

# The Role of Innovative Work Behaviour as The Mediator Between Inclusive Leadership and Subjective Career Success

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## ABSTRACT

Achieving the desired standard of career success is currently moving towards a more dynamic direction, where individuals are trying to define their career success. This research aims to analyse the relationship of inclusive leadership on subjective career success mediated by innovative work, as well as the potential influence of inclusive leadership on subjective career success. This study was carried out in BUMN located in Medan, while the objects in this study were 133 managers. Based on the results, it was found that inclusive leadership directly affected subjective career success. The results also show that innovative work behavior acted as the mediator between inclusive leadership and subjective career success.

**Keywords:** *Subjective Career Success, Innovative Work Behavior, Inclusive Leadership*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades the study of career success has been developing from a traditional career perspective towards a more dynamic, individual-based goal orientation, and independent from organizational limit, namely protean career [1], [2], [3]. This contemporary career concept was born in response to technological, economic, and social changes that occur, where individuals seek to develop their definition of success and take action to achieve these success criteria [4].

These days, employees tend to proactively manage their careers and gradually reduce the dependencies toward companies in order to satisfy their psychological needs. Demonstrating individual determination by developing their resources continuously [5], individuals have the power to govern their career choices and achievements, hence are capable to evaluate future career prospects, and have the ability to strategically create their career plan which will contribute to career success [6].

Career success is a process of serving fulfilling individuals' need for achievement and power in their career journey [7]. Career success achievement tends to be more subjective rather than objective (salary, position, and status). Employees may have high positions and salary, but do not identify themselves as successful in their careers. Subjective career success is widely reviewed based on several antecedents, but there are still few studies that examine inclusive leadership as an antecedent of subjective career success. To achieve the desired standard of career success in the current

situation which is full of challenges and competition, an employee must of course have innovative work behavior, namely by producing new ideas, providing solutions to problems, and realizing these ideas. However, there is still a lack of attention given to the role of Innovative Work Behavior in increasing subjective career success.

Recent research has shown that leadership can affect an employee's career [8], [9], [10], for example, research on transformational leaders affects the success of an employee's work through work engagement [10] or psychological empowerment [11]. While research on Leader-member exchange (LMX) shows an influence on intrinsic and extrinsic career success [8]. However, almost no research has been found that discusses the influence of inclusive leadership on subjective career success directly or through the role of innovative work behavior as a mediator.

Therefore, this study aims to analyse the role of innovative work behavior as a mediator variable between inclusive leadership and subjective career success, as well as to analyse the potential direct influence of inclusive leadership on subjective career success to obtain a thorough picture of subjective career success, which will ultimately be beneficial for organizational success.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Inclusive Leadership

Words and actions by leaders that encourage and respect other's contributions are said to inclusive

leadership [12]. [13] defined inclusive leadership by three important elements, namely openness, accessibility, and availability [13] when having relation with followers. Hence, leaders may be able to induce employees to share their views and opinions when those leaders are being open, available, and accessible. It may also help to build trust among employees when their opinions are valued.

Inclusive leaders demonstrate attention to the employees' feelings, hope, interests, and willingness to contribute assistance [13], [14]. Moreover, inclusive leaders are able to convey their vision of the organization to their employees and incorporate those ideas. Consequently, employees feel motivated and more committed to leaders, they will tend to perform extra-role behavior in return. [15], [16], [17], [18]. Moreover, inclusive leaders support the employees emotionally, increase integrity, and have strong principles who make unbiased judgments [12], [19], [20].

## **2.2 Innovative Work Behavior**

According to [21], innovative behavior can be defined as behavior that leads to the initiation and implementation of new ideas, techniques, products, or procedures within the job context. Thus innovative behavior is a comprehensive and multi-dimensional construct that embraces all employee's behavior to contribute to the innovation system.

Innovative work behavior is described by some non-customary behaviors, where employees have the courage to speak up their minds and select the unusual way of thoughts [22]. The key steps in the milestone of individual innovation consist of two-stage procedures namely idea generation and application behavior [23], [24], [25]. The employee can create ideas by exploring opportunities, performance identification, or generating solutions. Ideas generating emerge when employees are in an unexpected situation such as problems with usual working methods, unable to address the customer needs, or other problems regarding production. While in the implementation stage, the employee can conduct the application behavior by developing testing and commercializing an idea.

## **2.3 Subjective Career Success**

Career success can be defined as an objective or subjective perception of achievements based on an individual's work experiences [26]. Career researchers have investigated career success by creating a conceptual difference between objective and subjective career success [27], [28]. Objective career success consists of more noticeable career accomplishments, such as salary and promotion. While subjective career success relates to less

observable career accomplishments, such as job and career satisfaction [1]. [29] Individuals may feel subjectively unsuccessful in their careers, even though achieving a good salary, position, and job status.

The investigation of subjective career success has become more important, as the growth of modern career context highlights the unpredictability and mobility of careers [30]. Hence, investigating the predictors' factors of subjective career success is important to assist individuals in their career growth [31]. Furthermore, subjective career success allows individuals to feel positive and more successful in their careers [32].

## **2.4 Inclusive Leadership and Subjective Career Success**

Some studies have shown that leadership can affect an employee's career [8], [9], [10] such servant leadership affects the subjective career success of employees through career skills [33]. While Leader-member exchange (LMX) shows an influence on intrinsic and extrinsic career success [8]. However, almost no research has been found that discusses the influence of inclusive leadership on subjective career success directly. Inclusive leaders who are open to ideas, ready for discussion, willing to share knowledge, will make employees feel motivated and tend to act the best effort toward their desirable career achievement in the future. Therefore, it is expected that inclusive leadership will affect subjective career success.

H1: Inclusive leadership is positively related to subjective career success

## **2.5 Inclusive Leadership, Innovative Work Behavior, and Subjective Career Success**

Leadership is considered the key agent of change in organizations and is a strong component of the organizational work environment. Therefore, when leaders show supportive behavior for new ideas, then employees see it as organizational support to enhance their innovative work behavior [34], [35], [36]. Inclusive leaders with this attribute, give employees access to decide their work activities on their own. Therefore, they experience high empowerment with inclusive leadership [37] that motivates and helps them to successfully exhibit innovative work behavior such as build beneficial ideas, put a lot of effort to promote them to obtain the acknowledgment, and apply them for practical benefits [38], [39], [40]. Innovative employees who are moved by inclusive leaders will be able to handle problems in working place, discover solutions, stimulate them to perform better that leads to their desired career plans. Thus, inclusive leadership is expected to have a connection with

subjective career success when innovative work behavior serves as the mediator.

H2: Inclusive leadership relates to subjective career success through innovative work behavior.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Methodology

This research was conducted at PTPN IV, while the objects in this study were 133 managers at PTPN IV. To test the validity and fit of the model, use the Loading Factor and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The data analysis uses the Structural Equation Model (SEM) method to test the hypothesis in this study.

#### 3.2. Measures

The overall measures in this research have been adapted from the previous studies and achieved the required reliability and validity. This research used the Likert scale (A five-point), from strongly disagree (1) until strongly agree (5). Inclusive leadership was assessed by openness, availability, and accessibility, developed by [13]. Innovative Work Behavior was measured by using the generation of an idea, idea promotion, and idea realization, developed by [41] based on [42]. Subjective career success was measured by perceived career success, job satisfaction, and external marketability, developed by [43] based on [44], [45], [46].

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Results

##### 4.1.1. Validity and Reliability Test

The following results were obtained:

##### A. Validity

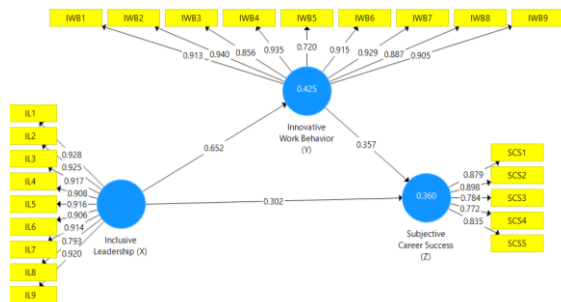


Figure 1. Validity Test Based on Loading Factor

Figure 1 showed the entire value of the loading factor is > 0.7, it has fulfilled the validity requirement based on the value of the loading factor. Next, the testing of validity is executed on the basis of the average variance extracted (AVE) value.

Table 1. Test of Validity (The Average Variance Extracted)

	Average Variance Extracted
Inclusive Leadership (X)	0.817
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.794
Subjective Career Success (Z)	0.698

The recommended AVE value according to table 1, is above 0.5 [47]. It is found that all AVE values are > 0.5, which means that they have met the validity requirements based on the AVE.

##### B. Reliability

The testing of reliability was held to refer to the composite reliability value as illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. The Test of Reliability (Composite Reliability)

	CR
Inclusive Leadership (X)	0.976
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.972
Subjective Career Success (Z)	0.920

The recommended CR value is above 0.7 [47]. It is found the overall CR values are > 0.7, it can be interpreted that the result has met the reliability requirements based on CR.

Table 3. Reliability Test Based on Cronbach's alpha (CA)

	Cronbach's Alpha
Inclusive Leadership (X)	0.972
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.967
Subjective Career Success (Z)	0.891

Table 3 shows the recommended CA value. It must be above 0.7 [48]. It is revealed that all CA values are > 0.7, the reliability requirements based on Cronbach's Alpha have been met.

##### 4.1.2 Significance Effect Test (Bootstrapping)

Table 4 presents the results of the Significance Effect Test (Bootstrapping)

Table 4. Significance Effect Test (Bootstrapping)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDE)	T Statistics ( O/ST)	P Values

			V)	DEV )	
<b>Inclusive Leadership (X) -&gt; Innovative Work Behavior (Y)</b>	0.652	0.654	0.090	7.284	0.000
<b>Inclusive Leadership (X) -&gt; Subjective Career Success (Z)</b>	0.302	0.286	0.118	2.552	0.011
<b>Innovative Work Behavior (Y) -&gt; Subjective Career Success (Z)</b>	0.357	0.371	0.106	3.366	0.001

Based on results in table 4:

- It is known that the coefficient of IL on IWB is 0.652 (original column sample), with P-Values = 0,000 < 0.05, it is concluded that IL has a significant effect on IWB, as well as IL on SCS and IWB on SCS.

**Table 5.** Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

	R Square
<b>Innovative Work Behavior (Y)</b>	0.425
<b>Subjective Career Success (Z)</b>	0.360

Based on the results in Table 5, it is known that the coefficient of determination (r-square) of innovative work behavior is 0.425. This value can be interpreted that the influence of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior is 42.5%. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination (r-square) of subjective career success is 0.360. This value can be interpreted as the influence of inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior on subjective career success by 36%.

**Table 6.** Mediation Test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
<b>Inclusive Leadership (X) -&gt; Innovative Work Behavior (Y) -&gt; Subjective Career Success (Z)</b>	0.233	0.246	0.092	2.538	0.011

Table 6 displayed the indirect effect of inclusive leadership on subjective career success through

innovative work behavior is 0.233, with P-Values = 0.011 < 0.05, which means that innovative work behavior is significant as a mediator of the relationship between inclusive leadership and subjective career success.

**4.2. Discussion**

This research intends to analyse the potential direct influence of inclusive leadership on subjective career success. Previous research on inclusive leadership focused more on its effect on innovative work behavior [49], [50], [33], very little research explores the direct effects of inclusive leadership on subjective career success. It was found that inclusive leadership significantly influences subjective career success. Inclusive leaders who embrace the different ideas among employees, always have time to discuss, are willing to share information and knowledge, are ready to consult on work issues, and concern about new opportunities in job achievement will cultivate confidence in employees about their work, role, and future career achievements. As a result, it can be stated that inclusive leadership has a direct effect on subjective career success.

The results also show that inclusive leadership has a significant relationship with subjective career success mediated by innovative work behavior. Subjective career success is an assessment of career success based on an individual's subjective assessment of their career achievement, which includes career satisfaction. The satisfaction of career achievements can be reached when they have the opportunities to behave innovatively in carrying out their ideas for work accomplishment. These needs can be addressed by inclusive leaders, who are able to stimulate the creative mind of the employees. In addition, inclusive leaders provide opportunities for employees to express their opinions and ideas, are willing to listen, and encourage employees to implement their ideas [13]. To be specific, inclusive leaders provide opportunities for employees to have innovative work behavior. Employees who are full of ideas and innovative and driven by inclusive leaders will be able and confident in overcoming problems that will hinder their career achievements, able to improve abilities that lead to achieving the desired career success. Hence, this research has confirmed the role of innovative work behavior as the mediator between inclusive leadership and subjective career success.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

YA carried out the literature survey, IS participated in the design of the study. ES participated in the statistical analysis, and YCM was responsible for the draft of the manuscript. The final manuscript was read, reviewed, and consented to by all authors.

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