





Exploring the effect of inclusive leadership on psychological distress through organizational climate mediation and moderation

 **Ibnis Shaïd Bin Abdul Rajun¹**

 **Soon Singh Bikar Singh²⁺**

 **Muhamad Suhaimi Taat³**

 **Musirin Bin Mosin⁴**

^{1,2,3,4}Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah Malaysia.

¹Email: ibnis2018@gmail.com

²Email: soonsb@ums.edu.my

³Email: suhami@ums.edu.my

⁴Email: m_musirin@yahoo.com



(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

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A new leadership approach called inclusive leadership has emerged in response to today's crises and disasters used by different organizations. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the effectiveness of inclusive leadership and organizational climate in reducing the widespread prevalence of this symptom among 423 secondary school teachers. Field research data collection was manually analysed using the International Business Machine-Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM-SPSS) with moment structure (AMOS) analysis and Jamovi software. The results of the inclusive leadership study are significantly related to organizational climate. The organizational climate is significantly and inversely related to psychological distress. The relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress was found to be positive but not significant. Nevertheless, organizational climate fully mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress. However, organizational climate has partially moderated the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress. The study is beneficial to organizational leaders especially the ministry of education and school principals who face diverse secondary school teachers. Finally, it contributes to the development of leadership, management and psychology.

Contribution/Originality: This study is 100% original. It is our work and it is carried out according to the procedures and discipline of the absolute investigation without any violation either in terms of contents or ethics. It has also never been published anywhere.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global economic crisis that followed the COVID-19 pandemic's significant events has impacted household socioeconomics through several factors including job loss, income decline, bereavement and other losses (Murugan, Rajavel, Aggarwal, & Singh, 2020). Since the end of the late 1900s, the concept of inclusion has been discussed among the public, especially in the United States of America due to the insistence of disabilities demanding equal rights and opportunities in any field including education. They do not want to be segregated from the mainstream (Thompson & Matkin, 2020). The starting point for inclusive leadership is emerging as a new leadership style. The inclusive leadership style is widely embraced in various sectors including health services (Fu et al., 2022),

telecommunications (Nguyen, Le, Trinh, & Do, 2019), construction (Rehman, 2020), finance (Paiuc, 2021), manufacturing sectors (Guo, Zhu, & Zhang, 2022) and schools (Bhowmik, Walker, & Bryant, 2023).

Organizational climate plays a positive integral stabilizer and balancer mechanic in the role of inclusive leadership in changing workplace perceptions based on the previous studies. This study outlines several goals for conducting research. The first is to identify the effect of inclusive leadership on organizational climate. The second is to identify the effect of organizational climate on psychological distress. The third identified the effect of inclusive leadership on psychological distress. The fourth is to identify whether organizational climate mediates and moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress. The following are the research questions in line with the goals of the study: First, is there an effect of inclusive leadership on organizational climate? Second, is there an effect of organizational climate on psychological distress? Third, is there an inclusive effect on psychological distress? Fourth, does organizational climate mediate and moderate the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress?

The current situation has many people affected by the rapid and turbulent changes in human life since the deadly epidemic hit. School teachers are also ordinary people without exception, facing reality-critical moments that can lead to psychological distress. The impact and implications are not only for teachers and families but for the future of the next generation and the country. If teachers are unable to carry out their duties due to mental disorders, then the education system will be paralyzed. Therefore, research to find a solution to this issue is very appropriate. In addition, the authorities need to know the level of mental health of subordinates so that there is a programme to control and prevent this symptom from spreading (Boström et al., 2020). Therefore, this study identifies the cause and effect of the problem of psychological distress by combining variables that are identified as having high reliability. Inclusive leadership and organizational climate are among the variables that are associated with the problem of psychological distress.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Relevant literature highlights are needed to get a clear picture and a better understanding of issues of psychological distress and the strength of inclusive leadership. Moreover, it is also explained about the role of organizational climate as a mediator and moderator.

2.1. *Inclusive Leadership and Organizational Climate*

According to Kuknor and Bhattacharya (2022) inclusive leadership is a new leadership style that is now gaining a place in the corporate world. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) explain in their article the concept of leader inclusiveness which is the words and actions that a person exhibits that are charming and appreciate the contribution of others. Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, and Ziv (2010) defined him as a leader who has openness, availability and accessibility to all members of the organization without any limitations (Veli Korkmaz, Van Engen, Knappert, & Schalk, 2022). Several additional qualities contribute to a method of leadership but some that are frequently discussed are dedication, bravery, teamwork, awareness of one's prejudices, fairness, empathy and so on. Some past studies on inclusive leadership are associated with various constructs in various fields and sectors. It turns out that this leadership style is seen as a choice and has effectiveness from the point of view of managing human resources. For example, research in the health care service sector, construction, telecommunications and so on. The highlight of the literature on inclusive leadership linked to organizational climate is the main focus. Nair and Sivakumar (2020) have investigated whether inclusive leadership is able to reduce emotional dissonance among teachers. The study examines whether organizational climate mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and emotional dissonance. The issue that has been highlighted is related to conflict and disagreement in the organization that make a person experience emotional disturbances. In this study, Qi and Liu (2017) raised the issue of employee voice behaviour and team performance as the main issues while employing a caring ethical climate

as a mediator. Employee voice is a problem that can also be considered a big problem if not dealt with wisely. Employee voices may cause conflict for some people but others might be absorbed as constructive criticism. Leaders who consider themselves good listeners will definitely face it, refine the voices of subordinates and develop their leadership potential and the organization as a whole. There are also studies that examine whether inclusive leadership fosters psychological resilience and mediates it with perceived insider status and a supportive organizational climate. Psychological resilience is a revival of a sense of hopelessness and traumatic failure due to facing various problems like anxiety (Nurdin, Sulaeman, & Ridwan, 2022) or bullying (Tashtoush, Wardat, AlAli, & Al-Saud, 2023). Perceived insider status is about a person's concept of his position space and acceptance of himself in the organization. There are gaps and a great deal of potential for additional research in the numerous studies that have emphasised different concepts, backgrounds and techniques. Studies on inclusive leadership are associated with organizational climate. Kurt Lewin's work and those of his colleagues have conceptualized that organizational climate also as social Climate. Litwin and Stringer (1968) described the organizational climate as "the shared beliefs and values of organization members that constitute the perceived work environment" (Holloway, 2012). Similarly, Forehand and Von Haller (1964) stated that organizational climate refers to "a set of characteristics that describe an organization and that (a) distinguish the organization from other organizations, (b) are relatively enduring over time and (c) influence the behaviour of people in the organization" (Kundu, 2007). Therefore, organizational climate does not solely depend on an environmental space the appearance, structure. It also covers behaviours and reactions that are difficult to see with the naked eye such as revenge, jealousy, hypocrisy, security or safety, justice, empowerment climate, ethical climate and many more that affect a person's psychological well-being and vice versa (Jaya, Vasudevan, Nagaraj, Hashim, & Tunjungsari, 2023). Earlier studies focused only on some aspects of the organizational environment. The current study examines the relationship between inclusive leadership in five dimensions: supportive, directive, engaged, frustrated, and inmate. Therefore, the results of previous research mapping lead this study to hypothesize that inclusive leadership does not have a significant effect on organizational climate as per hypothesis 1.

2.2. Organizational Climate and Psychological Distress

The importance of the workplace environmental climate is often underestimated and neglected. However, at this time, it feels like the work and play space is no longer as comfortable as it used to be due to the many changes that have taken place making some people feel bored, disgusted, hopeless and lost. The worst is that many people take a short cut and the media reports suicide incidents almost daily. Previous studies on aspects of organizational climate appear to be very broad covering all of human life. Some get concerned about the harm being done to natural wealth and feel bad about not appreciating it. However, some individuals don't give a damn and even go on destroying it guiltlessly, ruining the lives of others in the process. Consider the examples of mudslides and floods which demonstrate the greed of human activities. According to the social perspective, bullying behaviour, sexual harassment, defamation and many more can be said to destroy the social structure as well as many other things related to the organizational climate. Many studies have found that the effect of organizational climate on psychological distress is very close and even found an inverse relationship which means that when the quality of the workplace environment is high, many members of the organization no longer face severe psychological distress (Shaheen, Bano, & Ahmed, 2022). For example, in Balwant, Jueanville, and Ramdeo (2019), Simard and Parent-Lamarche (2022) and Selem, Boğan, Shehata, and Mohamed's (2023) study, aspects of leadership and supervision affect mental health outcomes. Inoue, Eguchi, Kachi, and Tsutsumi (2023) examined psychological safety, psychological distress and work engagement among Japanese workers mediating job demand and job resources. Psychological safety is one aspect of the organizational climate that is taken into account in providing confidence about safety in the workplace. The results of the study found that the effect of psychological safety on psychological distress is inversely significant.

Studies that associate inclusive leadership with psychological distress or all kinds of related mental disorders are extremely rare. According to Fink (2016) psychological distress is "general symptoms of depression and anxiety and reflects both a stable trait component and a state component susceptible to changes after external events." He also relates unpleasant experiences of an emotional, psychological, social or spiritual nature as "interfering with the ability to cope." There are several examples of past studies on authentic (Hunt & Fedynich, 2019) transformative (Liu & Li, 2018; Saleh, Elgelal, & Noermijati, 2015) and servant leadership styles (Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys, 2017) all of which look at organizational performance and give a lot of credit to superiors while those who carry out many successful works neglect their welfare especially in terms of personal health. However, the fact is that there is very little especially about inclusive leadership that is linked to symptoms of psychological distress. Psychological distress is a common symptom includes many mental disorders or disruptions such as depression, anxiety and stress. This symptom has been reviewed for a long time since the late 1800s and is assumed to have many causative factors. It has been reviewed and researched either directly or indirectly with various methodologies and diverse backgrounds such as experiencing discomfort, workload, socio-economic, family relationships, refractive diseases, chronic, lifestyle, and more. One of the studies on inclusive leadership and psychological distress was conducted when the spread of COVID-19 began in China among health care workers (Ahmed, Zhao, & Faraz, 2020). At that time, health care workers were in a traumatic situation faced with thousands of people lying around due to a virus whose origin has not yet been identified and whose cure is unknown. This study found that inclusive leadership has an inversely significant relationship. This finding means that the higher the quality of inclusive leadership in practice, the lower the level of psychological distress among the health care workers in the hospital. There was also a similar study when COVID-19 hit Indonesia where many people were experiencing anxiety (Nurdin et al., 2022). The study found that communicating, providing support and taking a spiritual approach can give relief to those who are affected. These sorts of acts are part of the inclusiveness that can be performed to reduce the level of anxiety effectively. There is also a similar study where inclusive leadership is linked to emotional exhaustion (Peng & Li, 2022). The study also employed a caring ethical climate and psychological safety as mediation. Emotional exhaustion is associated with fatigue and burnout which are symptoms of psychological distress. Inclusive leadership that focuses on the welfare of subordinates will definitely take an approach that suits his capacity as a leader who prioritizes inclusion. Similarly, things that can improve the workplace environment will continue to ensure an atmosphere of respect for each other in addition to emphasizing a sense of security in the leadership. Some gaps have not been explored holistically in several examples of papers that research organizational climate and psychological distress. The study only accounts for a small part of the organizational climate such as psychological safety, caring ethical climate and others. Similarly, in terms of psychological distress, there is very little research on depression and anxiety. Organizational climate and psychological distress are multi-dimensional variables. Complex issues can be analysed simultaneously with the presence of various statistical software at the moment. Based on the gap, organizational climate and psychological distress are hypothesized as hypothesis 2.

2.3. Organizational Climate and Psychological Distress

Ruotsalainen, Jantunen, and Sinervo (2020) surveyed finish home care workers in terms of job satisfaction, stress and psychological distress. The mixed-methods study found that the qualitative and quantitative results show results that are parallel and support each other. The management is not fixed and often changes; the system and time are also uncertain, so some people are unable to do so because they are overwhelmed and exhausted. Sometimes the management is very rigid and intolerant and sometimes the autonomy is too wide to be free. It can be concluded that organizational climate is related to psychological distress. It was found that a person affected mental disruption either directly or indirectly in a study on the effects of bullying climate on psychological distress and job satisfaction. This study gives a hint that the environment has an impact on a person's psychological well-being. If it is peaceful, relaxing or inspiring, it fosters growth and the development of healthy thinking or vice

versa. Inoue et al. (2023) in their study examined psychological safety, psychological distress and work engagement among Japanese workers mediating job demand and job resources. The results of the study found that the effect of psychological safety on psychological distress is inversely significant. Teaching was one of the most fulfilling professions a few decades ago. The school environment was joyful and enjoyable, learning occurred, exams were taken seriously and school activities operated without incident. Currently, many teachers feel that this profession is stressful and it was reported that many of them chose to retire early (Ishaq, Syed, Nadia, & Muhammad, 2022). Few studies have examined the relationship between psychological discomfort and organizational environment among the numerous studies that have been conducted. Many issues fill the media display while at school. Therefore, this study identifies the relationship between organizational climate and psychological distress as hypothesis 3.

2.4. Organizational Climate Employed as a Mediator and Moderator

The organizational climate is employed as a mediator and moderator. Mediation means mediating two related constructs. It is expected that the direct effect will be reduced in the presence of the mediation. For example, inclusive leadership is directly related to psychological distress in this study. In the framework of the conceptual study, inclusive leadership and organizational climate are indirectly related. The moderator is moderating the strength of the causal effect including leadership, on psychological distress while organizational climate and psychological distress are also indirectly related. In past studies, there have been several studies that looked at organizational climate as a mediator and moderator.

Chahar, Hatwal, and Sen (2019) reviewed the mediating effect of organizational climate on employee learning and creativity. As a result, the study found that employees partially mediated but creativity did not. Researchers suggest that an organization's climate can help improve employee learning if it is at a high level. Nguyen, Nguyen, Nong, and Nguyen (2022) use knowledge sharing and innovation climate as mediators for inclusive leadership and creativity. In this study, climate innovation and knowledge sharing mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and creativity. In another study, researchers used school climate as a mediator for transformational leadership and student modernity (Wang, 2019). Researchers found that school climate has mediated positive student modernity while only partially mediating transformational leadership. It should be raised and identified whether it plays a mediatic role in the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress based on the findings of organizational climate as a very effective mediation.

In previous studies, organizational climate was also used as a moderator for many variables. Xintian and Peng (2023) employed a supportive organizational climate as a moderator for the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological resilience in their study. The indirect relationship of inclusive leadership is positively significant.

The supportive organizational climate mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological resilience at a high level, so that the influence of inclusive leadership transcends borders. In another study, organizational climate was deployed as a moderator in the relationship between the big five and organizational dissent (Ötken & Cenkci, 2015). The results of the study found that organizational climate partially moderated the relationship between the big five personalities and dissent. Researchers suggested further investigating how organizational climate can motivate upward dissent in the organization.

According to previous studies, researching the role of organizational climate as a mediator and moderator shows psychological and social problems can be overcome by paying attention to the level of quality. This study examines it in different places, namely in the education sector to see whether it can play a role as a mediator and moderator based on several recommendations to pay attention to the organizational climate aspect. Therefore, hypothesize that organizational climate does not mediate and moderate the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress according to hypothesis 4.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Method of Study

This research chose a quantitative research survey design. This approach provides a clearer and different perspective compared to previous studies where the issue of psychological distress was examined in relation to the factors directly. Although the issue of psychological distress has been discussed for a long time, it is still one of the issues that are being debated.

3.2. Sample

The sample technique uses stratified cluster random sampling of secondary school teachers consisting of four districts with a total population of 3581 people. Based on the Raosoft calculator at a confident level of 95%, the minimum sample is at least 358 (Al-Balas et al., 2020; McCrum-Gardner, 2010). However, the employed 450 respondents' study that sent complete responses was as many as 423 respondents.

3.3. Instruments

This study uses four instruments to collect data from secondary school teachers who are the study sample. Three of the instruments were adopted from existing instruments. Local experts and practitioners have validated the contents suitability before being used for field study. The first is inclusive leadership which consists of two dimensions, namely the dimension of the principal and school management team and teachers and teaching and learning management totaling 40 items (Moya, Molonia, & Caurcel Cara, 2020). The second is the organizational climate descriptive questionnaire (OCDQ) (Hoy, 1990). It contains five dimensions such as supportive, directives, engaged, frustrated and inmates. It contains 34 items. The third is psychological distress. It contains three sub-constructs such as depression, anxiety and stress and a total of 42 items (Ramli, Rosnani, & AR, 2012). The fourth is secondary teachers' demographics prepared by the researcher as a control variable with only 10 items. All instruments have been pilot-studied before being used in the field. All the instruments reached a high Cronbach's alpha of >.6 based on the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Kyriazos & Stalikas, 2018).

3.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the field has been processed and filtered manually first to detect incomplete responses, extreme responses, straight lines and so on. Checking and detection also cover missing values. The data was analysed using SPSS with Amos at two levels. The first stage is descriptive analysis which involves central tendency dispersion and constructs correlation (Anyika, 2020).

3.4.1. Demography Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 is a descriptive analysis of the demographics of secondary school teachers. There are 10 items on characteristics that are collected as identification and control variables that can be used as inferences from research findings. Based on the mean, the information shows that they are not equal to each other in terms of skewness and kurtosis. The data shows that they are skewed to the left and right. There are significant gaps and differences. For example, in gender, it was found that female teachers outperformed male teachers by 37:63%. The number of teachers owning their own vehicles is very large. Similarly, in terms of owning their own houses, 67% of the teachers possess their own personal home. Most of the teachers are married and only a few are single widows or widowers. Looking at the history of the teachers' personal health, most teachers only experience normal illnesses but there are also teachers who experience symptoms of high blood pressure and diabetes. Most of them do not have chronic disabilities. A few people have hearing and vision problems. Teachers have a first-degree education qualification and few have reached masters and PhD levels.

Table 1. Descriptive demographic characteristics.

Items				Skewness		Kurtosis	
List	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE
GEN	1.62	2	0.485	-0.514	0.119	-1.744	0.237
MST	2.77	3	0.744	-1.336	0.119	2.562	0.237
RES	4.03	5	1.479	-1.169	0.119	-0.287	0.237
DTN	2.47	2	1.313	0.561	0.119	-0.844	0.237
TRA	4.63	5	1.07	-2.919	0.119	6.999	0.237
DSAB	4.83	5	0.755	-4.587	0.119	19.982	0.237
HELT	1.34	1	0.739	2.669	0.119	7.644	0.237
HOB	2.53	2	1.66	0.603	0.119	-1.341	0.237
MSH	2.06	2	1.211	1.332	0.119	0.814	0.237
QLFC	1.91	1	1.093	0.769	0.119	-0.582	0.237

Note: GEN = Gender, MST = Marital status, RES = Residence, DTN = Distance, TRA = Transportation, DSAB = Disabilities, HELT = Health history, HOB = Hobby, MSH = Organizational membership, QLFC = Academic qualification and professional certificates.

Table 2 is the analysis of correlation coefficients between the sub-constructs found in the three variables. Inclusive leadership consists of two sub-constructs, namely **INCLI** and **INCL2** which show $r = .601$ and p -value $= .001$. Psychological distress contains three sub-constructs, namely **Dass1** and **DASS2** showing $r = .785$ and $p = .001$, **DASS1** and **DASS3** at $r = .764$ and $p = .001$, and **DASS2** and **DASS3** at $r = .811$ and $p = .001$. Meanwhile, organizational climate has five sub-constructs, namely **Oc1** and **Oc2** at $r = .419$ and p -value $= .001$, **Oc1** and **Oc4** at $r = .466$ and p -value $= .001$, **Oc1** and **Oc5** at $r = .132$ and p -value $= .01$, and **Oc2** and **Oc4** at $r = .382$ and p -value $= .001$, and **Oc2** and **Oc5** at $r = .156$ and p -value $= .01$, and **Oc3** and **Oc5** at $r = .103$ and p -value $= .05$, and **Oc4** and **Oc5** at $r = .233$ and p -value $= .001$. This indicator shows that the measurement instrument used has a simple relationship and a low correlation between sub-constructs in the variable. For instance, there is a correlation between **Incl1** and **DASS1** at $r = -.055$, **Incl2** and **DASS2** at $r = .072$, **Dass1** and **Oc1** at $r = -.161$, **DASS2** and **Oc2** at $r = -.175$ and **Dass3** and **Oc3** at $r = .198$, and so on. It can be said that the relationship between sub-constructs in separate variables is low. Therefore, the relationship between variables can be said to be linear. It can be detected that there is a positive and negative relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that the instrument used to measure is appropriate and there is no extreme relationship coefficient.

Table 2. Sub-construct correlation.

SUB-CON	INCL1		INCL2		DASS1		DASS2		DASS3		OC1		OC2		OC3		OC4		OC5
INCL1	—																		
INCL2	0.601	***	—																
DASS1	-0.055		0.006		—														
DASS2	-0.026		0.072		0.785	***	—												
DASS3	-0.046		-0.005		0.784	***	0.811	***	—										
OC1	0.283	***	0.257	***	-0.143	**	-0.133	**	-0.161	***	—								
OC2	0.26	***	0.263	***	-0.178	***	-0.175	***	-0.178	***	0.419	***	—						
OC3	0.068		0.145	**	0.229	***	0.282	***	0.198	***	-0.083		0.026		—				
OC4	0.262	***	0.22	***	-0.024		-0.004		-0.016		0.466	***	0.382	***	-0.002		—		
OC5	0.138	**	0.164	***	-0.018		0		0.028		0.132	**	0.156	**	0.103	*	0.233	***	—

Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

3.4.2. Structural Measurement

The second level is the analysis of structural measurement and structural theory (Zhang, Dawson, & Kline, 2021). This is due to the study taking a structural modelling approach. Structural measurement is an analysis that ensures that the data obtained meets the assumptions. The sample size exceeding 200 respondents does not face multi-collinearity and achieves the appropriate convergent and discriminant levels. The data obtained does not have a sample discrepancy (N = 423) based on the assumption check (Barrett, 2007; Yong & Pearce, 2013). Variance inflation factor (VIF) < 10 and tolerance < 1 (Ma’ruf, Hadari, & Amalia, 2019). The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results found that sub-constructs in all constructs passed >.5 Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Except for the three sub-constructs <.5 and composite reliability, all are well-established (Dash & Paul, 2021). The Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used to measure discriminant validity. All sub-constructs do not exceed >.85 based on this approach (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). This means that the data obtained is reliable to measure the model study. By using AMOS, structural theory (model) obtained model fit indices as shown in Figure 1.

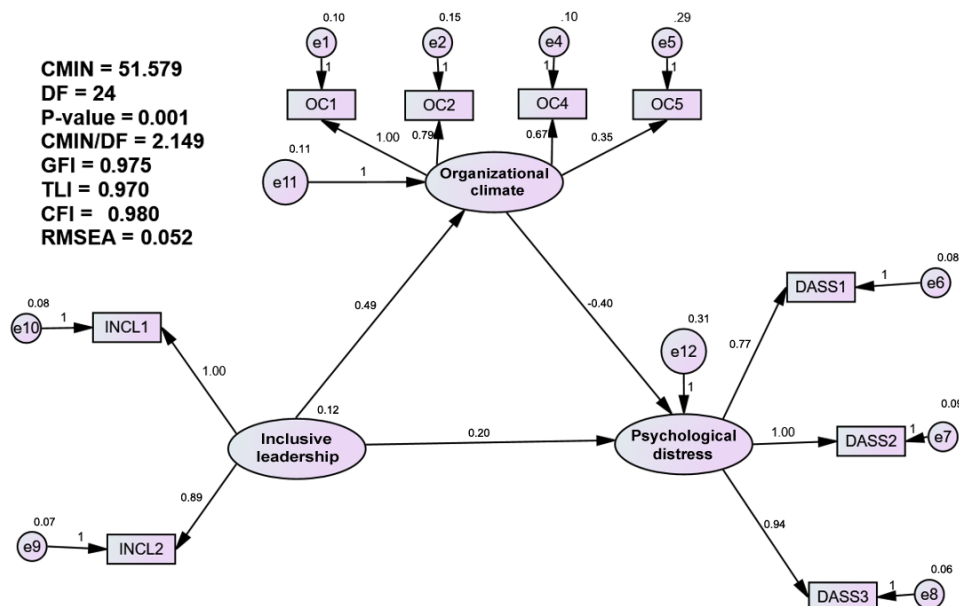


Figure 1. Model fit indices.

Figure 1 shows that the proposed structural equation modelling composition has achieved a good model fit and was obtained by most researchers as follows: CMIN = 51.579, CMIN/df = 2.149, df = 24, p-value =.001, GFI =.975, TLI =.970, CFI =.980 and RMSEA =.052 (Wang, Xu, Wang, Tan, & Chen, 2020). This index shows well but the p-value at the .000 level is only on the default measurement of the model which is less desirable and not persuasive because it contains a lot of discrepancies. Most statisticians expect a level >.000 which shows a permissible level of discrepancy.

Table 3. Path regression weight outcome.

Constructs relationship	β	t	P-value	Remarks
1. Inclusive leadership (ILQ) -> Organizational climate (OCDQ)	0.490	6.142	0.000	Significant
2. Organizational climate (OCDQ) -> Psychological distress (PsyD)	-0.400	-3.516	0.000	Significant
3. Inclusive leadership (ILQ) -> Psychological distress (PsyD)	0.195	1.669	0.095	Insignificant

4. RESULTS

4.1. Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Organizational Climate

According to Table 3, the relationship between inclusive leadership was found to have a significant effect ($\beta = 0.490$, $t = 6.142$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). The research question raised about whether inclusive leadership has a significant effect on psychological distress has been answered. The results of the study show that inclusive leadership has a close relationship with and complements each other. If the level of inclusive practices is high, then the organizational climate also increases in quality. Hence, hypothesis 1 which states that inclusive leadership has no significant direct effect on organizational climate is not supported.

4.2. Effect of Organizational Climate on Psychological Distress

Research question 2 raises the question of whether organizational climate has a significant effect on psychological distress. The results of the analysis showed a significant inverse effect of organizational climate on psychological distress ($\beta = -0.400$, $t = -3.516$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). The inverse relationship shows that if the organizational climate is improved and reaches a conducive level, then the level of psychological distress will decrease. In other words, a person feels happy, relieved and safe at the workplace. This inverse relationship shows that organizational climate can stimulate psychological well-being among the members of the organization. Therefore, hypothesis 2 which states that there is no significant effect of organizational climate on psychological distress is not supported.

4.3. Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Psychological Distress

Research question 3 is about whether inclusive leadership has a significant effect on psychological distress. Outcome analysis showed that inclusive leadership has a non-significant positive effect on psychological distress ($\beta = 0.195$, $t = 1.669$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.095$). This finding indicated that the inclusive leadership effect on psychological distress is less effective. In other words, inclusive leadership has less effect on reducing pressure, depression and anxiety among subordinates. In line with the research question, hypothesis 3 which states that inclusive leadership has no effect on psychological distress is not supported.

4.4. Organizational Climate Mediates and Moderates Relationships

Research question 4 is about whether organizational climate mediates and moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress. The standardized Figure 2 shows the path regression weights of inclusive leadership about organizational climate ($\beta = 0.46$), psychological distress ($\beta = -0.26$) and inclusive leadership about psychological distress ($\beta = 0.12$). The inclusive leadership effect on psychological distress is reduced by the presence of organizational climate as a mediator in the model. The relationship indicated that it was not significant and moderation occurred or was present. The bootstrapping process at 5000 resampling confirmed that the organizational climate has served as complete mediation as indicated in Table 4. The direct effect is not significant while the indirect effect indicates significance. Therefore, organizational climate has fully mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress. As a result, hypothesis 4 is not supported.

Table 4. Bootstrapping outcome.

Constructs relationship	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Confidence level (95%)		P-value	Remarks
			Lower bound	Upper bound		
ILQ -> OCDQ -> PsyD	0.118	-0.119	-0.217	-0.026	0.026	Significant (Full mediation)

Note: 1. ILQ = Inclusive leadership, 2. OCDQ = Organizational climate, 3. PsyD = Psychological distress.

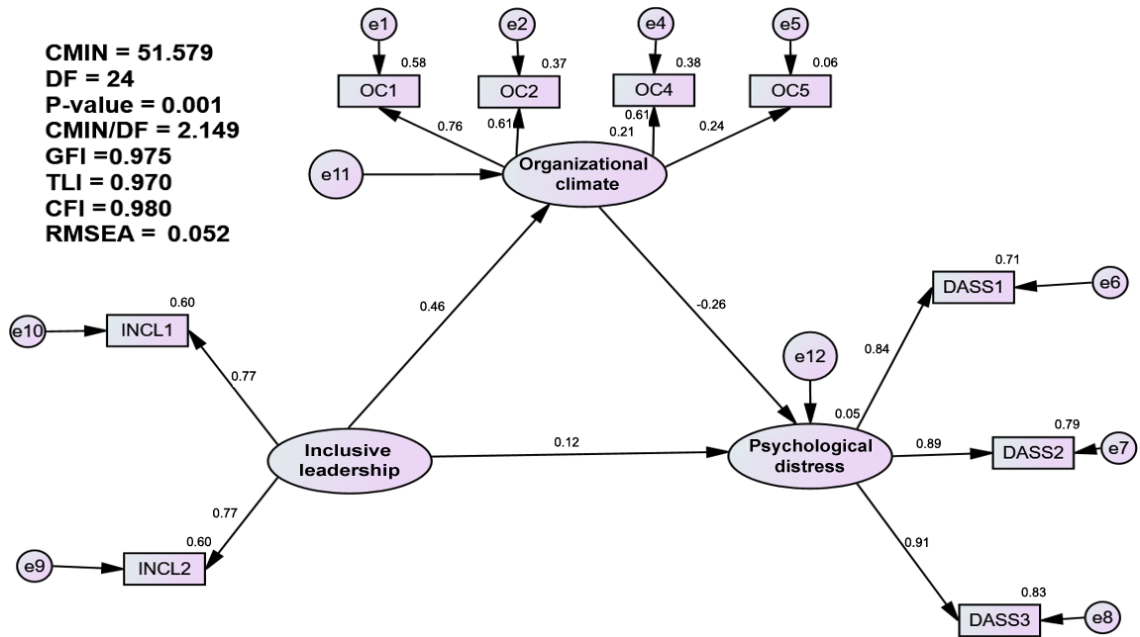


Figure 2. Standardized path regression weight.

The moderator analysis results as shown in Figure 3 use the AMOS graphic and Table 5 is the outcome of the moderator analysis. It is a clear indication that organizational climate served as a partial moderator based on the results of the significant relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress ($\beta = 1.135$, $t = 2.458$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.014$). Organizational climate in relation to psychological distress is not significant ($\beta = 0.195$, $t = 1.546$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.122$) and the relationship between inclusive leadership multiplied by organizational climate (ILQxOCDQ) in relation to psychological distress is significant too ($\beta = -0.066$, $t = -2.149$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.032$). The organizational climate did not successfully change the inclusive leadership change from significant to insignificant. Hence, it moderated partially. Therefore, hypothesis 4 that organizational climate has fully mediated and partially moderated the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress is not supported.

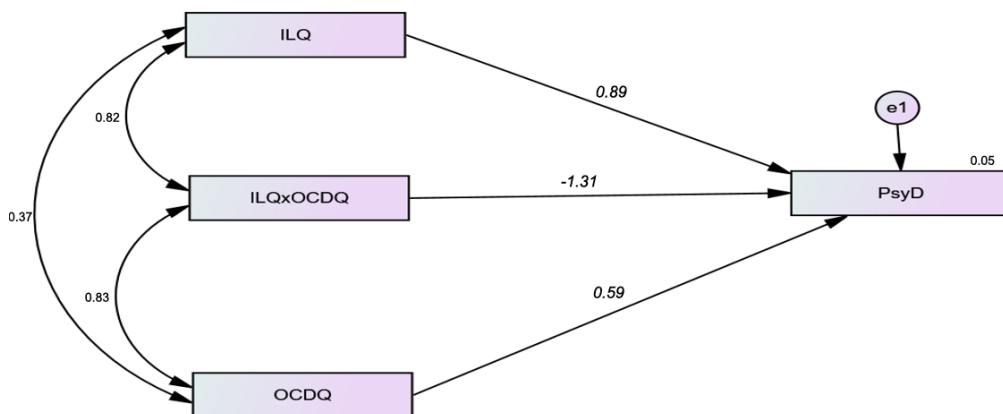


Figure 3. Moderation analysis process using AMOS.

Notes: 1. ILQ = Inclusive leadership, 2. OCDQ = Organizational climate 3. PsyD = Psychological distress 4. ILQ x OCDQ = Inclusive leadership multiplied by organizational climate.

Table 5. Moderator analysis outcome.

Constructs relationship	Beta	T	P-value	Remarks
ILQ in relation to OCDQ	1.135	2.458	0.014	Significant
OCDQ in relation to PsyD	0.195	1.546	0.122	Insignificant
(ILQxOCDQ) in relation to PSYD	-0.066	-2.149	0.032	Significant

Note: ILQ = Inclusive leadership, OCDQ = Organizational climate, PsyD = Psychological distress, (ILQxOCDQ) = Inclusive leadership multiplied by organizational climate.

5. DISCUSSION

The following analysis results are statements of findings and are discussed based on the objectives of the study, the research questions stated and the hypothesis determined as detailed earlier.

The results of the study show that there is a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and organizational climate. The findings of the hypothesis of this study are in line with several studies although they are not directed towards the same term. However, it is possible to suggest that it is related to organizational climate in at least a minor aspect. For example, [Zheng and Liu \(2016\)](#) found that inclusive leadership has an effect on the psychological empowerment climate. According to [Singh \(2019\)](#) psychological empowerment climate is a state of empowering people in the organization to work comfortably according to their ability out of a sense of responsibility and career development as cited in the article. [Qi and Liu \(2017\)](#) found the inclusive effect on caring ethical climate positive and significant. According to [Cullen, Parboteeah, and Victor \(2003\)](#) a caring ethical climate is a shared manner in an organization as intended in the work. Ethical care climate is one of the components of the organizational climate that is necessary for creating a comfortable and harmonious work environment ([Coad & Cullen, 2006](#)). Their study found that the inclusive effect on caring ethically is positive and significant. In another study, it was found that inclusive leadership has a significant positive relationship with organizational justice ([Tran & Choi, 2019](#)). According to [Yean \(2016\)](#) organizational justice creates a fair environment and fair treatment for all members and can be divided into three dimensions, namely distributive, procedural and interactional. All of those dimensions could foster a harmonious workplace and well-being. Therefore, it can be perceived that organizational justice is part of the organizational climate ([Javed, Naqvi, Khan, Arjoon, & Tayyeb, 2019](#)). Psychological empowerment has also been associated with inclusive leadership. The effect of inclusive leadership on psychological empowerment is significantly positive. Psychological empowerment is an effort to enable a person to be perceived in ways such as giving autonomy and increasing self-efficacy and motivation in the workplace. This gives a wide space for a person to develop the potential and competence to work with pleasure. Therefore, psychological empowerment is also the creation of a conducive organizational climate. It can be concluded that inclusive leadership has a close relationship between the two, namely inclusive leadership and organizational climate based on the parallelism of this study with several previous studies. The attitude and behaviour of leaders who emphasize psychological safety, justice and empowerment for subordinates are considerable parts of the organizational climate that can encourage psychological well-being and relieve the feelings of other members of the organizations.

In the second hypothesis, it is hypothesized that there is a direct relationship between organizational climate and psychological distress. Referring to the analysis in the table, it shows an inverse relationship effect. The [Sandrin, Brun, Nguyen, Biron, and Ivers's \(2022\)](#) study examined psychological safety climate and psychological distress during and after a health crisis relationship. The psychological safety climate has a direct positive influence on post-traumatic growth and performance. However, it has a direct and negative influence on psychological distress. [Inoue et al. \(2023\)](#) have also examined a similar aspect among Japanese employees: perceived psychological safety as associated with psychological distress and work engagement. Their findings indicate a negative relationship between perceived PSC and psychological distress. In a longitudinal study design, there is a connection between the work environment and workplace bullying ([Ozer & Schwartz, 2022](#)). The results of the study found that after three months, there was an increase in trust in the organization which brought an encouraging effect that the practice of justice and the health of the employees improved over time. Consistent and coherent findings were obtained from the analysis carried out on bullying activities in the workplace ([Steele, Fogarty, Rodgers, & Butterworth, 2022](#)). The target of the study involves individual and group members of the organization. The results of the study found that bullying behaviour can affect mental health and at the same time, affect well-being in an extreme climate. The results of the study can be viewed as being consistent with most previous studies.

The third hypothesis is to identify the direct relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress. The results of the analysis found that inclusive leadership and psychological distress are not significant. It

is not in line with previous studies. For instance, inclusive leadership with burnout was also found to have a significant and negative effect (Peng & Li, 2022). Many scholars define burnout as a multifaceted phenomenon that includes stress, depersonalization, unattainable personal accomplishments, emotional exhaustion and so forth (Knox, Willard-Grace, Huang, & Grumbach, 2018). Therefore, burnout can be said to be related to psychological distress. Therefore, this study can be referred to as one of the comparative and inferential study outcomes. In another study, when the epidemic of COVID-19 reigned in Wuhan, China, Ahmed et al. (2020) found that inclusive leadership had an effect on health service personnel who experienced traumatic psychological distress. The results of the study found that the relationship between the two is inversely significant. Results show inclusive leadership has a significant and negative relationship with psychological distress. Inclusive leadership style serves as a sustainable mechanism to reduce psychological distress during pandemics (Zhao, Ahmed, & Faraz, 2020). The current study found that it is not in line with the findings of previous studies. The difference in findings is due to the presence of mediators in the study model. Mediators have taken most of the load from inclusive leadership. Aslan, Sani, and Şen (2021) revealed in their study that inclusive leadership is a strong predictor of employee empowerment. The internal motivation of the employees supported by the leaders increases in terms of individual value and they feel psychologically empowered. Hence, employee empowerment was found to positively affect innovative work behavior. The results of the study can be viewed as inconsistent with most of the previous studies. Some are positively significant and some are inversely significant while this research has found that they are insignificant. The presence of organizational climate in the model study has given it more regression weight than inclusive leadership. Therefore, the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress is no longer significant. As a result, the statement that there is no relationship or direct effect of inclusive leadership on psychological distress is supported.

The following is an in-depth analysis of the role of organizational climate as a moderator and mediator: The study found that organizational climate has significantly mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress based on standardized path regression. The direct effect of the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological distress is insignificant. The 5000 resampling bootstrapping process was used to confirm the mediation analysis (Mughtar, Absah, Sadalia, & Siahaan, 2022). The results of bootstrapping the direct effect are insignificant and the indirect effect is not significant as shown in Table 4. The outcome of the analysis is indicated in line with previous studies (Qi, Liu, Wei, & Hu, 2019).

The organizational climate also acts as a moderator. According to the data shown in Figure 3 and Table 5, it seems that organizational environment serves as a partial moderator in the relationship between psychological distress and inclusive leadership. The result indicates that this is in line with previous studies (Memon et al., 2019; Mustafa, Nordin, & Razzaq, 2020). Psychological safety climate was found to be a moderator in the study of emotional and psychological job demand and worker depression compared with control and social support (Hall, Dollard, Winefield, Dormann, & Bakker, 2013). The psychological safety climate (PSC) is a macro-level resource and safety signal for workers acting to reduce demand-induced depression. Besides, PSC operates to buffer the effects of workplace psychosocial hazards and to build environments that are conducive to the employee. Similarly, organizational climate also moderates the direct relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative employee behavior (Xintian & Peng, 2023). According to Yıldız, Özcan, and Dinç (2014) organizational climate was employed as a moderator in the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity. Organizational climate is a crucial and recommended aspect that needs attention based on the parallelism of this study with previous studies. Inclusive leadership and organizational climate can be applied to control the symptoms of psychological distress.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has achieved the goal of identifying the effectiveness of inclusive leadership in reducing psychological distress among secondary school teachers by mediating and moderating organizational climate. This

research model shows that organizational climate is one of the factors that contribute to the mental health of people in an organization. Hence, the organizational climate is very important to pay attention to for performance and the quality of production contributed by subordinates is beneficial. On the other hand, if it is not preserved, it can lead to a fall in organizational performance. In the school context, the mental health of teachers is affecting the acquisition of knowledge and skills among students which also affects academic performance. If this is not curbed properly, it will harm many parties not only students but also stakeholders. Therefore, this research model contributes to the consolidation and development of leadership, management and psychology.

7. POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Among the impacts of climate change on the environment is the presence of multiple emerging infectious diseases (MEIDs), including pandemic or zoonotic potential that is largely unknown. Apart from that, the temperature is sometimes extreme, beyond normal which causes many people to suffocate and faint. The authorities need to enact a new policy as a measure to prevent and control psychological distress following the concept of inclusive leadership which focuses on the welfare of subordinates regardless of rank and position in the organization. First, ensure that staff who serve on the same tenure, part-time, or temporary basis have medical insurance considering that public hospitals cannot provide services and treatment. This is due to the increase in population which is not sufficient given the number of doctors and nurses. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the doctor-patient ratio is at least 2.5:1000 (Kumar & Pal, 2018). Based on the report, doctors in Malaysia are at 1:420 which is considerably inadequate (Loh, Chua, & Karuppanan, 2021). In terms of medical insurance, staff can get a medical check-up at least twice a year with a valid hospital panel with an insurance provider. The management also organizes a programme with nearby health centres to get essential medical checks, such as blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol tests and get health care tips. The third is to establish cooperation with counselling and psychiatry to obtain guidance and consultation on a group or individual basis. The fourth is to create reliable records and data for each member of the organization so that the prevention and curing programme can be implemented successfully. Fifth, screening and health certification are enforced so that staff who are confirmed to be suffering from infectious diseases, mental disorders, and others need to be rested until they fully recover. This avoids infecting others especially students. Meanwhile, staff with mental disorders must undergo rehabilitation before being allowed to return to work. This step is to protect the safety of others and students from life-threatening behavior. The proposed policy is not a punishment but a step for the well-being of the entire organization.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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