

Inclusive Leadership and Subordinates' Pro-Social Rule Breaking in the Workplace: Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy and Moderating Role of Employee Relations Climate

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Purpose: Drawing on the Social Information Processing (SIP) theory, the study sought to examine the link between inclusive leadership and employees' pro-social rule-breaking (PSRB) behavior through the mediating effect of self-efficacy. The study also investigates the moderating role of employee relations climate between inclusive leadership and self-efficacy.

Methods: The study's sample size consists of 438 full-time corporate employees at 47 organizations from China. Statistical analysis methods were used for data analysis, such as Pearson's correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and multilevel regression analysis.

Results: The results demonstrated that inclusive leadership positively affects PSRB behavior and self-efficacy. Furthermore, the employee relations climate moderates self-efficacy, which mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and the PSRB behavior of employees.

Conclusion: This study determines the psychological factors causing PSRB behavior in light of inclusive leadership. In the context of SIP theory, the findings conclude that inclusive leadership fundamentally influences self-efficacy, encouraging employees to exhibit PSRB behavior. Furthermore, this study also explains the mediating and moderating effect of self-efficacy and employment climate, which shape PSRB behavior. Hence, this study contributes to the organizational behavior literature regarding PSRB behavior and inclusive leadership.

Keywords: inclusive leadership, pro-social rule-breaking, self-efficacy, psychology, employee relations

Introduction

Advanced globalization has made the world experience severe competition, dynamic economic changes, and unpredictability.¹ In such a dubious environment, it is insufficient for the organizations to solely depend on employee behavior complying with the predefined instructions (eg, rules and regulation). Consequently, this increasing competitiveness and uncertainty have made organizations acknowledge employees' pro-social rule-breaking behaviors (ie, PSRB) by improving the efficiency of the work environment.²

Employees' behavior in the workplace is complicated and varies across organizations. Morrison³ initially describes pro-social rule-breaking (PSRB) as behaviors whereby "employees voluntarily violate organizational rules and policies" to promote "the organization and stakeholders' interests, such as work efficiency, helping co-workers and customers." Organizational rule violations are categorized as

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employee behaviors that support self-interest in enterprises.^{4,5} PSRB is a form of work behaviour motivated by voluntarily violating organizational rules to improve work efficiency. Co-worker PSRB is a form of behaviour motivated by voluntarily violating organizational rules to help colleagues.⁵ Thus, the PSRB behavior includes identifying room for improvement by recording constructive changes, thus motivating the organization to comply with new rules and directions.

In particular, the increasing dynamics and environmental vulnerabilities had required employees to go beyond the job duties while embracing proactive measures, thereby accomplishing higher self-efficacy. Self-efficacy convictions drive motivated behavior.⁶ Increasing self-efficacy permits employees to share critical information while effectively communicating their thoughts and considerations. Indeed, the PSRB behavior grants employees to gain a higher autonomy by enhancing their efficacy level.

Stajkovic and Luthans⁷ conceptualize self-efficacy as “individuals’ belief or confidence in his or her ability to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and the course of action required to perform a specific task in a given context successfully”. In China, first of all, inclusive leadership has distinct Chinese cultural characteristics. Tolerance is a traditional virtue of Chinese employees and is one of Chinese Confucianism’s long-term core values. Secondly, highly inclusive leaders appraise and embolden the disbursement and contributions of their subordinates. Finally, leaders enhance subordinates’ courage to commit PSRB behavior and help employees take risks through self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an employee’s abilities and confidences level when implementing a specific behavior, psychological state of motivation, resources, and a series of actions initiated to achieve a certain goal.⁸

Inclusive leadership is an imperative figure influencing proactive rule-breaking behavior (ie, PSRB). The research argues that leader response to PRSB impacts the workers’ behavior engaging in PSRB behavior.⁹ Inclusive leadership aligns with typical relational leadership, manifested in listening to subordinates’ ideas, paying attention to two-way interaction with subordinates, and providing timely help when subordinates encounter problems.¹⁰ Inclusive leaders are concerned about the needs of employees for work autonomy and the pursuit of differentiation. Its democratic and supportive leadership behaviors in interaction with subordinates stimulate employees’ innovative behavior^{11,12} and other extra-role behaviors. Inclusive

leaders are tolerant of their subordinates and willingly listen to them, which means that they are more likely to be forgiven by inclusive leaders if they violate organizational rules. In this scenario, subordinates may perceive the risk associated with engaging in PSRB behaviors to be below, which may heighten their audacity to partake in adventurous activities. Indeed, inclusive leadership encouraging the PSRB behavior had become critical for gaining individual interest and organizational success.

Correspondingly, there is no exact definition or a measure that drives the body of the work on the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee PSRB behavior. Indeed, researchers have adopted diverse approaches and theories for illustrating the result of proactive behavior. A common thread of fundamental theories explaining the rule-breaking behavior recommends that Social Information Theory enables the workers to take active actions, thereby achieving favorable individual and organizational outcomes.

The present research incorporates Social Information Processing (SIP) while putting forward a theoretical model. Inclusive leaders are approachable and kind supervisors. They pardon mistakes from their subordinates and welcome their requests for assistance when they are facing emergencies and may need to engage in PSRB behavior. To date, the existing literature mostly ignores the impact of situational factors on inclusive leadership mechanisms. The employment relations climate determines how leaders treat subordinates. In turn, it will stimulate their respective perception and behavior.¹³

In this study, we describe PSRB in two ways. First, there are violations of rules that might be detrimental to corporate success. Second, the pro-social drive motivates employees’ rule violations that aim to promote the organization and organizational stakeholders’ interests. The employee relations climate is considered an essential part of an organization, reflecting its ideology. Consequently, this article considers the employee relations climate as a moderating variable. In this respect, we will focus on predicting the mechanism and impact of inclusive leadership on employees’ PSRB behavior.

The first section of the study develops a clear understanding of employee responsive behavior (ie, PSRB) from an inclusive leadership perspective. Significantly, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of leadership styles by examining the role of psychological factors (ie, self-efficacy and the employee relation climate) influencing employee PSRB behavior. Correspondingly, to

present the argument, multiple sections have been designed to support the structure of the study. The literature review (Section 2) strengthens the research argument, providing a systemic view of previous findings. Furthermore, the research methodology (Section 3) describes the approach to accumulating the research data while interrogating the fundamental relationship between the variables (eg, independent and dependent). Similarly, Sections 4, 5, and 6 provide the study results, discussion, and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Social Information Processing Theory (SIP)

Social Information Processing theory illustrates the adoption of computer-mediated technology for forming an interpersonal relationship.¹⁴ The SIP theory focuses on developing an effective communication network by using non-verbal cues. Social Information Processing theory states that individuals are self-regulating personalities.¹⁵ From SIP Theory, we explain the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee PSRB. Inclusive leaders listen to employees' ideas and needs, ensuring fairness and justice in the organization team. They make employees feel valued, and employees tend to think that their existence is essential to the organization. According to SIP Theory, leaders influence subordinates' psychology, attitude, and behavior through their social exchanges with other leaders and subordinates. Inclusive leadership has a significant impact on employees' innovative behavior^{16,17} and organizational citizenship behavior.¹⁸ Significantly, Social Information Theory conceptualized on the thought that explains that individuals draw meanings of the environment by processing the social information inside the work setting. In particular, workers construct their perceptions and attitudes based on the social environment while influencing their behavior: the organization's social environment empowers workers to share their valuable opinions and sentiments, thus exhibiting PSRB behavior.¹⁹

In particular, workers' voice is perceived as a negative behavior, creating contradictions with the senior administration while producing unfavorable consequences, and it is harming the leader-subordinate relationship.²⁰ Subsequently, the social information theory actuates the managers to acknowledge employees' pro-social rule-

breaking behavior by avoiding the logical consequences of punishment (Wijaya, 2018). Thus, SIT theory promotes the high-quality relationship between inclusive leadership and proactive behavior by focusing on the intrigued of the organization with esteeming the employees' voices.²⁰

Moreover, individuals acquiring tall self-efficacy are most likely to involve in PSRB activities.³ The study suggests that this act of rule-breaking is a contagious step that empowers fellow employees to violates the organizational rules and approaches by performing the rule-breaking exercise. However, this penchant reflecting the co-worker behavior was explained by the social information theory that states: the PSRB behavior is significantly influenced by the fellow worker's actions.²¹ Perhaps, the SIT contribution to the body suggests that workplace vulnerability (eg, lack of leader support) influences the worker's propensity to violates the organizational rules and policies.

Indeed, the research indicates that leaders' support systems and motivation play a dominant role in affecting the subordinates' proactive behavior.²² Social information theory encourages constructive employee behavior. It proposes that the perceived openness of employees based on a positive social exchange relationship (ie, leader-member) influences their voluntary contributions (eg, information, knowledge, experience).²³ Hence, the SIT theory proposes that proactive employees effectively create an employee relations climate. It suggests that pro-active individual tends to take action as they understand the esteem of connection with their leaders, thereby producing a favorable field to impact the organization climate.²⁴

Subsequently, Social Information Processing theory contributes toward the development of social cognitive competence. It explains the way humans process information to manage changes in human behavior. Social information theory suggests that individuals perceive and interpret social data, thereby recording behavioral changes. The Social Information Processing model provides knowledge about social behaviors, defining this theory as an integral component of studying human behavior.

Inclusive Leadership and Pro-Social Rule Breaking

PSRB is attributed to employees who attempt to promote work efficiency, plus colleagues' and customers' interests. They voluntarily act against organizational rules.³ Practically, organizational rules and employee behavior provide a solid viewpoint in understanding the firm

structure. To explain this notion, inclusive leadership significantly affirms employee opinions and efforts regarding organization rules and policies. On the contrary, PSRB reflects an individual desire to achieve effective outcomes while performing the job role, regardless of the rules.

Employees expect to help others when pro-social motivation is more potent. Conversely, employees are more reluctant to help others if pro-social motivations are inferior.²⁵ PSRB is considered positive deviant workplace behavior, and it may be related to inclusive leadership in the Chinese context (ie, moral and toleration behaviors). It appears to influence subordinates' internal psychology and external behaviors, such as PSRB.²⁶

Pro-social behavior encourages employees to violate the organization's policies to achieve organizational efficiency. To illustrate this perspective, one study explains that inclusive leadership magnifies the effectiveness of employees' behavior, thereby encouraging PSRB practices.²⁷ However, besides writing visible and durable rules, violations can still be observed in many organizations. Given this, the previous study shows that the inclusive characteristics of leaders formulate a solid leader-subordinate relationship, shaping PSRB behavior.²⁸

On the other hand, employees gain support from inclusive leaders when they encounter difficulties at work. Leaders who positively embrace subordinates' minor faults or mistakes and emphasize that their work may lead to positive outcomes in their jobs foster better employee interpersonal work. This enables employees to be engaged in breakthrough work tasks.²⁹ Likewise, research also suggests that PSRB improves individual performance by contributing to an effective system for organizational establishment.³⁰ Hence, inclusive leadership develops a high quality of organization identification, motivating the employees to exhibit responsible behavior for achieving social interest (eg, Organization and Stakeholders).³¹ Therefore, inclusive leadership may also have a significant impact on PSRB.³² Based on the above arguments, this study speculates that inclusive leadership has a significant impact on PSRM. Consequently, based on the literature findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Inclusive leadership has a significant impact on PSRB.

Inclusive Leadership and Self Efficacy

Researchers suggest that leadership plays a vital role within teams, influencing subordinates' psychological capital, psychological safety, and self-efficacy.³³

Inclusive leaders care about employees' emotions and happiness, which helps them to build confidence at work. Bandura³⁴ and Schwarzer⁸ found that self-efficacy should involve self-confidence in performing specific behavior, motivation, resources, and actions for goal achievement. Inclusive leaders treat subordinates with respect and tolerance, listen to their opinions, acknowledge their contributions, and improve their performance.³⁵ At the same time, inclusive leaders help each other in their interactions with subordinates. This relationship between leaders, in turn, interacts with the leaders' and employees' association with each other and positively impacts employees' performance.^{10,36}

When leadership is open, it enhances staff confidence, contributing to improving staff performance by providing a positive psychological state. Previous studies have shown that self-efficacy, ethical leadership,³⁷ transformational leadership,³⁸ authentic leadership,³⁹ charismatic leadership,⁴⁰ and servant leadership⁴¹ have a significant positive impact. In addition, inclusive leaders treat employees with openness, agreeableness, and tolerance. Inclusive leaders are open-minded and ready to accept subordinate's mistakes and do not rebuke them severely.⁴² An immediate leader-subordinate connection establishes a higher level of trust, making leaders treat employees as insiders. Results show that this close affiliation develops a superior organization identification,⁴³ strengthening the bond between the staff. Furthermore, inclusive leadership increases employee loyalty and confidence, encouraging them to go out of their way to achieve their interests.²⁷ Moreover, a study illustrates that a high-quality leader-employee relationship provides employees with the confidence to speak up for their interests (ie, organization and stakeholder), thus motivating them to break organizational rules and policies.⁴⁴ Indeed, inclusive leadership plays a crucial role in creating an atmosphere of trust and recognition. Inclusive leadership builds individual confidence, allowing employees to participate independently in the firm's decision-making process.⁴⁵

George and Zhou⁴⁶ state that when leaders support employees, they are more adventurous and innovative. Inclusive leadership provides a set of positive leadership behaviors that help team members feel a sense of belonging and maintain positive mental energy.¹⁶ As a result, leaders with inclusive leadership styles have more positive expectations and tolerance toward subordinates. It enables employees to receive more support from leaders and

increases self-efficacy. It is likely to heighten employees' confidence in dealing with emergencies. Based on the discussion above, this study states that inclusive leadership has a positive impact on self-efficacy. Accordingly, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 2: Inclusive leadership significantly effects self-efficacy.

Self- Efficacy and Pro-Social Rule Breaking

Self-efficacy is an individual self-belief in response to achieving personal and social outcomes. Self-efficacy enhances employees' ability to cope with the disappointments that may arise during job performance.⁴⁷ Given this statement, PSRB behavior increases employee's job performance through effective management of organizational policies.⁴⁸

Individuals with a higher sense of self-efficacy have less anxiety about work and are confident in handling unpredictable challenges. Employee self-efficacy reflects the employee's positive psychological state (eg, choice, cognition, motivation, and process) and the impact level of confidence employees have in carrying out a specific task.⁴⁹ In addition, self-efficacy is significantly related to an individual's attitude, performance, and behavior. Furthermore, research also states that individuals tend to acquire an increasing level of self-efficacy while managing different organization matters.⁵⁰ These cognitive abilities enhance employees' identities by enabling them to have trust in the organization's promises.

Moreover, if employees lack self-efficacy, it will directly lead to a lack of behavioral motivation and confidence when risky activities need to be performed in response to an emergency. PSRB is high-risk behavior. When employees' self-efficacy is lower, they are less willing to challenge themselves. On the contrary, employees' higher self-efficacy leads them to commit more pro-social violations. Based on the discussions above, we propose that self-efficacy has a positive effect on PSRB. Accordingly, this study proposes that:

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy has a significant effect on PSRB.

The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a personal trait directing an individual toward attaining a worthy goal. However, PSRB behavior driven by individual self-efficacy allows followers to

perform PSRB after learning it from leaders. SIP states that employees' psychological perception and behavior start from social information available in the work situation and for employee processing.¹⁵ Therefore, in addition to leadership's transfer of social information to the teams' employees, employees' psychological perceptions will also become a kind of social information processed. Finally, psychological perception and behavioral responses will go through a process that will form a behavioral output. The literature states that an efficient leadership style involves possessing a strong confidence in subordinates, improving employee self-efficacy. This prominent trait empowers individuals to handle less favourable situations in a positive manner. Self-efficacy may be a critical psychological factor in initiating positive thinking, and therefore, displaying socially responsive behavior (ie, PSRB).⁵¹ Self-efficacy engages the employees in the PSRB act, resulting in them developing a feeling of psychological entitlement. According to this, highly-identified employees hold firm control over organization identification,⁵² thereby predicting PSRB practices.

Studies demonstrates that high self-efficacy contributes to employees setting more ambitious goals, such as choosing more challenging work and succeeding in their abilities to achieve goals, leading to high-quality performance.⁵³ Self-efficacy theory is based on the dynamic interaction between the environment and individual behaviors. Evidence suggests that self-efficacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and service quality,⁴¹ destructive leadership and counterproductive work behavior,⁵⁴ and transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Self-efficacy mainly affects the selection of trainees' cognitive motivation and emotional process.

Employees' PSRB is an explanation and response to other external influence factors led by their characteristics. When an employee commits PSRB toward a team leader, then the employee and leader are the two critical subjects involved in the entire PSRB. According to SIP, employees are senders of PSRB, and leaders are recipients of PSRB. Therefore, both the employees' factors and leadership factors will affect the entire process of PSRB. Thus, according to SIP, employees will process and interpret information obtained in the work environment, including the characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes of essential information in the work environment. Employees will use this information to react accordingly. Inclusive leadership accommodates different personalities of employees.⁵⁵

As a result, employees effectively adapt to the complexity of management situations and diversity of employees, including employee perspectives and failures. Furthermore, it enhances subordinates' confidence in problem-solving. Furthermore, PSRB intends to benefit both the organization and its stakeholders. Employees who have significant self-efficacy receive social support from their employing staff (ie, leaders and supervisors), leading to PSRB behavior.⁵⁶ Based on the above discussion, we speculate that inclusive leadership positively affects PSRB through self-efficacy. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and the PSRB of an employee.

The Moderating Role of the Employee Relationship Climate

The employee relations climate is a manifestation of management ideology.⁵⁷ Danie⁵⁸ elaborates that a positive climate within an organization helps to generate high performance, challenging and proactive employees. Yet, harmonious employment relationships are based on fairness, trust, and mutual respect. Therefore, a harmonious employee relations climate within an organization helps to produce dedicated employees. Moreover, inclusive leadership with an equal and open management style significantly promotes psychological safety and high self-efficacy among subordinates in a harmonious and positive employee relations climate.⁵⁹ This notion is relevant for understanding employees' relations climate's role as a moderating effect among individuals and environments.⁶⁰ The procedural justice climate mediates the role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between high-performance work systems and inhibitions. An innovative climate mediates the relationship between proactive personality, knowledge sharing, and employees' innovative behavior. There is a significant and positive correlation between organizational climate and innovative behavior.^{61,62} The organizational innovation climate has been found to mediate the relationship between employees' psychological capital and technological innovation performance when employee pro-social motivation is high. It tends to transpose to thinking and willingness to help others.^{63,64} Empowering leadership encourages followers to perform PSRB by holding strong self-belief and ensuring that an effective leader-follower atmosphere encourages such actions.⁵¹ The result shows that employees who break the existing rules do not experience

any reprimand from their leaders,⁶⁵ thus demonstrating responsible behavior (ie, PSRB). A comprehensive study explains that the PSRB intention makes leaders realize the positive consequences of violating organizational policies.⁶⁶ This new management perspective creates a solid leader-follower connection, enabling employees to break the rules for the social purpose.⁶⁷ The favorable climate of employee relations may help promote customer-oriented PSRB in a harmonious environment of mutual concern where employees are more likely to care about their customers. Furthermore, employees who form higher self-efficacy are willing to work hard for organizational efficiency in such a mutual concern climate. Based on the above discussions, it is hypothesized that the employee relations climate moderates self-efficacy, mediating the relationship between inclusive leadership and subordinate PSRB. Accordingly, this study proposes the following assumption:

Hypothesis 5: The employee relations climate moderates self-efficacy, which mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and the PSRB of employees.

Different leadership styles have a profound impact on the subordinate's behavior. In this view, we expect that inclusive leadership will be positively related to PSRB, which is mediated by self-efficacy. Further, the employee relations climate can be expected to play a moderating role in the mediating process of self-efficacy as well. **Figure 1** shows a theoretical framework of the study.

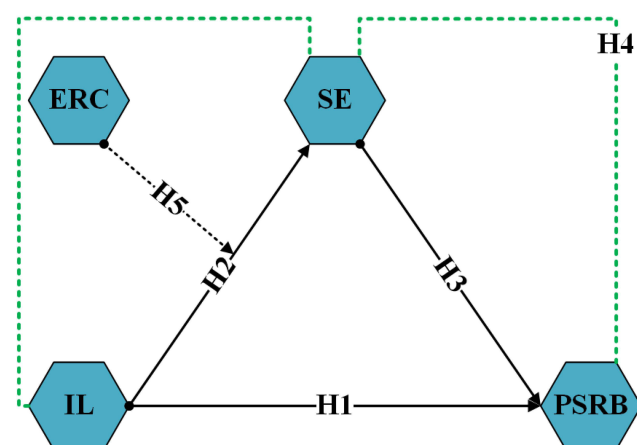


Figure 1 Theoretical framework.

Abbreviations: IL, Inclusive Leadership; ERC, Employee Relations Climate; SE, Self-Efficacy; PSRB, Pro-Social Rule Breaking.

Research Methodology

Participants and Procedures

In this study, full-time employees in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Foshan, and other cities in China were randomly selected by e-mail and field surveys. Respondents from Forty-seven organizations, including 14 state-owned enterprises, 17 private enterprises, seven enterprises with foreign investment, and nine joint ventures, were included in this study. Each organization was randomly selected, and a total of 148 work units were recruited, of which 38 were state-owned enterprises, 51 were private enterprises, 31 were foreign-invested enterprises, and 26 were joint ventures. In addition, we measured employees' perceptions of inclusive leadership, self-efficacy, employee relations climate, and PSRB (482 employees participated; 57 of them were sent out questionnaires by e-mail). We have used back-to-back translation for data collection. We have listed all the abbreviations in [Appendix A](#).

All participants adhered to the principle of voluntarism. Therefore, questionnaires in which answers were too short, missing or not competent, were excluded. In total, we collected 438 valid questionnaires. Among them, males accounted for 39.1% (171 participants), and females accounted for 60.9% (267 participants). Ordinary employees accounted for 60.7% (266 participants), junior management employees accounted for 24.4% (107 participants), middle management employees accounted for 14.6% (64 participants), and senior management employees accounted for 0.2% (1 participant). Regarding educational background, participants who had a senior high school education or below accounted for 6.6% (29 participants), junior college education accounted for 21.7% (95 participants), undergraduate education accounted for 64.0% (280 participants), and postgraduate accounted for 7.7% (34 participants).

Study Measures

In this study, we used the Likert-7 scale (1 = complete no match, while 7 = complete match; increasing from low to high), and the following are existing measures:

Inclusive leadership: This study used the employee's inclusive leadership scale developed by Carmeli.¹⁰ The scale was tested by scholars both in China and abroad, and it had good reliability and validity. Therefore, the scale has been used for reference and has been scored with 7 points by the Likert-7 scale, which comprises four items, including "My boss likes to listen to new ideas."

Self-efficacy: This study is based on the employee self-efficacy test conducted by Schwarzer.⁶⁸ Ten questions of general self-efficacy were selected, and a seven-point score was used. An example of a typical item included is "If I do my best, I can usually solve difficult problems."

Employee relations climate: This study used the employee relations climate scale adopted by Ngo and Lau.⁶⁹ It uses a 7-point rating, which comprises 26 items, including "In the company, I can give full play to my knowledge and skills."

Pro-social rule-breaking: This study selected the Chinese context PSRB scale revised by Huang, which comprises ten items, including "I am willing to violate certain company rules if they seriously prevent me from working more efficiently."

Common Method Biases

Common method bias may be present due to the nature of the self-report survey. To counteract that, anonymous surveys were used before the survey and questionnaires were scrambled to control common method biases. In addition, Harman mono factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and principal component analysis were performed to measure all study items. [Table 1](#) shows that five common factors were extracted as total variance explained. The variance of the first common factor was 30.94%, less than 40%, so the questionnaire survey in the study was not considered to have significant standard method bias.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlational Analysis

Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis are shown in [Table 2](#). SPSS19.0 was used for descriptive statistics, reliability and validity, correlational analysis. Cronbach's alpha is above 0.800 for each variable. KMO exceeds 0.800 and passes the validity test. The correlation coefficient between inclusive leadership and self-efficacy was 0.557**; the correlation coefficient between inclusive leadership and PSRB was 0.477**. The correlation coefficient between self-efficacy and PSRB was 0.438** and correlation coefficients between variables showed a statistically significant level.

The standard P-P plot of regression standardized residual is shown in [Figure 2](#). The horizontal axis is observed cum prob, and the longitudinal axis is expected cum prob. It's being compared to a set of data on the y-axis. Q-Q plot is a normal quantile-quantile plot. The points are clustered on the 45-

Table 1 Total Variance Explained in the Study (N = 438)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loading			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance Contribution %	Cumulative %
1	10.829	30.940	30.940	10.829	30.940	30.940	6.087	17.391	17.391
2	5.641	16.118	47.058	5.641	16.118	47.058	5.520	15.771	33.162
3	2.547	7.277	54.335	2.547	7.277	54.335	5.461	15.604	48.766
4	1.384	3.954	58.288	1.384	3.954	58.288	3.267	9.333	58.099
5	1.044	2.984	61.273	1.044	2.984	61.273	1.111	3.173	61.273
6	0.944	2.698	63.970						
7	0.878	2.508	66.479						
8	0.797	2.276	68.755						
9	0.738	2.109	70.864						
10	0.700	2.000	72.864						
11	0.636	1.818	74.683						
12	0.593	1.695	76.378						
13	0.587	1.677	78.055						
14	0.541	1.546	79.601						
15	0.503	1.438	81.039						
16	0.480	1.371	82.410						
17	0.469	1.339	83.749						
18	0.457	1.307	85.056						
19	0.429	1.224	86.280						
20	0.413	1.180	87.460						
21	0.397	1.134	88.594						
22	0.387	1.106	89.700						
23	0.357	1.020	90.721						
24	0.336	0.960	91.680						
25	0.329	0.940	92.621						
26	0.321	0.918	93.539						
27	0.307	0.877	94.416						
28	0.288	0.823	95.239						
29	0.282	0.804	96.043						
30	0.278	0.794	96.837						
31	0.252	0.720	97.557						
32	0.238	0.681	98.239						
33	0.225	0.642	98.881						
34	0.200	0.572	99.453						
35	0.192	0.547	100.000						

Note: Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

degree line, suggesting that the large sample data is normally distributed.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 3 shows confirmatory factor analysis results of inclusive leadership and PSRB. We used AMOS17.0 to perform confirmatory factor analysis. In the four factors model, the value of χ^2/df was 3.549, RMSEA was 0.05,

GFI was 0.87. RMSEA was 0.04 in the two-factor model, and the fit index met the standard and had good validity.

Table 4 shows the hierarchical regression analysis of the study variables. Model 1 shows the relationship between inclusive leadership and PSRB. Gender, position, education level, and working time with an immediate supervisor are control variables. Model's explanatory power increased significantly after introducing inclusive leadership and controlling the other

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha, and Correlation Coefficients

Variables	M	SD	α	KMO	1	2	3	4
1. Inclusive leadership	5.096	0.9318	0.915	0.926	1			
2. Self-efficacy	5.191	0.8183	0.900	0.936	0.557**	1		
3. Employee relations climate	5.082	0.9884	0.843	0.851	0.667**	0.568**	1	
4. Pro-social rule breaking	4.033	1.1826	0.925	0.927	0.477**	0.438**	0.317*	1

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Abbreviations: M, mean; SD, standard deviation; α , Cronbach's alpha; KMO, Kaiser Meyer Olkin.

variables. Inclusive leadership accounted for 2.1% of the variance in PSRB ($\Delta R^2 = 0.021$, $p < 0.05$). Inclusive leadership had positive effect on PSRB ($\beta = 0.147$, $p < 0.01$). These findings support Hypothesis 1. Model 2 shows the effect of Inclusive leadership on self-efficacy. The model's explanatory power was significantly increased after the inclusion of inclusive leadership. Inclusive leadership was able to explain a 27.4% variance in self-efficacy ($\Delta R^2 = 0.274$, $p < 0.001$). Inclusive leadership has positive effect on self-efficacy ($\beta =$

0.526, $p < 0.001$). These findings support Hypothesis 2. Model 3 shows the relationship between inclusive leadership and PSRB. Self-efficacy has significant positive effect on PSRB ($\beta = 0.211$, $p < 0.001$). These findings support Hypothesis 3. The results also show that the mediating effect of self-efficacy is 0.110 and that the confidence interval is (0.052, 0.914). It can be seen that self-efficacy has a mediating effect between inclusive leadership and PSRB. These findings support Hypothesis 4.

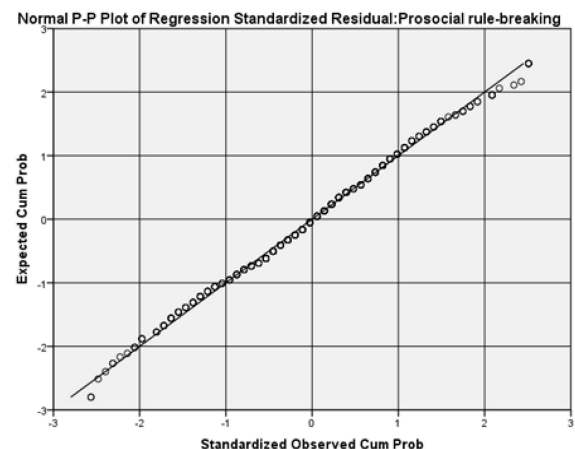
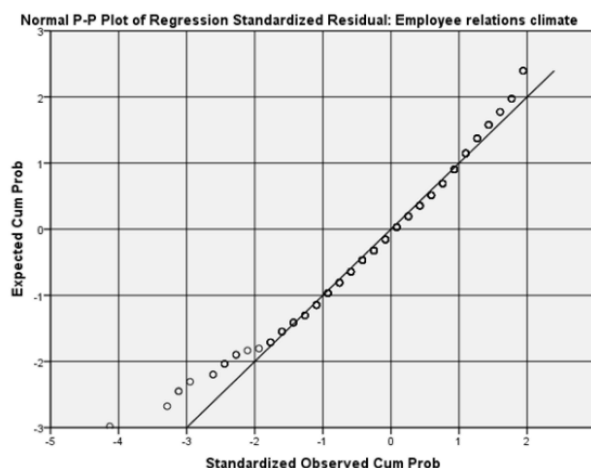
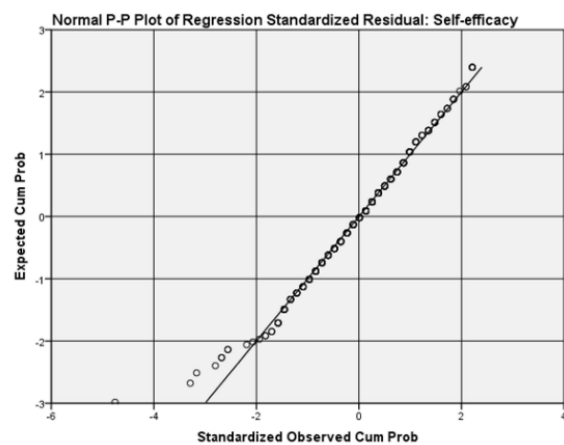
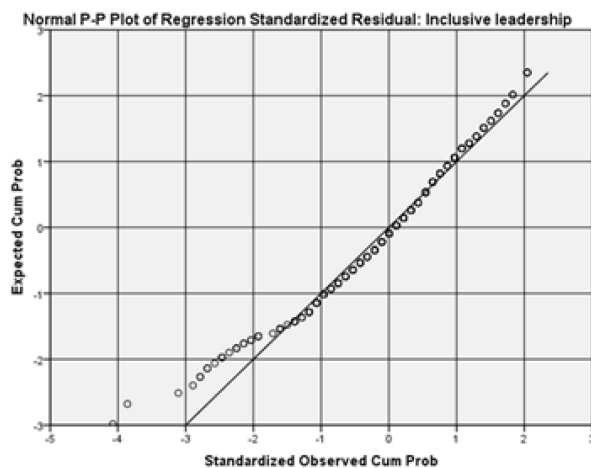
**Figure 2** Normal P-P Plots of Regression Standardized Residual.

Table 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	χ^2	Df	χ^2/Df	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	RMSEA
M0: Four-Factor Model	1732	488	3.549	0.929	0.87	0.843	0.86	0.05
M1: One-factor model by combining all variables into one-factor (IL, ERC, SE, PSRB)	2662	471	4.651	0.935	0.71	0.697	0.73	0.07
Time I								
M2: Two factor model (IL, ERC)	682	231	2.952	0.966	0.90	0.871	0.89	0.04
M3: One factor model (IL, ERC)	1580	243	4.502	0.971	0.77	0.678	0.85	0.06

Abbreviations: GFI, Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; NFI, Normed Fit Index; CFI, Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation.

Table 4 Main Effect and Mediating Effect Analysis

Variables	PSRB	SE	PSRB
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	b	b	b
Control variable			
Gender	-0.125**	-0.081*	-0.107*
Position	0.025	0.129**	-0.002
Educational level	-0.017	-0.038	-0.009
Time spent with immediate supervisors	-0.005	0.086*	-0.023
Independent variable			
Inclusive leadership	0.147**	0.526***	0.036
Mediating variable			
Self-efficacy			0.211***
R ²	0.039	0.332	0.069
F	3.529**	43.030***	5.328***
ΔR^2	0.021	0.274	0.030
ΔF	9.599**	177.620***	13.803***
Mediating effect	Effects	Boot SE	Boot LLCI
Self-efficacy	0.110	0.032	0.914

Notes: N = 438 employees. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table 5 shows the results of moderating analysis. The proposed Hypothesis 5 suggests the moderating effect of “inclusive leadership → employee relations climate → self-efficacy → PSRB of employees” (the arrows “→” represent the sequence from one variable to the next). The PROCESS Hayes⁷⁰ method was used for moderation analysis. Bootstrap tests show that the moderating effect of employee climate relations is significant at ($\beta = 0.021$, $p < 0.0004$). Moreover, the bootstrapping technique at a 95% confidence interval also confirms the result. Hayes’s⁷⁰ coefficient method was adopted in this study to calculate the Index of moderated mediation. The index’s value was significant for the moderating effect of interaction between

inclusive leadership and employment climate and self-efficacy on employee’s PSRB. In this study, the PROCESS procedure analyzes the moderating effect between inclusive leadership and PSRB; bootstrap is set to 5000. These findings support Hypothesis 5.

Discussion

The current study fills an important gap in the organizational behavior literature concerning motivational mechanisms for PSRB among employees. However, when employees find problems, they can generally not propose suggestions and ideas directly to managers. As a result, they cannot solve problems effectively,

Table 5 Moderated Regressions Analysis for Employee Relation Climates

Employee Relation Climates as a Moderator Between Inclusive Leadership & Self-Efficacy					
Sr#	Predictor	B	SE		
1	Constant	2.5821	0.5453		
2	IL	0.0541***	0.1559		
3	ERC	0.0570***	0.1683		
4	IL x ERC	0.021***	0.013		
Mediating Variable	Employee relation climates	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Self-efficacy	Low (M – 1SD)	0.063	0.028	0.021	0.135
	Medium (M)	0.084	0.029	0.037	0.154
	High (M + 1SD)	0.105	0.035	0.047	0.192

Notes: n = 438, Control Variables are Gender, Position, Education Level. ***p<0.001, Multiplication = x.

Abbreviations: IL, inclusive leadership; ERC, employee relation climates; Bootstrap LL, lower limit; CI, confidence interval; UL, upper limit.

potentially leading to severe losses to the organization. Therefore, the study's primary purpose was to examine the influencing factors of PSRB from the perspective of inclusive leadership behavior in China. Furthermore, this research highlighted the role of employee self-efficacy as a mediator variable and the employment climate's role as a moderating variable on the relationship between inclusive leadership and PSRB. The research hypothesis was tested using a questionnaire survey and statistical analysis following the conceptual model and SIT.

Inclusive leaders look after the needs of their employees. They allow employees to share their opinions, thus ensuring employees' participation in decision-making.¹⁶ Hence, Inclusive Leadership plays a vital role in influencing employees' PSRB behavior. Supervisors' PSRB is positively related to subordinates' PSRB, and that effect was more substantial under highly empowering leadership or higher degrees of courage.⁵¹ A superior's tolerant behavior is an essential factor that acts on subordinate PSRB behavior.

Primarily, Chinese norms are derived from human sentiments, enabling employees to favor moral values over organizational policies. Given this, Chinese corporate culture is the most flexible culture regarding compliance with structural norms. In solving interpersonal matters, the Chinese tend to favor their subordinates rather than following the rules. This idea supports humanity, encouraging the management to sacrifice organizational principles against human nature, thereby exhibiting PSRB behavior. Hence, this set of cultural norms allow employees to violate the organization's rules, achieving social welfare (eg, for the organization and stakeholder).

In explaining this notion, a study shows that Chinese ethical leadership encourages PSRB behavior.⁷¹ Likewise,

the research states that inclusive leadership allows employees to exhibit socially responsive behavior, even if it means breaching the organization's rules. This application of morality possibly permits subordinates to commit mistakes, including intentionally breaking the organizational policies.⁷²

Research shows that in the People's Republic of China, inclusive leadership positively supports the employee's voice behavior, encouraging the management to fulfill the needs of the new generation (ie, employees).⁷³ Overall, Chinese culture has significantly enhanced corporate behavior, thereby modifying historical organizational practices.

The study's empirical results confirm the existence of inclusive leadership in Chinese enterprises. A good leadership style often motivates employees to engage in PSRB. An empirical study of Chinese employees in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Foshan shows that inclusive leadership significantly positively affects PSRB ($\beta = 0.147$, $p < 0.01$). It indicates that inclusive leadership has a vital role in promoting Chinese employees' PSRB and is a key part of Chinese cultural characteristics.

Although inclusive leadership plays a unique and critical role in leadership research, few studies have investigated the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee PSRB. One study shows that inclusive leadership allows employees to intentionally break the rules, predicting a high level of PSRB response, but the topic is under-researched.²⁸ The current study explored the impact of inclusive leadership on employee's PSRB and its causes based on SIP Theory. Consistent with SIP, we found a positive correlation between inclusive leadership and employee PSRB.

Overall, the influence of inclusive leadership on PSRB is regarded as a process of improving both employees' psychological cognition and self-efficacy. This provides a better understanding of the influence of inclusive leadership on PSRB and deepens insights into their internal mechanism of action. We further confirmed that self-efficacy significantly affects PSRB ($\beta = 0.231$, $p < 0.001$). The inclusive characteristics of leaders boost employee morale (ie, self-efficacy), thereby encouraging them to display socially responsible behavior (eg, PSRB).²⁷ Therefore, when managers exhibit inclusive behavior, employees' self-efficacy cognition is likely to be strengthened because of specific signals provided by leadership behavior. As a result, the level of PSRB will be increased.

The environmental Factor-Employee relations climate is also an essential factor that influences employee's PSRB. A study reveals that leadership effectiveness strengthens the leader-subordinate relationship, shaping the PSRB behavior.²⁸ It has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between inclusive leadership and PSRB. Based on SIP, this paper investigated the mediating role of self-efficacy and the moderating role of the employee relations climate on the influence of inclusive leadership on subordinate PSRB. Inclusive leadership greatly motivates employees to engage in PSRB behaviors at work. The results revealed a moderating effect of the employee relations climate on the process of self-efficacy. We suggest that the relationship between subordinate self-efficacy, inclusive leadership and subordinate PSRB can be changed by altering employee relations.

Theoretical Implications

Our study findings have theoretical implications for the literature on inclusive leadership and PSRB. Inclusive leadership is still a new concept, and there is no consensus in the academic community on its structural nature or theoretical basis.^{35,73,74} Our study is one of few to investigate the effects of inclusive leadership on self-efficacy and PSRB. First, based on the social information processing theory, this paper reveals the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee's PSRB. Inclusive leaders emphasize an open and inclusive approach to subordinates, including encouraging and accepting mistakes, and avoiding overly blaming employees for failure. Inclusive leaders are more tolerant of their subordinates' PSRB. The results show that inclusive leadership can promote the occurrence of pro-social violations. This is because inclusive leadership provides

employees with more openness, inclusion, respect, and encouragement to safely and securely engage in behavior that violates organizational rules with altruistic intent.

Our study confirms that inclusive leadership has a significant positive predictive effect on employees' PSRB and self-efficacy, which enriches the research on the effect of inclusive leadership and broadens people's understanding of the influencing factors of employees' PSRB and employees' self-efficacy. Study findings also contribute to the self-efficacy literature. Further, our theorizing on inclusive leadership offered a nuanced look at how leaders facilitate PSRB behaviors. Introducing the mediating effect of self-efficacy revealed that inclusive leadership has an indirect effect on employees' PSRB. Furthermore, this study explored the process mechanism of leadership influencing employee behavior and revealed the process of leadership influencing subordinates from the perspective of a deep psychological mechanism to explain the influence of an inclusive leadership style on subordinates' behavior from different perspectives. This enriched the study of the intermediary mechanism between inclusive leadership and PSRB.

Third, it enriches the research on employee PSRB by exploring how leadership style influences the process of problem-solving. This study also deepens the understanding of PSRB. Specifically, we focused on a moderating variable (employment relations climate) between inclusive leadership and PSRB. We tested the stronger influence of self-efficacy on employees' PSRB under the condition of the high level of employment relationship climate. This conclusion provides a theoretical basis for opening the black box between inclusive leadership and employees' PSRB. It also helps develop our understanding of the boundary between inclusive leadership and PSRB and further enriches the theoretical research of enterprise leadership and management.

Finally, this study explored the impact of inclusive leadership on employee PSRB by considering the factors affecting PSRB. Leadership in organizational factors is considered to be the critical factor that influences employees' PSRB. Still, previous studies on the effect of leadership style on employees' PSRB have been insufficient. While there are studies on leadership styles, most of them are about traditional leadership styles such as transformational leadership. This study suggests that inclusive leadership positively affects employees' PSRB, and it is

significant for the further development of employee's PSRB.

Practical Implications

The study suggests practical managerial implications for organizations to boost employee PSRB and self-efficacy. Firstly, from a practical point of view, our study provides insight into how inclusive leadership can partially encourage subordinates to take PSRB actions through self-efficacy enhancement. Organizations and corporations that take this approach are more concerned about employees' needs and psychology. First of all, organizations should give importance to and consider employees' PSRB seriously. The organizations operating environment is dynamic, and all kinds of unexpected situations and complex problems occur at any time. In response to these specific problems, PSRB violates organizational rules. Still, it is good practice to motivate work and organizational efficiency to help enterprises effectively cope with the changeable business environment. Therefore, through their own PSRB, the organization's management should reasonably promote the employees' PSRB. On the surface, doing so seems to ignore the organization's rules and challenge the organization's authority; however, it is beneficial to effective organization development in the long run. Therefore, managers also need to consider the ethical impact of employees' PSRB.

Secondly, in management practice, organizations should pay attention to the characteristics of inclusive leadership. In the aspect of leadership style, inclusive leadership is prevalent in management practice. This study proves that inclusive leadership can influence employee's pro-social behavior through employee self-efficacy. Therefore, team leaders should consciously shape an inclusive leadership style and strive to create a harmonious, equal and open working environment for employees. Managers could also consider ways to be open and inclusive to subordinate's new processes and make an effort to value their positive and pro-social motivations.

Thirdly, organizational leaders should strive to shape their inclusive leadership style by implementing inclusive leadership behavior. It can effectively improve the level of employees' self-efficacy. On the other hand, the team should try to improve the climate of the employment relationship by creating all types of conditions, providing a good and open working environment, and striving for a reasonable level of PSRB. A good employment relations

climate can effectively improve the level of employees' self-efficacy in inclusive leadership and PSRB.

Finally, leaders should fully recognize the importance of enhancing self-efficacy for employee personal development. Leaders can enhance employees' self-confidence, improve employees' self-efficacy, and promote PSRB through work guidance and encouragement. In terms of self-efficacy, managers should pay attention to the role of self-efficacy in practice. When managers guide subordinates' self-efficacy in the work process, they should pay attention to their role and consider organizational environment factors.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

Though this work enriches the understanding of employee's PSRB, it has some limitations that offer indicating potential future research directions. First, data were obtained from the same resource, and this study may still be limited by common method bias. However, the risk of bias driving outcomes was significantly reduced by using time lag and CFA. Second, this paper only focuses on inclusive leadership style as an antecedent variable to explore the impact of employee's PSRB, which is likely to be insufficient. Because of a wide range of factors influencing employee PSRB, follow-up research should explore the role of employees' personality traits, ethics, and values. Third, in this research, inclusive leadership was treated at the employee level to examine the leadership approach's effects. Further research could include a multilevel study examining the influences of inclusive leadership at an organizational level to provide more generalization of outcomes.

Conclusion

PSRB is associated with positive or negative organizational outcomes, particularly regarding employees who significantly impact the organization's outcomes. Therefore, it is vital to understand the factors that positively or negatively influence PSRB intentions among employees. This paper draws the following conclusions based on the empirical research of inclusive leadership and PSRB. First, inclusive leadership positively affects employees' self-efficacy and PSRB. Second, self-efficacy positively affects employee's PSRB.⁷⁵ Third, self-efficacy plays a mediating role between inclusive leadership and PSRB. Lastly, inclusive leaders positively influence PSRB

through self-efficacy through the positively moderating climate of employment relations. The better the employment climate is, the more inclusive leaders positively influence PSRB through self-efficacy.⁵¹ Overall, PSRB is a standard employee behavior in enterprises.

Employees' PSRB is motivated by altruism. Further, it is an act of selfless dedication and the manifestation of employees' social responsibility to violate organizational rules from the perspective of others;⁶⁶ this is understandable and permissible when it benefits society and social responsibility. As such, this behavior can widely benefit the organization. Hence, management should encourage its employees to exhibit PSRB behavior that gains maximum social welfare.

Data Sharing Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethical Approval

All participants gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study. All procedures performed were by the ethical standards as laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standard. All the procedures were approved by the ethical committee of School of Management, Guangdong University of Technology.

Author Contributions

All authors made a significant contribution to the work reported, whether that is in the conception, study design, execution, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation, or in all these areas; took part in drafting, revising or critically reviewing the article; gave final approval of the version to be published; have agreed on the journal to which the article has been submitted; and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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Disclosure

The authors declare no conflicts of interest for this work.

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