

MS Research Thesis

**EFFECT OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP ON
TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL**



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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT
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APPROVAL SHEET

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

It is hereby declared that author of the study has completed the entire requirement for submitting this research work in partial fulfillment for the degree of MS ELM. This thesis is in its present form is the original work of the author except those which are acknowledged in the text. The material included in the thesis has not been submitted wholly or partially for award of any other academic certification than for which it is being presented.

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SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATE

The thesis titled “Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Teachers’ Engagement and Professional Development at university Level” submitted by Ms. Sajida Aimen Awan Reg. No. 44-FOE/MSELM/F23 is partial fulfillment of MS degree in Educational Leadership and Management, has been completed under my guidance and supervision. I am satisfied with the quality of student’s research work and allow her to submit this for further process as per IIUI rules and regulations.

Dr. Munazza Mahmood

Dedication

To the pillars of my strength and the light of my life

My Parents

For the prayers whispered in silence,

The values instilled with love,

And the strength you gave me to rise and keep going

My Husband

For being my calm in the storm,

My silent supporter,

And the steady hand that held mine through every step

My Dearest Son

For the joy in your laughter,

The sparkle in your eyes,

And the sweet reminder of why I dream and strive

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To my husband, thank you for your patience, encouragement, and understanding during the most challenging moments of this journey. Your support has meant the world to me.

To my dear son, your innocent smile gave me hope, comfort, and the motivation to keep moving forward even when the days were tough.

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Sajida Aimen Awan

Abstract

The concept of inclusive leadership has gained increasing importance in higher education due to its potential to enhance teacher engagement and professional development. Inclusive leaders, characterized by openness, accessibility, and respect for diversity, foster psychologically safe environments where faculty members feel encouraged to share ideas and pursue continuous learning. This study aimed to find out inclusive leadership practices at the university level, to find out the level of teacher engagement, to find out the professional development opportunities, to identify the effect of inclusive leadership on teacher engagement, to identify the effect of inclusive leadership on professional development, and to identify the effect of inclusive leadership teacher engagement and professional development. The study holds significance for teachers, students, administrators, and policymakers, emphasizing that inclusive leadership fosters openness, recognition, and collaboration in academic environments. A quantitative, causal-comparative research design within a positivist paradigm was employed. The population consisted of 210 university teachers from IIUI and NUML, while a stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select a sample of 136 teachers. Data were collected through three structured instruments two developed on the basis of literature (inclusive leadership and professional development) and one adapted scale (for teacher engagement). Data were analysed using mean, linear regression, and multivariate multiple regression techniques. The findings revealed that inclusive leadership had a significant positive effect on both teacher engagement and professional development. The conclusion of the study is that inclusive leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a supportive, motivating, and development-focused academic environment. It is recommended that higher education institutions may initiate leadership development programs comprising of inclusive practices. Such initiatives may enhance openness, accessibility, and recognition among academic leaders to promote sustained teacher engagement and professional excellence.

Keywords: *Inclusive Leadership, Teacher Engagement, Professional Development*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	viii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study.....	2
1.2 Problem statement	3
1.3 Objectives of the study	4
1.4 Research Questions	4
1.5 Research Hypothesis	4
1.6 Significance of the Study	4
1.7 Delimitations of the Study.....	5
1.8 Operational Definitions	5
1.9 Conceptual framework	7
CHAPTER 2	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Inclusive Leadership.....	8
2.1.1 Definition and Overview	8
2.1.2 Inclusive Leadership in Higher Education	8
2.1.3 Relevance for Fostering Engagement and Development	9
2.2 Dimensions of Inclusive Leadership	10
2.2.1 Openness	10
2.2.2 Availability	11
2.2.3 Accessibility.....	11
2.2.4 Encouragement & Recognition.....	11
2.2.5 Respect & Fair Treatment.....	12

2.2.6 Failure Tolerance	12
2.3 Theoretical Foundations	13
2.3.1 Transformational Leadership Theory	13
2.3.2 Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory	14
2.3.3 Servant Leadership Theory	14
2.3.4 Social Exchange Theory	14
2.3.5 Social Identity Theory.....	15
2.4 Inclusive Leadership and Teacher Engagement	16
2.4.1 Relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Teacher Motivation	16
2.4.2 Influence on Teaching Quality and Innovation	17
2.5 Inclusive Leadership and Employee Well-being.....	18
2.5.1 Role in Supporting Mental Health	18
2.5.2 Reducing Stress and Burnout.....	18
2.5.3 Promoting Work-Life Balance through Supportive Leadership ...	18
2.6 Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety	19
2.6.1 Definition and Importance in Academic Settings	19
2.6.2 Trust, Risk-Taking, and Safe Communication	19
2.6.3 Psychological Safety as a Mediator in Leadership Outcomes	20
2.6.4 Leaders Openness and Voice Behaviour	20
2.7 Inclusive Leadership and Professional Development	21
2.7.1 Creating a Culture of Learning and Growth	21
2.7.2 Equal Access to Development Opportunities	21
2.7.3 Mentorship and Coaching by Leaders	22
2.7.4 Encouragement for Research and Innovation	23
2.8 Dimensions of Teacher Engagement.....	24
2.8.1 Vigor	24

2.8.2 Dedication	24
2.8.3 Absorption.....	25
2.9 The Impact of Inclusive Leadership on Teacher Engagement	25
2.9.1 Inclusive Leadership as a Predictor of Engagement	25
2.9.2 Role of Trust and Recognition.....	26
2.10 Psychological Safety and Teacher Engagement	27
2.10.1 Emotional Support as an indicator of Engagement.....	27
2.10.2 Safe Work environment for Faculty Participation	27
2.10.3 Psychological Engagement and Teacher Engagement	27
2.11 Theoretical perspectives on Teacher Engagement.....	28
2.11.1 Social Learning Theory.....	28
2.11.2 Social Exchange Theory	28
2.12 Collaborative Empowerment and Teacher Engagement.....	28
2.13 Recommendations for Enhancing Teacher Engagement through Leadership	29
2.14 Professional Development	29
2.14.1 Importance of Professional Development in Universities	29
2.14.2 Role of Leadership in Facilitating Professional Development	30
2.14.3 Challenges and Opportunities	30
2.14.4 Technology and Innovation in Faculty Development	32
2.14.5 Connection between PD and Teacher Engagement	32
2.15 Summary and Research Gaps	33
2.15.1 Summary of Literature	33
2.15.2 Research Gap and Justification for Study	33
CHAPTER 3	35
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	35
3.1 Research Design	35

3.2 Population.....	35
3.3 Sample and sampling technique	36
3.4 Instruments	37
3.5 Procedure(Validity, Pilot Testing & Reliability)	37
3.6 Data Collection.....	39
3.7 Data Analysis	40
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	40
3.9 Research Plan	41
CHAPTER 4	42
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS	42
CHAPTER 5	53
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
5.1 Summary	53
5.2 Findings	54
5.3 Discussion	58
5.4 Conclusions	62
5.5 Recommendations	63
5.6 Future Recommendations.....	65
REFERENCES	66
APPENDIX I	76
APPENDIX II	78
APPENDIX III	80

List of Tables

Table 3.1	Population of the Study.....	35
Table 3.2	Sample of the Study.....	36
Table 3.3	Reliability Statistics of IL Scale	38
Table 3.4	Reliability Statistics of Teacher Engagement Scale	39
Table 3.5	Reliability Statistics of Professional Development Scale	39
Table 3.6	Research Plan.....	41
Table 4.1	Cut-off Points for Interpretation of Mean Scores.....	43
Table 4.2	Teachers' Perception Regarding Inclusive Leadership Practices.....	44
Table 4.3	Teachers' Perception Regarding Engagement under Leadership.....	45
Table 4.4	Teachers' Perception Regarding Professional Development under Leadership.....	46
Table 4.5	Regression Coefficients of Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Teachers' Engagement.....	48
Table 4.6	Teachers' Engagement among Leaders with low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.....	48
Table 4.7	Regression Coefficients of Effect of Inclusive Leadership on Teachers' Professional Development.....	50
Table 4.8	Teachers' Professional development among Leaders with low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.....	50
Table 4.9	Multivariate Multiple Regression of Inclusive Leadership Practices on Teachers Engagement and Professional Development.....	52

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has raised the demand for innovation and efficiency within organizations, making inclusive leadership essential for fostering employees' professional growth and advancement. According to Hassan & Hassan (2018), supportive actions towards employees, appreciation for the diversity, and working hard to create an environment that is psychologically safe enough to voice opinions by staff members are some of the characteristics attributed to inclusive leaders. It is in the workplace that individuals have more tendencies to take creative risks and be motivated to perform more than expected requirements for their jobs if they are job secure. As inclusive leadership has a direct effect on teachers' involvement and development, its importance is particularly amplified within learning institutions, such as universities.

As organizations increasingly focus on enhancing employee engagement and retention, inclusive leadership has become more important than ever. Researches from Malik et al. (2017) and Choi, Tran, and Park (2015) in Pakistan and Vietnam have highlighted that leaders who encourage characteristics such as openness, supportiveness, and respect for diversity can build stronger relationships between employees and the organization, thus establishing a specific connection between inclusive leadership and increased employee engagement.

The role that leadership plays in promoting teacher engagement and fostering professional development is becoming increasingly significant within the context of universities in which innovations and discourse are paramount. Furthermore, open inclusive leadership promotes both meaningful communication and collaboration, besides recognizing and honoring individualization of every single person, thus encouraging an environment that would bring educators to grow and achieve excellence. This leadership methodology offers significant advantages as an inclusive leader ensures that instructors feel trust and are not excluded, which will encourage them to learn more profoundly about their work and maximize opportunities available for professional growth. This study aims at exploring how higher education institutions through inclusive leadership can enhance teacher engagement and professional development to improve the quality of education with innovation.

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Tang, Wareewanich, and Yue (2023) inclusive leadership assumes a significant role in building an environment at work that is respectful, valued, and supportive of diverse viewpoints. In the context of higher education, the existence of inclusive leadership affects educators' emotional and professional involvement, creating a motivational setting that challenges educators to produce their best but at the same time makes they feel appreciated. Studies by Chang, Ma, and Lin in the year 2022 reveal that inclusive leadership enhances the psychological safety, trust, and belongingness of workers that increase employee commitment toward work. It also inspires creativity among the workers to come up with innovative ideas. In addition to organizational engagement and inclusivity, this kind of leadership helps organizations develop an inclusive environment.

This is because the staff plays a critical role in the educational infrastructure as stakeholders, hence they should have a conducive setting that encourages their professional development. The involvement levels of teachers are directly proportional to professionalism; high involvement teachers show greater interest, focus, and readiness to take on other tasks (Tang et al., 2023). Indeed, the inclusive leadership promotes an involvement of teachers in learning and professional development together with psychic safety, challenges, and open communication. According to Choi, Tran, and Kang (2017), inclusive leaders are active agents in supporting their employees to realize their objectives, value diversity of views, and foster a climate that increases job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, despite evidence from organizational and corporate settings, limited empirical research exists specifically examining how inclusive leadership influences teacher engagement and professional development in higher education institutions. This gap indicates the need to investigate these relationships within postsecondary academic environments, where the dynamics of leadership, engagement, and professional growth may differ from other organizational contexts. Consequently, the objective of this research is to examine the influence of inclusive leadership on these critical domains within academic environments.

The emotional and psychological aspects of work engagement play a crucial role in reinforcing the link between inclusive leadership and professional growth in teachers. According to Weiss & Cropanzano (1996), teachers' behaviors and attitudes toward their work are significantly shaped by their emotions and perceptions of

workplace experiences. Inclusive leadership fosters an environment characterized by equity, openness, and support, which helps reduce teachers' stress and emotional exhaustion, ultimately enabling them to focus more effectively on their professional development. Moreover, an inclusive workplace enhances overall job satisfaction an essential component of professional growth while simultaneously increasing teacher engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002). By addressing this research gap, the present study aims to offer insights particularly relevant to higher education, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical leadership strategies within universities.

1.2 Problem Statement

This profoundly changing education environment has made universities increasingly diverse in a geographical sense-by bringing students together from different regions, cultures, and backgrounds to learn and grow. Yet leading most educational institutions, particularly universities, has failed to keep pace with such changes in diversity. Studies show that while the importance of inclusive leadership is indeed explored vividly in corporate settings, there is a huge knowledge gap in terms of understanding the effects on educational settings, particularly considering aspects of teacher engagement and professional development.

Inclusive leadership, which is characterized by its openness, supportiveness, and appreciation for diverse viewpoints, is crucial in fostering an environment where teachers are engaged and motivated. Educators improve their skills in fulfilling their duties as they receive active engagement and support within their professional development, which adds up to better student learning results. This is particularly crucial at the university level, where a varied makeup of students requires teachers to be flexible, accommodating, and well-rounded in their professional skills. As such, the absence of inclusive leadership in learning institutions can undermine engagement and professional development among teachers, which would ultimately impact the quality of education provided to students. The present study addresses a gap in existing research by examining the influence of inclusive leadership on faculty engagement and professional development in higher education institutions. This investigation responds to the growing need for implementing inclusive leadership practices that effectively support both educators and students across diverse learning contexts.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the inclusive leadership practices at university level
2. To find out the level of teachers' engagement at university level
3. To find out the professional development opportunities at university level.
4. To identify the difference in the level of teachers' engagement working under leaders having low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.
5. To identify the difference in the level of teachers' professional development working under leaders having low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.
6. To identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ₁ What are the inclusive leadership practices at university level?

RQ₂ What is the level of teachers' engagement at university level?

RQ₃ What are the professional development opportunities at university level?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the level of teachers' engagement working under leaders having low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the level of teachers' professional development working under leaders having low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.

H₀₃ There is no significant effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The current study on effect of inclusive leadership on teacher engagement and professional development at the university level holds paramount significance in multiple domains. Firstly, the study will facilitate educators in enhancing educational quality by utilizing the findings of the study. University teachers will gain insights into how inclusive leadership enhances their engagement and professional development. University might reform educational policies and practices, guiding curriculum framework and assessment guidelines. Secondly, the study will aid university

administrators in making informed decisions about professional development opportunities on the basis of equity for faculty. Thirdly, teachers will be encouraged to improve their engagement and participate for the betterment of university and students. Moreover, educational institutions will be encouraged to work on developing. Moreover, as well-supported and engaged teachers create better learning environments so this will be beneficial for students as well. Additionally, university administrators and leaders will learn that inclusive leadership can improve faculty performance and overall institutional success, fostering a more inclusive and supportive academic environment for all.

1.7 Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to the Teachers of Faculty of Social sciences (Education, Psychology, International Relations, Pakistan studies & Media and communication studies) International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and National University of Modern Languages (NUML).

1.8 Operational Definitions

1.8.1 Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership within the academic environment comprises the approaches that facilitate openness, accessibility, availability, encouragement & recognition, respect & fair treatment and failure tolerance. It also values diversity across the various faculty staff. This means developing an environment in which all educators are fully engaged, their viewpoints valued, and their career advancement opportunities are equal. Inclusive leaders also facilitate collaborative approaches and more effective communication among the staff, and they support professional development of their staff on the basis of their individual needs.

1.8.2 Teacher Engagement

Teacher engagement is the degree to which university teachers are vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed in their work. Vigor represents the energy, resilience, and persistence teachers bring to their work. Dedication is about a sense of pride, enthusiasm, and purpose, which creates a strong emotional connection with their profession. Absorption refers to deep focus and immersion in their tasks where they become so engaged that time appears to pass very quickly. These dimensions offer a

comprehensive measure for teacher engagement, as evidenced by commitment and involvement through the impact of inclusive leadership practices.

1.8.3 Professional Development

Professional development, in the context of this research, is a systematic and ongoing process of improving the teaching skills, research competencies, and overall professional career of university faculty staff. It involves inclusive leadership-based programs that promote equitable access to opportunities for skill-building, self-reflection, professional conduct, and resilience to change. Such opportunities are frequently channeled through workshops, training sessions, and shared platforms that enable lifelong learning, innovation, and participation. Under inclusive leadership, professional development becomes an exciting instrument of change that furthers equity, motivation, and institutional support, ultimately leading to better teaching practices, research production, and ongoing professional excellence.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

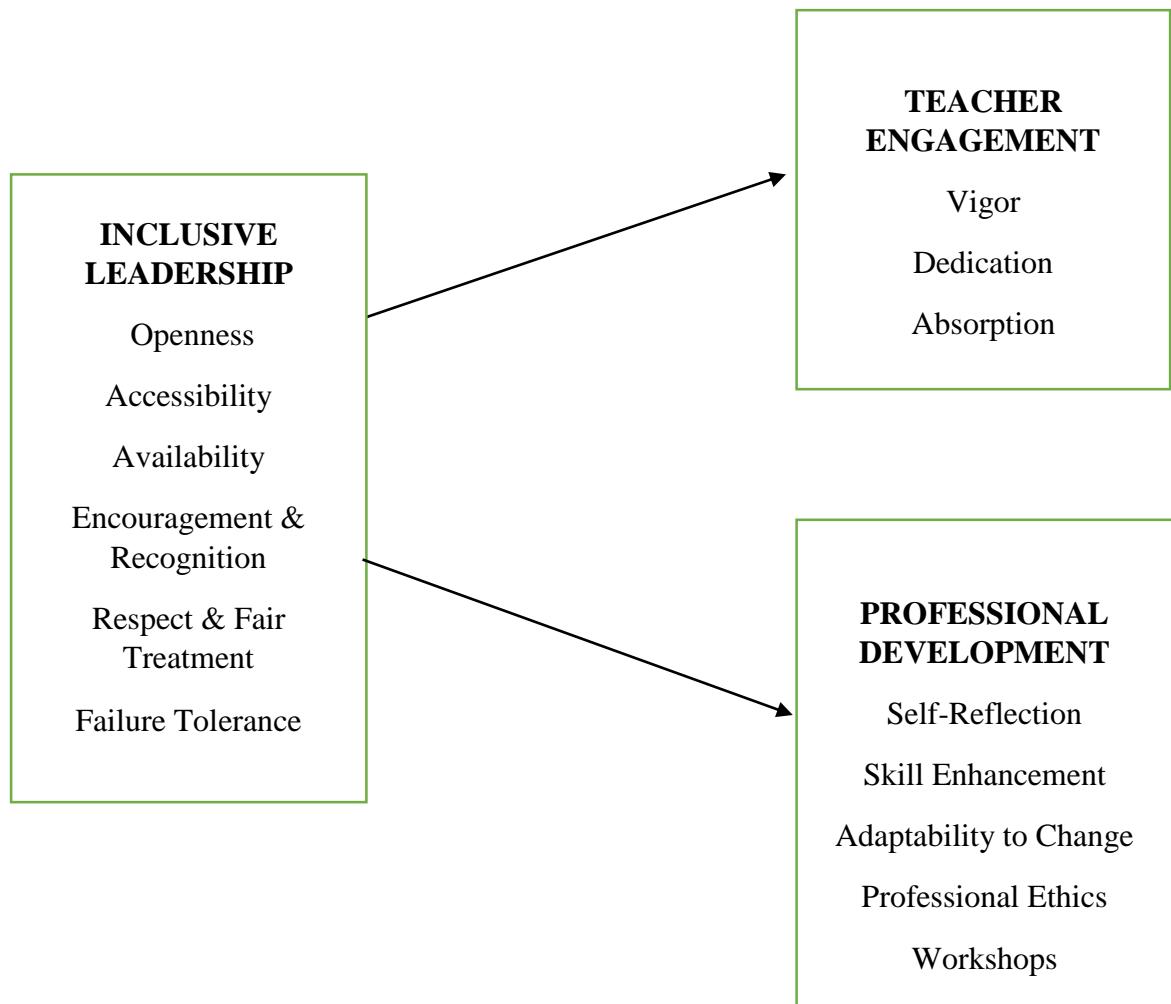


Figure: 1.1 Conceptual Framework of Inclusive Leadership, Teachers' Engagement and Professional development

Inclusive Leadership (Carmeli et al., 2010), (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021)

Teacher Engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004)

Professional Development (Pan, 2004), (King, 2004)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Inclusive leadership

2.1.1 *Definition and Overview*

The contemporary global workforce, characterized by increasing diversity in the workforce and the contemporary, represents both opportunities and challenges for leadership practices. According to Rodriguez (2018), this leader-centric model of leadership makes a lot of fuss about the traditional features of charm and character, placing the leader in a place of superiority over his followers. While these attributes are broadly recognized and have their own merits, they do indeed bypass the relationship that remains a standard and essential aspect between leaders and their followers.

It is also crucial to translate this new behavioral focus into the signs that an inclusive leader should convey, such as that decisions are well-based and insights deep. Inclusion requires purposeful intent; it means striving to support a diverse workforce, organizational culture, and standard operational practices; it further contains understanding what drives or hinders inclusion (and exclusion) and knowledge on how to develop new behavioral norms (Rodriguez, 2018).

Inclusive leadership highlights the significance of leaders' openness, accessibility, and development support in fostering employees' well-being and motivation. Recent studies established that inclusive leaders have a positive impact on workplace well-being through increased employees' vigor and engagement through positive feedback and appreciation. Their research illustrates that when leaders deliberately craft a climate of inclusion and psychological safety, workers feel valued, more energized, and more engaged to contribute imaginatively to organizational objectives. This aligns with the broader perspective that inclusive leadership transcends positional power, focusing on relational trust and authentic participation in diverse work environments (Liu et al., 2024).

2.1.2 *Inclusive Leadership in Higher Education*

In higher education, inclusive leadership is related to an inclusive work environment where employees are valued and involved, thereby fostering diversity, innovation, and creativity. It subsequently increases productivity, teamwork, and job satisfaction. Proactive diversity strategies ensure continued progress in those regards,

beneficial to further success of the institution. This opinion is supported by Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020.

Inclusive leadership is a vital leadership style for today's organizations, particularly in the educational environment, where diversity and participation are vital elements. Inclusive leadership is defined as verbal and behavioral communications of a leader that express an invitation to work together and value others' work. Such a leadership elicits a context of mutual empowerment that is rooted in respect and mutual responsibility. In university contexts, inclusive leadership is essential in ensuring the members of the teaching faculty feel valued, respected, and included in decision-making processes. Problematic universities with issues of leadership have fewer faculty involvements, low motivation, and poor quality professional development programs. Lack of inclusive leadership results in poor faculty performance, no innovation, and low institutional achievement (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

These conclusions as a whole suggest that inclusive leadership in higher education not only improves the morale of employees but also improves institutional performance. Compared to other styles like transactional or authoritarian inclusive leadership has a clearer relationship with staff engagement and innovation (He et al., 2021; McKimm, 2018). This comparison implies that inclusivity as a facilitator catalyzes collective learning as well as academic excellence in universities.

2.1.3 Relevance for Fostering Engagement and Development

Inclusive leadership is a paradigm founded on a person-centered approach, building positive mutual relations and actively combating bias to foster better cooperation and creative ideas in diverse teams (McKimm, 2018). This type of management acknowledges and affirms employees' input and opinions and, therefore, fosters transparency in the environment, encourages workers' participation and reflects various views in the organizational structure (He et al., 2021).

Leadership is a much known complex phenomenon that has its core around very important organizational, social, and psychological processes. The process of social influence between a leader and a follower is necessary for the existence of leadership. Let us, then put the classic concept of a leader as a hero behind us and focus on the traits of an inclusive leader-a very person who seeks diverse viewpoints actively and that can shape the environment in which diverse teams function best (Rodriguez, 2018).

Perceived organizational support becomes an atmosphere where every employee receives a feeling of recognition and motivation, the development of their psychological capital, and boosting output through creative thinking, while inclusive leadership involves all components above along with a relational process of discussion, vulnerability, and interconnection that fosters more perspectives in creating collective growth and transformation within an organization (Virginia & McKendry, 2019).

Creating an inclusive climate is not only good for existing faculty participation and growth, but also for promoting inventive practices between learning teams. For instance, one recent research discovered that inclusive leadership has a considerable impact on inventive work behavior among teachers, and this influence functioned by the existence of an inclusive climate and affective commitment (Çelik, Polat & Esen, 2024). Such results indicate that when college leaders proactively foster an environment in which everyone is listened to and emotions are respected, faculty members feel encouraged to innovate in teaching techniques, research partnerships, and curriculum development. Thus, inclusive leadership must be considered a strategic catalyst of professional growth and institutional innovation sustaining present practice, to be sure, but also facilitating future development.

2.2 Dimensions of Inclusive Leadership

2.2.1 *Openness*

Openness in leadership serves to alleviate the uncertainty and ambiguity of faculty members in the workplace. Idea-accepting leaders establish an environment in which university teachers are at ease discussing their ideas and creative ways of teaching. When openness is practiced by university heads, it brings about an environment that makes the teachers feel appreciated and encouraged, fostering greater confidence and productivity (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

Open leadership is transparent and inclusive, supporting extensive input and participation in making decisions. Open leadership builds a broad foundation of experience, facilitating cooperation and creativity, which are crucial aspects of inclusive leadership within education and organizations (Dewey, 2019).

2.2.2 Availability

Availability is an essential element of inclusive leadership, ensuring university leaders' presence and availability when required. The presence and responsiveness of a leader create a helpful environment to assist faculty members in overcoming challenges, asking for advice, and improving their teaching ability (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

Availability, being one of the inclusive leadership dimensions, is an aspect of the leader being prepared to interact with employees and offer assistance. It creates favorable interactions, improves worker satisfaction, and urges involvement in decision-making. Through accessibility, inclusive leaders set the stage for workers to feel appreciated and motivated to contribute to innovative operations. Availability, combined with openness and accessibility, plays an important role in fostering work engagement and innovative workplace behavior (IWB) among workers (Falih Bannay et al., 2020).

2.2.3 Accessibility

Accessibility is the characteristic of an inclusive leader that renders him/her accessible to teachers. University leaders who listen attentively, allow free conversation, and are highly available for assistance foster a culture in which instructors feel at ease presenting their ideas and concerns. This can result in improved job satisfaction, active behavior, and a better work climate (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

Accessibility, as one of the aspects of inclusive leadership, is the capability of the leadership to make communication and participation simple for subordinates, leading to improved work performance. It also highlights the value of leaders being accessible and quick to respond to staff inputs and issues (A. Alalak et al., 2023).

2.2.4 Encouragement & Recognition

Leadership encouragement and recognition are important in motivating teachers and increasing participation. A leader who recognizes faculty efforts promotes innovation and encourages teachers to enhance their teaching and research. Encouragement and recognition assist in developing confidence, trust, and professional commitment among faculty members (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

Encouragement and recognition are significant inclusive leadership dimensions because they amplify newcomers' psychological capital through acknowledgment of diversity and error tolerance. Such encouragement nurtures resilience, self-efficacy, and optimism to facilitate improved organizational socialization among diversely situated newcomers (Dai & Fang, 2023).

2.2.5 Respect & Fair Treatment

Fair treatment and respect for university teachers build a positive institutional culture, where instructors feel valued. Leaders who treat faculty with dignity, value their distinctive contributions, and attend to their concerns assist in boosting job satisfaction and motivation. Respectful work environments enhance confidence and result in greater engagement and professional commitment (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

Respectful pluralism focuses on respect for human dignity and promotes the acceptance of differences instead of just tolerating them. This promotes an inclusive leadership style that values equitable treatment and inspiring communication, which is crucial for leader and follower growth in diverse settings (Dean, 2022).

2.2.6 Failure Tolerance

An inclusive leader recognizes that mistakes are a learning and innovation part. Accepting and positively responding to errors instead of penalizing those produces a culture of trust and ongoing improvement. It inspires faculty members to experiment and learn from their mistakes, promoting creativity, professional growth, and flexibility in instruction and research (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

The research states tolerance as the first level of the inclusive leadership path, and it stresses that leaders need to develop awareness and accommodation in order to accept diversity. This grounding dimension enables the movement towards acceptance, value, and celebration in inclusive leadership (Gupta et al., 2024).

Together, the six dimensions of inclusive leadership constitute an integrated model of fostering trust, engagement, and ongoing professional development among faculty members of a university. Openness, accessibility, and availability provide a basis for open communication and psychological safety, whereas encouragement, recognition, and respect fortify the intrinsic motivation and sense of belonging of the teachers. Failure tolerance rounds out this model by fostering learning and innovation

instead of fear of failure. Collectively, these dimensions create a climate of leadership in which teachers are valued, enabled, and motivated to make substantial contributions to the growth of the institution. In this manner, inclusive leadership turns bureaucratic routine relationships into strategic partnerships that foster engagement and enduring academic excellence.

2.3 Theoretical Foundations

Bases for Theories of Inclusive Leadership Various bases ground theories of inclusive leadership, emphasizing differences, equity, and collaboration. Based on transformational leadership and social identity theory, it highlights the roles of leaders in involving diverse members of the team as a way of providing an inclusive environment. This approach is founded on the behavior of leaders who belong to a culture of inclusion, positively changing the performance of teams and the general well-being of the individuals. By incorporating psychological principles with organizational dynamics, inclusive leadership provokes leaders to challenge their biases while fostering trust and engaging diverse views so that success is achieved in an environment diversified by everyone.

2.3.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Hay 2006 clarify that Cox (2001) divides leadership into transformational or transactional. According to Downton (1973), the contrast was first proposed and popularized by Burns (1978). Transformational leaders are said to include followers and cater to higher-order needs, whereas transactional leaders reward loyalty. The critical economic changes in the 1970s called for rapid adjustment and keeping the morale of the staff up in the midst of uncertainty and brought forth transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership is the only way to develop inclusive and engaging workplaces since it deals successfully with emotional and relational dynamics, which the traditional models of leadership so grossly neglected. It stimulates capacity growth as well as increases the personal commitment of "followers" to business goals. According to, transformational leadership arises when leaders broaden and raise the interests of their employees, raise awareness, and acceptance of the groups' purposes and mission, and motivate people to work beyond their individual self-interest for the greater good of the group, (Hay, 2006). Their followers believe that everyone in the organization should be developed to his or her highest potential. This also makes the

leaders empower others to take greater responsibility for achieving the vision (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

2.3.2 Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

The Leader-Member Exchange Theory describes how leaders and subordinates establish mutual relationships of trust, mutual respect, and support. Leaders establishing strong alliances with employees have the potential to benefit job satisfaction and performance. The theory is focused on the fact that inclusive leadership encourages cooperation and positive reciprocal relationships between leaders and employees, leading to enhanced faculty involvement and professional development (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

2.3.3 Servant Leadership Theory

Servant leadership is derived from the teaching of Jesus and Lao-Tzu. The modern concept, referring to the rebellion of the young of the 1960s in relation to the inefficiency of institutions, was developed by Robert Greenleaf in the 1970s. He first coined the term "servant leadership" in his famous essay, where it was argued that leaders must put service first. It was through his thoughts that, for the first time in AT&T's history, the organization registered increased employee engagement. Continued research into hierarchical power structures led Greenleaf to institutionalize servant leadership, now recognized as a valid contemporary approach (Brewer, 2010).

A servant leader is one who focuses on his or her followers, and their needs emerge as the priority, while organizational issues become secondary. The servant leader constructs are described as virtues. According to Dennis et al., "Virtues may be defined as a good moral quality, the overall quality of goodness, or even moral perfection" (2010). Servant leadership is a holistic leadership approach that makes the followers full-fledged people because it assimilates them into all other dimensions, whether that is relational, ethical, emotional, and spiritual. The effort here is to make followers by virtue of moral and humanitarian attitudes exercised by leaders (Eva et al., 2019).

2.3.4 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory emphasizes the fact that an exchange relationship between leaders and workers is crucial in the workplace in order to encourage motivation. By promoting involvement in decision-making and planning for work,

inclusive leaders make their employees feel appreciated, thus boosting motivation, participation, and job commitment (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

2.3.5 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory explains how people base their identity on the membership of some groups, control interpersonal activity with those groups, and regulate contact between groups through social and self-categorization processes (Amber et al., 2023).

According to social identity theory, individuals differentiate between their 'in-groups' and 'out-groups', resulting in prejudice of the out-groups and bias in favor of the in-groups. Group identification shapes robust emotions and actions; for example, a feeling of sorrow over loss in a sport event where your team loses. Social relationships have been engineered by the collective self via group affiliations which also speaks to how group behavior impacts individual identity (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019).

Together, the six dimensions of inclusive leadership constitute an integrated model of fostering trust, engagement, and ongoing professional development among faculty members of a university. Openness, accessibility, and availability provide a basis for open communication and psychological safety, whereas encouragement, recognition, and respect fortify the intrinsic motivation and sense of belonging of the teachers. Failure tolerance rounds out this model by fostering learning and innovation instead of fear of failure. Collectively, these dimensions create a climate of leadership in which teachers are valued, enabled, and motivated to make substantial contributions to the growth of the institution. In this manner, inclusive leadership turns bureaucratic routine relationships into strategic partnerships that foster engagement and enduring academic excellence.

2.4 Inclusive Leadership and Teacher Engagement

2.4.1 *Relationship between Inclusive Leadership and Teacher Motivation*

Inclusive leadership is instrumental in supporting teachers' motivation through the creation of a facilitative, respectful, and empowering work environment. Inclusive leaders being open, accessible, and effective, have a direct impact on teachers' value, belongingness, and recognition perceptions in the organization. These favorable psychological perceptions, in turn, enhance job satisfaction, an important internal motivator (Tang et al., 2023).

The research discovered a strong positive relationship between inclusive leadership and job satisfaction ($r = 0.496$), as it was already established that by making teachers feel respected and supported emotionally, they became more committed, motivated, and active in the professional arena. Inclusive leadership counters strict hierarchies, fosters emotional cohesion by care and justice, and empowers autonomy—parameters that drive teachers' intrinsic motivation (Tang et al., 2023).

In addition, by fostering a culture of psychological safety and belonging, these leadership practices not only minimize interpersonal fences but also motivate teachers to invest more intensively in their job and strive for development, innovation, and excellence in their professional lives. This correlation is particularly significant in vocational education environments, where teacher development is vital to quality education and preparation for the workforce (Tang et al., 2023).

Being an inclusive leader involves working with people and not for them. To increase the level of employee engagement, leaders with the incorporation of leadership should show positive peer relationships along with being approachable and transparent. Supportive, open, and available behaviors are required by inclusive leaders. Inclusive leaders are open to listening to the employees and debating innovative ideas for making up the work goals and new opportunities get their attention. The most effective way to engage employees is by adopting an inclusive style of leadership (Brien, 2019).

Teachers who are exposed to an inclusive leadership style exhibit increased workplace motivation and engagement. When university leaders are accessible, open, and invite faculty input, teachers feel valued, which enhances their vigor, dedication, and absorption in work. Inclusive leadership has been linked to psychological safety, which improves job satisfaction and innovation. Leaders who have mutual relationships

with faculty members establish trust, resulting in increased commitment and proactive behavior (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

2.4.2 Influence on Teaching Quality and Innovation

Inclusive leadership has a positive influence on teacher quality and innovation through promoting innovative work behavior, improving teachers' psychological well-being, and motivating knowledge sharing, thereby promoting teaching competence and commitment in schools (Iqbal et al., 2023).

Inclusive leadership enhances the quality of teaching by establishing a positive school climate and culture, having high expectations, and facilitating effective pedagogical practice. Inclusive leadership plays a key role in realizing quality education and teachers' professional development in schools (Crisol Moya et al., 2020).

Overall, the studies considered establish that inclusive leadership is a complex source of teacher motivation, engagement, and innovation. By fostering an environment of openness, respect, and trust, inclusive leaders not only improve teachers' psychological safety but also develop intrinsic motivation and work behavior for cooperation. These practices bring about increased teaching effectiveness and creativity since teachers are motivated to initiate action and exchange knowledge. As a result, inclusive leadership becomes a revolutionary force in synchronizing individual teacher happiness with institutional development and educational excellence.

2.5 Inclusive Leadership and Employee Well-being

2.5.1 Role in Supporting Mental Health

Inclusive mental health leadership entails empowering individuals with lived experience to participate in service delivery and policy formulation, advocacy building, and developing platforms where various individuals initiate change, ultimately enhancing accessibility and quality of mental healthcare services (Sunkel & Sartor, 2021).

Leadership also plays an important role in building a positive work culture that is mentally healthy by practicing open communication, empathy, and active support. This practice of inclusivity is of the highest value in building a psychologically safe workplace that prioritizes employee well-being (Elufioye et al., 2024).

2.5.2 Reducing Stress and Burnout

Inclusive leadership reduces stress and burnout by valuing the worth of team members, recognizing their contribution, and providing a supportive environment. This maximizes morale, minimizes turnover, and prevents the exorbitant cost of employee turnover in radiology departments facing workforce shortage (Narayan et al., 2024). Inclusive leadership establishes a culture of respect where there is respect for diversity of thought, thus enhancing team performance and employee engagement. Inclusive leadership reduces stress and burnout since it promotes collaboration, listening to all voices, and having employees feel valued (Kalina, 2019).

2.5.3 Promoting Work- Life Balance through Supportive Leadership

Inclusive leadership is important in facilitating work-life balance by creating a positive climate. It is focused on intention and integration, solving burnout and retention problems, and creating a healthier workplace that focuses on individual and collective well-being (Person et al., 2020).

Inclusive leadership builds spaces for participation and belonging, and these, in turn, can enhance work-life balance by creating supportive environments. Through valuing diverse identities and advancing equity, inclusive leaders enable people to thrive both as individuals and as professionals, and the work-life integration is healthier (Person et al., 2020).

As a whole, inclusive leadership makes a substantial impact on employee well-being by promoting mental health, managing stress and burnout, and enabling work-life balance. Leaders who embody openness, empathy, and equity enable psychologically safe and respectful spaces where teachers can succeed both in their work and as individuals. This ultimately enhances institutional stability and performance.

2.6 Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety

Inclusive leaders make workers feel both a sense of belonging and individuality. Carmeli et al. (2010) would say that, to put it first, leaders ought to be available and accessible. Others assert that psychological safety is the foundation of teamwork: more about creating the environment of security in sharing ideas for leaders. That is basically, Carmeli et al. center their attention to the leader's availability while others look at open communication culture. Together, these findings show that the inclusion of community and individual recognition enrich the experiences of employees. Inclusive leaders - who are characterized by fairness, tolerance of diversity, valuing of individual perspectives, and authenticity - impact teams to make stronger bonds, where employee engagement would be enhanced (Cohen, 2023).

2.6.1 Definition and Importance in Academic Settings

Psychological safety in the classroom allows people to ask questions, admit mistakes, and propose solutions without fear, thus creating a learning- and innovation-promoting culture. Also, it enhances collaboration, which in turn finds its way into enhanced patient safety and learning in healthcare and medical education (Porter-Stransky et al., 2024).

2.6.3 Trust, Risk-Taking, and Safe Communication

Psychological safety is not trust; it built an environment that promotes risk-taking and transparent communication, where people can speak freely. Trust reduces the need to monitor, while psychological safety is needed to promote learning behavior among members. Inclusive leadership supports trust and psychological safety by making sure that all members of the team feel valued and engaged, no matter where they are. This way of leading enables open communication, where team members can experiment and be inventive without worrying about punitive repercussions (Hincapie & Costa, 2024).

Inclusive leadership creates psychological safety, trusting subordinates to undertake risk-taking and honest communication. The research points out that trust in a leader increases this effect, enabling work engagement in an environment of trust where the employees can share freely (Siyal, 2023).

2.6.3 Psychological Safety as a Mediator in Leadership Outcomes

Inclusive leaders make workers feel both a sense of belonging and individuality. Carmeli et al. (2010) would say that, to put it first, leaders ought to be available and accessible. Others assert that psychological safety is the foundation of teamwork: more about creating the environment of security in sharing ideas for leaders.

Psychological safety is a mediator of the relationship between leadership and employee wellbeing outcomes. It was discovered in the study that leadership behaviors contribute positively to psychological safety, which in turn impact many dimensions of employee experience, such as general wellbeing, job satisfaction, and self-reported performance. Lack of psychological safety contributes to adverse outcomes like incivility and burnout. This emphasizes the key position of leaders in creating a culture where employees are comfortable to speak up and participate (Clarke et al., 2024).

2.6.4 Leader Openness and Voice Behavior

That is basically, Carmeli et al. center their attention to the leader's availability while others look at open communication culture. Together, these findings show that the inclusion of community and individual recognition enrich the experiences of employees. Inclusive leaders - who are characterized by fairness, tolerance of diversity, valuing of individual perspectives, and authenticity - impact teams to make stronger bonds, where employee engagement would be enhanced (Cohen, 2023).

As the leader is open to the feedback of its employees so it is significantly influencing the employees voice behavior so it's shows that the motivating behavior from the supervisors or leaders will Foster and environment of encouragement and positive that will promote the voice among employees and ultimately enhance outcomes of the organization and the psychological well-being of the followers (Mayfield et al., 2023).

Perceived manager openness moderates the relationship between ego depletion and voice behaviors, affecting the manner in which employees channel organization-

focused and self-focused voice. This implies that leader openness can facilitate voice behaviors even in politically charged contexts (Zhou & Sun, 2022).

In summary, inclusive leadership is the key to achieving psychological safety through the encouragement of openness, accessibility, and respect for differing viewpoints. When leaders lead through fairness, authenticity, and a real concern for their subordinates, they establish a culture of trust and open communication that fosters psychological safety. This psychological safety not only makes teachers feel free to contribute ideas and take constructive risks but also improves their engagement, creativity, and well-being. Therefore, psychological safety becomes an integral bridge through which inclusive leadership finds expression in positive individual and institutional results.

2.7 Inclusive Leadership and Professional Development

2.7.1 *Creating a Culture of Learning and Growth*

Inclusive leadership is creating a culture of growth and learning by giving value to each of their individuals' strength and talent and promoting collaborations so this encourage the creativity in the employees as well as the education systems. It also insures the equity and quality of education with respect to the diversity and creating an environment that will conduct the personal and collective development of the individuals and institution (Rodriguez, 2023).

Inclusive leadership creates a culture of learning and development by supporting a philosophy of inclusion, diversity management, and an integrated school community. Through this collaborative strategy, all members are engaged and there is increased participation, and the educational needs of all students are supported (Ferdman, 2020).

As inclusive leaders empower all of their employees no matter from which background they are coming from so this culture of learning and growth will ultimately enhance the job satisfaction of the staff and stimulates innovation that will leads to the improvement in organizational performance and overall improvement of the organization (Amin et al., 2018).

2.7.3 *Equal Access to Development Opportunities*

Inclusive leadership promotes a culture of equal access to opportunity for growth for all. Through role modeling inclusive behaviors, leaders promote collaboration and

ensure that all members of a diverse workforce are able to perform to their best abilities, leading to better overall organizational performance (Simmons & Yawson, 2022).

Inclusive leadership development prioritizes acknowledgement of social power disparities and building trust-based alliances. By drawing on multiple perspectives and encouraging cultural humility, it guarantees balanced access to development, especially for marginalized groups, for increased social justice through cooperative learning and shared vision (Shapiro & Little, 2020).

Such a culture, where different personalities blossom, is promoted by the inclusive leadership, which also contributes to professional development because of cooperation, learning, and attainment of strategic business goals in the organization (Robert & Yawson, 2022). Professional development for inclusive leadership to empower individuals and to promote the culture of an organization in health professions is to create real relationships, to encourage challenging conversations about differences, and to be a role model for practicing inclusively (Rashmi & Kusurkar, 2024).

2.7.3 Mentorship and Coaching by Leaders

Culturally aware and inclusive mentors and coaches disrupt exclusionary paradigms, affirm diverse student experiences, and develop self-awareness, ultimately leading to inclusive leadership practices that enable novice leaders from minoritized communities to excel in their communities and beyond (Vaccaro & Camba-Kelsay, 2018)

Inclusive leaders' mentoring and coaching include counseling employees' success by career and psychological support. This comprises sponsorships, exposure, role modeling, and camaraderie to ensure a sense of belonging and optimal inclusion within the company (Smith & Lindsay, 2014).

Inclusive leaders require mentorship that includes both job-specific guidance and general support. The combination serves to improve their capacity to deal with cultural clashes and build critical thinking skills necessary for promoting equity and inclusiveness in their organizations (Hughes, 2019).

2.7.4 *Encouragement for Research and Innovation*

Inclusive leadership creates a culture of employee engagement and innovation by embracing virtues like trust, courage, humility, empathy, and gratitude. Such leadership improves the organizational ability to innovate, making it an important domain for further research and investigation (Vladić et al., 2021).

Inclusive leadership promotes management-level innovation in higher education through a positive environment that places importance on diversity. This promotes creativity and supports favorable work-related consequences, ultimately translating to a research- and innovation-friendly climate in academic units (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2022).

Inclusive leadership promotes research and innovation by creating a culture in which people's differences are welcomed, strengthening affective commitment to the employees, and, as a result, innovative behavior increases, especially in family businesses when they are in the sibling partnership stage (Kaban, 2024).

Professional growth is a critical element of faculty career development. Inclusive leadership contributes to offering training and mentoring programs to teachers, supporting leadership positions for faculty, influencing teachers to be self-motivated in expanding their teaching and research skills. A university leader who fosters professional learning, hears faculty voices, and enables career adaptability supports a climate of growth and innovation (Oad & Khan Alwi, 2021).

In short, inclusive leadership has a revolutionary impact on facilitating professional growth within schools. By promoting learning, inclusivity, and innovation, inclusive leaders inspire faculty members to develop personally and professionally. Through mentorship, equitable access to opportunities, and promotion of research and creative expression, inclusive leaders make all teachers able to meaningfully contribute to institutional development. This leadership style develops organizational strength, develops intrinsic motivation, and creates a culture in which sustained learning and teamwork become part of academic excellence.

2.8 Dimensions of Teacher Engagement

Employee engagement refers to the emotional, cognitive, and physical presence of an employee at work. It has a significant impact on improving the performance level, especially in tourism higher education establishments, due to commitment and effort toward the achievement of organizational goals (Arup, 2024). Employee engagement can be described as the emotional commitment employees have toward their work and organization, which seems to influence motivation, productivity, job satisfaction, and retention (Anwar, 2024).

2.8.1 *Vigor*

Vigor, as a component of teacher involvement, plays a vital role in ensuring the inspiration of college teachers, which is necessary for the growth of universities and society. Vigor theory management stresses people-oriented management that fulfills teachers' material, cultural, communication, self-esteem, and self-realization needs. With this focus, institutions can effectively improve teachers' commitment and motivation, bringing a more dynamic and effective educational climate. (GUO & YIN, n.d.)

Vigor is an important aspect of teacher motivation, as it indicates the internal motivation and enthusiasm that teachers exercise in their practice. The article highlights the importance of maintaining teacher vitality in order to increase vocational self-consciousness and creativity. When teachers are vigorous, they are more capable of innovating and adjusting their instructional strategies, which translates to better learning outcomes. Therefore, creating a setting that sustains teacher vitality is crucial in order to revive their enthusiasm and performance in the classroom (Hanum & Hermawan, 2025).

2.8.2 *Dedication*

Dedication, a core component of teacher involvement, represents teachers' emotional commitment to teaching, instilling loyalty and dedication. Highly engaged teachers exhibit greater commitment, resulting in better student performance and school performance, the essential basis for successful educational systems (Hanum & Hermawan, 2025).

Dedication was determined as an important marker of teacher involvement in the study. It refers to work commitment, which adds to levels of overall engagement, in conjunction with other determinants such as leadership support and working conditions that increase motivation and participation among teachers (Jalaludin et al., 2024).

2.8.3 *Absorption*

Absorption is one of the three components of work engagement, in addition to vigor and dedication. It is a sense of being completely focused and immersed in one's work, which feeds into overall engagement and has a positive impact on organizational commitment and on individual health outcomes (Christian & Slaughter, 2007).

Absorption is one of the core aspects of work engagement, which involves being completely absorbed and focused on one's job. It marks a state in which workers feel thoroughly involved, which translates into improved performance and satisfaction in their work (Leiter, 2019).

In brief, teacher engagement is a complex construct involving vigor, dedication, and absorption, each of which makes independent contributions to the motivation, performance, and well-being of teachers. Vigor captures teachers' energy and passion, dedication represents their emotional involvement and sense of purpose, while absorption represents immersion in pedagogical tasks. Collectively, these dimensions create a highly motivated and productive teaching workforce. Institutions that foster these elements through facilitative leadership and favorable working environments can greatly increase teachers' professional satisfaction as well as overall organizational effectiveness.

2.9 The Impact of Inclusive Leadership on Teacher Engagement

2.9.1 *Inclusive Leadership as a predictor of Engagement*

Studies have shown a great and direct link that exists between inclusive leadership practices and employee engagement. This paper postulates that employees give their heads, hearts, and hands to an organization when they feel that the

organizational leaders treat them as inclusively, boosting productivity and inspires creativity, claims Rodriguez in 2018.

Inclusive leadership is a positive predictor of team engagement, as the study has shown. Inclusive leadership promotes an inclusive climate, which boosts team members' engagement, according to the research. This engagement is vital in making team feedback seeking effective, which eventually leads to better entrepreneurial team performance. Besides, leader team representativeness supports the positive link between inclusive leadership and team engagement even further, emphasizing the significance of inclusive leadership in encouraging active participation and commitment within teams in an entrepreneurial setting (Xu et al., 2023).

2.9.2 *Role of Trust and Recognition*

A business will be very effective if it is able to engage its workforce, as lots of techniques will fuel career advancement opportunity, work-life balance initiatives, effective communication, leadership development, and recognition programs for employees, (Ritu, 2024). Especially, when we talk about the higher education system, inclusive leadership goes a long way in innovation within higher education because it ensures that workforce will be diversified, innovation is promoted at the management level, and an invention-friendly environment for staff members will be enhanced.

Inclusive leadership plays a tremendous role in employee engagement, as it makes it easier for people to connect with each other and appreciate the value of individual input. If employees find their immediate managers friendly and open, then they are more likely to be motivated and satisfied (Qasim et al., 2022).

Inclusive leadership, being a comprehensive strategy, strongly enhances teacher involvement by developing trust, acknowledgment, and a sense of shared purpose in educational centers. Where leaders demonstrate justice, transparency, and gratitude, teachers will be more inclined to demonstrate emotional commitment and continued motivation toward their professional practice. This mutual relationship among inclusive practices and engagement proves that leadership behavior based on empathy and equity not only improves individual satisfaction but also makes collective institutional excellence possible. Inclusive leadership, therefore, becomes a vital predictor of engagement, motivating educators to put their energy, creativity, and loyalty behind working towards the general goals of higher education.

2.10 Psychological Safety and Teacher Engagement

2.10.1 Emotional Support as an indicator of Engagement

Inclusive leadership is mainly a relational construct that explores how leaders and followers are in contact. It emphasizes the need for the team leaders to be aware of the self, and also sensitive to the emotional needs of the team members in order to foster a feeling of individuality and belonging among the workers, according to Rodriguez (2018). Comprehension of other perspectives and the creation of a safe environment to discuss identity issues can help inclusive leadership build more cohesive connections between employees and their work environment, further enhancing engagement and job satisfaction (Cohen, 2023).

2.10.2 Safe Work Environment for Faculty Participation

There are two main psychological processes that act as mediators in the relationship between employee engagement and inclusive leadership and maintain a safe working environment where the teachers or workers participate fully. An inclusive leader will ensure a workplace environment that is, free from all forms of fear where employees feel they are free to give their ideas or opinions. Consequently, employees will work harder based on this safety (Qasim et al., 2022).

2.10.3 Psychological Engagement and Teacher Engagement

Invaluable employees are more fully engaged psychologically and are more committed to their work and organization. Psychological safety is critical to enhancing employees' engagement since it provides a safe environment where people can share thoughts and feelings free from any form of aggression. This kind of environment fosters open communication and interactional engagement, which encourages workers to work harder to produce quality work (Qasim et al., 2022).

Psychological safety is an essential mechanism that connects inclusive leadership to teacher engagement. Leaders' emotional support, open communication, and sense of belonging ensure that the teachers feel safe and free to voice themselves and take an active role in institutional choices. This kind of setting builds mutual respect and trust, which maximizes teachers' psychological commitment, motivation, and satisfaction. Finally, the creation of a safe, inclusive environment not only reduces fear and stress but also strengthens participation, creativity, and cooperative learning—key components needed for fostering excellence in higher educational environments.

2.11 Theoretical Perspectives on Teacher Engagement

2.11.1 Social Learning Theory

In this theory, followers learn behavior through behavior being modeled by their leaders. When CEOs demonstrate inclusive behavior, this is one of the reasons that staff members are more likely to exhibit that same behavior. This increases engagement and inspires helpful behaviors across the company (Qasim et al., 2022).

2.11.2 Social Exchange Theory

This theory posits that workers have a sense of obligation to repay the leaders for resources and support through more engaging exchange and helpful behaviors. With this, their mutual partnership promotes better functionality in the organization's success (Qasim et al., 2022).

Together, Social Learning Theory and Social Exchange Theory offer complementary understanding of how inclusive leadership generates teacher engagement. By exemplifying inclusive acts such as openness, respect, and appreciation, leaders establish behavioral expectations that are likely to be copied by teachers, enhancing a spirit of trust and cooperation. Through these, in return, when teachers feel fairness and support from their leaders, they pay back with greater commitment, motivation, and active participation. Therefore, these theories together account for the way that engagement arises as both a learned and reciprocated action in an open learning environment, enhancing overall institutional performance and cohesion.

2.12 Collaborative Empowerment and Teacher Engagement

The other relevant aspect that influences the engagement of teachers is collaboration-based empowerment. For example, teacher-facilitated leaders enable teachers to share issues and offer mutual support in the workplace. Such educators attain higher levels of engagement because of the progression of their commitment toward their profession and belonging in such a collaborative environment (Uzair-ul-Hassan & Hassan, 2023).

School leaders who are focused on inclusion create a climate of respect, belonging, and psychological safety that strengthens engaged teachers and makes them willing to teach fearlessly. Inclusive leadership, through teamwork, empowers the teaching force, encourages dedication and job satisfaction, increases engagement with teachers, and fosters innovation in classrooms (Uzair-ul-Hassan & Hassan, 2023).

2.13 Recommendations for Enhancing Teacher Engagement through Leadership

The report offers inclusive leadership training for head teachers from higher education administrations. Such training might motivate leaders to create an atmosphere that is inclusive by equipping them with everything they need, thus increasing the participation and innovation of teachers. Inclusive leaders value teachers' ideas and opinions and also encourage team working. They participate more and feel that they are being heard because their work truly matters and has an impact (Uzair-ul-Hassan & Hassan, 2023).

Psychological safety reduces the fear of bad outcomes, which promotes creativity, teamwork, and other helpful activities that strengthen team dynamics. It is also a bridge that leads to a relation between inclusive leadership and engagement because, as inclusive leaders create this secure environment that enables workers to do more than what was expected of them. Ultimately, psychological safety promotes participation and an enabling work environment (Qasim et al., 2022).

Overall, teamwork-based empowerment and inclusive leadership training become essential strategies for building teacher commitment. Where leaders intentionally build teamwork, open communication, and collaborative decision-making, teachers feel a sense of affiliation and professional agency that enhances their commitment to teaching. By practicing inclusivity, leaders build a climate of psychological safety and respect that allows faculty members to speak freely, take initiative, and experiment in teaching innovations. Thus, it promotes collaborative empowerment and leadership development not just to increase teachers' motivation and satisfaction but also to ensure long-term institutional growth and academic excellence.

2.14 Professional Development

Professional development refers to learning new abilities, talents, and knowledge continuously in order to improve one's performance in a professional setting. It involves a comparison with the "craftsman spirit," emphasizing devotion, commitment, and creativity about teaching methods, in the context of Chinese colleges (Tang et al., 2023).

2.14.1 Importance of Professional Development in Universities

Effective professional development at the university level involves structures of pedagogical collaboration, relatedness, defined and structured programs, cultural variations, and resource availability. In an organizational university setting,

professional development occurs through leadership that is inclusionary; through greater involvement, communication, and teamwork, it equips people for their best potential involvement in contributing toward organizational objectives (Virginia & McKendry, 2019).

It must, therefore, be ensured through professional development that the teachers' intrinsic motivation is strengthened and that they are encouraged towards new behaviors which promote job performance. Professional development significantly increases job satisfaction and thus makes educators pursue professional development. Equity, support, and open communication between leaders and teachers inside the company is also promoted through professional development. Teachers committed to their work and those having a stable, well-recognized career are strengthened through ongoing development. Lastly, it imposes continuous learning and personal improvement in a lifetime; this raises the benchmark of education as a whole (Tang et al., 2023).

2.14.2 Role of Leadership in Facilitating Professional Development

Promoting inclusive leadership and an inclusive environment is pretty vital for the development of higher learning professors. A boost in job satisfaction will have to be an outcome, as it leads to better performance and loyalty toward the institution. The faculty has to identify personal goals with professional values like creativity and commitment. Continuous learning through continuous education in innovative teaching methods and research skills would have to be encouraged. Professional building also further helps to increase mutual sharing of best practices among other collaborative research opportunities (Tang et al., 2023).

Professional development programs enhance the quality of teaching through new perceptions and innovative strategies by the teachers, which in turn boost academic creativity and maximize student learning outcomes (Satri et al., 2024). Professional development helps add pedagogical expertise to career structures and encourages ownership of quality procedures while coordinating with the institutional improvement plans (Åse & Sjöberg, 2023).

2.14.3 Challenges and Opportunities

There are many problems and challenges in the professional development of teachers the institutions have not enough funding to train their teachers. Mostly the people are resistant to change, and also because of the diverse faculty needs with limited resources it's not possible to give proper trainings and workshops. But there

are some opportunities also like the partnership programs, technology through which we can train out faculty easily, different tailored programs and institutional investment in academic success (Ram et al., 2023). There are some institutional barriers like inability of professional groups to work together, bureaucratic demands for documenting continuing professional development, and lack of appreciation for workplace learning as an opportunity worth taking (John, 2002).

2.14.4 Technology and Innovation in Faculty Development

Professional development at universities is somewhat challenging because of hierarchical management that restricts faculty members from communicating openly and underdeveloped the motivation of faculties besides being without proactive facility development opportunities. However, there are countless choices including commitment and creativity programs that match faculty development with even more general education missions. Implementing inclusive concepts for managing promotes equity as well as motivation and job satisfaction. For example, "integration of technology into the development programs provides adaptive and accessible learning opportunities, but an inclusive workplace culture has also been emphasized as fostering collaboration through diversity of opinion and outlook." These issues, when addressed, can create vast improvements in the professional growth of faculties through availing the opportunities provided (Tang et al., 2023).

2.14.5 Connection between PD and Teacher Engagement

They build psychological safety that increases job happiness and drive for professional development. They inspire communication and cooperation because their approach lowers the barriers between individuals and fosters candid speech, which are very crucial during development. Intrinsic motivation evokes creative behavior, and by doing so, it increases performance and boosts a person's career while leadership-driven satisfaction in jobs elevates engagement (Tang et al., 2023).

Generally, inclusive leadership is a basis for building professional growth in higher education. Through creating openness, trust, and cooperation, inclusive leaders build an atmosphere where teachers are encouraged to constantly develop themselves and exchange best practices. Inclusive leadership not only overcomes obstacles such as insufficient resources and opposition to change but also incorporates innovative and technological methods of professional learning. Therefore, inclusive leadership repositions professional development as a dynamic and participatory process that is inclusive of teacher participation, job satisfaction, and institutional excellence.

2.15 Summary and Research Gaps

2.15.1 Summary of Literature

The literature identifies inclusive leadership as a determinant of creating an inclusive culture, the promotion of teacher involvement, and professional growth in higher education institutions. Inclusive leadership is defined through openness, accessibility, availability, respect, recognition, encouragement, and tolerance for failure. Theoretical foundations in the form of transformational leadership, leader-member exchange, servant leadership, and social exchange theories converge to highlight relational trust, mutual respect, and a supportive environment. These inclusive behaviors positively affect motivation, job satisfaction, and emotional health of faculty members. Inclusive leaders create psychological safety, enhance interpersonal connections, encourage innovation, and provide equal access to development opportunities through mentoring, coaching, and participatory decision-making.

In addition, the literature emphasizes that teacher engagement characterized through dimensions such as vigor, dedication, and absorption is significantly enhanced by inclusive leadership. Psychological safety acts as a mediator between leadership behavior and engagement outcomes, enabling educators to speak without constraint and engage in professional risks. Inclusive leadership is also a transformative factor in professional growth by creating a culture that is learning-focused, providing every individual with a fair chance for growth, and enabling innovation in pedagogy and research. It enables faculty by means of ongoing learning, targeted support, and strategic engagement, finally improving teaching quality, institutional performance, and job satisfaction in varied academic environments.

2.15.2 Research Gap and Justification for Study

In spite of increasing acknowledgment of inclusive leadership as an agent for promoting diversity, innovation, and employee well-being, there is still an empirical research gap that highlights its effects in the higher education industry, specifically in the context of developing nations like Pakistan. Most of the literature available is based on corporate or Western contexts, with little focus on how inclusive leadership influences teacher motivation and professional development in schools directly. Although numerous studies have elaborated on the dimensions and theoretical frameworks of inclusive leadership, the integration of inclusive leadership with the particular constructs of faculty engagement, including vigor, dedication, and absorption, and professional development, including availability of developmental

opportunities, motivation, and teaching/research skills, has not yet been fully developed in the context of South Asian higher education.

This research attempts to bridge this research gap through an investigation of inclusive leadership practices' impact on the engagement and professional growth of teachers at universities. It tries to offer system-specific evidence applicable to the Pakistani higher education system, where institutional diversity is expanding and calls for innovation and inclusive governance are increasing. By examining this relationship, the research makes not just a theoretical contribution towards the literature on inclusive leadership in schools but also provides practical recommendations towards leadership development, policy making, and academic performance improvement in universities within developing regions.

In summary, the literature reviewed collectively confirms that inclusive leadership is a key driver of improving teacher motivation and professional growth by creating an open culture of collaboration, respect, and psychological security in universities. Despite increasing international awareness of its significance, a lack of empirical research exists from developing nations, especially within the Pakistani higher education system. Filling this void, the current study attempts to explore empirically the impact of inclusive leadership on teacher motivation and professional growth at the level of the university. This research not only adds to theoretical knowledge on inclusive leadership practices but also offers practical recommendations for leadership development training, policy making in institutions, as well as the general development of higher education systems.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides a thorough outline of the research methodology employed in this study. It offers a structured description of the systematic approach including research design, population, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research paradigm was positivist. This study was quantitative and a causal comparative research design was used to find out the effect of inclusive leadership on teacher engagement and professional development at university level. Variables were compared through Causal comparative research design without manipulation. It helps to identify differences in between the variables with causality.

3.2 Population

The population of the study were 210 teachers from Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences (IIUI) and Faculty of Social sciences (NUML). Total population consisted of 81 teachers from International Islamic University Islamabad and 129 teachers from National University of Modern Languages.

Table 3.1

Population of the Study

Faculties/ Departments	IIUI	NUML
Faculty of Education/	21	31
Department of Educational sciences		
Department of Politics & IR/ International Relations	14	24
Department of History & Pakistan studies/ Pakistan studies	14	31
Department of Psychology	15	12

Department of Media & communication studies	17	31
Total	81	129

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study is 136 teachers from IIUI and NUML. A stratified sampling technique was used to ensure fair representation from both universities. Respondents were divided into two strata IIUI and NUML. The sample size for each stratum was determined by using the proportionate stratified sampling formula, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2017). Using this approach, 52 teachers were selected out of 81 teachers from IIUI and 84 out of 129 teachers were selected from NUML, ensuring balanced representation from both universities. The total number of sample was selected by using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sampling table.

Table 3.2

Sample of the Study

Faculties/Departments	IIUI	NUML
Faculty of Education/	14	20
Department of Education		
Department of Politics &	9	16
IR/ International Relations		
Department of History &	9	20
Pakistan studies/ Pakistan		
Studies		
Department of Psychology	9	8
Department of Media &	11	20
communication studies		
Total	52	84

3.4 Instruments

Three Closed ended questionnaire were used to gather data for the three variables respectively. All of the three questionnaires were used to gather teachers' opinion and perspectives. First instrument was made on the basis of literature and used to measure teachers' perspectives regarding the prevailing inclusive leadership practices. It consists of 21 statements based on six dimensions. The dimensions were openness (1-3), availability (4-6), accessibility (7-9), encouragement & recognition (10-14), respect & fair treatment (15-17) and failure tolerance (18-21). The questionnaire consisted of a 5- point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Second, an adapted questionnaire for teachers was used to measure teachers' engagement under inclusive leadership (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale) Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003. It was consisted of 13 statements based on three dimensions. The dimensions were Vigor (1-5), dedication (6-9) and absorption (10-13) related to engagement level. This questionnaire consisted of 5- point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Third questionnaire was made on the basis of literature and used to measure teachers' perspectives regarding the professional development opportunities. It was consisted of 17 statements based on four dimensions. The dimensions were opportunities for professional development (1-4), leadership role in professional development (5-8), motivation & job satisfaction (9-13) and impact on teaching & research competence (14-17). The questionnaire consisted of a 5- point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. All three of the instruments were finalized after expert validation and pilot testing. The complete questionnaires are attached in the appendices (Appendix I, II & III).

3.5 Procedure (Validity, Pilot Testing & Reliability)

Pilot testing was conducted before the actual research in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument. This step was taken so that if there were any mistakes in the instrument, they could be identified and corrected beforehand. Validity ensures that the questions are appropriate and relevant to the field of educational management.

To establish content and face validity, the instrument was reviewed by a panel of seven experts from the field of Educational Leadership and Teacher Education at IIUI and NUML. The experts examined the instrument for clarity, wording, relevance, structure, and alignment with the study variables inclusive leadership, teacher engagement, and professional development. During the initial review, the experts identified some structural and language-related issues, which were then revised and corrected by the researcher. The modified version of the instrument was shared again with the same experts for re-evaluation, and after their final approval, the questionnaire was considered valid for data collection.

Before administering the finalized instrument to the target population, a pilot test was conducted to further examine its reliability and clarity. For this purpose, 10% of the total sample (teachers not included in the main study) was selected. The pilot results confirmed that the items were authentic, suitable, and clearly understood by the respondents. Hence, the instrument was finalized and used for the main data collection.

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of an instrument in measuring the intended construct across different contexts and times (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2012). After conducting the pilot test, the reliability of the instruments were assessed using Cronbach's alpha through SPSS software. The Cronbach's alpha values obtained were as follows: reliability of Questionnaire for leaders inclusiveness was 0.95, for the Teachers' Engagement instrument, it was 0.94 and for the Professional Development Opportunities instrument, it was 0.93. These values indicate that the instruments are reliable and can be used for the main data collection phase.

Table 3.3

Reliability Statistics of IL Scale

Dimensions	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Openness	03	0.76
Availability	03	0.79
Accessibility	03	0.85
Encouragement & Recognition	05	0.90
Respect & Fair Treatment	03	0.89

Failure Tolerance	04	0.86
Overall	21	0.95

Table 3.4

Reliability Statistics of Teacher Engagement Scale

Dimensions	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Vigor	05	0.86
Dedication	04	0.90
Absorption	04	0.89
Overall	13	0.94

Table 3.5

Reliability statistics of Professional Development Scale

Dimensions	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Opportunities for Professional development	03	0.82
Leadership Role in Professional Development	04	0.86
Motivation & Job Satisfaction	05	0.91
Impact on Teaching & Research Competence	04	0.90
Overall	16	0.93

3.6 Data Collection

The process of data collection was conducted with thorough planning and careful execution to ensure the reliability and validity of the responses received from the participants. The data were collected from university faculty members (Teachers) of National University of Modern Languages and the International Islamic University Islamabad. Specifically, the participants were from five academic departments:

Psychology, Education, International Relations, Media & Communication and History & Pakistan Studies.

Before initiating the distribution of the questionnaires, formal permission was obtained from the departments of the respective teachers from whom the data were to be collected. Although no formal consent forms were submitted to the participating institutions, a departmental permission letter used as official authorization to conduct the data collection. The heads or administrative authorities of the targeted departments granted verbal approval, which allowed access to the teachers for research purposes.

During the process, a few challenges were encountered, such as difficulty in reaching some teachers due to their busy schedules and the need for repeated visits to ensure timely data collection. However, through persistent follow-up and departmental cooperation, the data collection was successfully completed.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by using descriptive measures, with the mean calculated for each variable to address the research objectives. Then inferential statistics were applied for the remaining two objectives. Linear regression was conducted to examine the effect of inclusive leadership on teacher engagement and professional development, respectively. One-way ANOVA was used to compare teachers working under low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices, in order to examine differences in their levels of teacher engagement and professional development. Furthermore, Multivariate multiple regression was used to identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are crucial in research to ensure integrity and participant protection. The researcher obtained informed consent, maintain confidentiality and anonymity, and minimize potential harm. The researcher selected participants equitably and avoid exploiting vulnerable populations. Honesty in reporting findings and managing conflicts of interest is essential. For the proposed study, secure data collection is vital, ensuring data is accessible only to authorized personnel. Adhering to these guidelines, the study was ethically sound.

3.9 Research Plan

Table 3.6

	Process	Timeline
1.	Proposal Writing	September- December 2024
2.	Proposal Submission	December 2024
3.	Instrument Development & Pilot Testing	January - February 2025
4.	Data Collection	March - April 2025
5.	Data Analysis	May - June 2025
6.	Findings, Interpretation, and Conclusion	June - July 2025
7.	Thesis Writing and Submission	August - September 2025

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretations of the data collected to address the research objectives and hypotheses. The analysis was carried out using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics (mean) was used to determine the inclusive leadership practices, the level of teachers' engagement and the professional development opportunities at university level. Inferential statistics (Linear Regression, One-way ANOVA and multivariate multiple regression) were used to identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level and secondly to find out the significant difference in the level of teachers' engagement and professional development working under leaders having low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices. This chapter is aligned with the explanation of research objectives and hypotheses respectively. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

A. Descriptive Statistics

- i. Tabular Representation of mean scores of teachers' perceptions on inclusive leadership, teachers' engagement and professional development.

B. Inferential Statistics

- i. Linear Regression was used identify the effect of Inclusive Leadership on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.
- ii. One-way ANOVA was used to compare the differences in teachers' engagement and professional development across low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.
- iii. Multivariate multiple regression was used to identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.

4.1 Cut-off Points for Interpretation of Mean Scores

Table 4.1

Mean Score Cut off points

Level	Value	Range
Low	1	1.0-2.4
Medium	2	2.5-3.4
High	3	3.5-5.0

(Oxford, 1990)

Table 4.1 shows the interpretation of mean scores grouped into three levels: low, medium, and high. This grouping follows the interpretation framework proposed by Oxford (1990). Mean scores from 1.0 to 2.4 are interpreted to represent a low level, scores of 2.5 to 3.4 show a medium level, and scores between 3.5 and 5.0 show a high level. Such a classification is providing a substantive ground on which the descriptive findings derived from the participants' answers on the five-point Likert scale can be analyzed and interpreted.

Objective 1

To find out the inclusive leadership practices at university level.

Table 4.2

Responses of Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Inclusive Leadership Practices of Their Leaders

Dimensions	N	Mean	Level
Openness	136	4.17	High
Availability	136	4.00	High
Accessibility	136	4.00	High
Encouragement & Recognition	136	4.03	High
Respect & Fair Treatment	136	3.91	High
Failure Tolerance	136	3.83	High

Table 4.2 represents the mean scores of teachers' perception regarding their leaders' inclusive leadership practices. The dimension openness is the most prominent aspect of inclusive leadership as perceived by the teachers with the highest mean score of 4.17. Encouragement & recognition is the second most prominent dimension with the mean score of 4.03 while the dimension accessibility and availability with the mean score of 4.00 showing the leaders' tendency to remain approachable and accessible and responsive to their teachers. Respect & fair treatment and failure tolerance with relatively low mean scores of 3.91 and 3.83 respectively indicates that there is relatively less emphasis on supporting the mistakes as a part of learning. Overall the data indicates that the leaders have most of the traits of inclusive leadership, with openness being the most prominent one.

Objective 2

To find out the level of teachers' engagement at university level.

Table 4.3

Responses of Teachers' Perceptions Regarding their Engagement under Leadership Practices

Dimensions	N	Mean	Category
Vigor	136	3.95	High
Dedication	136	4.02	High
Absorption	136	4.00	High

Table 4.3 shows the mean scores of teachers' perception regarding their engagement under the inclusive leadership practices. Out of three dimensions dedication is the most prominent one with the highest mean scores of 4.02 indicates that the leadership makes them feel more comfortable and dedicated by giving them support and inspire them to take pride in their work. The dimension of absorption with the mean score of 4.00 also shows that the teachers feel more absorbed in their work and done their duties with their best because of the positive leadership environment. Lastly vigor with the mean score of 3.95 reflects a high level of resilience and level of energy among teachers but slightly lower than other dimensions of teachers' engagement. Overall the data indicates that the leadership practices are playing their positive role in various aspects of teachers' engagement, with dedication being the most prominent one.

Objective 3

To find out the professional development opportunities at university level.

Table 4.4

Responses of Teachers' Perceptions Regarding their Professional Development under Leadership Practices

Dimensions	N	Mean	Category
Opportunities for PD	136	3.98	High
Leadership Role in PD	136	3.98	High
Motivation & Job satisfaction	136	3.89	High
Impact on Teaching & research	136	4.10	High
Competence			

Table 4.4 shows the mean scores of teachers' perception regarding their professional development under the inclusive leadership practices. The dimension impact on teaching and research competence has highest mean score of 4.10, indicating that leadership significantly enhances the research competencies of the teachers and also helping them to keep their knowledge updated. As with the mean score of 3.98 both of the dimensions opportunities for professional development and leadership role in professional development shows that the leaders are facilitating them in their professional developments by promoting growth opportunities for their employees with in the academic environment. Motivation and job satisfaction scored a slightly lower mean with the mean score 3.89 but it also shows a positive side of their leadership practices as these are motivating them keeping their morals high and satisfied them with their jobs respectively. Overall the data indicates that the leadership practices are

playing their positive role in various aspects of teachers' professional development, with impact on teaching and research competence being the most prominent one.

Objective 4

To identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement at university level.

Hypothesis 1

H_{01} There is no significant difference in the level of teachers' engagement working under leaders having low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices.

Table 4.5

Regression Coefficients of Inclusive Leadership on Teachers' Engagement

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	13.99***		2.98
IL	.45***	.74	.35
R^2	.553		

Note. N = 136

*** $p < .001$.

Table 4.5 shows effect of Inclusive Leadership on Teachers' Engagement at university level. The R^2 value of .553 revealed that predictor variable explained 55.3% variance in the outcome variable with $F (1, 134) = 166.08, p < .001$. The findings indicated that inclusive leadership positively predicted teachers' engagement ($\beta = 0.74, p < 0.001$).

Table 4.6

Difference in Teachers' Engagement among Leaders with low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices

IL Groups	M	SD	$F(2, 133)$	η^2	Post Hoc
Low IL	2.423	0.786			
Medium IL	3.507	0.520	36.54***	.35	1<2<3
High IL	4.145	0.531			

*** $p < .001$

Table 4.6 shows mean, standard deviation and *F*- value for teachers' engagement across inclusive leadership groups. Results indicated significant mean differences across inclusive leadership groups with $F (2, 133) = 36.54, p < .001$. Findings revealed that teachers working under leaders (high inclusive leadership practices) shows a higher level of engagement while those under medium and low relatively shows a slight lower level of engagement. The value of η^2 was $.35 (< .50)$ indicated small effect size. The comparison of Post – Hoc indicated significant between group mean differences of each group with other two groups.

Objective 5

To identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on professional development at university level.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02} There is no significant difference in the level of teachers' professional development working under leaders having high and low inclusive leadership practices.

Table 4.7

Regression Coefficients of Inclusive Leadership on Professional Development

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	37.33***		4.05
IL	.36***	.55	.05
R^2	.303		

Note. N =136

*** $p < .001$.

Table 4.7 shows effect of Inclusive Leadership on Professional Development at university level. The R^2 value of .303 revealed that predictor variable explained 30.3% variance in the outcome variable with $F (1, 134) = 58.12, p < .001$. The findings indicated that inclusive leadership positively predicted professional development ($\beta = 0.55, p < 0.001$).

Table 4.8

Difference in Teachers 'Professional Development among Leaders with low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices

IL Groups	M	SD	$F(2, 133)$	η^2	Post Hoc
Low IL	2.902	0.369			
Medium IL	3.702	0.669	19.72***	.23	1<2<3
High IL	4.085	0.465			

*** $p < .001$

Table 4.8 shows mean, standard deviation and *F*- value for teachers 'professional development across inclusive leadership groups. Results indicated significant mean differences across inclusive leadership groups with $F(2, 133) = 19.72$, $p < .001$. Findings revealed that teachers working under leaders (high inclusive leadership practices) shows a higher level of professional development while those under medium and low relatively shows a slight lower level of professional development. The value of η^2 was .23(< .50) indicated small effect size. The comparison of Post – Hoc indicated significant between group mean differences of each group with other two groups.

Objective 6

To identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03} There is no significant effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.

Table 4.9

Multivariate Multiple Regression of Inclusive Leadership Practices on Teachers Engagement and Professional Development

Dependent variable	Predictor	F	p	Partial η^2	R^2	Adj. R^2
Multivariate test	IL	36.57	<.001	0.545		
Teacher engagement	IL	72.51	<.001	0.539	0.539	0.532
Professional development	IL	15.09	<.001	0.196	0.196	0.183

*** $p < .001$

Table 4.9 shows results of multivariate multiple regression was conducted to examine the effect of inclusive leadership on teacher engagement and professional development. Wilks' Lambda indicated a significant overall effect, $\Lambda = 0.455$, $F(2, 61) = 36.57$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.545$. Univariate tests revealed that inclusive leadership significantly predicted teacher engagement, $F(1, 61) = 72.51$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.539$, and professional development, $F(1, 61) = 15.09$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.196$. Inclusive leadership had a stronger effect on teacher engagement than on professional development. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that inclusive leadership practices have no significant effect on teacher engagement and professional development at the university level, is rejected.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study was conducted to investigate the effect of inclusive leadership on teachers' engagement and professional development at the university level, focusing on institutions in Pakistan, specifically the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and the National University of Modern Languages (NUML). The primary goal was to assess how inclusive leadership practices such as openness, accessibility, availability, encouragement & recognition, respect & fair treatment and failure tolerance effect the engagement and professional development of teachers. The total population of the study was 210 teachers from both of the universities including 81 teachers from IIUI and 129 teachers from NUML. A total of 136 teachers were selected as a sample of the study by using stratified sampling technique. The sample include 52 teachers from IIUI while 84 from NUML.

Data were collected by using three closed ended questionnaires for the three variables respectively. First questionnaire was used to measured teachers' perceptions of their leaders' inclusive leadership practices. Second and third questionnaires were used to measure the teachers' engagement and professional development working under the inclusive leaders. The study used a five-point Likert scale to assess responses, with descriptive statistics summarizing the mean scores of teachers 'perception. Inferential statistics, including linear regression, One-way ANOVA and multivariate multiple regression, were applied to evaluate the effects and differences predicted by the research hypotheses.

5.2 Findings

The following findings were drawn from the collected and analyzed data of the study.

Objective 1

To find out the inclusive leadership practices at university level.

1. Openness (4.17) was observed as the highest score dimension among the inclusive leadership practices. It shows that the teachers' acknowledge their leaders as approachable, transparent and responsive to new ideas. It was concluded that when leaders are open to communication, offer feedback and engage in collaborative dialogue teachers feel more valued and respected which creates positive work climate and professional relationships with in the institutions (Table 4.2)
2. The mean score of Encouragement & Recognition was 4.03, showing that teachers are encouraged and appreciated by their leaders. Higher score also indicates that leaders acknowledge their teachers' contributions and value their achievements. This recognition by the leaders increases motivation and morals of the teachers and strengthen their professional commitment (Table 4.2).
3. Availability and Accessibility with the mean score of 4.00, indicating that teachers perceived their leaders as present and approachable to them whenever they needed them. The findings suggest that leaders those are responsive to their teachers' give them open access to communicate and always being available to them for guidance and support. These leadership behaviors promotes positive work space culture in which the teachers feel valued and professionally supported which ultimately foster trust (Table 4.2).
4. The mean score of Respect & Fair Treatment was 3.91, showing that teachers perceived their leaders as respectful and equitable in their behaviors. It reflects a leadership environment in which dignity and professionalism is maintained. However, the mean score is slightly lower as compared to the previous ones (Table 4.2).
5. Failure Tolerance with the mean score of 3.83, is the lowest mean among all the inclusive leadership practices. It shows that teachers may not always admit failure or feel safe to take risks without the fear of judgment. It's important to promote a

safe environment where mistakes should be seen as learning opportunities and promote a healthy dialogue on failures and how to overcome them (Table 4.2).

Objective 2

To find out the level of teachers' engagement at university level.

6. Dedication was observed as the highest score dimension among the teachers' engagement under inclusive leadership practices with a mean score of 4.02. The finding shows that teachers' demonstrate a strong commitment and energetic towards their work. The higher mean scores shows that teachers under inclusive leadership are more committed to dedication of work and found a purpose in their work. This dedication played a strong role in making a lasting impact on student learning also (Table 4.3).
7. The mean score of Absorption was 4.00, showing that teachers are immersed in their work as they are engaged and focused. High mean score of absorption indicates that the teachers working under the inclusive leaders have a strong cognitive and emotional connection to their tasks. Teachers' absorption and immersion in their work is also a strong agent of learner productivity (Table 4.3).
8. Vigor with the mean score of 3.95, is the lowest mean among all the dimensions of teachers' engagement. But still favorable that shows that teachers generally feel energetic in their roles due to the inclusive leadership (Table 4.3).

Objective 3

To find out the professional development opportunities at university level.

9. Impact on Teaching and Research Competence (4.10) was observed as the highest score dimension among teachers' professional development under inclusive leadership practices. Teachers' perceive that they have significant instructional and scholarly capabilities as working under inclusive leaders. Under professional environment created by inclusive leaders teachers are better able to refine their teaching practices and academic research (Table 4.4).
10. Opportunities for PD and Leadership Role in PD with the mean score of 3.98, indicates that teachers perceived their leaders' as supportive and encouraging for their continuous growth and learning. The professional development programs like workshops and trainings reflects institutions commitment towards their employee's

professional development and growth. Leadership role is also an essential factor that actively facilitates these opportunities by providing a culture of ongoing professional advancement especially skills and knowledge for their teachers (Table 4.4).

11. Motivation and Job Satisfaction with the mean score of 3.89, is the lowest mean among all the dimensions of teachers' professional development under inclusive leadership practices. It shows that teachers generally feel positive about their roles but less attention was paid to the factors relevant to motivation and job satisfaction. Fostering more empowering and supporting work environment contributes to higher professional development and long- term commitment (Table 4.4).

Objective 4

To identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement at university level.

12. Linear regression R^2 (.553) shows that 55.3% of the variance in Teachers' Engagement is explained by Inclusive Leadership. The regression coefficient ($\beta = .74$) is positive, and the p-value (.000) is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a significant effect of Inclusive Leadership on Teachers' Engagement (Table 4.5).

13. To examine the difference in teachers' engagement among the leaders with low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices One-way ANOVA was conducted. The results indicated that there is a significant difference across IL groups with $F (2,133) = 36.54, p < .001$. The η^2 value (.35), being less than .50, indicates small size effect. Teachers working under high inclusive leadership practices exhibit higher level of engagement while those working under low and medium showed relatively low engagement. Post hoc comparison indicated significant mean differences between each group (Table 4.6).

Objective 5

To identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on professional development at university level.

14. Linear regression R^2 (.303) shows that 30.3% of the variance in Teachers' professional development is explained by Inclusive Leadership. The regression coefficient ($\beta = .55$) is positive, and the p-value (.000) is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a significant effect of Inclusive Leadership on Teachers' Professional Development (Table 4.7).
15. To examine the difference in teachers' professional development among the leaders with low, medium and high inclusive leadership practices One-way ANOVA was conducted. The results indicated that there is a significant difference across IL groups with $F(2,133) = 19.72$, $p < .001$. The η^2 value (.23), being less than .50, indicates small size effect. Teachers working under high inclusive leadership practices exhibit higher level of professional development while those working under low and medium showed relatively lower level of professional development. Post hoc comparison indicated significant mean differences between each group (Table 4.8).

Objective 6

To identify the effect of inclusive leadership practices on teachers' engagement and professional development at university level.

16. Multivariate multiple regression was conducted to examine the effect of inclusive leadership on teacher engagement and professional development. The overall test indicated a significant effect of inclusive leadership on the combined dependent variables, $\Lambda = 0.455$, $F(2, 61) = 36.57$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.545$. Inclusive leadership significantly predicted teacher engagement ($F(1, 61) = 72.51$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.539$, $R^2 = 0.539$) and professional development ($F(1, 61) = 15.09$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.196$, $R^2 = 0.196$). These results indicate that inclusive leadership positively influences both teacher engagement and professional development, with a stronger effect on engagement, thus fulfilling the study objective (Table 4.9).

5.3 Discussion

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the existing body of literature on inclusive leadership and its impact on teachers' engagement and professional development at the university level. By examining the six dimensions of inclusive leadership Openness, Availability, Accessibility, Encouragement & Recognition, Respect & Fair Treatment and Failure Tolerance this study provides insights into how leadership influences teachers' engagement, professional development, and overall school culture.

Openness was the most highly rated dimension of inclusive leadership practices, suggesting that university instructors significantly see their leaders as open, forthcoming, and open to new ideas. This result is in agreement with the fact that open communication is of much relevance in the building of trust and teamwork, similar as Rodriguez (2018) posited that inclusive leadership is fostered through two-way communication and psychological safety. Oad and Khan Alwi (2021) also established that openness in leadership inspires faculty members to exchange teaching innovations and obtain direction, improving their professional relationships and academic contributions.

Encouragement and Recognition also scored high, indicating that teachers are valued and acknowledged by their leaders. Similar validates by Dai and Fang (2023), where they highlighted that leaders who recognize the efforts of their workers boost their psychological capital and professional self-efficacy. Recognition increases commitment and motivates teachers to work towards academic excellence. As the research implies, when leaders openly appreciate the value of faculty input, they establish an encouraging climate that supports teachers' intrinsic motivation and feeling of belonging.

Availability and Accessibility again emphasized that teachers find their leaders available and approachable when necessary. This confirms the similar findings of Falih Bannay et al. (2020), who claimed that leaders' physical and emotional presence creates trust and participation in academic decision-making. The findings in this research confirm again that available leaders who provide timely assistance and have open-door policies make teachers feel safe and empowered, hence facilitating greater cooperation and respect among academic departments.

Respect and Fair Treatment were also highly rated, meaning that mostly teachers feel dignity and professionalism as they interact with their leadership. Nevertheless, the slightly lower rating indicates that, although a majority of teachers feel respected, there are likely to be isolated incidents where fairness is not consistent. This finding is similar to Dean (2022), who contended that inclusive leadership should transcend tolerance and aim for equity in daily operations. Fairness, when practiced regularly, fosters psychological safety and strengthens lasting professional involvement.

Failure tolerance was the lowest-rated score, indicating teachers' reluctance to take risks or confess errors because of the fear of being criticized. This result highlights an area for improvement in fostering a culture in which errors are considered as opportunities to learn and innovate. Similarly Gupta et al. (2024) underscored the importance of failure tolerance as a foundation in inclusive environments since it fosters experimentation and adaptive teaching and research. The lower score indicates that universities are still in need of developing safer environments where learning from failure and reflection are welcomed.

Vigor, which is one of three dimensions of teacher engagement, had the lowest mean across engagement variables. Although still positive, this indicates that there is some likelihood of physical or emotional exhaustion among some teachers in their work. The findings suggest that although inclusive leadership plays a role in teacher engagement, there might be other strategies like workload control, institutional support, and stress-reduction policies in place to maintain high levels of energy. This is similar with the findings of Hanum and Hermawan (2025), who posited that teachers' sustained energy is necessary for fostering innovation and productive classroom performance.

Dedication rated the highest among dimensions of teacher engagement, indicating that teachers under inclusive leadership manifest extensive emotional commitment, purposefulness, and pride at work. Such findings are similar and complementing Jalaludin et al. (2024), who asserted that leadership that fosters emotional connection increases teachers' loyalty and commitment to student achievement and institutional goals. Findings verify inclusive leadership, through the

cultivation of a culture of respect and inclusion, energizes commitment among university professors and deepens long-term scholarly influence.

Absorption also had a high mean score, revealing that teachers are emotionally and cognitively engaged in their work. Teachers who perceive that they are valued and respected are likely to have deep engagement and prolonged concentration in their work. This finding is similar with Leiter (2019), who stipulated that absorption is one of the main factors in employee engagement, which leads to better performance, creativity, and job satisfaction. The results validate that inclusive leadership increases this level of "flow" among teachers, allowing them to work with complete focus and passion.

Opportunities for professional development, with a mean value of 3.98, reflect that teachers perceive their colleges and leaders as offering them opportunities to participate in workshops, training, and capacity-building exercises. This supports and shows similarity to the findings of Simmons and Yawson (2022), who contended that inclusive leadership facilitates equal access to development and fosters professional learning among all demographic groups. The results confirm that building opportunities for growth increases teacher capacity and institutional quality and innovation.

Leadership in professional development also scored well, indicating that leaders are actively engaged in supporting and enhancing faculty learning. Inclusive leaders as mentors, facilitators, and role models foster a culture of continual learning. This supports Ferdman's (2020) belief that inclusive leadership leads to a common community of expansion, where educators feel encouraged to join academic development programs. The findings indicate that the presence of leaders is crucial in maintaining participation in professional development activities.

Motivation and Job satisfaction, however, were slightly lower compared to other professional development areas. Although still positive, this reflects that emotional and psychological needs are not entirely met by existing professional development practices. the findings shows similarity with Tang et al. (2023) as he emphasized that intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction are critical for long-term faculty retention and creativity. The research indicates that leaders need to not only offer opportunities but also foster emotionally satisfying climates in which teachers are valued and enabled.

The linear regression model that tested inclusive leadership's impact on teachers' engagement showed that inclusive leadership was a strong predictor of teachers' engagement. These results validate that inclusive leadership significantly and positively influences the extent to which teachers are engaged in their professional role. This validates and showed similarity with the theoretical perspective of Social Exchange Theory that states that when the leadership provides a fair and supportive environment, the employees feel bound to return the favor with greater commitment and engagement. In addition, this finding is consistent with the study of Tang et al. (2023), who cited that inclusive leadership contributes to psychological safety and affective investment among teachers, which eventually translates to their vigor, dedication, and absorption in learning activities.

The one-way ANOVA that was performed to assess differences in teachers' engagement among teachers who work under low, medium, and high inclusive leadership practices showed a statistically significant difference. Teachers who work under high inclusive leadership scored well above those working under medium and low leadership on dimensions of engagement. While the effect size was modest, the persistent and significant group differences confirm that inclusive leadership practice does make a real difference in how committed and involved faculty are in their work. This is consistent and similar with the findings of Brien (2019), who specifically highlighted that inclusive leadership behaviors like open communication and shared decision-making are prime drivers of teacher engagement. The post hoc comparison outcomes also confirm the efficacy of inclusive leadership in motivating and emotionally engaging teachers with their academic work.

The regression analysis for professional development of teachers revealed a statistically significant association. While the strength of this association is weaker than that of teacher engagement, it still reveals a very considerable and significant effect. This implies that leaders who are approachable, motivational, and respectful foster the creation of environments that facilitate ongoing learning, skill development, and scholarly growth. The outcome validates the findings of Rodriguez (2023) and Ferdman (2020), who suggested that inclusive leadership enables professional learning communities by ensuring equal access to learning and appreciating one's strengths. The moderately strong impact depicted in this study underscores the significance of

leadership behavior to promote both formal and informal opportunities for faculty development at institutions of higher learning.

The ANOVA results for professional development were also significant between teachers who worked under different inclusive leadership levels. Teachers who worked under high inclusive leadership practices reported positive outcomes on professional development such as greater access to opportunities, higher motivation, and greater teaching and research abilities. This result is consistent with literature indicating inclusive leadership has a critical role to play in providing learning opportunities and fostering growth (Simmons & Yawson, 2022; Shapiro & Little, 2020). While the effect size is still small, the statistical group differences highlight that even modest enhancements in leadership inclusiveness have considerable implications for faculty growth and institutional performance. The discovery also indicates that inclusive leadership helps create professional cultures favorable to long-term career development and innovation.

Generally, the research supports the theoretical assumption that inclusive leadership is a fundamental driver of teacher commitment and development. The research proves that when leaders at the university are open, available, respectful, and supportive, teachers tend to be committed, innovative, and professionally engaged. These findings not only validate earlier research but also expand the knowledge by providing evidence in a developing country situation, where inclusive leadership practices are still in their formative stages. The research therefore highlights inclusive leadership as an essential strategic practice for developing engaged, capable, and motivated faculty in universities.

5.4 Conclusions

The results emphasize how inclusive leadership significantly influences the development of successful teaching strategies and the significance of leadership in educational environments. Following are the specific conclusions drawn from the main findings of the study:

1. Teachers' perceive inclusive leadership behaviors as overall strong on all six dimensions. Openness had the highest mean rating, with encouragement, availability, and accessibility following. Respect and fair treatment were

moderately high, and failure tolerance was low, suggesting that more positive and risk-taking climates needed to be developed (Finding: 1,2,3,4 & 5).

2. Teacher motivation was rated highly under inclusive leadership, with dedication and absorption scoring highest. Vigor, while also positive, was slightly lower, indicating a need for added support to maintain teachers' energy and drive (Finding: 6, 7, & 8).
3. Professional development was also rated well. Teachers indicated high competence in teaching and research and equitable access to opportunities. Motivation and job satisfaction were lower, however, and pointed to a gap in supporting emotional and long-term career needs (Finding: 9, 10, & 11).
4. Inclusive leadership strongly predicted teacher engagement with a strong positive correlation between inclusive leadership and teachers' engagement (Finding: 12).
5. Study showed significant differences in teacher engagement among low, medium, and high inclusive leadership groups, with higher levels of leadership associated with higher engagement (Finding: 13).
6. Inclusive leadership significantly predicted teachers' professional development, with a moderate positive correlation between inclusive leadership and teachers' professional development (Finding: 14).
7. Study showed significant differences in teacher professional development among low, medium, and high inclusive leadership groups, with higher levels of leadership associated with higher engagement outcomes (Finding: 15).
8. Inclusive leadership significantly predicted teacher engagement and professional development, with a stronger positive effect on teacher engagement than professional development. The results indicate a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and both outcomes, highlighting that higher levels of inclusive leadership are associated with increased faculty engagement and professional growth (Finding: 16).

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to enhance inclusive leadership and improve teachers' engagement and professional development at the university level:

1. Teachers' perception of failure tolerance was found to be lower than other dimensions of inclusive leadership dimensions. So, it is recommended that

university leaders may foster a failure-tolerant environment where teachers feel safe to take risks, make mistakes, and try new practices without fear of blame. This approach promotes psychological safety and enhances innovation in teaching and learning.

2. The vigor dimension of teachers' engagement was observed to be relatively lower than others. So, it is recommended to improve teacher engagement, especially in terms of energy and enthusiasm, university leaders may implement workload management strategies and provide emotional and psychological support systems. Such measures can prevent burnout and sustain high levels of teacher energy.
3. Although teachers perceive their leaders as open, encouraging and respectful, there is still scope to strengthen leadership competencies. So, it is recommended that institutions may design leadership development programs according to the core dimensions of inclusive leadership and include real-life scenarios, simulations, and regular feedback systems to build leaders' interpersonal competencies.
4. The respect and fair treatment dimension was slightly lower than other leadership dimensions. So, it is recommended to enhance mutual respect and fairness in institutional environments efforts may be made by promoting shared governance, collective decision-making, and inclusive team-building activities. These practices can strengthen positive leadership relationships.
5. Motivation and job satisfaction among the teachers require further attention. So, it is recommended that leaders may take proactive steps to understand and address the emotional and professional needs of teachers to improve their motivation and job satisfaction. Providing meaningful recognition and psychological support will help to strengthen long-term commitment.
6. The impact of inclusive leadership on interpersonal relationships, inclusivity, and employee engagement has not been fully examined. So, it is recommended that the inclusive leadership may not only be measured by academic outputs but also by its impact on interpersonal relationships, inclusivity, and employee development outcomes.
7. University leaders may adopt and strengthen inclusive leadership practices, as they have a significant positive effect on both teacher engagement and professional development, with a stronger impact on engagement.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Researchers

1. It is recommended to the future researchers that they may increase the sample size and include universities from multiple provinces or countries to increase the generalizability and representativeness of findings.
2. To get deep understanding about the effect of inclusive leadership on faculty experiences mix methods studies may be used by combining quantitative and qualitative data.
3. It is recommended to future researchers that they may access effect of inclusive leadership on teacher engagement and professional development over the time, by the longitudinal research especially during the period of institutional change and crisis.
4. Studies may be done in comparison of inclusive leadership or to examine the inclusive leadership in relation to the other leadership styles like transactional leadership servant leadership transformation leadership to determine that which are the practices those are most effective in the academic settings.
5. The studies in the future may explore the indirect effects of inclusive leadership on achievements of the students and the performance of institutions by mediating variables like job satisfaction, classroom engagement and teacher innovation.
6. Researchers may emphasize the intersection of inclusive leadership and retaining early-career and professors to better examine the role of leadership in diversity and equity.
7. Research into virtual or remote leadership behavior after the pandemic may also be explored to examine how inclusivity crosses over into virtual academic space.
8. Future researchers may study the barriers that are affecting and preventing the leaders from practicing the inclusive leaderships in the university environment.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEADERS INCLUSIVENESS

Gender

Male

Female

Experience:

0-5 Years

6-10 Years

11-15 Years

16 – 20 Years

21 Years & above

Mark the relevant box for each statement.

Strongly agree (SA) – 5	Agree (A) – 4	Neutral (N) – 3	Disagree (DA) – 2	Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1
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	Statements	SA	A	N	DA	SD
Openness						
1	The leader is open to considering new ideas					
2	The leader is ready to listen to my request					
3	The leader actively discusses institutional goals and strategies for improvement with faculty					
Availability						
4	The leader is available for consultation on problems					
5	The leader regularly interacts with faculty and is available for support					
6	The leader is available for professional questions that I would like to consult of with him/her					
	Accessibility					

7	The leader is attentive to new opportunities for improving work processes				
8	The leader encourages me to access him/her on evolving issues				
9	The leader is accessible for discussing emerging problems				
	Encouragement & Recognition				
10	The leader encourages me to take on new challenges.				
11	The leader motivates me to share my ideas openly.				
12	The leader acknowledges and values my contributions.				
13	The leader provides constructive feedback to support my growth.				
14	The leader fosters an inclusive and respectful work environment.				
	Respect & Fair Treatment				
15	The leader treats all team members with fairness and respect.				
16	The leader ensures equal opportunities for all employees.				
17	The leader values diverse perspectives in decision-making.				
	Failure Tolerance				
18	The leader allows me to learn from mistakes.				
19	The leader supports me in taking risks.				
20	The leader encourages me to explore new approaches.				
21	The leader provides guidance instead of criticism when challenges arise.				

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT

Gender Male Female

Experience:

- 0-5 Years
- 6-10 Years
- 11-15 Years
- 16 – 20 Years
- 21 Years & above

Mark the relevant box for each statement.

Strongly agree (SA) – 5	Agree (A) – 4	Neutral (N) – 3	Disagree (DA) – 2	Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1
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	Statements	SA	A	N	DA	SD
	Vigor (energy and resilience in teaching)					
1	I feel energized to perform my teaching responsibilities because of the support I receive from leadership.					
2	Leadership practices motivates me to stay persistent at my work.					
3	I have the stamina to maintain high levels of energy in my teaching role due to the supportive environment at my university.					
4	Leadership practices give me the energy to push through difficult periods in my teaching.					

5	The encouragement from the university leadership boosts my enthusiasm to excel in my teaching tasks.					
	Dedication(Commitment in work)					
6	I find my work meaningful and rewarding because of the leadership approach at my university.					
7	The leadership practices in my department inspire me to take pride in my teaching role.					
8	Leadership makes me enthusiastic about contributing to the university through my teaching and development.					
9	I feel that leadership helps me be dedicated to my teaching career and professional growth.					
	Absorption(Immersion and focus in teaching)					
10	I can easily concentrate on my teaching duties due to the positive and supportive leadership environment.					
11	Under the leadership at my university, I have found myself completely absorbed in teaching.					
12	As my efforts are appreciated, I am more focused on my responsibilities.					
13	I feel a sense of flow in my teaching work, driven by the collaborative culture at my university.					

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gender Male Female

Experience:

- 0-5 Years
- 6-10 Years
- 11-15 Years
- 16 – 20 Years
- 21 Years & above

Mark the relevant box for each statement.

Strongly agree (SA) – 5	Agree (A) – 4	Neutral (N) – 3	Disagree (DA) – 2	Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1
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	Statements	SA	A	N	DA	SD
	Opportunities for Professional Development					
1	My university provides equal access to professional development opportunities for all faculty members.					
2	University offered me the professional development programs that align with my career goals and teaching needs.					
3	My university ensures equitable support for lifelong learning and skill enhancement.					
4	Professional development programs are designed to address specific challenges and opportunities faced by faculty.					

	Leadership Role in Professional Development				
5	The leadership at my university ensures that professional development initiatives promote equity and inclusiveness.				
6	My university leaders actively encourage participation in development programs across all faculty members.				
7	I feel included and supported by leadership when accessing professional development opportunities.				
8	Leaders at my university address barriers that may prevent equitable participation in development programs.				
	Motivation and Job Satisfaction				
9	Professional development opportunities at my university increase my motivation.				
10	Professional development opportunities at my university increase my job satisfaction.				
11	I feel intrinsically motivated to improve my performance due to professional development opportunities.				
12	Professional development initiatives motivates me to stay engaged in my work.				
13	I feel encouraged to pursue continuous growth due to the support of professional development initiatives.				
	Impact on teaching and Research Competence				
14	Professional development programs improve my teaching strategies and practices.				
15	Participation in training enhances my research skills and productivity.				
16	I can apply the skills learned in development programs directly to my teaching and research activities.				

17	Professional development programs help me to maintain updated knowledge in my academic field.						
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