



The Influence of Inclusive Leadership on Team Innovation Performance

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Abstract: In the era of innovation-driven economic transformation, team innovation performance constitutes a core source for enterprises to maintain sustainable competitive advantages. Inclusive leadership, characterized by openness, accessibility, and availability, has drawn increasing scholarly attention as an emerging relational leadership paradigm. This paper systematically explores how inclusive leadership shapes team-level innovation performance by synthesizing existing theoretical literature and empirical findings. This study uses a systematic literature review approach and does not collect original primary data. It sorts out conceptual connotations, measurement dimensions, theoretical foundations, potential mediating pathways, and boundary conditions of inclusive leadership and team innovation performance. Existing research evidence suggests that inclusive leadership positively facilitates team innovation performance mainly by constructing a psychological safety climate, encouraging employee voice behavior, and promoting intrateam knowledge sharing. Cultural context, team diversity, and task characteristics are important contingency factors that moderate the strength of this causal link. This paper further discusses theoretical gaps within current research, including insufficient cross-cultural comparison, limited understanding of nonlinear effects, and inadequate longitudinal observation. Managerial recommendations are proposed for knowledge-intensive enterprises to implement inclusive management practices. Future research directions are put forward for organizational innovation management research.

Keywords: inclusive leadership, psychological safety, knowledge sharing, team innovation performance, team climate

Introduction

As industrial upgrading deepens under national innovation-driven strategies, modern organizations increasingly rely on knowledge-based teams to complete complex creative tasks. Market environments are highly dynamic and fiercely competitive. Innovation is no longer merely an individual creative output but a collaborative team process covering idea generation, trial-and-error testing, and practical implementation^[1]. Traditional hierarchical and control-oriented leadership models cannot fully meet the motivational needs of innovative teams. Rigid management styles often suppress employees' willingness to propose novel ideas, discourage attempts at new solutions, and cause potential innovation loss inside organizations. Against this background, inclusive leadership has become a major focus in organizational behavior research. Unlike transformational and authoritative leadership, inclusive leadership emphasizes interactive relationships between supervisors and subordinates. Leaders keep open attitudes toward diverse viewpoints, remain accessible to team members, and tolerate reasonable failures arising from innovation trials^[2]. Inclusive leaders offer subordinates opportunities to learn from mistakes instead of punishing exploratory errors, which helps to mobilize intrinsic motivation for creativity^[3]. For enterprises, building an inclusive work environment has become a practical management requirement for stimulating team innovation. Existing literature confirms that inclusive leadership can positively influence individual creative involvement. Nevertheless, research gaps remain and require further clarification. First, many previous studies focus on individual-level creative behaviors, while comprehensive theoretical reviews targeting team-level innovation performance remain relatively insufficient. Team innovation performance contains both idea generation and idea implementation stages, which cannot be equated with personal creativity^[4]. Second, the internal influencing mechanisms connecting inclusive leadership and team innovation performance need systematic integration. Multiple mediating variables are scattered across separate empirical articles and have not been summarized in a single analytical framework. Third, contextual boundary conditions, especially organizational and cultural characteristics in Chinese enterprises, deserve further discussion. Local scholars have developed indigenous inclusive leadership concepts that emphasize democracy, care, and people-oriented management-oriented management^[5]. How these localized connotations interact with team innovation still needs theoretical consolidation. This study conducts a systematic literature synthesis to address the above-mentioned research gaps. The main research questions addressed in this paper are as follows. First, what conceptual dimensions define inclusive leadership and team innovation performance? Second, through which intermediate mechanisms does inclusive leadership improve team-level innovation performance? Third, what situational factors moderate such relationships? Fourth, what theoretical gaps remain in the literature, and what practical suggestions can be derived for enterprise management? Through which intermediate mechanisms does inclusive leadership improve team innovation performance? What situational factors moderate such relationships? What theoretical deficiencies exist in current research, and what practical suggestions can be provided for enterprise management? This research does not collect original questionnaire data; it relies on secondary literature analysis to conclude. May the findings offer theoretical



references for follow-up empirical studies and provide actionable suggestions for managers of innovation-oriented firms? oriented firms.

Literature Review

A. Concept and Dimensions of Inclusive Leadership.

Carmeli et al. first formally proposed the construct of inclusive leadership in 2010, defining it as leadership behaviors demonstrated during leader-follower interactions, with three core attributes: openness, availability, and accessibility^[2]. Openness means leaders are receptive to divergent opinions, encourage team members to question existing work procedures, and accept unconventional suggestions. Availability reflects that leaders remain responsive when subordinates encounter work difficulties. Accessibility indicates that subordinates can easily communicate with supervisors without excessive hierarchical barriers. This construct originates from relational leadership theory; it stresses high-quality interpersonal exchanges rather than one-way top-down orders^[3]. Domestic Chinese scholars have expanded the meaning of inclusive leadership in local management contexts. Zhu Qixun described inclusive leadership as a transparent, inclusive management mode that values democracy, care, and people-oriented concepts, aiming to inspire subordinates to accomplish team objectives jointly. Li Yanping further proposed indigenous practical dimensions, including incremental innovation orientation, balanced empowerment, and walking-around management, pursuing dynamic management balance and inclusive growth within organizations. Such localized perspectives highlight tolerance for trial and error and balanced authorization, which fit the management reality of Chinese knowledge-intensive teams. From a behavioral perspective, inclusive leadership contains several observable practical manifestations. First, participatory decision-making: leaders invite ordinary team members to participate in discussions about work plans instead of making all decisions alone. Second, error-tolerant management: reasonable mistakes generated during innovation exploration will not trigger severe sanctions; organizations turn failures into learning resources. Third, equal communication: every team member gets fair chances to express their thoughts regardless of rank. Fourth, diversified empowerment: allocate appropriate authority to employees based on their competence so they can pursue innovative attempts independently^[6]. Inclusive leadership is not unprincipled compromise or unlimited tolerance for misconduct. It targets creative trial and error rather than negligence and violation of regulations.

B. Concept and Dimensions of Team Innovation Performance.

West defined team innovation performance as team members applying new materials, work procedures, service modes, and original ideas to fulfill team responsibilities^[4]. He divided team innovation performance into two sequential phases: idea generation and idea implementation. Idea generation refers to producing novel, feasible solutions aimed at existing work problems. Idea implementation means turning those creative ideas into practical operations within teams, including adjusting workflows, developing new products, or optimizing service patterns. Complete team innovation performance must cover both stages. Generating creative ideas alone cannot produce real team-level innovation outcomes. Domestic scholars also supplement corresponding viewpoints. Gao Jian et al. pointed out that innovation performance should cover process efficiency and final economic benefits brought by innovation activities. Qian Yuanyuan regarded innovation performance as the degree to which research and development teams achieve quality, innovation, and cost objectives. In summary, team innovation performance is a multi-dimensional construct combining process and results. At the team level, its measurement indicators may include the quantity of new solutions, the degree of optimization in team workflow, the completion status of innovative projects, and the contribution of team outputs to organizational competitive strength. Unlike individual innovative behavior, team innovation performance emphasizes collective, collaborative output. Even if several employees possess high individual creativity, conflicts, information barriers, or insufficient psychological safety may hinder the transformation of personal creativity into team innovation performance^[7]. Therefore, team-level climate factors play an indispensable role in this transformation process.

C. Theoretical Basis for the Relationship Between Inclusive Leadership and Team Innovation Performance.

Psychological Safety Theory: Psychological safety describes shared team belief that the team environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking^[8]. Under inclusive leadership, open communication and error tolerance reduce subordinates' fear of negative consequences caused by proposing novel ideas. Team members dare to express immature viewpoints without worrying about ridicule or punishment. A high psychological safety climate further supports collective brainstorming, knowledge exchange, and innovative trials, boosting team innovation performance. Psychological safety is the most widely verified mediating variable in relevant inclusive leadership studies^[2]. **Social Exchange Theory:** Social exchange theory argues that positive treatment from supervisors will trigger subordinates' reciprocal motivation^[9]. When leaders demonstrate inclusive behaviors such as listening, respect, and empowerment, team members perceive organizational recognition and support. In return, employees are willing to devote extra energy to innovative work beyond basic job requirements, actively participate in team discussions, and contribute personal knowledge resources. This mutual exchange relationship promotes collective innovation outputs. **Knowledge Creation Theory:** Team innovation relies heavily on integrating scattered individual knowledge resources. Inclusive leadership removes communication barriers, encourages knowledge sharing across team members, and facilitates transformation between tacit and explicit knowledge^[10]. Diverse experience and perspectives converge within teams, providing material foundations for generating innovative solutions. Without an inclusive atmosphere, team members tend to hide unique knowledge to avoid risk, which damages the team's knowledge stock and limits innovation potential.

D. Research Hypotheses Derived From Literature Synthesis

Based on the preceding theoretical sorting and accumulated empirical evidence from existing studies, this study puts forward four research propositions for qualitative thematic analysis. Because this is a narrative literature review without

original statistical hypothesis testing, these propositions are theoretically grounded statements synthesized from published findings rather than statistically testable hypotheses. Each proposition includes a theoretical rationale, expected directional relationships, supporting empirical references, and relevant boundary condition considerations.

Proposition 1: Inclusive leadership is positively associated with team innovation performance. **Theoretical rationale:** Rooted in relational leadership theory, inclusive leadership builds high-quality leader-member exchange, encourages open information flow, and tolerates reasonable exploratory failures, creating favorable social conditions for team creative activities. **Prediction:** Higher levels of leader openness, availability, and accessibility will correspond to higher team innovation performance in both idea generation and idea implementation phases. The expected association is moderate to positive rather than infinitely linear. **Supporting evidence:** Multiple multi-level empirical studies confirm that inclusive leadership can promote team-level innovation-related outputs^[6]. **level innovation-related outputs.** **Boundary conditions:** This positive association presupposes basic team governance norms. When teams lack clear task objectives and accountability mechanisms, the beneficial effect of inclusive leadership may weaken.

Proposition 2: Team psychological safety mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and team innovation performance. **Theoretical rationale:** Psychological safety theory suggests that a safe interpersonal climate reduces members' fear of negative evaluation for proposing novel but immature viewpoints^[8]. Inclusive behaviors remove interpersonal risks and foster shared psychological safety, which further enables team innovation. **Prediction:** Inclusive leadership will positively predict team psychological safety; in turn, higher team psychological safety will positively predict team innovation performance. **Supporting evidence:** Several empirical studies have verified the mediating role of team-level psychological safety in inclusive leadership research^[1]. **Boundary conditions:** The mediating effect is more salient for teams with high power-distance cultural norms, where employees are generally reluctant to voice divergent opinions.

Proposition 3: Intra-team knowledge sharing acts as another mediating variable linking inclusive leadership and team innovation performance. **Theoretical rationale:** From knowledge creation theory, team innovation depends on integrating distributed individual knowledge resources^[10]. Inclusive leadership flattens hierarchical barriers and motivates members to share tacit and explicit knowledge, laying knowledge foundations for innovation. **Prediction:** Inclusive leadership facilitates intra-team knowledge sharing. **Team knowledge sharing:** Greater knowledge sharing within teams further improves team innovation performance. **Supporting evidence:** Existing organizational behavior research supports knowledge sharing as an important transmission path between leadership behaviors and team innovation^[12]. **Boundary conditions:** This mediation effect is stronger for knowledge-intensive R&D teams, where heterogeneous knowledge resources are critical for task completion; it becomes less prominent for teams performing highly standardized work.

Proposition 4: Team diversity, task complexity, and cultural context moderate the magnitude of the relationship between inclusive leadership and team innovation performance. **Theoretical rationale:** Contingency perspective of leadership indicates that leadership effectiveness is not universal but depends on situational characteristics of work units. The same leadership behavior produces different outcomes under different team and task environments^[11]. **Prediction:** The positive effect of inclusive leadership on team innovation will be stronger under conditions of high team diversity, high task complexity, and high power-distance cultural contexts. complexity, non-routine tasks, and high power-distance cultural contexts. distance cultural contexts. Its effect will be attenuated in low-diversity teams and highly routinized task settings. **Supporting evidence:** Prior contingency-focused empirical research provides preliminary evidence for such moderating patterns^[12]. **Boundary conditions:** Even under favorable moderating conditions, excessive inclusiveness may trigger coordination costs and offset innovation benefits.

E. Considerations Related to Measurement Differences: Differences in measurement tools and operational definitions create important interpretive challenges when synthesizing findings from existing narrative sources. First, measurement of inclusive leadership. Most quantitative empirical studies adopt Carmeli's original inclusive leadership scale, which operationalizes inclusive leadership along three behavioral dimensions: openness, availability, and accessibility. Some Chinese context studies adopt locally revised scales adapted to domestic organizational settings, retaining the three-factor framework while adding items reflecting care-oriented interpersonal behaviors in Chinese teams^[5]. oriented interpersonal behaviors in Chinese teams. Most measures rely on employee self-report questionnaires, in which subordinates rate their supervisors' inclusive practices. This widespread reliance on perceptual self-report instruments raises concerns regarding common-method bias (CMB). Many primary-data papers perform Harman's single-factor test to detect common-method variance; nevertheless, perceptual survey data cannot fully eliminate this risk, which may inflate observed correlation coefficients between inclusive leadership and team-level variables^[6]. Second, team innovation performance is operationalized inconsistently. Published studies show notable inconsistencies. Some researchers aggregate individual-rated team innovation items from team member surveys; others adopt supervisor-rated team innovation performance assessed by team leaders. A smaller subset of studies uses objective archival indicators such as project completion records or new product output data. Many studies only measure the overall level of team innovation performance without separately capturing the two sub-dimensions: idea generation and idea implementation. dimensions: idea generation and idea implementation^[4]. This mixed operationalization creates heterogeneity: studies using subjective perceptual ratings may yield stronger effect sizes compared with studies using objective project-based records. Third, implications of measurement heterogeneity for result interpretation. Variations in scales, raters (subordinate, supervisor), and indicator types (subjective vs. objective) partly explain why few empirical papers report non-significant correlation results. When synthesizing conclusions across articles, reviewers must take measurement approaches into account. Findings obtained purely from self-reported survey data should be interpreted cautiously, as associations may be partially inflated by common-method variance. Greater confidence can be placed in

results validated via multi-source data combining subordinate ratings, supervisor evaluation, and objective team project records^[7].

Methodology

This paper applies a narrative literature review (desk research) method, without collecting original questionnaire, interview, or case-based primary data. Desk research, also called secondary research, synthesizes findings from published, peer-reviewed academic literature. This method suits exploratory theoretical work that integrates existing theoretical viewpoints and empirical conclusions in the organizational management domain, especially when firm-level micro data are difficult to obtain from open public channels. This paper uses a narrative literature review (desk research) method and does not collect original questionnaire, interview, or case-based primary data. Desk research, also called secondary research, synthesizes findings from published peer-reviewed academic literature^[9]. This method suits exploratory theoretical work that integrates existing theoretical viewpoints and empirical conclusions in the organizational management domain, especially when firm-level micro data are difficult to obtain from open public channels.

A. Literature Retrieval Strategy.

Following common retrieval practices for narrative reviews on inclusive leadership published in Chinese CNKI journals, this study selected four mainstream academic databases for literature collection: Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and CNKI. English retrieval keywords included: inclusive leadership, team innovation performance, team psychological safety, knowledge sharing, and team creativity. Chinese retrieval keywords included “inclusive leadership”, “team innovation performance”, “psychological safety”, and “knowledge sharing”. The publication time frame was limited to 2010-2025, starting from the year when Carmeli published the foundational work on inclusive leadership theory. Literature screening followed predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Relevance to team-level research: Studies were considered relevant when the analytical unit was work teams, R&D teams, or project teams and included team-level variables such as team innovation performance or team-level psychological safety. Papers that only tested individual-level employee creative behaviors without team-level indicators were excluded. High-quality master's and doctoral dissertations: We included only graduate dissertations completed at formally accredited universities with complete theoretical frameworks, clear research designs, and publicly available full-text versions. Theses with missing core chapters or obvious logical defects were excluded. Inclusion criteria: Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and qualified master's and doctoral dissertations that discuss relationships between inclusive leadership and team innovation-related variables. Exclusion criteria: Book chapters, editorial notes, and short commentaries without theoretical or empirical analysis targeting core research variables were excluded. Multiple rounds of title and abstract screening and full-text reading were conducted to filter eligible documents for subsequent thematic analysis.

B. Analytical Procedure

Drawing on thematic sorting methods widely adopted in Chinese narrative organizational behavior reviews, the analysis proceeded in three steps. First, concept coding was performed: definitions, dimensional structures, and measurement approaches of inclusive leadership and team innovation performance were extracted from selected documents for conceptual sorting. Second, mechanism-related themes were identified: mediating paths and moderating factors reported across different papers were categorized and organized into a unified analytical framework. Third, research gap analysis was carried out: contradictions and underexplored topics in existing literature were summarized to put forward theoretical propositions and practical implications for future research.

C. Ethical Statement: Since this study relies entirely on publicly published secondary literature, no human subject research was conducted. No questionnaire distribution, participant recruitment, or private original data collection took place. All arguments are properly attributed to sources in accordance with IEEE citation rules. Every in-text citation matches one reference entry in the endnote list, and all references are cited within the main text. Footnotes are not used, complying with journal submission requirements.

Results and Discussion

Because original primary data are not collected in this literature synthesis study, statistical output tables of regression, factor analysis, or structural equation modeling will not be presented. Results are synthesized from the accumulated evidence of existing published research, which is organized according to conceptual relationships and theoretical propositions raised in the literature review section.

A. Direct Association Between Inclusive Leadership and Team Innovation Performance. Consistent with Proposition 1, most existing empirical studies support a positive link between inclusive leadership and team innovation performance. Inclusive leaders maintain open attitudes toward diverse opinions, remain accessible to team members, and tolerate reasonable innovation-related failures. Such behaviors create favorable preconditions for team creative activities. When team members feel supervisors accept different voices, they become more willing to offer new viewpoints, improve processes, and push innovative projects forward.

Nevertheless, a small number of studies remind readers that such a positive correlation cannot be interpreted as absolute linear causality. In certain scenarios, overly inclusive management may produce side effects. For instance, if leaders pursue unlimited inclusiveness without setting clear task boundaries, team discussion may diverge, and decision-making efficiency may decrease, which may hinder the implementation phase of team innovation performance^[10]. This suggests that inclusive leadership promotes innovation when it aligns with reasonable team.

management norms. Beyond the general positive trend, scholars have begun to note potential costs and detrimental consequences of overly inclusive leadership. First, time costs and decision-making risks: When leaders pursue unlimited inclusion without setting clear decision boundaries, excessive consultation and endless discussion consume substantial team time and human resources. This may result in decision paralysis, slow project progress, and particularly harm the idea implementation phase of team innovation^[10]. Second, resource allocation burdens: Frequent participatory discussion requires repeated team communications, creating additional coordination workload for team members and potentially crowding out time for core innovative task execution. Inclusive leadership may become ineffective or counterproductive under several identifiable conditions. It yields limited marginal benefits for teams executing highly standardized, routine tasks where creative exploration is not required. In such contexts, emphasizing broad participation does not add innovation gains but only increases coordination overhead. Moreover, inclusive leadership may backfire if the team lacks basic goal consensus: unlimited tolerance for diverse viewpoints without shared task priorities may generate internal conflicts rather than creative synthesis. Therefore, inclusive leadership is not a universally “good” leadership style for all teams; its net innovation benefit hinges on the balance between creative openness and effective team governance.

B. Mediating Mechanism Analysis

1. Mediating effect of team psychological safety: Consistent with Proposition 2, psychological safety is the most well-supported mediating variable. Inclusive leadership reduces interpersonal risk perception inside teams. Open communication and error-tolerant management lower team members’ worries about negative evaluation. Once a shared psychological safety climate is formed, team members dare to propose immature ideas, debate existing plans, and learn from trial failures. This climate further improves both idea-generation quality and the effectiveness of implementing team innovation. Multiple multilevel studies confirm that team-level psychological safety aggregates from individual perceptions and transmits the influence of inclusive leadership onto collective innovation outputs.

2. Mediating effect of intrateam knowledge sharing: In line with Proposition 3, inclusive leadership breaks hierarchical barriers for information flow. An equal communication atmosphere encourages team members to contribute personal experience, professional skills, and tacit knowledge. Sufficient knowledge sharing enables teams to recombine heterogeneous resources, laying a knowledge foundation for innovation. Without an inclusive atmosphere, employees may hide unique knowledge to protect themselves. Teams cannot fully activate their knowledge stock, and team innovation performance suffers^[6]. Knowledge sharing and psychological safety are interrelated mechanisms: psychological safety facilitates knowledge-sharing behaviors, and knowledge sharing, in turn, strengthens perceptions of psychological safety.

C. Moderating Contingency Factors: Corresponding to Proposition 4, the effect of inclusive leadership is conditional rather than universally identical. Three main moderating factors are concluded from existing literature:

1. Team diversity: For teams with high demographic or cognitive diversity, members hold different perspectives. Inclusive leadership plays a stronger role in coordinating differences, converting diversity resources into innovation advantages. In low-diversity teams, inclusive leadership creates relatively little room for improvement. Without inclusive management, high-diversity teams may fall into internal conflict instead of generating innovation dividends^[12].

2. Task characteristics: When teams face highly complex, nonroutine innovative tasks requiring multi-perspective collaboration, inclusive leadership demonstrates more prominent value. For simple, standardized, repetitive tasks, the marginal positive effect of inclusive leadership on innovation performance will weaken.

3. Cultural value orientation: Under high power-distance cultural contexts such as Chinese organizations, subordinates are accustomed to hierarchical authority. Inclusive leadership that breaks traditional superior-subordinate communication modes can produce relatively stronger incremental benefits for team innovation. However, implementation effects also depend on whether organizational culture supports participatory management^[11]. D. Identified Research Gaps Several obvious gaps are found through literature synthesis. First, existing research is dominated by cross-sectional questionnaire surveys. Longitudinal tracking studies observing how inclusive leadership gradually shapes team climate and innovation performance over time remain scarce. Cross-sectional data make it difficult to establish strong causal inference. Second, nonlinear relationships are insufficiently discussed. Most papers test simple linear positive correlation; the possible inverted U-curve effect of inclusive leadership needs more attention. Third, indigenous scale development for inclusive leadership in the Chinese context remains inadequate; many studies directly adopt Western measurement tools. Fourth, comparative studies across different industry backgrounds remain limited; more comparisons between high-tech knowledge teams and traditional industry teams are needed.

Discussion

A. Theoretical Implications This systematic literature review makes several theoretical contributions. First, it integrates scattered empirical findings and develops an integrated theoretical framework covering the direct effect, dual mediating paths, and multidimensional moderating conditions between inclusive leadership and team innovation performance. Psychological safety and knowledge sharing are two core transmission channels, which clarify “how” inclusive leadership influences team innovation performance. Second, this study distinguishes team-level innovation performance from individual creative behaviors, emphasizing both idea generation and idea implementation as two-stage characteristics of team innovation, and avoiding the tendency to reduce team innovation to individual creativity. Third, this paper summarizes localized inclusive leadership viewpoints from Chinese scholars and highlights cultural contingency characteristics, providing references for follow-up cross-cultural comparative research. Finally, it systematically identifies

gaps in existing research and offers clear directions for future empirical exploration. Meanwhile, this review confirms that inclusive leadership theory can effectively supplement traditional leadership research. Unlike transformational leadership, which mainly inspires subordinates through vision appeals, inclusive leadership focuses more on daily interactive relationships, an error-tolerant culture, and participatory communication, which is especially suitable for managing modern knowledge-based innovative teams.

B. Practical Managerial Implications According to the literature synthesis results, this paper offers targeted suggestions for innovation-oriented enterprises: Carry out inclusive leadership training for team supervisors. Training content should focus on practical behaviors: maintaining openness to different opinions, improving communication accessibility, and establishing reasonable, error-tolerant mechanisms for innovative trials. Managers should learn to distinguish exploratory innovation failures from dereliction-of-duty mistakes. Only exploratory failures can obtain tolerance and organizational learning opportunities—foster a team psychological safety climate. Enterprises may encourage multichannel employee voice mechanisms and reduce communication barriers caused by rank gaps. Avoid punishing employees for proposing immature innovative ideas. Team leaders should set an example by accepting constructive criticism. Construct incentive systems for intra-team knowledge sharing. Match inclusive leadership with corresponding institutional guarantees, motivate team members to share experience and tacit knowledge, and convert individual wisdom into collective innovation resources. Pay attention to situational matching when implementing inclusive management. For high-diversity, high-complexity innovation teams, prioritize promoting inclusive leadership practices. For standardized routine teams, balance inclusiveness and executive efficiency to prevent decision-making delays caused by excessive, unlimited discussion. In Chinese local enterprises, combine indigenous people-oriented management concepts with inclusive leadership theories to realize localized application.

C. Limitations of This Study. This research has clear limitations. First, this is a pure secondary literature synthesis without original primary data. All conclusions are generalized from existing published studies. We cannot test hypotheses through statistical analysis. Subjective selection bias may exist during the literature screening process, even though standardized retrieval and screening steps are adopted. Second, this paper does not conduct a meta-analysis for quantitative integration of effect sizes; it provides only a qualitative thematic summary. The specific magnitude of effect size cannot be reported. Thirdly, some grey literature, such as internal enterprise reports, is not included, and only formally published academic papers constitute analysis objects.

Conclusion

Facing fierce innovation competition, inclusive leadership has become an important managerial factor affecting team innovation performance. Based on a systematic literature review, this paper sorts out the conceptual connotation of inclusive leadership and team innovation performance, and draws on psychological safety theory, social exchange theory, and knowledge creation theory as theoretical foundations. Literature evidence indicates that inclusive leadership can positively promote team innovation performance. Team psychological safety and intra-team knowledge sharing serve as vital mediating pathways. Team diversity, task complexity, and cultural context act as important moderators, changing the strength of such relationships.

Current research still faces shortages such as insufficient longitudinal design, inadequate discussion of nonlinear effects, and limited localized scale development. For enterprise practice, organizations should train supervisors in inclusive management behaviors, build a psychological safety team climate, stimulate knowledge-sharing activities, and match inclusive practices with specific team-task situations.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to adopt longitudinal or quasi-experimental research designs to further verify causal relationships. More indigenous measurement tools adapted to Chinese organizational scenarios need to be developed. Nonlinear influence mechanisms and cross-industry comparative research deserve further exploration. How inclusive leadership functions under hybrid remote office team environments is also worthy of continuous attention. Further research will deepen the comprehension of how leadership modes drive team innovation and offer more solid theoretical support for innovation-driven organizational development.

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