustments alone won't enough to establish a productive workplace; leaders also need to foster an environment that encourages inclusivity and pushes each employee to attain their maximum potential. In order to build trust with the team member and effectively exercise his authority, the leader work with them. To achieve objectives of their projects, project leaders need to focus on both their intentions and actions (Redick, 2014). This improves diversity while also enhancing both individual and business success (Soares et al., 2011). As a result, leadership matters in companies. At all organizational levels, leadership is necessary to foster the need to meet employers' needs and the quality of work (Anvari et al., 2014).

According to Kezar and Lester (2010), inclusive leadership guarantees the right style of leadership is used to forge a connection between the leader and the followers. Multiple barriers can develop phenomenon of IL challenging (Ryan and Haslam, 2007). The following types of challenges may arise: (i) expert managing techniques; (ii) organizational policies. While establishing an inclusive culture, inclusive leadership can assure greater performance, enhanced innovation, and the retention of employees with creative minds (Carmeli et al., 2010; Hunt et al., 2015). An inclusive leader serves as an example for others to follow by establishing new standards for inclusive behaviour. They value their subordinates' ideas and participation and listen to them, seek out their opinions, and consider them without bias when making decisions (Groysberg and Slind, 2012). People who work with inclusive leaders experience a sense of camaraderie and community at work (Javed et al., 2019). The values and expertise levels of the team members may vary. The project managers may make the most of team member differences and tactfully resolve conflicts amongst groups, improving worker performance. Inclusive leadership can assist in highlighting the crucial importance of these characteristics by promoting the effective management of diversity and conflicts in workgroups for project success(Mujtaba, 2013). Based on these arguments, we suggested the association below.

H—₁: Inclusive leadership has a significant positive impact on Project Success

2.2   Inclusive Leadership, Work Engagement & Project Success

The promotion of an organization's aims and missions depends on its leadership (Jackson, 2016). According to Theoharis and Scanlan (2015), the actions and attitudes of their followers in

order to develop stronger relationships with employees. A leader who listens well will also pick up on unspoken difficulties and inspire followers to take-action. WE is characterized the energy, dedication, and absorption as a cheerful and contented state of mind associated to labor. Dedication is defined as having a deep interest in one's work and a sense of significance in it. While time flies by and one is happily immersed in his work, one finds it impossible to disengage from it(Schaufeli et al., 2002). This is absorption, the degree to which an employee is engaged at work and decides to remain with the same company and position is greatly influenced by his or her supervisor. The inclusive leader may offer better assistance hold supervisors responsible for any kind of retention through training. Inclusive leaders should consider considering subordinate involvement levels as an evaluation criterion for managing effectiveness at all levels.

Previously, it has become clarify that businesses require more usable information and original ideas in order to be more successful (Carmeli et al., 2010). These are acquired through worker engagement. Every company's success depends on the dedication of its staff, which has been associated with higher individual productivity, higher business turnover, improved managerial effectiveness, and higher customer satisfaction (Blomme et al., 2015; Strom et al., 2014). However, less engaged workers tend to produce less, work less efficiently, and cost more money (Sung and Choi, 2018). The inventive and creative contributions made by an organization's staff have an impact on its performance. The elements affecting employee WE are critical for organizational success (Blomme et al., 2015). Leadership is one of the most important factors determining work engagement since it not only gives workers purpose and drive but also fosters a friendly environment that boosts work engagement for better performance in project-based organizations. (Sung and Choi, 2018). Leadership exhibits openness, reachability, and availability to their team. It motivates employees to put their best into the work they are given and to devote all of their mental, emotional, and physical resources to the business. Leaders also encourage their team members to work harder and contribute more to their organizations. Therefore, leaders who are approachable, transparent, and accessible to their staff members increase project success and have a good impact on employee engagement.

H_2: Work engagement mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and project success.

2.3   Person Job Fit, Inclusive Leadership & Work Engagement

A certain level of agreement between a person's skills, principles, and knowledge and the necessary conditions of the work is known as a person-job fit. Employees with a good view of their own abilities should act as private resources. These individualized materials encourage specific advancements in growth and goal achievement and are thus ideal to support an employee's wellbeing. To boost private resources, comprehensive leadership that fosters a positive work environment for staff might be implemented (Hollander, 2012). This supports the worker's conviction and assurance that they possess all necessary skills to fulfil the requirements of the position (Tims et al., 2011). The idea of "PJF" is centered upon these people and their evaluation. This is to make sure that those people have the know-how needed to complete the jobs they have been given. Additionally, these people contribute to the organization's objectives by making additional efforts. According to Carmeli et al. (2010), the most successful and efficient leadership processes take place when leaders are able to establish a responsible and advantageous relationship with their following. Additionally, leaders might profit from that cooperation. Comprehensive leaders can create valuable and advantageous ties with team members, claim (Carmeli et al., 2010). Such a connection enables their followers to more effectively meet job requirements

with premium resources. Coteries are therefore likely to have beneficial effects from inclusive leaders and job-fit terms, a phrase that is supportive of successful employment outcomes. This fosters the creativity and wellbeing of employees. As an illustration, a leader's actions facilitate phenomena of JF. It has beneficial effects and influences on coworkers & subordinates.

Managers must set up their teams to maximize efficiency while simultaneously fostering talent, nurturing skills, and inspiring results. Project managers that have leadership competency profiles tend to focus more on the details. They are able to coordinate and keep track of numerous unrelated tasks at once. According to Lovas and Ghoshal (2000), the organization's executives have a positive effect on the direction and results of organization. This hypothesis suggests that organizations have a little but significant amount of leverage to influence their surroundings through the manager's foresight and recruitment. Project team members are chosen by inclusive leaders based on their in-depth understanding of each person that are suitable for the project in order to ensure that it is effective and yields the best outcomes possible (Ramazani and Jergeas, 2015). It is found that a person's job fit has a positive effect on work outcomes, such as happiness and performance, which increases the likelihood that the project would succeed. Success-enhancing behavior and feelings of fulfilment can only be produced by inclusive leadership (Hitt and Duane, 2002).

H_3: *Person Job fit moderates the relationship between Inclusive leadership and work engagement.*
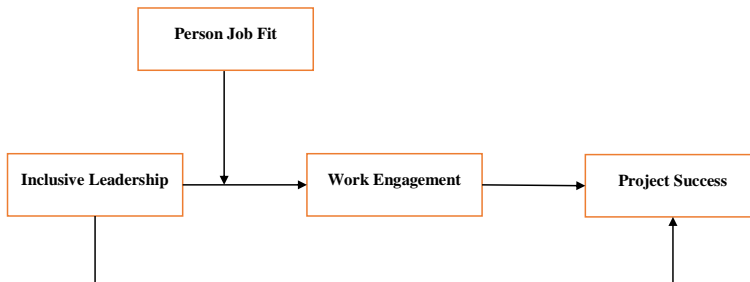
Research Model

Figure 1: Research Model

3 Methodology

3.1 Participants & Procedure

Project base organization staff from Islamabad and Rawalpindi make up the study's current population. The questionnaire method has been used to take responses. Any research methodology that is chosen and put into practice must be supported by an explanation of why the study is using it, and this chapter does just that. The analysis and investigation of research questions are contained in the research technique. By mediating the role of WE and the moderating role of a PJF, this methodology was utilized to investigate the relationship between inclusive leadership

and project success. The query is addressed in this chapter. Do hypotheses get approved or denied? This chapter covers the data collection method with measurement, the instrument scale, and the research design. Data is collected from project-based organizations of twin cities. The quantitative technique has been used to collect data. A sample is calculated by using G-power because the population was unknown. The data was gathered using a convenience sample strategy because of time restrictions. 500 questionnaires were issued, and 334 of the answers were accurate.

3.2   Sample Characteristics

Variety exists in every project-based organization and diversity often stimulates project success. Project-based businesses also need engagement and job fitness to complete the project successfully. The subsequent descriptive analysis demonstrates how different organizations are in terms of factors like gender, age, education, and experience, among others.

Table 3.1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	265	79.3
Female	69	20.7
Total	334	100

In this research 265 respondents were male and 69 respondents were females. Here, the number of male respondents is high.

Table 3.2: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	82	24.6
26-33	19	5.7
34-41	101	30.2
42-49	95	28.2
50-above	37	11.1
Total	334	100

Here, 82 are from the 18-25 age group. 19 are from the 26-33 age group. 101 are from the 34-41 age group and 95 are from the 42-49 age group. 37 persons from the highest age group 50-above.

In this research, 1 respondent is qualified Matric. 8 people are Intermediate. Bachelors qualified are 84, 151 are qualified as MS/MPhil & 90 respondents are qualified as Ph.D.

Here, MS/MPhil respondents are high. In this research, 196 respondents had experienced 0-5years, and 78 had experienced 6-10 years. 29 had experience of 11-15 years. 22 were from 16-20 and 9 from 21-above.

Table 3.3: Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Matric	1	.3
Intermediate	8	2.4
Bachelor	84	25.1
Master/M.Phil.	90	45.2
PHD	196	26.9
Total	334	100

Table 3.4: Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	196	58.7
6-10	78	23.4
11-15	29	8.7
16-20	22	6.6
21-above	9	2.7
Total	334	100

4   Instruments

4.1   Inclusive Leadership

The present study made use of a 9-item scale of inclusive leadership developed by (Carmeli et al., 2010). Examples of such criteria include "the management is open to discuss the intended goals and innovative approaches to achieving them (openness), the manager is available for consultation on problems (availability), and the manager encourages me to contact him/her on emergent issues (accessibility)". Javed et al. (2019) used the instrument, and they reported that its reliability was 0.838.

4.2   Project Success

There is no standard method for measuring project performance in the literature that has been published, and one alternative tool uses prior research. This study made use of the 14-item project success scale that (Aga et al., 2016) had previously utilized. The sample has a dependability of 0.751 and includes the statements "The project was finished off on schedule," "The project was finished off according to the budget decided," and "Our primary donors were satisfied with the results of the project execution."

4.3 Work Engagement

The condensed UWES was employed in this investigation. To gauge employee engagement at work, Schaufeli et al. (2002) devised these 9 items. Examples of such statements are "I feel bursting with enthusiasm at my work" and "I am immersed with my work." Schaufeli et al. (2002) have also previously validated dimensions (2016). UWES-9 had an internal reliability of 0.797 in their study.

4.4 Person Job Fit

The four product dimensions developed by Saks and Ashforth (2002). "To what extent do your knowledge, skill, and ability match the requirements of the job?" is the example commodity. Likewise, "To what extent does the job meet your requirement?" Here, 0.707 dependability is present.

4.5 Reliability Analysis

From Table no 1, by applying Cronbach's Alpha the following are the result.

Table 4.1: Results

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
IL	9	0.84
WE	9	0.81
PJF	4	0.79
PS	12	0.80

Because the numbers are higher than 0.70, Cronbach's Alpha demonstrates that the outcome is more trustworthy. According to the current study, inclusive leadership has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.84, work engagement has a Cronbach value of 0.81, person-job fit has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.79, and project success has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.80.

5 Results

5.1 Descriptive Analysis and Correlation

The above-given table shows the value of the means and standard deviation of all the variables. Additionally, it depicts the value of correlation as well. All the correlation values lie under +1, and -1 and show a significant relationship among dependent, independent, mediating, and moderating variables.

Table 5.1: Results

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlations			
IL	4.31	.47	1			
WE	4.21	.46	.43**	1		
PJF	1.82	.57	-.30**	-.35**	1	
PS	4.16	.39	.41**	.42**	-.36**	1

N= 334, IL: Inclusive leadership, WE: Work Engagement, PJF: Person Job Fit, PS: Project Success.

5.2   Regression

H$_1$:

Results in the table below showed that there is a significant impact of inclusive leadership on project success, as Beta= .23 where (P=0.000) is less than 0.005. Hence, H$_1$ is supportive.

Table 5.2: Standardized Coefficients for Structural Paths

Structural Path	B	SE	T	p
IL>PS	.23	.05	5.18	.00

***=P<0.001, β =standardized regression coefficients, SE=Standard Error

H$_2$:

Table 5.3: Standardized Coefficients for Structural Paths

	Effect	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
WE → PS	.25	.04	5.74	.00	.17	.34
Direct Effect	.23	.04	5.18	.00	.14	.32
Indirect Effect	.11	.05			.02	.21

***=P<0.001; **=P<0.05; β =standardized regression coefficients, SE=Standard Error.

The tables above show that there is a significant positive indirect effect of IL on PS through WE, as Beta = .11, BootLLCI=.02 & Boot ULCI=.21. So, mediation hypothesis H$_2$ is also supportive.

Table 5.4: Standardized Coefficients for Structural Paths

Structural Path	Effect	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Inter-term (IL*PJF)	.30	.04	7.63	.00	.22	.38

***=P<0.001; **=P<0.05; β =standardized regression coefficients, SE=Standard Error

H$_3$:

The interaction effect values are given in the above table. The results showed that inclusive leadership and work engagement have a strong relationship when the person-job fit is high. So, H$_3$ is supported by the results as the value of Beta= .30, LLCI= 0.22 & ULCI= 0.38.

6   Discussion

This study finds the impact of inclusive leadership on project success further mediating the role of work engagement; along with moderating the role of person-job fit has also been researched. If the correct person is selected for the job, then there will be more chances of success of a project because every person has different skills and work abilities, so every person should have a chance to work there where his/her skills fit. The present study's first hypothesis is H$_1$: Inclusive leadership has a significant positive impact on Project Success. From the finite approval that H1 supports. H$_2$: Work engagement mediates the inclusive leadership and project success relationship. From my findings Beta= BootLLCI .0411 & BootULCI .2256 (P<0.05), whereas both values of Boot are positive So H$_2$ supports. H$_3$: Person Job fit moderates the relationship between Inclusive leadership and work engagement. From my findings Beta= BootLLCI .0013 & BootULCI .1841 (P<0.05), whereas both values of Boot are positive So H3 supports.

Results demonstrate that IL has a major impact on project success. Various studies have supported such connection. According to Carmeli et al. (2010), inclusive leadership significantly improves performance. However, a study looked at IL as a component in the development of the company since they looked at successful leaders who recognize the value of everyone's involvement. The literature thus supports the claim that Individual levels, including job satisfaction and retention, group levels, including increased creativity, innovation, and work engagement are all positively and significantly impacted by IL on all levels of the organisation, including good job performance and results Hollander (2012), individual levels, including job satisfaction and retention, and group (Carmeli et al., 2010).Each of these requirements thus directly affects the project's success.

The current study closes a knowledge gap by validating the effects of inclusive leadership on project success and work engagement, among other contributions to the work engagement and person-job fit project management domains. We started by conceptualizing how inclusive leadership affects project success and employee engagement. Second, we investigate the connection between job satisfaction and project success. This association had not been examined in the literature, and the current study's findings supported the conclusion.

7   Conclusion

Four qualities were extensively studied in this study to see if they were applicable to project management. The findings of the hypothesis demonstrate a strong and positive association between inclusive leadership and project success, which is mediated through work engagement. Additionally, the findings show that person-job fit significantly modifies the relationship between inclusive leadership and work engagement. Findings from the study suggest that supporting inclusive leadership in project-based businesses may result in the success of a project by increasing employee work engagement. Additionally, inclusive leadership may boost worker engagement in project-based organizations when there is high-person job fit.

7.1   Limitation and Direction for Future Research

We evaluated inclusive leadership so that future researchers might look at various leadership philosophies like authentic leadership, ethical leadership, and servant leadership as well as how local leadership affects project success in the Pakistani context. Time constraints only allowed for a single mediator to be examined; however, additional research could improve the model and look at the other mediators and moderators. Second, the researcher might have enhanced the cross-sectional data by applying time lag. As the data was only acquired from Pakistan and its twin city, the research can improve the data collection procedure and acquire data from different countries or cities. The investigation's methodology was a solid one. In order to decrease the potential consequences of similar techniques and single bias, project managers and team members should be asked for data on inclusive leadership, work engagement, person-job fit, and project performance.

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