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The Nexus Between Inclusive Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior: A Multiple Mediation Model

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Abstract

In the dynamic banking industry, fostering innovation is crucial for maintaining competitiveness. This study explores how inclusive leadership influences innovative work behavior (IWB) among banking employees in Thailand, focusing on the mediating roles of psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy. Drawing upon social information processing theory, social learning theory, and social exchange theory, the research develops a multiple mediation model to examine these relationships. Data were collected from 960 employees across Thai banks and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings reveal that inclusive leadership has a significant and positive impact on psychological safety, affective trust, creative self-efficacy, and IWB. Furthermore, all three mediators were found to significantly influence IWB and mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and IWB. These results underscore the critical role inclusive leaders play in creating a psychologically safe and trusting environment that enhances employees' confidence in their creative abilities. The study offers practical implications for banking executives aiming to promote innovation through inclusive leadership strategies. It also contributes theoretically by integrating multiple social theories to explain the mechanisms linking leadership and innovation, highlighting the importance of psychological and interpersonal factors in organizational innovation processes.

Keywords: Banking Sector; Innovation Development; Psychological Safety; Affective Trust; Creative Self-Efficacy.

1. Introduction

Thailand's banking sector is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by the country's ambition to become a global financial hub under the "Ignite Finance" initiative. Banks are actively embracing digital innovation, investing in core banking upgrades, enhancing data capabilities, and preparing to migrate 50% of new digital workloads to the public cloud within five years to meet rising digital demands. In 2025, positive loan growth is expected, highlighting the urgency for both traditional and non-traditional financial players to adopt emerging technologies and customer-centric digital strategies. A strong Agentic AI strategy and robust cybersecurity framework are essential for building trust and achieving sustainable growth [1]. The evolving financial landscape positions banks at the forefront of innovation, making digital transformation a critical pathway for competitiveness in Thailand's future economy.

Banks confront this challenge and have a significant stake in applying information and communication technology principles to meet constantly shifting requirements and customers' demands for new products and services driven by

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ICT. In this regard, banks are required to actively participate in an ongoing process of enhancing and refining. Innovation enables them to enhance service delivery, improve operational efficiency, and develop new financial products, ensuring the bank remains competitive and responsive to market demands [2]. Therefore, bank employees need to exhibit innovative work behavior to adapt to the rapidly evolving financial landscape, driven by technological advancements and changing customer expectations. In this swiftly evolving business context, extraordinary human resources provide a paramount competitive advantage. An adept staff not only enhances efficiency and service quality but also fosters innovation to meet rising client needs [3].

In the present competitive landscape, organizations are compelled to devise strategies to foster innovation in response to the shifting demands of their consumers [4]. This approach is crucial in an unpredictable environment, as innovation is a key driver of competitive advantage [5]. As global competition intensifies, the ability to think innovatively is increasingly recognized as vital for organizational survival and success [6]. For their long-term achievement, research indicates that innovation is not restricted to R&D departments alone; rather, all employees must adopt innovative roles [7]. It is imperative for firms to enhance their innovative abilities to secure a competitive edge and sustain these talents in the long term [8].

Employees contribute to innovation by leveraging their skills to foster, advocate, and execute novel concepts, which enhances their innovative work behavior (IWB) [9]. It seems that fostering IWB among employees is crucial for an organization's sustainability and ambition. Currently, organizations are keen on encouraging their employees to innovate and execute novel concepts to enhance overall efficiency. Since every groundbreaking concept begins with an individual's idea, businesses need to seek out employees who are particularly creative and inventive [10]. Moreover, Organizations are increasingly compelled to examine the principal factors influencing employee innovation, especially in the private banking industry [11].

Recent studies on employees of IWB have garnered considerable interest. Numerous studies have been undertaken globally into the determinants influencing employees of IWB. Nevertheless, the quantity of research is limited [12]. Scholars have discovered that leadership is a significant circumstance factor that encourages IWB among employees [13]. Leaders play a crucial role in driving organizational transformation in the workplace. Particularly as it pertains to promoting and encouraging innovation within an organization [14], it is a challenge for researchers to identify the effective leadership style that inspires IWB.

A significant amount of further study has illuminated the influence that different leadership styles have on achieving higher levels of IWB [15-17]. In the present investigation, our focus was on a specific form of relational leadership, which examines how leaders foster and sustain positive, collaborative relationships with their followers, referred to as inclusive leadership (IL), throughout the entire process. When it came to investigating innovative situations, this leadership approach was more appropriate because it allows for the concurrent examination of employee and leadership behavior in the process of collaboratively determining IWB [18]. Specifically, banking is a service sector that requires collaboration across several divisions and constant communication with diverse consumers. Consequently, inclusive leaders are more likely to heed others' perspectives, advocate for diversity, and ensure staff feel valued and appreciated [19]. This enables employees to provide enhanced customer service.

There have been ongoing efforts to identify the specific features and mechanisms that influence the impact of leadership on the IWB of followers. A recent study identified psychological safety as a potential mechanism through which IL could exert a greater impact on the IWB of subordinates in a sample from the automobile and chemical industries [19, 20]. Moreover, previous research expressed that trust has an impact on servant leadership and IWB in the IT industry [21]. An additional investigation conducted in textile enterprises revealed that creative self-efficacy functioned as a viable mechanism via which IL could impact the IWB of employees [22]. Due to the rapid technological advancements in the banking sector, fostering creativity among employees is more imperative. Nevertheless, the banking sector's characteristic stability, legitimacy, and stringent regulations—may hinder employees from exhibiting IWB, mostly due to fear of failure or internal pressure to adhere to established norms. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to establish a psychologically safe workplace where employees feel empowered to propose innovative ideas and take risks without fear of repercussions. Furthermore, fostering trust among individuals and enhancing their confidence in their creative capabilities can further facilitate invention. In a meticulously regulated organization, fostering creativity hinges on cultivating trust among individuals and self-belief within a supportive atmosphere. Building on this foundation, the present study proposes that psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy collectively serve as key mechanisms that explain how IL promotes IWB in the banking sector.

Although several studies have explored the relationship between inclusive leadership (IL) and innovative work behavior (IWB) [19–22], research in this area remains limited in the banking sector, especially within the Thai context. Moreover, while individual mediators such as psychological safety, affective trust, or creative self-efficacy have been examined in isolation, few studies have integrated all three mechanisms within a unified conceptual

framework. These mediators, rooted in positive psychology, may jointly explain how IL fosters IWB; yet, their combined mediating effects remain underexplored, particularly in high-stakes, service-oriented environments such as banking. This study addresses these gaps by examining a multiple mediation model of IL and IWB in Thailand's banking sector.

The primary objective of this investigation is to analyze the intricate dynamics between IL, psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy to explain the IWB of bank employees. That is to say, the present study exposes and subsequently suggests the three psychological mechanisms that underline the postulated interaction effects. Firstly, this study investigates an efficacious mechanism through which IL in the banking sector can subtly impact the IWB of their employees by utilizing psychological safety. To facilitate the advancement of innovative processes, employees must be provided with psychological safety [23]. Secondly, the study employs affective trust as the mediator between IL and IWB. Leadership fosters trust in employees, empowering them to confidently introduce improvements in their roles, thus boosting their job resources. While simultaneously enhancing their job satisfaction. Armed with the additional resources and optimistic outlook, the personnel will enhance their ability to think and act, leading to the advocacy and execution of novel concepts [24]. Thirdly, Creative self-efficacy pertains to a collection of fundamental self-concepts that foster creative pursuits, and it quantifies the extent to which employees rely on their ability to generate inventive results [25], which would serve as a mediator in this relationship. Finally, this investigation contributes to the current body of knowledge about IL and employees' IWB in the banking sector in Thailand.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Theoretical Background

This study improves comprehension of how inclusive leadership (IL) affects employees' innovative work behavior (IWB) in the Thai banking sector. Three key theories underpin the proposed research model: social exchange theory, social information processing theory, and social learning theory. Each theory offers a lens through which the mechanisms and pathways of influence from IL to IWB can be better understood.

1) Social Exchange Theory

Following the principles of social exchange theory, as proposed by Blau [26], posits that individuals engage in social interactions based on a rational assessment of costs and benefits. People strive to maximize the benefits received while minimizing the drawbacks of their interactions [26]. This perspective is particularly useful in understanding how affective trust operates as a mediator in leadership dynamics, as individuals are more likely to reciprocate positively when they perceive fair and beneficial exchanges. Based on social exchange theory [26], IL fosters trust and collaboration by offering support, recognition, and growth opportunities to diverse employees. This approach creates an environment where individuals experience esteem and appreciation, which encourages participation and gives them the opportunity to express their opinions. IL thereby builds reciprocal social relationships characterized by mutual benefit and obligation, ultimately leading to increased IWB. Furthermore,

2) Social Information Processing Theory

Based on social information processing theory [27], individuals rely on their social surroundings—especially their leaders—to acquire crucial information that shapes their attitudes and behaviors. This theory, initially proposed by Salancik and Pfeffer [27], emphasizes that employees interpret and make sense of their work environment by observing the behaviors of others, particularly those in leadership roles. Through these social cues, they derive meanings that affect their psychological responses and actions. When inclusive leaders actively foster a climate of psychological safety—by encouraging open communication, inclusion, and risk-taking without fear of negative consequences—it significantly influences how employees perceive and engage with their environment [27]. This creates conditions that support IWB.

3) Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory, proposed by Bandura [28], highlights that individuals acquire knowledge and behaviors through observation, modeling, imitation, and vicarious reinforcement. It underscores the role of cognitive processes and the social context in shaping individual behavior. In the workplace, employees often observe how IL manages diversity, supports creativity, and responds to new ideas. These observed behaviors, coupled with the positive reinforcement that inclusive leaders provide, can strengthen employees' beliefs in their creative abilities, also known as creative self-efficacy [28]. As a result, employees become more confident in their capacity to generate and implement innovative solutions, thereby enhancing IWB.

2.2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior

The notion of IL was initially coined by Nembhard & Edmondson [29], and they defined IL as "words and deeds by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions." IL involves actions by leaders who actively seek and value the input of all team members, establishing a conducive atmosphere that fosters a sense of respect and inclusion for all individuals [30]. They focus on fairness and foster a culture where diverse perspectives are integrated into decision-making [29].

IL values inclusion greatly and inspires all staff members to offer changes. This encourages employees to collaborate, express their viewpoints, and exceed expectations [31]. Goals are mutually established when IL values their workers using inclusive strategies like belongingness and distinctiveness [32]. Working closely with employees and inviting them explicitly for involvement in deciding are two ways IL involve their workforce in the inclusion process [33]. Furthermore, IL owns up to their mistakes [33], this is significant when it comes to innovation because the process of creating innovation is prone to errors. Staff members discuss novel concepts as well as advocate for and carry out practical ideas. When their views are supported, employees exhibit increased IWB [34].

IWB refers to "the intentional creation, introduction, and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, in order to benefit role performance, the group, or the organization [9]." Additionally, the concept of IWB involves a collection of actions taken by employees wherein they actively pursue and uncover novel possibilities or solutions within the workplace with the intention of implementing them [35].

Following the principles of social exchange theory [26]. This study improves comprehension of how IL affects employees' IWB in the Thailand banking sector. Employees' IWB is improved by IL in many ways. For instance, leaders who are inclusive value transparency and honest communication with employees. Employees who have earned the trust of their superiors are therefore less afraid of facing consequences if they don't achieve the expected outcomes [36]. Furthermore, IL encourages employees to discuss new concerns with their supervisors [37]. Thus, employees are inspired to discuss issues and devise creative strategies. Moreover, IL must ensure they are readily available to employees undertaking novel endeavors. Hence, with the guidance of IL, employees have the ability to surmount novel challenges within the realm of innovation. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H1. Inclusive leadership relates positively to innovative work behavior.

Inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and innovative work behavior.

Psychological safety refers to a condition where employees feel secure when taking risks, although facing several obstacles to freely sharing their thoughts [38]. Such as expressing one's opinions, engaging in inquiry, or acknowledging errors, without apprehension of adverse outcomes. This reveals that employees require proficiency in discussing novel work procedures by dismissing conventional methods of performing the tasks [39].

IL is characterized by a leader who is perceived as open-minded, available, and accessible in their relationship with employees. According to Edmondson et al. [38], leaders who are open-minded, available, and accessible are likely to encourage the growth of psychological safety. Rational and feeling support offered by IL can contribute to the creation and maintenance of work environments in which employees confront a higher level of psychological safety [40, 41].

IL demonstrates their availability and accessibility, which conveys a distinct message that employees may readily contact them and discuss any concerns [37]. Consequently, when people see a robust perception of inclusivity from their leader, they will feel secure in approaching the leader and sharing their thoughts without fear of negative consequences, therefore, promoting the cultivation of personal psychological safety among employees.

Psychological safety fosters individuals' recognition of their capacity to propose groundbreaking ideas [41]. Employees who experience psychological safety are encouraged to openly challenge the rationale behind decisions made by their leader, with the aim of proposing constructive adjustments that promote IWB. Moreover, Abbas & Wu [42] asserted the necessity of establishing a conducive atmosphere for employees to freely share innovative business ideas, devoid of any apprehension of punishment. This heightened sense of psychological safety serves as a catalyst for fostering greater levels of IWB.

In line with this reasoning, it may be said IL has the ability to impact the IWB of employees by fostering a greater sense of psychological safety. Individuals who possess a sense of psychological safety are more likely to engage in active participation in IWB and provide fresh and unique thoughts to the business [43].

Significantly, within the banking sector, organizational divisions that possess elevated levels of psychological safety under IL are more likely to promote employees' participation in IWB. Thus, this discussion suggests that psychological safety acts as a mediator in the connection between IL and IWB.

Based on the social information processing theory [27], it is probable that employees experience a sense of psychological safety in their interactions, they are more inclined to openly articulate their thoughts, share diverse perspectives, and participate in collaborative resolving issues endeavors. This environment encourages experimentation and risk-taking, crucial components of IWB. Therefore, even if their novel ideas are not completely mature, employees will feel secure to share innovative ideas with each other without the apprehension of being criticized or penalized.

Conversely, employees in work units that have a poor level of psychological safety may refrain from sharing their ideas. Thus, IL indirectly promotes IWB by creating a conducive atmosphere for open communication and idea exchange, as theorized by social information processing theory [27].

To summarize, IL facilitates the cultivation of psychological safety, hence promoting employees to actively participate in IWB. Thus, we put forward the subsequent hypothesis:

H2. Inclusive leadership relates positively to psychological safety.

H3. Psychological safety relates positively to innovative work behavior.

H4. Psychological safety mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior.

Inclusive leadership, affective trust, and innovative work behavior.

Under the trust literature, two distinct types of trust have been recognized: cognitive trust and affective trust. Cognitive trust refers to "the rational evaluation of whether the other party to an exchange is trustworthy based on the knowledge and information regarding its ability, professionalism, and reliability [44-46]." Affective trust refers to "the emotional bonds or connections with the party to the exchange that are grounded in the care and concern that it demonstrates [44-46]." The primary focus of this study was on affective trust. Affective trust fosters a greater inclination among individuals to assist one another, distribute job tasks, collaborate towards shared objectives, support others in achieving personal goals, and inspire each other to exert considerable effort for the team's esteem and principle [47].

A current study demonstrated that IL has a favorable impact on trust in the leader [48]. Employees who trust their leaders should perceive qualities such as open-mindedness, empathy, and a collaborative approach. They exhibit fearlessness in expressing themselves and engaging in open discussions to share ideas and challenges [49]. If the proposal proves effective, they can expect recognition from their leaders. However, if the idea fails, responsibility will likely be attributed to external conditions and other reasons, rather than the person who proposed the idea. Furthermore, trusted leaders are more proficient in eliciting superior performance from their employees [50]. Research has shown that employees' confidence in their leader is associated with their willingness to be transparent and receptive to the leader's activities, as they trust that the leader would not violate the rights they have [51].

Studies demonstrate an association of positivity between IL and affective trust [52]. IL fosters a sense of affective trust among employees by ensuring their inclusion within the organization. Consequently, IL has a positive effect on affective trust [53]. When employees have confidence in their leader, they have a greater propensity to participate in IWB because they perceive their leaders as trustworthy and capable of supporting them in challenging circumstances [54]. Moreover, positive trust fosters employees' confidence and empowers them to cultivate optimistic attitudes and engage actively in novel initiatives, thus bolstering their IWB [55]. Furthermore, trust plays a crucial role in influencing creativity. These findings indicate that affective trust enhances employee's IWB [56].

In light of comprehensive analysis, it is apparent that the adoption of IL facilitates the cultivation of affective trust dynamics within an organization, consequently yielding discernible reductions in stress levels amidst individuals undertaking innovative tasks [57]. Obviously, heightened levels of affective trust directed towards leaders engender an environment conducive to the proliferation of IWB.

Notably, within the banking sector, organizational units characterized by elevated levels of affective trust in IL demonstrate a marked proclivity toward engagement in IWB by employees. Hence, this discussion suggests that affective trust acts as a mediator in the association between IL and IWB.

This study investigates the importance of affective trust as a mediator, drawing on the social exchange theory, proposed by Peter Blau [26]. In the context of social exchange theory, IL fosters affective trust within the workplace, wherein employees develop strong emotional bonds with their leaders because of the fair and supportive attention they receive. This trust is built upon the belief that the leader will reciprocate their contributions with rewards and support, as per the principles of exchange. Affective trust encourages employees to generate innovative ideas. Thus, IL indirectly enhances IWB by cultivating an environment of trust and reciprocity [37], as elucidated by social exchange theory [26].

In summary, IL promotes the development of affective trust, hence fostering employee's IWB. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5. Inclusive leadership relates positively to affective trust.

H6. Affective trust relates positively to innovative work behavior.

H7. Affective trust mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior.

Inclusive leadership, creative self-efficacy, and innovative work behavior.

Creative self-efficacy refers to "an individual's belief in their ability to generate creative ideas and effectively implement them [58]." This concept is grounded in Bandura's broader theory of self-efficacy, which emphasizes the role of perceived competence in influencing behavior. When applied to creativity, it involves an individual's confidence in their capacity to produce novel and innovative solutions in various domains.

IL boosts creative self-efficacy when employees produce, promote, and implement innovative ideas. New concept failures often cause employees to stop demonstrating IWB. Inclusion improves employees' mastery experience because IL motivates, shares knowledge, and shares responsibility for employee mistakes [33]. Power-sharing with employees gives them more autonomy and motivates them to perform successfully [59].

IL enables employees to gain knowledge and expertise by engaging them in decisions [60], improving vicarious experience. IL establishes a work environment that ensures equal opportunities for all individuals to make valuable contributions, improving employee assurance by learning from creatively self-confident peers. IL encourages employee performance improvement discussions [33]. Thus, the inclusive leader invites employees to share their thoughts and persuades them to do their jobs effectively.

Employees' creative self-efficacy enables them to triumph over obstacles that hinder creativity [61]. A person with high creative self-efficacy believes they can do a task creatively [62]. Creative self-efficacy encourages innovation-based employment expectations, these employees have strong cognitive abilities and focus on problem-solving and innovation [63]. This supports the achievement of innovative goals. Moreover, prior research has established an association between creative self-efficacy and innovative performance [64-66]. As demonstrated, employees who possess creative self-efficacy indicate a proactive inclination towards developing new solutions and display enthusiasm for engaging in innovative activities [67].

As said previously, IL boosts employee creative self-efficacy, which motivates IWB. IL engages employees by being hands-on. Employees believe they can succeed by proposing and using innovative work methods [68]. A friendly environment fosters employees to discuss their concerns with leaders. Therefore, IL can improve employees' emotional well-being [18], which is necessary for strong creative self-efficacy. Ultimately, IL offers guidance and emotional assistance, leading to employees cultivating self-assurance in their creative aptitude, which in turn improves their IWB [69].

In the banking sector, units that exhibit elevated levels of creative self-efficacy under IL tend to foster a notable propensity for IWB among employees. Consequently, this analysis suggests that creative self-efficacy serves as an intermediary in the link between IL and the adoption of IWB.

In the context of social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura [28], IL serves as a model that influences individuals' creative self-efficacy beliefs. Leaders who demonstrate inclusivity and support for diverse perspectives enhance employees' self-assurance in their competence to contribute innovative ideas. This heightened creative self-efficacy, consequently, fosters employee motivation and encourages their active participation in IWB. Thus, IL indirectly fosters IWB by bolstering employees' belief in their capacity to think creatively and make meaningful contributions [24], as posited by Bandura's social learning theory.

To conclude, IL assists in enhancing creative self-efficacy and, hence, inspires the IWB of employees. Therefore, the current study proposed.

H8. Inclusive leadership relates positively to creative self-efficacy.

H9. Creative self-efficacy relates positively to innovative work behavior.

H10. Creative self-efficacy mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Overview of Sample and Data Collection

The study participants were selected from Thailand's banking sector due to their specialized knowledge and experience in IWB exhibited within their workplace settings. Data collection was conducted among employees of Thai

banks through the distribution of self-administered questionnaires, utilizing a cross-sectional research approach. Thailand's banking sector comprises a total of thirty-three banks, comprising fourteen commercial banks, five government-owned banks, and fifteen international banks. The study specifically targeted employees from the top ten commercial banks based on the scale of their branch network.

A method consisting of multiple stages was utilized to ascertain the group of data providers. To commence, the population of Thailand is geographically dispersed among the following regions: the North, Northeast, Central, and South. Subsequently, the primary locations in the region shall be chosen according to which bank branches comprise the greatest quantity of the sample utilized in this investigation. Following this, a simple random sampling technique was implemented to obtain the respondents.

To enhance diversity within the study, participants were randomly selected from employees working across various branches and units within the banks, with a deliberate effort to ensure equal representation from each branch. The task of survey distribution to employees within the designated branch was entrusted to managers or vice managers. The participants were provided with the assurance that their participation was discretionary and that their personal information would be kept anonymous. The participants' tasks involved assessing their branch manager's IL qualities. They were specifically instructed to base their evaluations on their perceptions of their psychological safety, affective trust, creative self-efficacy, and IWB.

One thousand questionnaires were distributed to personnel in different branches of ten institutions via a procedure involving simple random selection. Twenty of the 980 questionnaires that were obtained were deemed inappropriate for analysis, resulting in their exclusion. This process left 960 questionnaires that were deemed legitimate and served as the foundation for the conclusions drawn in the study. The resultant rate of response was 96%. In addition to creative self-efficacy, affective trust, psychological safety, and IWB, participants documented their assessments of the IL exhibited by their managers. In addition, participants were requested to provide demographic and occupational information, such as their gender, educational attainment, age, salary, employment contract type, department affiliation, and organizational position. This was done to enable a thorough assessment of the influence that these factors had on the fundamental themes of the research.

In the demographic composition of the study's sample. The gender distribution of the study's sample demographics was preponderantly female, with 783 participants (81.6%) being female and 177 being male (18.4%). The data revealed that the highest level of educational achievement was a bachelor's degree, which accounted for 76.1% of those who participated. Master's degrees were held by 20.3% of the sample, while a minority held credentials or other qualifications. The sample exhibited a demographic imbalance, with 23.1% of participants being under 30 years old, 54.4% being between 31 and 40 years old, and 22.5% being over 40 years old. The salary distribution exhibited variability, as 4.2% of employees earned less than 15,000 baht, 50.7% earned between 15,000 and 30,000 baht, 32.6% earned between 30,001 and 50,000 baht, and 12.5% earned more than 50,000 baht. The majority of the respondents were employed in credit and customer service (72.2%) and 27.8%, respectively. Permanent employees constituted the overwhelming majority (94.9%), while temporary employees comprised 5.1%. In relation to organizational positions, the sample consisted primarily of operational staff (87.2%), with executive roles comprising the remaining 12.8%. The demographic composition of the banking employees who participated in this study is both diverse and distinct.

3.2. Measures

In accordance with Brislin's translation and back-translation method [70], the questionnaire was translated from English to Thai for use in asking a sample of Thai people. This process involved a bilingual translator initially translating the English version into Thai, followed by a second bilingual translator, who was unaware of the original English text, translating the Thai version back into English. The original and back-translated English texts were then compared to identify discrepancies, with a panel of bilingual experts reviewing and resolving any differences to ensure accuracy and cultural equivalence. Revisions were made based on the feedback, and the finalized Thai translation was prepared for distribution to the Thai sample.

In the study, a five-point Likert scale was employed to gather participants' responses, where a score of one (1) indicated "strongly disagree" and five (5) denoted "strongly agree." To assess IL, a 9-item scale developed by Mansoor et al. [41] was utilized. An example of an item from this scale is "The manager is available for consultation on problems."

Creative self-efficacy was measured using an eight-item scale from Carmeli & Schaubroeck [71], with a representative item being "I am confident that I can perform creatively on many different tasks." Besides, psychological safety was measured using a five-item scale developed by Liang, Farh & Farh [72], with an illustrative item stating, "In my work unit, I can express my true feelings regarding my job." Furthermore, De Jong & Den Hartog [73] quantified IWB using six items from the IWB scale, with an illustrative item stating, "I produce ideas to improve work practices."

Additionally, affective trust was measured using a five-item scale from McAllister [49]. All the items were rated on a scale ranging from "1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree", with a representative item being "If I shared my problems with this person, I know she/he would respond constructively and caringly." By utilizing established scales and items, this methodological strategy guaranteed a rigorous evaluation of the constructs under investigation, namely inclusive leadership, creative self-efficacy, affective trust, psychological safety, and innovative work behavior as exhibited by the respondents in the study.

3.3. Research Process

To systematically address the research objectives, the study followed a structured multi-step process, beginning with the identification of the research problem and progressing through to the analysis and interpretation of results. The workflow is outlined below:

1) Identify research problem: define the core issue to be investigated, focusing on the lack of understanding of how IL influences IWB.
2) Set research objectives: establish clear goals for the study, such as examining the direct and indirect effects of IL on IWB via psychological mechanisms.
3) Review related literature: conduct a comprehensive review of previous studies to identify theoretical gaps and support model development.
4) Develop theoretical framework and hypotheses: construct a conceptual model and formulate hypotheses based on relevant theories (e.g., social exchange theory, positive psychology).
5) Design preliminary quantitative instrument: draft the initial survey instrument using established measurement scales; ensure conceptual alignment with study variables.
6) Refine and validate formal scale: finalize the questionnaire through pilot testing and expert validation to ensure reliability and content validity.
7) Data collection: collect responses from the target population—banking employees in Thailand—using an appropriate sampling method.
8) Evaluate measurement model: Conduct confirmatory factor analysis to assess convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability of the constructs.
9) Evaluate structural model: Test the proposed relationships among variables using structural equation modeling (SEM) to validate the hypothesized paths.
10) Interpret results: analyze and interpret the findings, including direct and mediated effects, and discuss their theoretical and practical significance.
11) Draw conclusions, discussion, and implications: Summarize key insights and provide implications for theory, practice, limitations, and future research in leadership and innovation.

In summary, this structured approach ensured methodological rigor and coherence throughout the research process. The detailed workflow is illustrated in Figure 1. Research Process.

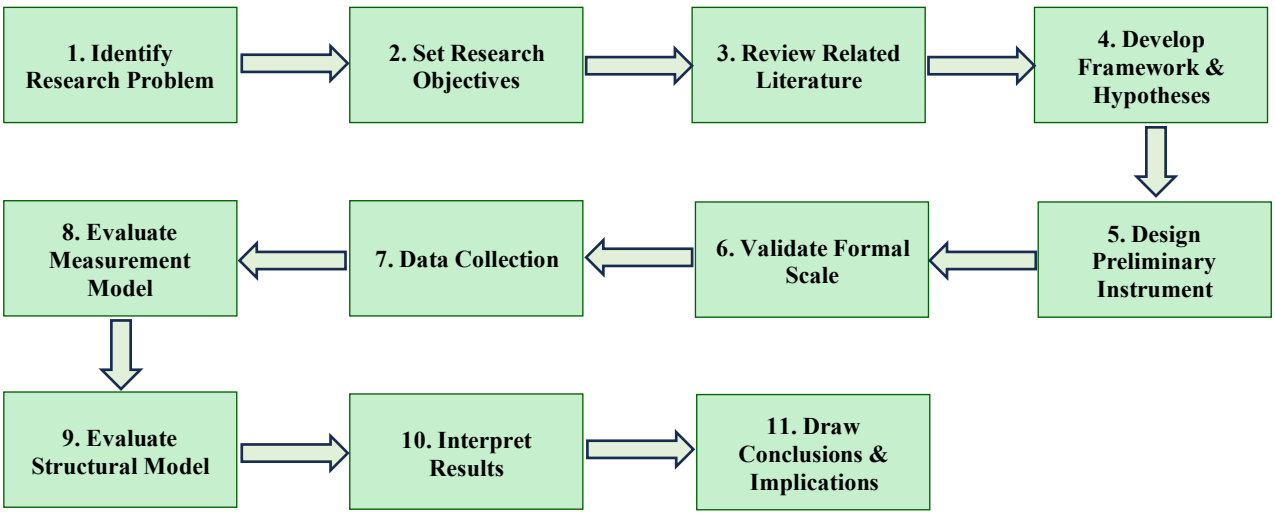


Figure 1. Research Process

4. Results

4.1. The Measurement Model

The factor loadings of each construct were assessed to evaluate convergent validity [74]. All factor loadings were greater than 0.60, ranging from 0.62 to 0.95, as shown in Table 1. Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each variable was of an acceptable magnitude (0.71-0.83), adhering to the suggested threshold of 0.50 [75]. In addition, the composite reliabilities (CRs) of the constructs ranged from 0.92 to 0.97, which exceeded the suggested threshold of 0.60 [76]. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha coefficients demonstrated acceptable degrees of internal consistency, falling within the range of 0.92 to 0.97 [75]. To evaluate the discriminant validity of the constructs, the square roots of the AVEs were calculated [75]. The magnitude of the AVE values exceeded the correlations that were shared among the constructs and other constructs in the model, as indicated in Table 2.

The hypothesized five-factor measurement framework was initially analyzed. The fit indices back up the five-factor model for IL with psychological safety, affective trust, creative self-efficacy and IWB that we carried out a CFA with Mplus7 was proposed, $\chi 2$ =1358, df = 454, $\chi 2$ /df = 2.991 ($p < .001$), RMSEA = 0.052, GFI = 0.901, IFI = 0.972, TLI = 0.966, and CFI = 0.972. The CFA findings demonstrated that this framework suited the data exceptionally well [77].

4.2. Common Method Bias

Harman's single-factor test was conducted to assess the potential influence of common method bias (CMB) due to the utilization of self-reported data in this research [78]. According to Harman's single-factor test, CMB is assumed to be present if a single factor accounts for less than 50 percent of the variance in a factor analysis. Utilizing unrotated principal component factor analysis, we found that six factors collectively accounted for 51.43 percent of the variance, slightly above the recommended threshold of 50 percent. Therefore, additional statistical controls were implemented, including the full collinearity VIF to account for potential method bias. We again examined data with the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of all observed variables. The criteria for consideration were VIF < 10, which explains that a VIF greater than 10 indicates a Multicollinearity problem. We found that the VIF of all items in every variable was within the specified criteria: VIF values not greater than ten (5.718 - 1.491), indicating that multicollinearity is not a major concern [79].

Table 1. Factor Loadings, AVE, CR, and Cronbach's α

Variables	Items	Loading
Inclusive leadership	**AVE = 0.77; CR = 0.97; α = 0.97**	
	The manager is open to hearing new ideas.	0.87
	The manager is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes."	0.83
	The manager is open to discussing the desired goals and new ways to achieve them.	0.85
	The manager is available for consultation on problems.	0.88
	The manager is an ongoing 'presence' in this team—someone who is readily available.	0.86
	The manager is available for professional questions I would like to consult with him/her.	0.88
	The manager is ready to listen to my requests.	0.87
	The manager encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues.	0.93
	The manager is accessible for discussing emerging problems.	0.89
Creative self-efficacy	**AVE = 0.76; CR = 0.96; α = 0.96**	
	I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself in a creative way.	0.90
	When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them creatively.	0.85
	In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me in a creative way.	0.89
	I believe I can succeed at most any creative endeavor to which I set my mind.	0.90
	I will be able to overcome many challenges creatively.	0.88
	I am confident that I can perform creatively on many different tasks.	0.87
	Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very creatively.	0.81
	Even when things are tough, I can perform quite creatively.	0.86
Affective trust	**AVE = 0.83; CR = 0.96; α = 0.96**	
	We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes.	0.88
	I can talk freely to this individual about difficulties I am having at work and know that she/he will want to listen.	0.92
	We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and we could no longer work together.	0.95
	If I shared my problems with this person, I know she/he would respond constructively and caringly.	0.95
	I would have to say that we have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship.	0.84
Psychological safety	**AVE = 0.71; CR = 0.92; α = 0.91**	
	In my work unit, I can express my true feelings regarding my job.	0.89
	In my work unit, I can freely express my thoughts.	0.90
	In my work unit, expressing your true feelings is welcomed.	0.90
	Nobody in my unit will pick on me even if I have different opinions.	0.86
	I'm worried that expressing true thoughts in my workplace would do harm to myself. ®	0.62

Innovative work behavior	**AVE = 0.77; CR = 0.95; α = 0.95**	
	I make suggestions to improve current products or services.	0.83
	I produce ideas to improve work practices.	0.88
	I acquire new knowledge.	0.86
	I actively contribute to the development of new products or services.	0.88
	I acquire new groups of customers.	0.92
	I optimize the organization of work.	0.89

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Inclusive leadership	4.22	0.74	(0.87)				
2	Affective trust	5.32	1.31	0.70**	(0.91)			
3	Innovative work behavior	3.92	0.67	0.54**	0.58**	(0.87)		
4	Psychological safety	3.94	0.71	0.52**	0.57**	0.58*	(0.84)	
5	Creative self-efficacy	4.03	0.63	0.46**	0.48**	0.59**	0.66**	(0.87)

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Through the utilization of the SPSS PROCESS macro [80], we were able to investigate the hypotheses. In accordance with this methodology, the predictor variable has been demonstrated to have a positive correlation with the criterion variable, as well as an indirect association with the criterion variable through the use of a mediator. Specifically, the research investigated the extent to which three mediators—namely, psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy—had an impact on the relationship between the two variables.

The direct impact of IL on IWB was substantial ($\beta = 0.154$, $t = 4.737$, $p < 0.001$), corroborating H1. This indicates that inclusive leadership fosters an environment where people are inspired to generate, promote, and implement innovative ideas, eventually resulting in IWB.

The results revealed that IL had a significant positive relationship with psychological safety ($\beta = 0.508$, $t = 19.037$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that employees who perceive their leaders as inclusive are more likely to feel safe to express themselves without fear of negative consequences. This finding supports Hypothesis 2, highlighting the role of IL in fostering a psychologically secure work environment.

IL was also found to be positively associated with affective trust ($\beta = 0.948$, $t = 20.795$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that inclusive leaders cultivate emotional bonds and interpersonal trust with employees, which reinforces their willingness to share ideas and collaborate. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is supported.

The analysis further showed that IL positively influences creative self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.141$, $t = 5.864$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that when leaders are inclusive, employees are more confident in their creative abilities and their capacity to generate innovative outcomes. Hence, Hypothesis 8 is supported.

A significant positive relationship was found between psychological safety and IWB ($\beta = 0.176$, $t = 5.195$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that employees who feel psychologically safe are more likely to engage in innovation-related behaviors. This result supports Hypothesis 3 and affirms the importance of a supportive climate in encouraging innovation.

Affective trust was also shown to have a positive influence on IWB ($\beta = 0.128$, $t = 6.726$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that employees who emotionally trust their leaders are more inclined to explore and advocate for new ideas. Accordingly, Hypothesis 6 is supported.

Lastly, creative self-efficacy was found to be a strong predictor of IWB ($\beta = 0.332$, $t = 9.334$, $p < 0.001$), reflecting that employees who believe in their creative capabilities are significantly more likely to engage in innovative tasks. This finding supports Hypothesis 9 and emphasizes the motivational role of self-efficacy in innovation.

Furthermore, mediation analyses confirmed that all three variables functioned as significant mediators between IL and IWB. Specifically: The results indicate that psychological safety significantly mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership (IL) and innovative work behavior (IWB) ($\beta = 0.089$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.050, 0.132]). This suggests that inclusive leaders promote an environment where employees feel psychologically safe, which in turn encourages them to engage in innovative behavior. The presence of psychological safety explains part of the mechanism through which IL influences IWB. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

The analysis also revealed that affective trust significantly mediated the relationship between IL and IWB ($\beta = 0.122$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.077, 0.167]). This finding indicates that IL enhances employees' emotional trust in their

leaders, which subsequently fosters their willingness to propose and implement new ideas. The emotional connection between leaders and subordinates acts as a crucial channel through which IL drives innovation. Hence, Hypothesis 7 is supported.

Furthermore, creative self-efficacy was found to significantly mediate the relationship between IL and IWB (β = 0.047, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.026, 0.072]). This implies that inclusive leaders help enhance employees' confidence in their creative abilities, which in turn leads to increased engagement in IWB. This psychological empowerment plays a key role in explaining how IL leads to greater innovation. Thus, Hypothesis 10 is supported. All results are comprehensively presented in Table 3 and visually summarized in Figure 2.

Taken together, these findings confirm a multiple mediation model in which inclusive leadership exerts its influence on IWB both directly and indirectly through the three mediators. This highlights the importance of considering psychological pathways in leadership research and underscores how relational leadership styles foster internal conditions conducive to innovation.

Table 3. Estimates based on the structural model

Hypothesis	Standardized beta	SE	*t*-value	p-value
H1: Inclusive leadership → Innovative work behavior	0.154***	0.032	4.737	0.000***
H2: Inclusive leadership → Psychological safety	0.508***	0.026	19.037	0.000***
H3: Psychological safety → Innovative work behavior	0.176***	0.034	5.195	0.000***
H5: Inclusive leadership → Affective trust	0.948***	0.045	20.795	0.000***
H6: Affective trust → Innovative work behavior	0.128***	0.019	6.726	0.000***
H8: Inclusive leadership → Creative self-efficacy	0.141***	0.024	5.864	0.002**
H9: Creative self-efficacy → Innovative work behavior	0.332***	0.035	9.334	0.000***

Mediating effects	Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect				
	Effect	SE	p-value	LLCI (95%)	ULCI (95%)
H4: Inclusive leadership → Psychological safety→ Innovative work behavior	0.089***	0.021	0.000***	0.050	0.132
H7: Inclusive leadership → Affective trust → Innovative work behavior	0.122***	0.022	0.000***	0.077	0.167
H10: Inclusive leadership → Creative self-efficacy → Innovative work behavior	0.047***	0.011	0.000***	0.026	0.072

Note (s): p*** < 0.001

To further validate the robustness of the proposed model and assess the incremental contribution of each mediating variable, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed, as shown in Table 4.

In Model 1, IL alone explained 29.8% of the variance in innovative work behavior (IWB) (R^2 = 0.298, ΔF = 407.085, $p < .001$). This substantial explanatory power confirms that IL is a key antecedent of IWB and highlights its standalone predictive strength.

Model 2 introduced psychological safety alongside IL. The model accounted for an additional 12.2% of the variance in IWB (ΔR^2 = 0.122, ΔF = 200.461, $p < .001$), suggesting that psychological safety is a strong and unique contributor to innovation outcomes. This supports the theoretical assumption that employees must feel safe to take risks and share novel ideas.

Model 3, affective trust, was added to the previous model. The model showed a further increase of 2.9% in explained variance (ΔR^2 = 0.029, ΔF = 51.026, $p < .001$). Although the increase is smaller than that of psychological safety, it demonstrates the value of emotional bonds between leaders and employees in enhancing innovative behaviors.

Finally, Model 4 incorporated creative self-efficacy along with the three prior predictors. The total variance explained rose to 49.5% (R^2 = 0.495, ΔR^2 = 0.046, ΔF = 87.141, $p < .001$). This final model indicates that creative self-efficacy contributes the most to the model at this stage, confirming that employees' belief in their creative abilities is a crucial psychological mechanism driving innovation.

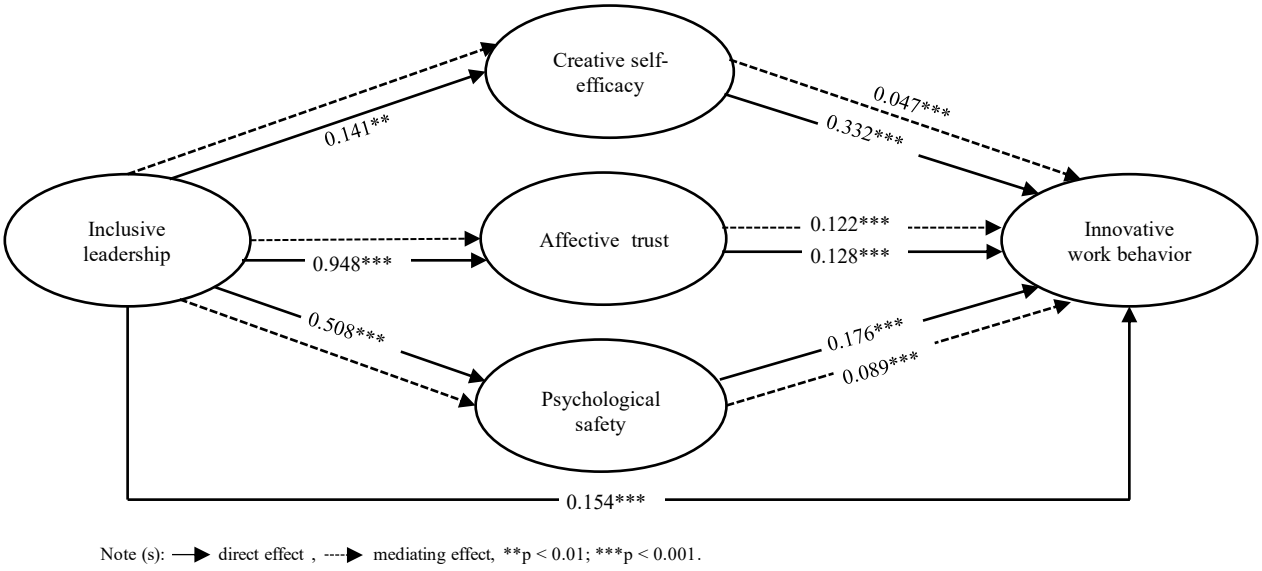
Across all models, the standardized beta values for IL progressively declined as more mediators were introduced (from β = 0.546 in Model 1 to β = 0.157 in Model 4), which implies that the effect of IL on IWB is partially mediated by psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy. These reductions in direct effect underscore the importance of the mediators in the IL–IWB relationship, reinforcing the theoretical justification for the inclusion of these psychological mechanisms.

Overall, the hierarchical regression results not only support the proposed multiple mediation model but also emphasize the unique and cumulative contribution of each mediator in shaping employees' IWB. These findings align

well with theoretical frameworks such as social information processing theory, social learning theory, and social exchange theory, which highlight the role of workplace climate and self-beliefs in fostering innovation.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression model

Independent variables	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. F Change	B	Beta	t
Model1	0.298	0.298	407.085	0.000			
Inclusive leadership					0.537	0.546	20.176
Model2	0.420	0.122	200.461	0.000			
Inclusive leadership					0.326	0.332	11.473
Psychological safety					0.415	0.409	14.158
Model3	0.449	0.029	51.026	0.000			
Inclusive leadership					0.188	0.191	5.571
Psychological safety					0.340	0.335	11.168
Affective trust					0.143	0.256	7.143
Model4	0.495	0.046	87.141	0.000			
Inclusive leadership					0.154	0.157	4.738
Psychological safety					0.177	0.174	5.195
Affective trust					0.129	0.231	6.726
Creative self-efficacy					0.333	.292	9.335



Note (s): ⟶ direct effect , ⇢ mediating effect, **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Figure 2. Latent mediation structural equation modeling results

5. Discussions

Within this research, we explored the association between various factors influencing IWB. The factors examined included IL and IWB, IL and creative self-efficacy, IL and affective trust, and IL and psychological safety. Additionally, the study investigated the relationships between creative self-efficacy and IWB, affective trust and IWB, and psychological safety and IWB. Moreover, the findings also illustrate the mediating influence of creative self-efficacy, affective trust, and psychological safety on the relationship between IL and IWB. This section provides further clarification on the dynamics mentioned earlier and examines the theoretical implications and practical implications of the study.

To begin with, the results of this study support the hypothesized direct effect of IL on innovative work behavior (IWB), aligning with previous research findings [19,81,22,82]. For example, a study conducted in Pakistan's textile SMEs found that IL significantly influenced IWB through psychological safety, emphasizing the value of IL in innovation-related roles [19]. Similarly, research in the healthcare sector demonstrated that IL enhances IWB by promoting job autonomy, which served as a significant mediator in that context [81]. In another study, creative self-efficacy was found to mediate the relationship between IL and IWB, further reinforcing the critical role of IL in promoting employee innovation through psychological and motivational mechanisms [22]. Additionally, findings

from a study of private hospital nurses in Jordan revealed that IL significantly predicts both adaptive performance and IWB, underscoring the broader impact of IL on performance outcomes in healthcare settings [82]. Collectively, these findings confirm that IL consistently contributes to IWB across diverse organizational and national contexts.

This study also extends the literature by affirming the positive relationship between IL and three psychological mechanisms—creative self-efficacy [22], psychological safety [19], and affective trust [48]—which jointly facilitate innovative behaviors. For instance, the finding that IL significantly enhances creative self-efficacy aligns with Emmanuel's [83] evidence that IL fosters a climate of openness, empowerment, and psychological security, allowing employees to believe in their creative capabilities. Similarly, IL was shown to foster psychological safety, consistent with previous findings that demonstrated leaders' inclusive behaviors—such as accessibility, supportiveness, and tolerance of failure—reduce interpersonal risks and encourage employees to voice new ideas [19].

Furthermore, affective trust emerged as another critical factor influenced by IL. Consistent with prior findings, IL cultivates affective trust by demonstrating care, fairness, and consistency, which in turn promotes deeper interpersonal relationships and openness to collaboration [48]. Supporting this, a study in the education sector showed that IL negatively predicted organizational hypocrisy by increasing trust in the principal, which then reduced perceptions of inconsistency and manipulation in the school context [48]. This reinforces the broader implication that IL not only facilitates innovation but also builds ethical and emotionally secure environments that reduce toxic behaviors.

The study also revealed that creative self-efficacy positively predicts IWB, which echoes the findings of previous research. Specifically, employees with high creative self-efficacy are more likely to take initiative and pursue novel solutions in their tasks. A study involving spa employees in Taiwan confirmed that when individuals believe in their creative capacity, they exhibit higher levels of innovative behavior, especially when paired with positive psychological traits such as optimism [63].

In addition, affective trust was found to significantly enhance IWB. This finding is supported by research in India's hospitality sector, where interpersonal trust was directly associated with IWB. The study found that even though spiritual leadership had a limited direct impact, it indirectly fostered IWB through trust and knowledge-sharing mechanisms [84]. These findings highlight trust as a central relational resource that allows employees to engage in innovation without fear of judgment or failure.

Equally important, this study confirms that psychological safety is positively associated with IWB. According to the social information processing theory [19], when employees perceive the workplace as safe to take risks, speak up, or propose new ideas without fear of negative consequences, they are more likely to engage in IWB. This is particularly relevant in organizations where leadership plays a visible role in shaping workplace norms. In [19], IL was shown to contribute to psychological safety by offering emotional support and being receptive to diverse inputs, which in turn increased employees' confidence in suggesting improvements and innovations.

Moreover, this study supports the mediating roles of psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy in the relationship between IL and IWB. Specifically, psychological safety was found to partially mediate the link between IL and IWB, confirming earlier findings by Javed et al. [19], who argued that employees interpret leaders' inclusive behaviors as signals of psychological safety, thereby facilitating innovative efforts. In their study of textile firms, psychological safety emerged as a key psychological context that enabled employees to engage more freely in idea generation and experimentation [19].

Similarly, creative self-efficacy was shown to partially mediate the IL–IWB relationship, aligning with prior studies that suggest IL enhances employees' belief in their creative capacity, which leads to higher innovation [22]. This finding highlights the significance of motivational self-perception as a mechanism through which leadership behaviors lead to innovative outcomes.

In the case of affective trust, this study also identified a partial mediation effect between IL and IWB. Although some prior work, such as Emmanuel [83], focused on trust in leadership as a moderator rather than a mediator, the current results differ. Emmanuel [83] examined the role of trust as a moderator and found it did not significantly alter the IL–IWB relationship. The different conceptualizations of trust may explain this discrepancy: trust in leadership (a general belief in a leader's competence and integrity) versus affective trust (emotional closeness and relational depth). Affective trust operates more proximally within interpersonal dynamics and may be more salient in facilitating innovation than broader trust constructs. Therefore, the current study emphasizes affective trust as a relational mechanism rather than a boundary condition, showing its active role in transferring the effects of IL onto IWB.

Overall, it may be said that the findings of this research illustrate how psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy serve as mediators between IL and IWB. This finding supports the concept that conducive contextual elements (such as leadership) can substantially enhance the positive psychological states of employees (including affective trust, psychological safety, and creative self-efficacy), all of which contribute to their propensity for engaging in innovative work practices [85].

In summary, the present study provides robust empirical evidence supporting the role of inclusive leadership as a key driver of IWB through multiple psychological mechanisms. These findings contribute to the broader organizational behavior literature by confirming the importance of fostering trust, psychological safety, and creative confidence in cultivating innovation across diverse workplace contexts.

5.1. Theoretical Implementations

Recently, a growing number of researchers have begun to examine the elements that influence employees' IWB (i.e., Mansoor et al. [41], Piansoongnern [36], Zahra et al. [86]). However, limited empirical research has examined the variables that inspire or facilitate IWB at the individual level [2] and in the banking sector. Our findings have the following implications for the employees' IWB literature.

First, our research contributes to the expanding corpus of literature by focusing on employees' IWB, transitioning from studying bank samples to examining bank employees. The bank's innovative potential is mainly determined by the individual employees. Our research is pertinent as bank employees frequently need to skillfully and swiftly manage diverse, challenging, or ambiguous situations to avert negative outcomes for their institution. The current results contribute to the expanding research on employees' IWB in the banking sector.

Secondly, our research suggests that the quality of IL is a reliable indicator of employee IWB. We conducted a comprehensive literature analysis and discovered that some studies investigate the factors that influence employees' IWB in relation to various types of leadership, including ethical leadership [86], transformational leadership [87], entrepreneurial leadership [88], and empowering leadership [89]. Current research minimally investigates employees' IWB concerning IL. Employees will modify their work mindsets and behaviors in response to their supervisor when they recognize IL support. IL, which fosters inclusivity and encourages innovation is more prone to granting employees autonomy and adaptability, enabling them to fully harness their capabilities and experience greater possibilities for behavioral decision-making. This fosters a culture where new behaviors occur frequently within the organization [90].

Third, our research enhances the theoretical perspective on this phenomenon by combining social information processing theory, social exchange theory, and social learning theory to explore factors influencing the IWB of banking employees. The results enhance scholarly comprehension of the intricate psychological mechanisms by which IL impacts employees' IWB. Scholars have less considered the potential for IL to enhance employees' IWB through continuous psychological processing. Employees utilize collaboration and empowerment under IL to enhance self-perception and build psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy. IL fosters employees' IWB by signaling support for proactive and risk-taking ideas and behaviors. This signal establishes an atmosphere of psychological safety, fosters affective trust, and boosts creative self-efficacy among employees. Our study builds upon current research highlighting the significant impact of IL on enhancing individual psychological perspective by integrating the three theories.

Finally, the study's contribution was the employment of three positive psychology mediators between IL and employee IWB. IL boosts creative self-efficacy, affective trust, and psychological safety. Employees eventually adopt IWB as their positive psychology. When IL is perceived by employees as feeling valued, respected, and heard, it will enhance the sense of safety at work, and trust in the leader, and stimulate creative self-efficacy, resulting in IWB. To put it another way, employees can generate novel ideas and focus on implementing them, both of which are critical aspects of initiating IWB. The empirical data from structural equation models in the three positive psychology mediator's models confirms the need to incorporate fresh causes and outcomes of IWB. Upon discovering the study results, researchers could consider broadening the literature by examining various other results from IL and facilitating the uncovering of the opaque mechanism of leadership behaviors that impact workers' IWB.

5.2. Practical Implementations

Our study's results also carry many practical implementations for banks. First, bank executives need to enhance their management awareness and adopt an IL style. IL reflects the evolving requirements of cutting-edge businesses like banks. Bank executives try to create efficient education and training programs to cultivate IL for each branch manager. Managers should focus on fostering inclusivity through flexibility, effectiveness, and connection in the management team, and effectively include employees and IWB based on real management scenarios. Managers should engage in active communication with employees, comprehend their work requirements, stimulate them to generate new ideas, grant them suitable autonomy, enable them to experiment with various solutions, and embrace the failure of their innovative endeavors. This will establish a flexible management atmosphere for IWB and maintain employees' drive for innovation.

Second, bank initiatives need to consider individual variations in employees' creative self-efficacy, as it plays a beneficial mediating role in the association between IL and employees' IWB. Employees with a strong sense of

creative self-efficacy are likely to exhibit greater confidence in their ability to innovate. Training and development activities should be utilized to instruct bank executives on enhancing creative self-efficacy in their employees. Bank executives should provide clear, encouraging, and constructive criticism to employees who have poor confidence in their creative abilities to challenge their existing concerns about their innovation capabilities. Bank executives should promote the sharing of knowledge, experience, and skills among employees to enhance the acquisition of effective information. Bank executives should foster innovation in the workplace by implementing challenging simulations and practices, showcasing successful examples of innovation from leaders and respected peers, providing regular feedback and support, and assisting employees in handling stress and negative emotions that can hinder creative confidence.

Third, bank executives must prioritize fostering affective trust among employees, as it has a significant impact on IWB. Bank executives need to enhance affective trust by addressing issues effectively, empowering staff, and maintaining consistency in their actions. Bank executives can create a work environment characterized by benevolence. This promotes employees to show empathy towards the emotional and specialized requirements of their colleagues and provides them with social, enlightening, and psychological aid to enhance their sense of connection and potentially foster affective trust. Bank executives, such as those at IL, should empathize with their employees to enhance their emotional well-being and encourage them to share their innovative experiences with managers, thereby fostering a strong social connection that facilitates the frequent exchange of innovative ideas.

Finally, bank executives should acknowledge the crucial importance of psychological safety in fostering IWB. The study revealed that the impact of IL on IWB was dependent on the employees' perception of psychological safety. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a secure and wholesome work environment to enhance psychological safety. Bank executives must establish a supportive workplace atmosphere that fosters employees' psychological safety by removing any fear of repercussions from managers and colleagues as they work on tasks innovatively. If employees exhibit unfavorable psychological signs, bank executives should promptly provide psychological counseling to minimize these symptoms and calm the employees' emotional state. Bank executives must include fault-tolerant attitudes in their daily management practices. Bank executives should also focus on summarizing experiences and lessons to facilitate future innovation success.

Overall, it may be said that bank executives can enhance these factors by implementing measures such as offering comprehensive support and training for employees, fostering a nurturing work atmosphere, acknowledging and incentivizing innovation, and promoting teamwork and effective communication. Promoting psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy leads to increasing employees' IWB, which can enhance the bank's competitiveness and drive long-term success.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Our research has constraints that need to be acknowledged in future investigations. First, the research data acquired from the banking sector in Thailand may be influenced by cultural bias. Data collection should involve multicultural sectors or diverse demographic viewpoints to prevent cultural prejudice.

Second, current studies have found that IWB is influenced by IL in single-level mediation analysis or by individual characteristics. Therefore, multilevel mediation analysis or organizational level should be presented in future research.

Third, IWB is significantly influenced by IL, which is mediated by factors including psychological safety, affective trust, and creative self-efficacy. Future research should pinpoint the psychological factors that influence IWB, including belongingness, competence, autonomy, and emotional stability. Furthermore, other moderating variables should be incorporated, for instance, organizational policies, HR practices, organizational culture, and perceived job security.

Finally, utilizing cross-sectional data collection in this study is beneficial for providing insights into population features and associations between variables at a particular point in time. However, cross-sectional data collection lacks insights into temporal changes and causal relationships, is vulnerable to selection bias, and limits the ability to study within-subject variability and cohort effects accurately. Therefore, in the future, design research should investigate the mechanism and boundary circumstances of IL's impact on employees' IWB using longitudinal research methodology.

6. Declarations

6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization, B.P, and R.U.; methodology, B.P. and R.U.; software, R.U.; validation, B.P., R.U., and L.B.; formal analysis, B.P. and R.U.; investigation, R.U.; resources, B.P., R.U., and L.B.; data curation, B.P. and R.U.; writing—original draft preparation, B.P. and R.U.; writing—review and editing, B.P. and R.U.; visualization, B.P. and R.U.; supervision, B.P. and R.U.; project administration, R.U.; funding acquisition, R.U. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

6.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

6.3. Funding

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6.4. Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Ethics Committee in Human Research Walailak University, Thailand (approval number: WUEC-22-184-01).

6.5. Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

6.6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest concerning the publication of this manuscript. Furthermore, all ethical considerations, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Your gender:

□ Male □ Female

2. Education level:

□ Below Bachelor's degree □ Bachelor's degree

□ Master's degree □ Doctoral degree

3. Age: …… years

4. Approximate monthly salary (baht):

□ Less than 15,000 □ 15,000–20,000 □ 20,001–25,000 □ 25,001–30,000 □ 30,001–35,000

□ 35,001–40,000 □ 40,001–45,000 □ 45,001–50,000 □ More than 50,000

5. Current department:

□ Customer Service □ Credit

6. Current employment status:

□ Permanent staff □ Temporary staff

7. Current job position:

□ Managerial □ Operational

Section 2: Measurement of Research Variables

How much do you agree with the following statements?	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
Inclusive leadership					
1.The manager is open to hearing new ideas.					
2.The manager is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes.					
3.The manager is open to discussing the desired goals and new ways to achieve them.					
4.The manager is available for consultation on problems.					
5.The manager is an ongoing 'presence' in this team; someone who is readily available.					
6.The manager is available for professional questions I would like to consult with him/her.					
7.The manager is ready to listen to my requests.					
8.The manager encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues.					
9. The manager is accessible for discussing emerging problems.					
Psychological Safety					
1. In my work unit, I can express my true feelings regarding my job.					
2. In my work unit, I can freely express my thoughts.					
3. In my work unit, expressing your true feelings is welcomed.					
4. Nobody in my unit will pick on me even if I have different opinions.					
5. I'm worried that expressing true thoughts in my workplace would do harm to myself. ®					
Creative Self-efficacy					
1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself in a creative way.					
2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them creatively.					
3. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me in a creative way.					
4. I believe I can succeed at most any creative endeavor to which I set my mind.					
5. I will be able to overcome many challenges creatively.					
6. I am confident that I can perform creatively on many different tasks.					
7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very creatively.					
8. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite creatively.					
Innovative work behavior					
1. I make suggestions to improve current products or services.					
2. I produce ideas to improve work practices.					
3. I acquire new knowledge.					
4. I actively contribute to the development of new products or services.					
5. I acquire new groups of customers.					
6. I optimize the organization of work.					

How much do you agree with the following statements?	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Somewhat Disagree)	4 (Neutral)	5 (Somewhat Agree)	6 (Agree)	7 (Strongly Agree)
Affective Trust							
1. We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes.							
2. I can talk freely to this individual about difficulties I am having at work and know that she/he will want to listen.							
3. We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and we could no longer work together.							
4. If I shared my problems with this person, I know she/he would respond constructively and caringly.							
5. I would have to say that we have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship.							