Inclusive Leadership and Employee Voice:
Mediating Roles of Psychological Safety and Leader-member Exchange

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated how inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and leader-member exchange (LMX), were related to employee voice. Using a sample of 158 full-time employees in Hong Kong, the results showed that psychological safety and LMX partially mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice. Because psychological safety had a high correlation with employee voice which may lead to potential collinearity problem, a supplementary analysis was performed which I only included LMX as the mediator in the inclusive leadership and employee voice link. The results showed that LMX fully mediated the relationship.
Chapter 1 – Introduction

In order to stand out and achieve overall success in rapidly changing business environment, organizations undoubtedly need more useful information and innovative ideas from their employees. In the past decade, many scholars have examined “voice”, which is expected to enhance organizational effectiveness and provide solutions for critical problems in the workplace (Detert & Burris, 2007; Detert & Trevino, 2010; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003; Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995). According to Van Dyne & LePine (1998), voice refers to “constructive change-oriented communication intended to improve the situation” (p. 326). Employees often refrain from speaking up because they concern that the risks associated with voice to personal consequences may outweigh its potential benefits to the organization (Edmondson, 1999; Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010; Milliken et al., 2003). Because supervisors have power to make decisions on pays, promotions and punishments of subordinates, they often act vitally in fostering employee voice (Detert & Burris, 2007; Depret & Fiske, 1993). Prior studies have shown that supervisors play a crucial role in developing a climate that encourages voice (Detert & Burris, 2007; Saunders, Shepard, Knight, & Roth, 1992). Their reactions to voice behavior also influence employees’ decisions on whether to speak up (Detert & Burris, 2007; Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). In particular, employees were more likely to speak up when the leaders support, inspire and motivate employees to make changes for the future and believe in their abilities (Detert & Burris, 2007). Therefore, it is theoretically important to understand how leadership may influence employee voice.

A particular form of leadership behavior that has only been recently proposed and examined is inclusive leadership (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). It is a specific form of relationship leadership, refers to “leaders who
exhibit openness, accessibility, and availability in their interactions with followers” (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010, p.250). It is similar to transformational leadership because both types of leadership behavior attend to employees’ needs and concerns. However, inclusive leadership is distinct from transformational leadership because inclusive leadership emphasizes both leaders’ characteristics as well as leader-follower exchange relationship, whereas transformational leadership relies on leader’s initiative (Hollander, 2009). Moreover, inclusive leaders motivate employees by recognizing their inputs and paying attention to their voice authentically (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Even though many empirical researches have focused on certain kinds of leadership styles on employee voice (Detert & Burris, 2007; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), there is little knowledge about the consequences of inclusive leadership on employee behavior. To my knowledge, there is no study that explains how this new type of leadership style may relate to employee voice. Also, despite a number of studies considering outcomes and antecedents of LMX (e.g., Erdogan & Liden, 2002; Gerstner and Day, 1997), the relationship between LMX and specific type of leadership style and how the quality of supervisor-employee relationship affects employee voice are not well understood. Finally, researchers have suggested and examined employees’ perceptions on the costs and benefits of speaking up. (Detert & Burris, 2007; Milliken et al., 2003). How leaders may affect such evaluation deserves further theorization. Therefore, the research question in this study is whether and how inclusive leadership affects employee voice.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This research aims at extending our knowledge of leader behaviors and style on
employee voice. Specially, I propose that inclusive leadership motivates employee voice through two mechanisms: (a) psychological safety because employees feel more safe to speak up, and (b) leader-member exchange (LMX) as they feel that they ought to return the favorable interpersonal treatments by their supervisors. A process model is proposed and examined in this study.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Psychological Safety and Employee Voice

Many empirical studies have shown that individuals compare the potential benefits and costs before engaging in a behavior (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Detert & Burris, 2007; Morrison & Rothman, 2009). Once they judge that the perceived costs are greater than the perceived benefits, they may refrain from doing that behavior (Detert & Burris, 2007; Morrison, 2011). When employees speak up, others (e.g., supervisors, peers) may see them as critics or whistle blowers (Armitage & Conner, 1998; Kahn, 1990; Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2008). They may suffer from an image cost. Even worst, they may loss the support of others and being punished for speaking up (e.g., lower performance evaluation, demotion, termination; Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Christianson, 2009; Milliken et al., 2003). Psychological safety is likely to influence such cost-benefit estimation. According to Edmondson (1999), psychological safety refers to a sense of confidence and self-protection that the individual “will not be embarrassed, rejected and punished by someone for speaking up” (p.355). Since voice can be a risky and uncertainty behavior (Burris, 2012; Takeuchi, Chen, & Cheung, 2012). Employees may became defensive and would not express their ideas and concerns when they feel fear and unsafe. When they feel safer, they are more motivated to voice. Therefore, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Psychological safety is positively associated with employee voice.

2.2 LMX and Employee Voice

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is premised on a reciprocal process, suggesting that individuals provide desirable resources such as information to reciprocate to what they receive from another party (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997; Zhang, Waldman, & Wang, 2012). Leader-member exchange (LMX) is a specific type of social
exchange relationship between a leader and his/her subordinate. It is suggested that leaders develop differential quality of exchange relationships with subordinates, and that the quality of these relationships may affect subordinate outcomes, for example, job performance, job satisfaction (Gerstner & Day, 1997), innovation on work tasks (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993) and organizational commitment (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). There are more trust, respect, loyalty and a high-level of sense of obligation among supervisor and the employee in a high-quality LMX relationship (Dulebohn et al, 2012; Graen & Uhl Bien, 1995). When employees perceive more support and guidance provided by their supervisors, they are willing to engage in contextual and volunteering performance in return (Deluga, 1998; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002). Employees who have high-quality LMX with their supervisors also use more interaction exchange, i.e., the actions and resources beyond their normal work requirements, to reciprocate the favorable treatments by their supervisors (Fairhurst, 1993; Krone, 1991). Prior studies have shown, in general, a positive relationship between LMX and prosocial behaviors (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviors, helping; Graen & Uhl Bien, 1995; Zhu, 2012). Employees may have opinions or ideas about issues at work that their supervisors may concern or not aware of. The higher the LMX is, the more likely that employees are motivated to speak up with the intention to help the supervisors identify the issues. In contrast, employees with low-quality LMX relationships with their supervisors often receive less support and have fewer changes to exchange opinions with their supervisors (Graen & Cashman, 1975). The less favorable treatments by the supervisors due to lower LMX may lead the focal employees less obligated to return favor to the supervisors. Therefore, he or she is less likely to voice. Overall, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: LMX is positively associated with employee voice.
2.3 Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety

Prior research found that transformational leadership behaviors (Detert & Burris, 2007) and agreeableness of a leader (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009) help enhance employee psychological safety. In particular, Edmondson (2004) proposed and found that employees feel safer when their supervisors demonstrate “openness, availability, and accessibility”. Employees perceive greater threat, or less safe, when they perceive their supervisors to be unsupportive, defensive and autocratic (Hollander, 2006; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). I propose that inclusive leadership is of particular relevance to employee psychological safety. Specifically, inclusive leaders are always supportive to their subordinates (Hollander, 2009). They focus on open communication that encourage and appreciate employees’ innovative contributions (Hollander, 2009). Moreover, they concern about the interests, feelings and expectations of their subordinates. The more employees perceive their supervisors to be inclusive, the higher their psychological safety because they feel safer to approach their supervisors (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). They are likely to perceive it less risky to go beyond their in-role job requirements because there is unlikely any harmful effects to their personal image, status, and career (Carmeli et al., 2010; Detert & Edmondson, 2011). Therefore, I expect that the higher the levels of inclusive leadership, the higher the levels of employees’ psychological safety.

**Hypothesis 3**: Inclusive leadership is positively associated with employee psychological safety.

2.4 Inclusive Leadership and LMX

I propose that inclusive leadership has a positive relationship with LMX. Specifically, strong LMX relationships will take place gradually when inclusive supervisors offer coaching, caring, guidance and resources and employees view these are valuable and sufficient in mutual exchange processes (Tse & Mitchell, 2010; Werbel & Henriques, 2009). Employees
are more willing to share mutual respect, identity, trust, obligation with their supervisors when LMX is higher (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joireman, 2008). They are less likely to do so when employees perceive that their leaders do not show recognition, respond and support to them (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Because inclusive leaders often display behaviors that employees appreciate (e.g., listening and responding to employees’ opinions, valuing their contributions, and seeking their participation in decision making), they gain trust and commitment from employees (Hsiung, 2012). Therefore, I propose that the higher levels of inclusive leadership result in higher levels of LMX.

**Hypothesis 4:** Inclusive leadership is positively associated with LMX.

### 2.5 Inclusive Leadership, Psychological Safety and Employee Voice

As mentioned earlier, employees may perceive uncertainty in the consequences of voice. Voice may lead to positive (e.g., appreciation from supervisors) or negative outcomes (e.g., being regarded as troublemaker). How leaders behave to their employees in their day-to-day interactions may affect employees’ judgment on the extent to which voice to lead to these outcomes (Brown et al., 2005; Detert & Burris, 2007). When employees feel unsafe to do so, they withhold their voice. When the leaders can remove barriers that usually deter employees from voicing their ideas (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), employees are more likely to speak up.

Inclusive leaders welcome their subordinates to raise concerns, make novel ideas on work issues, and involve in in decision making process (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Ryan, 2007). As a result, employees are likely to perceive that the leaders are open-minded, resulting in a non-threatening climate for upward voice (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Therefore, they are less afraid to present their improve-oriented comments even that may challenge the current situation of the organization (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012). In addition,
inclusive supervisors constructively respond to the concerns of their followers. Prior studies have shown that such open-minded, available and accessible managerial behaviors can encourage voice by enhancing the level of psychological safety of the employees when they perceive their inputs and opinions are being considered and genuinely valued (Avey & Wernsing, 2012; Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson 1999, 2006; Saunders et al., 1992). To sum up, I propose that inclusive leadership enhances employees’ psychological safety, which in turn motivates them to speak up. I thus hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 5:* The positive relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice behavior to focal supervisor is mediated by psychological safety.

### 2.6 Inclusive Leadership, LMX and Employee Voice

When employees perceived that their supervisors treat them well, they feel a need to bring something desirable back to supervisors, such as speaking up. I propose that LMX is likely an alternative mechanism linking inclusive leadership and employee voice. Specifically, inclusive leaders share visions with employees and count their ideas frankly, followers feel energized and more committed to the leaders, thus they are most likely reciprocate by displaying extra-role behavior such as speaking up (Billmoria, 2012; Walumbwa, Cropanzano, & Goldman, 2011). The reasoning advocated by Lavelle et al. (2009) is that followers tend to have a feeling of relational obligation to perform constructive behaviors for their relational leaders. Besides, higher levels of LMX facilitate social exchanges on relationship resources (e.g., trust and respect). Such relationships are often seen as long-term and favorable (Lavelle et al., 2007; Zhang, Wang & Shi, 2012). Lower levels of LMX, in contrast, foster economic exchanges on materialistic resources, such as money (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, when a leader displays more inclusive behaviors, the focal employee is more likely to see the leader as going beyond an economic exchange, resulting in social exchange
relationship between the two parties (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). To fulfill his/her obligation to reciprocate the favorable treatments by the supervisor, the focal employee is likely to voice (Chan & Mak, 2012). Therefore, higher levels of inclusive leadership are likely to facilitate higher levels of LMX, which in turn motivates greater levels of employee voice. I thus hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 6:** The positive relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice behavior to focal supervisor is mediated by LMX.
Chapter 3 – Method

3.1 Participants and Procedures

Data were collected from employees working in Hong Kong using a cross-sectional, self-reported survey. I invited the participants of this study through two ways: First, I invited 30 employees in a medium-sized trading company, among which 27 completed the surveys. A contact person helped distribute the surveys to the employees who accepted the invitation. I included an instruction page, a cover letter, and a return envelope in each survey package. The cover letter described the main aims of the research, assured participants of anonymity plus confidentiality, and informed them that all responses are on voluntary nature and they could withdraw from the survey anytime because of any reason. Upon completion of the surveys, the respondents were instructed to put their completed questionnaire into the return envelope, sealed it with their signature across the seal, and dropped it in a collection box in the office. Second: I sent out invitations to 170 employees through the personal connections of my friends and relatives. I asked them to distribute and collect the paper-and-pencil surveys. As some respondents preferred online survey, I developed an online survey using Qualtrics and asked the respondents to complete the online version of the surveys.

I received a total of 172 returned surveys, including 27 from the trading company and 145 from the snowball sample. After removing cases with missing values, there were 158 responses with no missing value (response rate= 79%). 51% of them were male. On average, they were 31.75 years old, had worked for 43.41 months in the current company. 76% received at least a bachelor’s degree or above.

3.2 Measures

Following the recommendations by Brislin (1986), I translated the original English scales into Chinese. Two classmates involved in back-translation process. I compared their
responses to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

Responses to all items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

**Employee voice**

I used a six-item instrument developed by Van Dyne and LePine (1998) to measure employee voice. I adapted the items to tap upward voice. Sample items include, “I communicate my opinions about work issues to my supervisor even if my opinion is different and my supervisor disagrees with me,” “I keep my supervisor well informed about issues where my opinion might be useful to him/her,’ and “I encourage others to speak up to my supervisor about work-related issues in my work unit.” The Cronbach’s alpha was 0.81.

**Inclusive leadership**

I adopted a nine-item measure on inclusive leadership developed by Carmeli et al. (2010). Three characteristics of inclusive leadership will be evaluated, including openness, availability and accessibility. A higher score means that the employee believed his/her supervisor to demonstrate more inclusive leadership behaviors. A sample item for openness is, “My supervisor is open to hearing new ideas”. A sample item for availability is, “My supervisor is available for consultation on problems”. A sample item for accessibility is, “My supervisor is accessible for discussing emerging problems”. The Cronbach’s alpha was 0.90.

**Psychological safety**

I used Carmeli et al.’s (2010) five-item scale to measure employee psychological safety. The measure was adapted from the scale developed by Edmonson (1999). Sample items are, “I am able to bring up problems and tough issues”; and “It is easy for me to ask other
members of this organization for help”. The Cronbach’s alpha was 0.76.

**Leader-member exchange**

I used Liden & Maslyn’s (1998) 7-item instrument on LMX. Sample items include “I always know how satisfied my supervisor is with what I do,” “My supervisor understands my problems and needs well enough,” and “My supervisor would personally use his/her power to me solves my work problems.” The Cronbach’s alpha was 0.83.

**Control variables**

Based on prior studies, I controlled for several demographic variables which were not the main interests in this study yet have potential influence on employee voice, including age, gender, educational level, organizational tenure. Older employees may be more willing to voice than young employees because they may generate more feasible solutions to confront challenges (Artistico, Cervone, & Pezzuti, 2003); employees who have higher educational levels may feel more confident about their ability to express credible and effective ideas (Frese, Teng, & Wijnen, 1999); employees who stay longer in the organization may be more familiar with operations that can increase their confidence to voice (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001). Age was measured in years and tenure reported the number of year employee worked in the organization. Dummy coding was exerted to measure gender (0= male; 1=female). Also, a dummy variable was used to measure the educational level of the respondents (0= non-university graduate; 1= university graduate). Moreover, I controlled for two dimensions of transformational leadership, which were individualized consideration and inspirational motivation. These dimensions have the most theoretical overlap with inclusive leadership. I used 8 items from Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995) to measure individualized consideration (e.g., “My manager spends time teaching and coaching”) and
inspirational motivation (e.g., “My manager talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished”). The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.89.

3.3 Analytical Strategy

I followed Baron and Kenny’s (1986) approach to test the hypotheses. Specifically, I conducted hierarchical multiple regression analysis to test the mediating role of psychological safety and LMX in the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice. Four conditions must be fulfilled to test a mediation model: (1) independent variable must be correlated with dependent variable; (2) independent variable must be correlated with mediator; (3) mediator must be correlated with dependent variable when independent variable and mediator are entered; (4) full mediation will occur if the independent variable is together with insignificant beta in this final stage. I included the control variables in the first step in all the regression analysis.
Chapter 4 – Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and correlations

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and zero-order correlations for all variables. The results show that inclusive leadership was positively correlated with psychological safety, LMX and employee voice ($r_s = .62$, $.54$, and $.56$, respectively, $p_s < .001$). Psychological safety was positively correlated with LMX and employee voice ($r_s = .65$ and $.78$, respectively, $p_s < .001$). These high interconstruct correlations may lead to inaccurate estimation of the regression analysis (Lauridsen & Mur, 2006). The findings related to psychological safety should thus be interpreted with caution. I will discuss how I dealt with this issue in the Supplementary Analysis section. Finally, LMX was also positively related to employee voice ($r = .59$, $p < .001$).
4.2 Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses were tested through hierarchical regression analyses and the results are summarized in Table 2. The results provided support for Hypotheses 1 and 2. Psychological safety ($\beta = .63, p < .001$) and LMX ($\beta = .12, p < .001$) were positively associated to employee voice. As shown in Table 2, there is a significant positive relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological safety ($\beta = .50, p < .001$). The results also indicated that higher inclusive leadership was related to higher LMX ($\beta = .48, p < .001$). Therefore, both Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 were supported. Moreover, inclusive leadership positively related to employee voice ($\beta = .47, p < .001$). When I included inclusive leadership, psychological safety and LMX to the same regression equation, the positive effect of inclusive leadership on employee voice was weakened but remained significant ($\beta = .11, p < .001$). The results suggested the psychological safety and LMX partially mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice. Thus, Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 received partial support. A Sobel test revealed that the significant indirect effect of inclusive leadership on employee voice through psychological safety (indirect effect = .08, $p < .05$). There was also significant indirect effect of inclusive leadership on employee voice through LMX (indirect effect = .10, $p < .05$).

4.3 Supplementary Analysis

As mentioned, the high correlation among psychological safety and employee voice should be a concern because multicollinearity may make the estimation of the regression confidents unrealistic and unreliable (Haitovsky, 1969; Lauridsen & Mur, 2006; Beckstead, 2012). A high correlation of 0.78 indicated that 61% of the construct of psychological safety and employee voice was overlapped. As a result, it is very difficult to examine the unique contribution of psychological safety in employee voice in further analysis, or distinguish between psychological safety and employee voice when their constructs. The simplest
solution for multicollinearity is to remove the most intercorrelated variable (Zainodin, Noraini, & Yap, 2011). I thus excluded psychological safety and examined LMX as the mechanism, linking inclusive leadership and employee voice. I used the same analytic strategy in testing this simplified conceptual model.

As shown in Table 3, the effect of inclusive leadership on employee voice became non-significant when LMX was entered in the regression equation. The findings indicated that LMX fully mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice.
Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Summary of Results

Findings of this study showed that (1) psychological safety and LMX positively related to employee voice, (2) inclusive leadership positively related to psychological safety and LMX and (3) inclusive leadership related to employee voice partially through psychological safety and LMX. Overall, these findings suggest that psychological safety and LMX partially mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice. In the supplementary analysis I excluded psychological safety due to its high correlation with employee voice. The results showed that LMX underlies the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The concept of inclusive leadership is relatively new in research field. Few studies are available and the researchers have mainly investigated other positive work outcomes, such as employee involvement in creative work tasks (Carmeli, Palmon, & Ziv, 2010) and engagement in quality improvement work (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Its impact on employee voice remains unclear.

Leader actions may influence the willingness of employees to speak up with ideas and concerns on work issues (Edmondson, 1996). Findings of this study reveal that when leaders display more inclusive behaviors, employees feel safer and thus are more likely to speak up. More importantly, higher-quality of social exchange relationships would be enhanced between the leaders and their followers. Employees are likely to perceive their relationships with the leaders as trusting, supportive and respectful. Feelings of obligation to reciprocate the leaders’ favorable treatments therefore motivate them to speak up for organization improvement. Finding in this study on how the quality of supervisor-employee relationship
affects employee voice are largely consistent with those in the prior studies (e.g. Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Farndale et al., 2011; Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joirernan, 2008).

The unexpected high correlations between psychological safety, LMX, and employee voice might be due to several reasons. First, although there are some current research examined the relationship between psychological safety and employee voice (e.g. Detert & Burris, 2007; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), most of them have mainly focused on psychological safety at team level rather than individual level. Indeed, psychological safety was originally conceptualized as a team-level construct (Edmondson, 1999). More work may be needed to conceptualize psychological safety at the individual level, especially its relations to LMX and voice.

Second, I followed the majority of voice researches (e.g. Milliken et al., 2003; Deter & Burris, 2007; Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010; Burris, 2013) and defined voice as “constructive change-oriented communication intended to improve the situation” (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998, p. 326). The concept of voice is broad which includes opinions, views, ideas, recommendations, challenges, suggestions, concerns (Morrison, 2011). It is possible that the respondents in this study have different interpretations of the perceived costs and benefits for different types of voice. Liang, Farh and Farh (2012), for example, distinguished between “promotive voice” and “prohibitive voice”. They found that different psychological factors as predictors to the two types of voice. Therefore, future research may replicate and extent the present study to examine whether psychological safety has similar (highly positive) relationship with different types of voice.

Third, all the responses in this study were self-reported by the employees. There may be potential responses biases, e.g. social desirability (Holland, Cooper, Pyman, & Teicher, 2012). It might be that employees gave higher ratings for the items describing themselves and thereby affected the results of the analysis. Indeed, Conchie, Taylor and Donald (2012) also mentioned that data from single source may bias the measurement. The problems of increased
the common method variance and inflated the correlations may probably take place between the variables.

Finally, the high correlation might because of the sequencing of questions in the survey. The way the items presented might introduce potential bias since the constructs of psychological safety and employee voice behaviors were put together. It might be increase the likelihood of the respondents to give consistent responses on the items (Sanchez, 1992).

5.3 Managerial Implications

There are some worthy managerial implications in this study that should be highlighted. Findings of this study suggest to managers that the actions of leaders are very important in encouraging employees to speak up. Managers may demonstrate inclusive behaviors, including openness, accessibility and availability, as means to develop and maintain strong social exchange relationships with their employees. More specifically, they may provide more coaching, attend to employees’ suggestions and needs, promote two-way communications, and support for new idea. To do this, organizations may train and develop inclusive leaders by shaping their skills in coaching and communications.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

First, this study was cross-sectional in nature. When all the variables are measured at the same time, it is difficult to conclude whether one variable precedes another variable (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006; Spector, 2006). Therefore, the mediating role of psychological safety between inclusive leadership and employee voice could not be established. Morrison (2011) supported that data from different time points may assess the changes in employee voice over time. Data can be obtained at two or three points in time because a well-planned longitudinal study can provide better insights and help figure out
cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. It would be the most favorable if the predictor, mediator and criterion variables are evaluated separately (Chan, 2009). In light of these, I suggest a longitudinal study design would be more desirable in the future instead of cross-sectional design. Future research may thus replicate this study using a longitudinal research design.

Second, other mechanisms may be in place to explain the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice. For example, prior studies suggested “trust in leader” could motivate employees to express concerns and ideas (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Gao, Janssen, & Shi, 2011). It is conceivable that future research can integrate trust in leader with the current model and theories.

Third, future research may collect data from different sources in order to reduce the self-reported bias (Moorman & Podsakoff, 1992). LMX emphasizes dyadic relationships (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). It may be useful to examine leaders’ perceptions of LMX. Future research may invite supervisors to give ratings on LMX and employee voice.

Last but not least, future research should pay more attention on questionnaire design. To tackle the problem of consistent responses on two consecutive constructs in the survey, some filter questions may be placed between the measures such as demographic-related questions. However, filter questions should not be similar with the items measuring any focal variables in the study (Richardson et al., 2006). Knäuper (1998) advised that researchers should test the filter questions beforehand and ensure that the respondents would not misunderstand the question meanings.

5.5 Conclusion

This study extends our understanding by showing how inclusive leadership affects employee voice. LMX was found to mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee voice. This study extends current understanding on how inclusive leadership, a
specific type of leader behaviors, influences the exchange relationship between supervisors and employees, and thus employee voice.
References


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Appendices

Figure 1  Conceptual Model

![Diagram](image-url)
Table 1  Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

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<th>Mean</th>
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<td>1. Age</td>
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<td>3. Education: Bachelor’s or above</td>
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<td>4. Organizational Tenure</td>
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<td>5. Transformation leadership</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.4</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inclusive leadership</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>(.90)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Psychological Safety</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>(.76)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. LMX</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>(.83)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Employee Voice</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.78**</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>(.81)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=158 (listwised). Standardized betas were reported.  *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
### Table 2: Results for Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Hypotheses Testing: The Mediation Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mediator: Psychological Safety</th>
<th>Mediator: LMX</th>
<th>DV: Employee Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>M2</td>
<td>M1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = female)</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Bachelor’s or above</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Tenure</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>.41***</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.60***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.50***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV &amp; Mediators:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
R^2 \begin{array}{cccc}
.19*** & .33*** & .39*** & .51*** \\
.14*** & .12*** & .17*** & .08*** \\
\end{array}
\]

N=158 (listwised). Standardized betas were reported. *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
Table 3  Supplementary Results for Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Hypotheses Testing: LMX as the Mediator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator: LMX</th>
<th>DV: Employee Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = female)</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Bachelor’s or above</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Tenure</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>.60***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV &amp; Mediators:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.39***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.12***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=158 (listwised). Standardized betas were reported. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Measurement Scales

Voice behavior


1. I make recommendations to my supervisor about ways to improve work procedures in my work unit
我向上司提出改善工作程序的新方案

2. I encourage others to speak up to my supervisor about work-related issues in my work unit
我鼓励同事向上司提出一些与工作相关的想法

3. I communicate my opinions about work issues to my supervisor even if my opinion is different and my supervisor disagrees with me
我敢于向上司表达自己的想法和意见，即使他/她不认同

4. I keep my supervisor well informed about issues where my opinion might be useful to him/her
我很清楚自己的建议在那些问题上可能对上司有帮助

5. I get involved in issues that affect the quality of work life in my work unit
我经常参与讨论影响工作生活质量的事物

6. I speak up to my supervisor with ideas for new projects or changes in work procedures
我勇向上司提出对新项目或程序改进的看法
Inclusive leadership


Openness

1. The manager is open to hearing new ideas
   上司願意聽取我提出的新方案

2. The manager is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes
   上司關注能改善工作流程的機會

3. The manager is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them
   上司坦誠地和我討論工作目標及完成任務的新方法

Availability

4. The manager is available for consultation on problems (availability)
   當遇到困難時，員工可和上司磋商

5. The manager is an ongoing ‘presence’ in this team --- someone who is readily available
   在這團隊裡，上司隨時都有空接見員工

6. The manager is available for professional questions I would like to consult with him/her
   我可以諮詢上司有關工作的專業問題

7. The manager is ready to listen to my requests
   上司隨時準備傾聽我的請求

Accessibility

8. The manager encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues
   上司鼓勵我向他/她了解工作上出現的新問題

9. The manager is accessible for discussing emerging problems
   員工可容易地和上司討論工作上出現的新問題
Psychological Safety


*The measure was adapted from the scale developed by Edmondson, A.C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. Administrative Science Quarterly, 44, 350-383.

1. I am able to bring up problems and tough issues
我可以向上司提出問題和疑難

2. People in this organization do not reject others for being different
這家公司的成員不會因差異而排拒他人

3. It is safe to take a risk in this organization
在公司裡作出有風險的行為是安全的

4. It is easy for me to ask other members of this organization for help
我在公司尋求他人的幫助是很容易的

5. No one in this organization would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts
在這家公司裡，沒有人會蓄意破壞我的努力成果
LMX


1. I always know how satisfied my supervisor is with what I do.
   一般來說，我很清楚我的上司是否滿意我的工作表現

2. My supervisor understands my problems and needs well enough.
   上司對我工作上的問題和需要有足夠的了

3. My supervisor recognizes my potentials.
   上司清楚我的潛力

4. My supervisor would personally use his/her power to me solves my work problems.
   上司會運用個人的權力來幫我解決我工作上的問題

5. I can count on my supervisor to ‘bail me out’ at his/her expense when I really need it.
   我知道當我有需要時，即使對上司不利，他/她都會保我周全

6. I have enough confidence in my supervisor to defend and justify my decisions when I am not present to do so.
   我深信任我不在場時，上司會維護和支持我的決定

7. My working relationship with my supervisor is extremely effective.
   我和我上司的工作關係非常有效