

The Mediating Role of Organizational Trust in the Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Responsibility Taking Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Grounded in social exchange theory, this study examines the mediating role of organizational trust in the relationship between inclusive leadership and responsibility-taking behaviour. Data were obtained from 286 employees working in Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) units within the Turkish aviation sector. The analyses, performed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), correlation analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM) using SPSS and Jamovi, revealed that perceptions of inclusive leadership significantly and positively affect both organizational trust and responsibility-taking behaviour. Moreover, organizational trust was identified as a partial mediator in this relationship. The paper concludes by acknowledging its limitations and offering recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Inclusive Leadership, Organizational Trust, Responsibility Taking Behaviour, Aviation Sector.

Kapsayıcı Liderliğin Sorumluluk Alma Davranışına Etkisinde Örgütsel Güvenin Aracılık Rolü

ÖZET

Sosyal değişim teorisine dayanan bu çalışma, kapsayıcı liderlik ile sorumluluk alma davranışı arasındaki ilişkide örgütsel güvenin aracılık rolünü incelemektedir. Veriler, Türk havacılık sektöründeki Uçak Kurtarma ve Yangınla Mücadele (ARFF) birimlerinde çalışan 286 çalışandan elde edilmiştir. SPSS ve Jamovi kullanılarak doğrulayıcı faktör analizi (DFA), korelasyon analizi ve yapısal eşitlik modellemesi (YEM) ile gerçekleştirilen analizler, kapsayıcı liderlik algılarının hem örgütsel güveni hem de sorumluluk alma davranışını anlamlı ve olumlu yönde etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, örgütsel güvenin bu ilişkide kısmi bir aracı olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Çalışma, bu ilişkinin sınırlılıklarını kabul ederek ve gelecekteki araştırmalar için öneriler sunarak sonuçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kapsayıcı Liderlik, Örgütsel Güven, Sorumluluk Alma Davranışı, Havacılık Sektörü.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In a dynamic, complex and uncertain environment, many organisations tend to move away from their central goals and this necessitates a redefinition of employees' job roles. In increasingly dynamic organizational contexts, employees are expected not only to perform the tasks related to their roles efficiently, but also to exhibit proactive behaviours in order to respond to challenges and create a more solution-oriented work environment. Because proactive behaviour is an important factor in the rapid development of the organisation (Crant, 2000). As an important form of proactive behaviour, taking responsibility has a positive effect on organizational change and development (McAllister, Kamdar, Morrison, & Turban, 2007). Therefore, it has become an important research area in organizational management that employees' taking responsibility behaviours should be examined effectively.

Taking responsibility behaviour is the constructive effort of employees in the direction of corporate citizenship behaviour focused on initiating self-development, improving organizational operations and promoting change in the organisation (Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Chiaburu, Lorinkova, & Van Dyne, 2013). Previous studies indicate that constructive employee behaviours play a critical role in strengthening organizational adaptability and supporting its long-term viability (Moon, Kamdar, Mayer, & Takeuchi, 2008; Parker & Collins, 2010). Responsibility-taking behaviours, in addition to positively influencing performance evaluations, job satisfaction, and affective commitment (Kim, Liu, & Diefendorff, 2015; Kim & Liu, 2017), also serve to nurture employees' leadership capacities and expand their social networking opportunities (Fuller & Marler, 2009). However, it is risky for employees to implement these taking responsibility behaviours. Because employees' intention to take responsibility behaviour may cause problems in fulfilling the requirements of their job and may cause them to focus more on behaviours outside the job description. In order to minimise this risk, it is essential that leaders encourage their employees to participate and be inclusive in this process. It is also known that leadership behaviour is an important predictor of taking responsibility (Li, Chiaburu, Kirkman, & Xie, 2013; Li, Zhang, & Tian, 2015). Inclusive leadership focuses on proactive behaviour that demonstrates accessibility, interaction, fairness and fault tolerance in the process of interacting with employees (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010).

Open-mindedness, accessibility, and competent management are regarded as the key attributes of inclusive leaders. This leadership approach highlights the importance of maintaining constructive interactions with subordinates and promotes their active organizational involvement by ensuring fairness, accessibility, and a tolerance for errors. As a relatively new leadership model, it is considered an effective strategy for strengthening organizational support for employees (Temple & Ylitalo, 2009). Inclusive leaders inspire employees to confidently share their opinions and embrace new experiences, which, in turn, positively shapes their work attitudes and enhances outcomes such as innovative behaviour (Javed, Abdullah, Zaffar, Haque, & Rubab, 2019; Qi, Liu, Wei, & Hu, 2019), engagement

levels (Carmeli et al., 2010), and adaptive work behaviours in diverse contexts (Carmeli et al., 2010; Choi, Tran, & Kang, 2016; Zhu, Xu, & Zhang, 2020).

A review of the literature highlights several contextual elements that influence workplace dynamics, including organizational and social support (Backman, Sjögren, Lövhelm, & Edvardsson, 2018; Feng, Su, Wang, & Liu, 2018), leadership backing, working conditions (Bakr, Jarrar, Abumadini, Al Sultan, & Larbi, 2019), and perceptions of distributive and procedural justice, along with organizational development strategies (Moon et al., 2008; Escribano & Espejo, 2010; Dysvik, Kuvaas, & Buch, 2016). These factors collectively contribute to creating an atmosphere of trust and support within the organisation, which encourages employees to assume greater responsibility (Love & Dustin, 2014; Backman et al., 2018; Feng et al., 2018). Moreover, the presence of social support and positive work environments has been found to enhance employees' sense of job security and shield them from psychological strain and work-related stress (Backman et al., 2018; Bakr et al., 2019).

When leaders acknowledge and value their employees' contributions particularly through inclusive behaviours such as openness, approachability, accessibility, and active involvement in decision-making it fosters a positive form of social exchange, prompting employees to reciprocate with goodwill (Byrd, 2022; Javed et al., 2019). Within this dynamic, trust emerges as a central component of the social exchange framework, playing a crucial role in cultivating favourable work attitudes and reinforcing employees' intentions to remain with the organisation (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). Accordingly, grounded in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), this study aims to explore the extent to which the responsibility-taking behaviours of ARFF personnel are shaped by the inclusiveness of their leaders and the level of organizational trust.

The research focuses on rescue and fire fighting (ARFF) personnel, who play a crucial role in ensuring both flight and ground safety within the aviation sector. It is assumed that fostering an inclusive organisational climate led by inclusive leaders may be pivotal for sustainable sectoral growth, as it can motivate these employees who are frequently exposed to high-risk situations and traumatic incidents to concentrate on their strengths, utilise their skills, and adopt proactive behaviours, including responsibility-taking. Although prior studies have extensively examined how different leadership styles affect employee behaviour, limited attention has been given to the specific context of inclusive leadership and responsibility-taking among emergency response staff. Additionally, the potential role of organizational trust as a key variable influencing this relationship has not yet been explored, highlighting the study's unique contribution.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This section presents the conceptual framework for the research variables and includes the developed hypotheses.

2.1. Inclusive Leadership

One of the essential roles of leaders is to meet employees' needs for authenticity and belonging (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). In response, contemporary research has examined inclusive leadership as a means of addressing these psychological needs (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Nembhard and Edmondson (2006, p. 927) were the first to conceptualise leader inclusiveness, defining it as "the words and actions of one or more leaders that invite and appreciate the contributions of others." Later, Nishii and Mayer (2009) extended this line of inquiry by analysing high-quality leader–member exchanges within groups. According to the main arguments of this study, leaders developed "behaviours in which they accept employees because they have diverse background knowledge and experience, and by building high-quality relationships with employees, group leaders can promote norms about equality and inclusiveness, which in turn will facilitate greater power sharing and improve mutual exchange among group members" (Nishii and Mayer, 2009, p. 1413). According to Atwater and Carmeli (2009), inclusive leaders are defined as individuals who maintain visibility, remain accessible, and are available in their interactions with employees.

Despite the varying definitions of inclusive leadership in the literature, it is commonly understood as a leadership approach aimed at cultivating a sense of inclusion among employees. Leaders adopting this style are generally described as people-focused, maintaining openness, availability, and accessibility in their interactions, and effectively encouraging employees by recognising and appreciating their contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Carmeli et al., 2010; Nishii & Leroy, 2022). The openness dimension reflects a leader's respect for employee viewpoints, their encouragement of shared decision-making, and their support for innovation and diverse problem-solving strategies. In contrast, accessibility relates to a leader's readiness to provide immediate assistance when employees encounter work-related challenges and their attentiveness to employee needs, enabling the development of close professional relationships (Bhatnagar & Aggarwal, 2022; Choi, Tran, & Park, 2015).

To lead inclusively, a leader must develop specific competencies. According to Korn Ferry, these are grouped under five core capabilities: (1) Fostering interpersonal trust—which involves honesty, building rapport through shared understanding, and valuing diverse perspectives; (2) Integrating multiple viewpoints—which requires consideration of others' perspectives and needs, and effective conflict resolution; (3) Enhancing capability—which focuses on supporting others' growth and leveraging differences for group success; (4) Demonstrating adaptability—which entails maintaining a broad outlook, tailoring strategies to fit varying situations, and innovating through diversity; and (5) Driving transformation—which includes embracing challenges and uniting people from different backgrounds to achieve shared goals (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020).

Considering these competencies, inclusive leadership is regarded as a distinctive leadership style because it prioritises the development of a safe and supportive climate that enables all

team members to act authentically, while also nurturing and enhancing their sense of belonging within the organisation (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Bannay, Hadi, & Amanah, 2020). Inclusive leadership extends beyond encouraging broad participation; it also involves establishing shared decision-making and collaborative practices that empower all team members (Randel et al., 2018). These practices help create a psychologically secure climate that encourages employees to share innovative ideas confidently and take proactive steps toward their implementation. Inclusive leaders demonstrate respect for individuals while simultaneously fostering structures that uphold fairness and equity across different groups (Randel et al., 2018). Furthermore, by promoting open dialogue and diverse exchanges of opinion in an equitable setting, inclusive leaders inspire employees to voice their thoughts, thereby enhancing their willingness to engage in innovative and proactive behaviours. In the literature reviews, it is found that inclusive leadership is needed to motivate employees to discuss their problems to find innovative solutions (Javed et al., 2019) and that inclusive leadership has effects on innovative work behaviour (Endarwati & Riani, 2022; Guo, Jin, & Yim, 2023).

2.2. Taking Responsibility Behaviour

Proactive work behaviour is conceptualised as intentional actions aimed at enhancing existing work processes or creating new opportunities within the organisational context (Crant, 2000). Morrison and Phelps (1999, p. 403) define the proactive act of taking responsibility as “the constructive efforts of individual employees to make functional changes on an organisational basis with respect to how work is carried out in the context of their work units or organisations.” This behaviour goes beyond problem identification, encompassing deliberate actions to resolve issues and to introduce meaningful improvements to work procedures, policies, and operational methods (Choi, 2007; Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

Demonstrating responsibility entails a voluntary initiative aimed at driving positive change and contributing to organizational goals (Moon et al., 2008). Such behaviour is often associated with improved organizational performance (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). However, because these actions typically fall outside of formal job descriptions—being considered extra-role behaviours—they may not yield immediate personal benefits for employees. As a result, taking responsibility involves a degree of risk and difficulty. As noted by Wang et al. (2014), a team environment characterised by support and trust can reduce such challenges by fostering a cultural orientation towards knowledge sharing, critical analysis, and receptiveness to organizational change.

Inclusive leadership is pivotal in cultivating a positive organizational climate. By nurturing a culture grounded in trust, recognition, and respect, it addresses employees’ fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, thereby facilitating holistic workplace development. Through the encouragement of employee independence and participative decision-making, inclusive leaders particularly fulfill the need for autonomy. From the perspective of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), leaders who

demonstrate openness, accessibility, and availability offer valuable resources to their employees. When employees perceive that they have access to these resources, they are more likely to reciprocate by investing greater cognitive, emotional, and physical energy into their roles, thereby enhancing their commitment and contribution to the organisation (Hollander, 2009; Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014).

In addition, proactive behaviour that adapts to the current situation through an act of initiative and an attempt to change it in order to make decisions that lead to a better situation (Bateman & Crant, 1993), leads to a set of thoughts, attitudes and behaviours that will develop employees' abilities and determine new thoughts to ensure the best understanding of organisational policies (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). It is predicted that proactive behaviours such as initiative and initiative actions of the employees in a unit such as ARFF, where various solutions should be produced by considering new possibilities against situations that may occur at any time, and the inclusiveness style of their leaders will be effective on the employees' taking responsibility behaviour. Hypothesis 1 was formed based on these conceptual justifications.

Hypothesis 1: Inclusive leadership has a positive effect on employees' taking responsibility behaviour.

2.3. Organizational Trust

Trust, conceptualised as a self-sustaining and reinforcing process (Blau, 1964; Luhmann, 1979), emerges gradually within the leader–member relationship context (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000). This process incorporates both organizational and interpersonal dimensions, operating as a reciprocal structure where employees hold the belief that their contributions will positively serve organizational interests in various respects (Tan & Tan, 2000). In this respect, organizational trust is the expectation that they will develop behaviours based on ethical principles in the processes related to understanding, measuring, managing and improving the role of talent in executing strategy and creating value (Yucel, 2006; Pranitasari, 2020).

Organizational trust, as noted by Pucetaite and Novelskaite (2014), functions as a social mechanism that enables effective task execution within institutions. Leaders are seen as the key initiators of this process, holding primary responsibility for establishing trust-based environments (Schein, 1992; Uslu & Oklay, 2015). According to Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985) and Bruhn (2001), they are instrumental in shaping employees' trust or distrust perceptions while contributing to the development of a collaborative organizational culture. When employees place trust in their leaders, this confidence often extends to the organisation as a whole (Johnson et al., 2012; Tan & Tan, 2000; Asencio & Mujkic, 2016). Moreover, perceptions of organisational fairness contribute significantly to trust development (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), while interactions with leaders and experiences in the workplace further reinforce trust (Jung & Avolio, 2000).

Leaders who engage consistently with the tasks and concerns of employees encourage greater involvement and dedication to organizational goals. This dimension strongly corresponds with inclusive leadership principles (Choi et al., 2015), as inclusive leaders actively communicate to employees that their perspectives are sincerely valued. In contrast to other leadership styles, inclusive leadership is distinguished by its openness to employee input and heightened consideration of diverse viewpoints (Carmeli et al., 2010). By responding to individual needs, inclusive leaders facilitate the establishment of interpersonal trust and promote robust relational ties among team members (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007). Edmondson (2004) similarly emphasises that behaviours such as openness, approachability, and generosity are essential in fostering trust.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) posits that trust in leadership and organisational structures motivates employees to allocate greater effort and energy to their tasks. Ekvall and Ryhammar (1999) contend that a trusting organizational climate encourages employees to exhibit behaviours that positively impact organizational outcomes. Moreover, when trust is perceived as mutual, employees experience lower perceived risks in engaging in discretionary behaviours, as they believe their actions will not result in negative consequences (Costa, 2003). Collectively, these findings suggest that inclusive leadership, through its influence on employee behaviour, functions as a relational leadership style that cultivates positive leader–employee relationships and enhances organizational trust. Based on these conceptual justifications, Hypothesis 2 was formulated.

Hypothesis 2: Inclusive leadership has a positive effect on employees' organizational trust.

Organizational trust evolves as a long-term process (Marane, 2012). In low-trust organisational environments, maintaining discipline becomes challenging, as the lack of trust suppresses open communication and collaborative relationships, thereby reducing the quality of decisions. Trust is not only a determinant of work quality but also a critical factor influencing performance, efficiency, and organisational effectiveness (Zamanan et al., 2020). Moreover, research has shown that organizational trust contributes significantly to employee satisfaction and organisational commitment (Laschinger, Finegan, & Shamian, 2001). Empirical studies also associate trust with positive individual-level outcomes, including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and organisational citizenship behaviours (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Kim & Brymer, 2011). Thus, organizational trust is a crucial predictor of employees' work-related behaviours and outcomes.

Both leadership style and organizational trust significantly influence employees' individual work behaviours. Among the defining qualities of inclusive leadership, honesty stands out as particularly crucial. When inclusive leaders act with integrity, this fosters employees' perceptions of trust within the organisation (Pless & Maak, 2004). Hollander (2009) similarly highlights that an honest and transparent leadership approach is essential in cultivating trust. As outlined by social exchange theory, organizational success is largely dependent on effective and positive interactions between leaders and employees (Blau, 1964). Consistent displays of inclusive leadership behaviours strengthen employees' trust,

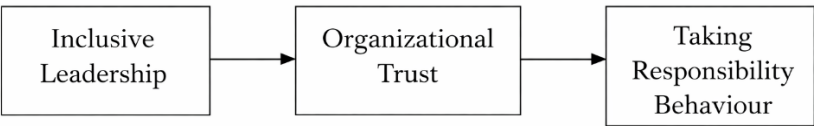
gratitude, and sense of obligation, which subsequently promote favourable workplace attitudes and behaviours, particularly an increased propensity to take responsibility (Wang et al., 2020).

In the case of ARFF personnel, inclusive leadership perceptions are posited to promote responsibility-taking tendencies through the development of organizational trust. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was proposed to examine the mediating role of organizational trust in the linkage between inclusive leadership and employees' responsibility-taking behaviours.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational trust has a mediating role in the relationship between inclusive leadership and employees' taking responsibility behaviour.

The research model formed within the framework of the hypotheses explained above is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research model



3. METHODOLOGY

The study was designed within a quantitative research framework, and survey data were collected from 26 March to 30 April 2025 after obtaining ethical approval from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Süleyman Demirel University (Approval Date: 22.03.2025; No: 166/8). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25 and JAMOVI 2.3.28 statistical software.

3.1. Sampling and Data Collection Process

The study targeted personnel employed in Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) units within the Turkish Civil Aviation sector ($n = 1,895$). Data were collected using a convenience sampling strategy, primarily through electronically distributed online questionnaires. Out of 422 surveys sent, 286 usable responses were returned, corresponding to a response rate of 68%. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), a sample size ranging from 200 to 300 participants is adequate for structural equation modelling (SEM), indicating that the current sample size is appropriate for testing the research model.

When analysed according to the demographic characteristics of the participants, 249 (68.6%) of the 286 employees are male and 37 (10.2%) are female. 213 (58.7%) were married, 72 (19.8%) were single and 1 (0.3%) did not want to specify their marital status. 207 (57%) of the participants are in the 26-41 age range, which can be considered as the

median age. In addition, 6 (1.7%) have primary education, 81 (22.3%) high school, 75 (20.7%) associate degree, 108 (29.8%) undergraduate, and 16 (4.4%) postgraduate education. Finally, when the working years of the participants were analysed, it was found that almost half of them were in the range of 6-10 years.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

Inclusive Leadership Scale: To measure ARFF personnel's perceptions of inclusive leadership, the Inclusive Leadership Scale developed by Carmeli et al. (2010) and adapted to Turkish by Gül and Çakıcı (2021) was employed. The scale comprises nine statements within a single dimension, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always). The reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's alpha (α) value of 0.852. Initially, first-level CFA results did not meet the acceptable fit indices; thus, modification indices were applied. Following these adjustments, the fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.93$, GFI = .99, AGFI = .97, CFI = .99, TLI = .99, IFI = .99, RMSEA = .082) indicated that the model fit was satisfactory (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Accordingly, the scale was deemed valid and reliable for this study.

Organizational Trust Scale: The level of organizational trust perceived by employees was measured using the Organizational Trust Scale – Short Version, originally developed by Cummings and Bromiley (1996) and utilised by Tüzün (2006, p.111). This 12-item scale is based on a 7-point Likert-type response format (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.917, reflecting high internal consistency. Although the initial CFA results did not meet the recommended fit thresholds, modification indices were applied. Correlations were introduced among the error variances of OG1–OG2, OG2–OG4, OG4–OG6, OG1–OG5, and OG10–OG11. The modified model exhibited satisfactory fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 3.22$, GFI = .99, AGFI = .98, CFI = .99, TLI = 1.00, IFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .081), indicating that the measurement instrument is both valid and reliable (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017).

Taking Responsibility Behaviour Scale: Responsibility-taking behaviours of ARFF personnel were measured using the Taking Responsibility Behaviour Scale developed by Parker and Collins (2010) and adapted into Turkish by Uri (2017). The scale is structured as a 5-point Likert-type instrument (1 = Rarely, 5 = Very Often) and contains items such as: "Makes efforts to implement advanced methods in their own work," "Makes efforts to implement new, more efficient business methods," and "Makes efforts to develop solutions to organisational problems that generate pressure." CFA results for construct validity, obtained without modification ($\chi^2/df = 2.59$, GFI = .99, AGFI = .99, CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99, IFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .073), demonstrated adequate model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Consequently, the measurement tool can be considered both structurally valid and reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017).

The analysis of skewness and kurtosis values revealed that all three scales had coefficients between +1.5 and -1.5, indicating a normal distribution of the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Additionally, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values were 0.487 and above,

while CR (Composite Reliability) values were greater than 0.60, which demonstrates that the convergent validity criteria were satisfied for all scales employed in the research (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4. FINDINGS

Correlation calculations, which constitute the prerequisite for the determination of the relationships between the variables related to the research model for which the normal distribution condition and convergent validity were provided and the regression analysis, were carried out through the ‘SPSS 25’ statistical programme. After determining the relationships between variables with correlation analysis, the test of the accuracy of the hypotheses was carried out with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) “Jamovi 2.3.28” software.

The results of the correlation analysis, together with the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for the variables in the research model, are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlations Between Research Variables

Variables (N=286)	n	Ort.	Std.	Inclusive Leadership	Organizational Trust	Taking Responsibility Behaviour
1. Inclusive Leadership	286	15.41	5.69	(1)		
2. Organizational Trust	286	10.39	2.40	0.357**	(1)	
3. Taking Responsibility Behaviour	286	46.10	10.47	0.124*	0.121*	(1)

*p<0.05, **p<0.01.

The correlation analysis demonstrated a statistically significant, positive, and low-level association between inclusive leadership and responsibility-taking behaviours ($r_{(286)} = 0.124$, $p < 0.05$). Likewise, organizational trust perceived by ARFF personnel showed a significant, positive, and low-level correlation with responsibility-taking behaviours ($r_{(286)} = 0.121$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, the relationship between inclusive leadership and organizational trust was found to be significant, positive, and moderate in magnitude ($r_{(286)} = 0.357$, $p < 0.01$).

In accordance with the research model, structural equation modelling was established in order to test the effect of ARFF employees' perceptions of inclusive leadership on taking responsibility behaviour and the mediating effect of trust in the organisation in this dynamic. 5000 bootstrap was applied with a 95% confidence interval. It was examined whether the conditions that the lower and upper limit values of the bootstrap confidence interval should not be 0 (zero) (Fairchild & MacKinnon 2009; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004; Preacher & Hayes, 2008) and the z scores in the Sobel test results should

be greater than 1.96 were met. In addition to these conditions, inferences regarding direct and indirect effects were made by fulfilling the condition that the effect is significant at 0.05 level (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). The statistical data related to the mediating variable analysis conducted in this context are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Structural Equation Modeling

Structural Model	Taking Responsibility Behaviour		Organizational Trust	
	Std. Reg.	Std. Error	Std. Reg.	Std. Error
Inclusive Leadership	0,357**	0,023		
R ²		0,124		
Inclusive Leadership			0,124*	0,108
R ²				0,012
Indirect Impact	0,329**			
Direct Impact	0.187**			
Bootstrap Confidence Interval	LLCI	0,0211		
	ULCI	0,0688		
Sobel Test			3.69	
% Mediation			68.2	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01.

The ability of inclusive leadership to predict taking responsibility behaviour was determined by simple linear regression analysis. In the analysis, inclusive leadership was determined as the independent variable and taking responsibility behaviour as the dependent variable. When the results were examined, it was seen that inclusive leadership positively affected taking responsibility behaviour ($\beta=.357$, $SE=.023$, $p<0.01$). In addition, when the model is examined, inclusive leadership explains 12.4% ($R^2=.124$) of the change in taking responsibility behaviour. In this context, **Hypothesis 1** was supported.

In the regression analysis conducted to determine the relationship between inclusive leadership and organizational trust, it was found that inclusive leadership positively affected organizational trust ($\beta=.124$, $SE=.108$, $p<0.05$). According to the model, the variance in the relationship between the dependent and independent variable is explained by 0.012 (R^2). In this context, **Hypothesis 2**, which suggests that there is an interaction between inclusive leadership and organizational trust, is supported.

The analysis evaluating the mediating role of organizational trust showed that the mediating effect was significant because zero was not within the confidence interval ($\beta = 0.329$; 95% CI [0.0211, 0.0688]). The Sobel test result ($z = 3.69 > 1.96$) also confirmed this mediating

effect. However, the direct effect also retained its significance ($\beta=.187, p<0.01$). According to Hayes (2018), partial mediation exists when the indirect effect is significant and the direct effect also retains its significance. In this context, when Table 2 is examined, it is determined that there is a partial mediating effect between organizational trust, inclusive leadership, and accountability behavior. However, the mediation percentage is calculated by dividing the indirect effect ($a \times b$) by the total effect (c) and multiplying the result by 100. This ratio indicates how much of the total effect is mediated (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Hayes, 2018). Indirect, direct, and total effects were calculated as percentages using Jamovi's mediation analysis. The findings reveal that organizational trust is a partial mediator, explaining 68.2% of the relationship between inclusive leadership and accountability behavior. Therefore, **Hypothesis 3** is partially confirmed.

When Table 3, which shows the general status of the hypotheses according to the findings, is analysed, it is seen that all hypotheses are accepted.

Table 3: Hypothesis Table

Hypotheses	Accepted/Red
H₁: Inclusive leadership has a positive effect on employees' taking responsibility behaviour.	Accepted
H₂: Inclusive leadership has a positive effect on employees' organizational trust.	Accepted
H₃: Organizational trust mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and taking responsibility behaviour.	Accepted

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this research is to determine critical determinants of organizational effectiveness by analysing the role of inclusive leadership in fostering employees' constructive input and responsibility-taking behaviours. Inclusive leaders are recognised for the consistency between their verbal commitments and actual behaviours and for their genuine efforts to value and solicit employee contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Leaders demonstrating inclusive behaviours are characterised by being open, accessible, and approachable in their interactions with employees (Carmeli et al., 2010). Grounded in the principles of social exchange theory, the present study analyses the direct impact of inclusive leadership on employees' responsibility-taking behaviours and tests the mediating role of organizational trust in this association.

The findings revealed that inclusive leadership positively influences both employees' responsibility-taking behaviours (H1) and their trust in the organisation (H2). These results validate the proposed connection between inclusive leadership and proactive employee behaviours, reinforcing the idea that leaders who demonstrate inclusive behaviours foster environments where employees are more inclined to share their perspectives for organizational improvement. This is especially evident when leaders adopt inclusive

principles that encourage recognition of employee input regardless of the immediate outcome. Inclusive leaders not only support employees in completing daily tasks but also promote transparent communication and ensure that every team member has equal opportunities. Consequently, such a leadership style cultivates a workplace atmosphere in which employees feel safe expressing their ideas.

These outcomes align with previous research by Javed, Khan, and Quratulain (2018) and Carmeli et al. (2010), who also identified a positive association between inclusive leadership and employees' change-oriented behaviours. Moreover, the findings highlight a crucial insight within the scope of social exchange theory: when employees perceive that their leaders provide access to support and valuable resources, especially in high-stakes roles such as life-saving units, they are more likely to perform their duties with full dedication. This not only enhances job performance but also reflects employees' trust in their leaders and the organisation through the expression of their full potential.

In the literature, there are also studies in which inclusive leadership directly affects organizational trust (Ağalday, 2022; Raiz, Ishaque, Abbasi, & Khan, 2023; Siyal et al., 2023). Inclusive leadership can therefore be viewed as a driving force behind positive emotional states that foster trust, ultimately contributing to higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation among employees. Therefore, listening to and including employees' views, especially in decision-making processes, is important in promoting positive working relationships and thus seeing the output of organizational trust (Bakotić & Bulog, 2021).

The final finding of the study indicated that organizational trust serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between inclusive leadership and employees' responsibility-taking behaviour (H3). A review of the literature supports this outcome. For instance, Song and Liu (2014) reported that empowering leadership enhances employees' voice behaviour, with organizational trust acting as a partial mediator in this relationship. Similarly, Zhang (2014) found that transformational leadership positively influences employees' innovative behaviours, again with organizational trust partially mediating the effect. The results are consistent with the current study and highlight the essential role of organizational trust in converting leadership behaviours into tangible employee outcomes, further contributing to the growing literature on this topic.

Social exchange theory posits that individual attitudes and behaviours evolve as a result of positive interactions between employees and their organisational environment (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017). Within this theoretical framework, the reciprocal relationship fostered by inclusive leadership and employees' perception of organizational trust becomes a key determinant of workplace behaviour. Inclusive leaders strengthen employee trust by aligning their practices with organisational goals and employing recognition or rewards as part of the exchange mechanism (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019). Supportive organisational settings provide employees with greater access to essential resources, contributing to sustained business operations and improved

workforce stability. Additionally, these environments strengthen employees' belief that their contributions are acknowledged and that the organisation is committed to their growth, which, in turn, builds trust.

In addition, inclusive leadership styles that embrace openness and flexibility allow employees greater autonomy and the chance to fulfil their personal and professional aspirations. This empowerment enhances their trust in the organisation. Ultimately, by cultivating a climate of transparent communication and mutual trust, inclusive leaders can further strengthen employees' willingness to take on responsibility and contribute meaningfully to organisational success.

Given these findings, it is essential for organisations to allocate sufficient resources to identify and cultivate leaders with inclusive intelligence. Organisations should also implement structured programmes to encourage inclusive role modelling and provide ongoing professional development such as seminars and training sessions designed to strengthen leaders' openness and approachability (Braun et al.). Additionally, to enhance organizational trust, inclusive leaders must ensure equitable treatment of employees through transparent and easily accessible communication practices. Awareness strategies should be created to encourage employees to recognise themselves as members of the organisation, to increase the reputation of their organisations by creating positive organisational pictures in the minds of employees through organisational communication, and thus to take more responsibility. Considering the danger and risk status of the work of ARFF personnel, the effect of cognitive and emotional factors in real and theoretical work practices is inevitable and it is difficult to explain these factors systematically. Future studies could adopt a more integrative approach by examining the combined effects of cognitive and affective dimensions on responsibility-taking behaviour, particularly in relation to situational factors. Employees are most inclined to take responsibility when they share and commit to organisational values; thus, leaders should emphasise initiatives that enhance employees' sense of responsibility and belonging, such as improving compensation and welfare systems and developing scientifically informed, personalised career development pathways. Furthermore, through inclusive leadership characterised by an open and inclusive team climate, attentiveness to employees' needs, provision of accessible support mechanisms, and opportunities for employee participation organisations can mitigate anxiety and uncertainty while reinforcing employees' sense of responsibility.

Despite offering important contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered and that open avenues for future inquiry. The data collection was based solely on self-reported questionnaires assessing leadership, organizational trust, and responsibility-taking behaviour. Future studies could enhance these findings by incorporating objective performance indicators or observable behavioural measures to better capture the practical outcomes of inclusive leadership and organizational trust. Second, the generalisability of the findings is constrained, as the sample consisted exclusively of ARFF personnel. Broader cross-cultural investigations involving participants from different sectors and countries are necessary to assess whether similar

effects of inclusive leadership styles can be observed across diverse organisational contexts. This study primarily addressed the mediating role of organizational trust; however, it is plausible that other psychological or contextual constructs influence the link between leadership style and employee behaviour. Future research should, therefore, consider additional mediators or moderators to uncover the complex mechanisms through which inclusive leadership affects organisational functioning. Such inquiry would not only broaden theoretical insight into inclusive leadership but also advance the development of more context-sensitive theoretical models by revealing how this leadership style operates across diverse organisational environments.

Declaration of Research and Publication Ethics

In all processes of the article, the principles of research and publication ethics of Manisa Celal Bayar University Journal of Institute of Social Sciences have been followed.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

The entire manuscript was written by the author.

Declaration of Interest

Author has no conflict of interest with any person or organization.

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