STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSON–ORGANIZATION FIT AND INNOVATION BEHAVIOR: MEDIATING EFFECT OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND MODERATING EFFECT OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

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The identification of Chinese AI enterprise technology and R&D personnel with organizational values significantly influences innovation behavior, thereby establishing a close relationship between human-organization fit and employee innovation behavior. Therefore, this paper explores the relationship between human-organization fit and the innovative behavior of Chinese AI enterprise technology and R&D personnel, as well as the mediating and moderating effects of workplace spirituality and inclusive leadership on the relationship between human-organization fit and the innovative behavior of employees. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between human and organizational fit and innovation behavior of Chinese AI enterprise technology and R&D personnel, as well as the mediating and moderating effect between workplace spirituality and inclusive leadership.

We completed the survey in November 2023, collecting samples from technical and R&D personnel in nine artificial intelligence enterprises in Beijing, China, using a random sampling method. We collected a total of 603 questionnaires, of which we obtained 526 valid ones. The results showed that: 1) the human-organization fit of technology and R&D personnel has a significant positive impact on innovation behavior; 2) the human-organization fit of technology and R&D personnel has a significant positive impact on workplace spirituality; 3) the workplace spirituality of technology and R&D personnel has a significant positive impact on innovation behavior; 4) the workplace spirituality of technology and R&D personnel has a mediating effect on innovation behavior in human-organization fit; and 5) inclusive leadership has a positive moderating effect on the innovation behavior of technology and R&D personnel in terms of the fit between people and organizations. The results of this study indicated that technology and R&D personnel's identification with organizational values requires not only the workplace spirit of inner
experience but also inclusive leadership with encouragement and support in order to fully enhance innovative behavior.

Keywords: Person-Organization Fit; innovation behavior; workplace spirituality; inclusive leadership

Introduction

Today, China's high-tech enterprises are undergoing an accelerated transformation (Hu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021), and in this process, acquiring technology through the market alone cannot guarantee a dominant position because any innovative technology that can be traded in the market can be easily imitated by competitors (He & Wu, 2022; Liu & Huang, 2021).

Therefore, firms should encourage their employees to exhibit more innovative behaviors, and they can only achieve better innovation performance if they generate more innovative ideas and transform them into new and better products, services, or work processes (Li & Zhang, 2021; Lu et al., 2021; Niu & Liu, 2021).

Therefore, there has been much interest in how to maximize innovation among R&D personnel (Hussain & Zhang, 2023; Liang et al., 2022; Magistretti et al., 2022).

Studies have found strong links between person-organization fit and innovative behavior (Tang et al., 2021), workplace spirituality (Hunsake & Ding, 2022), and inclusive leadership (Aslan, 2019).

However, it is unclear whether the relationship between person-organization fit and innovative behavior depends on the mediating and facilitating effects of workplace spirituality and inclusive leadership, which has also never been addressed.

Therefore, this study constructs a model based on self-harmony theory to assess the relationship between person-organization fit and innovation behavior of R&D personnel in Chinese high-tech firms, as well as the mediating effect of workplace spirituality and the facilitating effect of inclusive leadership. Clarifying these relationships can help high-tech firms identify motivational factors in the work environment and have some utility for R&D personnel's innovation.

Literature review and hypothesis

Person-organization fit

The concept of individual and organizational fit has received extensive attention from scholars since its introduction (Saether, 2019; Seong & Choi, 2019; Sun et al., 2021). Whereas, organizational values are values that are organization-driven and will have an impact on the behavior of employees and firms (Jin & Sonh, 2019; Rahman et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2021).

On the other hand, for organizations, values are the soul of business organizations and influence various activities of business organizations, whereas for employees, personal values can have a significant impact on the formation of employees' self-concept and self-organizational identity (Bharadwaj et al., 2022; Mostafa & Williams, 2014; Malhotra et al., 2022).
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Typically, individuals join organizations when the process of socialization with the outside world is largely complete, resulting in the formation of their unique value system (Jin & Sonh, 2019).

Therefore, the match between individual and organizational values is particularly important (Boon & Biron, 2016; Roczniewska et al., 2018).

In addition, the higher the degree of congruence between an employee's values and the organization's value goals, the smoother his or her adaptation to the organization will be, and the less the organization will have to spend on this adaptation process (Jin & Sonh, 2019).

Therefore, Chatman (1991) argues that values are fundamental and continuous both for the individual employee and the organization. As stated by Schneider et al. (1995), employees will choose organizations with values similar to their own, and at the same time, organizations will choose employees with similar values to the organization. As a result, Kuo et al. (2001) proposed the concept of values fit, whereby the core of the congruent match between employee values and corporate culture is the fit between employee values and organizational values.

In the current research on individual and organizational values fit, researchers mainly define individual and organizational values fit in terms of the compatibility or similarity between individual values and organizational values. As stated by Qi & Yang (2018), individual and organizational values fit refers to the extent to which an employee's personality traits are similar to his or her organizational values.

Whereas Edwards & Cable (2009) define value congruence as the similarity between the values held by an individual and the organization. It follows that individual-organizational values fit refers to the degree of congruence between an individual's values and the values of the organization in which he or she works (Jin & Sonh, 2019).

**Person-organization fit and innovative behavior**

Innovative behavior is seen as "encompassing the generation and implementation of ideas in the work environment. Creativity in an organizational context can be considered an innovative behavior, which includes not only a range of innovative processes and methods for generating novel and useful ideas but also the introduction of new ideas from others into the organization, which can be beneficial to the firm's innovativeness (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

Whereas person-organization fit is defined as "individual-organization fit is defined as the degree to which individual values are integrated with organizational values" (Kristof, 1996), which can influence employees' innovative behavior (Afsar & Rehman, 2015; Ma et al., 2016).

In addition, the way organizations can improve the innovative behavior of employees is to have effective management of values (Afsar & Rehman, 2015; Tang et al., 2021). Therefore, organizations should foster and develop positive values, as this influences the innovative behavior of individuals (Afsar & Rehman, 2015; Tang et al., 2021).

As a positive value, person-organization fit can be effective in enhancing the level of innovative behavior of employees by boosting their morale (Michael, 2016; Ma et al., 2016).

According to this hypothesis:

H1: Person-organization fit has a significant positive effect on innovative behavior.
Person-organization fit and workplace spirituality

Workplace spirituality has been defined as "an interconnected inner experience in which an employee transcends and connects with the self" (Milliman et al., 2003), and it is influenced by values (Palframan & Lancaster, 2019). Workplace spirituality is an important psychological factor in the business environment, as it is closely related to employees' values (Palframan & Lancaster, 2019).

According to the complementary demand-supply perspective of person-organization fit theory, fit occurs "when an organization meets an individual's needs, wants, or preferences" (Kristof, 1996), which provides a rationale for integrating workplace spirituality into the traditional workplace (Aboobaker, 2022; Hunsaker & Ding, 2022; Jena, 2022). Whereas person-organization fit is a positive value (Pratama et al., 2022) that increases employees' beliefs and enhances their inner experience (Palframan & Lancaster, 2019).

According to this hypothesis:
H2: Person-organization fit has a significant positive effect on workplace spirituality.

Workplace spirituality and innovative behavior

Workplace spirituality at work is an important HR policy issue because workplace spirituality is closely related to innovative behavior (Williams et al., 2017). One of the factors that organizations need to focus on to improve employees' innovative behavior is the effective management of positive experiences in the mental factors, as this influences individual behavior (Haldorai et al., 2019; Lata & Chaudhary, 2022; Pattanawit & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). As researchers have argued, one needs positive energy to cope with uncertainty and failure in the innovation process (Ma et al., 2016; Michael, 2016; Pattanawit & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Whereas, workplace spirituality helps to achieve a sense of purpose and direction, which motivates employees' creativity and further promotes innovative behavior (Palframan & Lancaster, 2019). According to this hypothesis:
H3: Workplace spirituality has a significant positive effect on innovative behavior.

Workplace spirituality as a mediator between person-organization fit and innovative behavior

Many scholars recognize workplace spirituality as a component of psychological functioning (Hunsaker & Ding, 2022; Wijayanti & Rajiani, 2023; Yin & Mahrous, 2022). Thus, inner experience is considered a mechanism to promote employee performance (Williams et al., 2017). Research has found support for psychological functioning and behavioral associations, which suggests that higher workplace spirituality is effective in enhancing employees' innovative behaviors (Williams et al., 2017). In addition, research has found that positive psychological functioning factors can play a particularly important role in the process of employee innovation (Williams et al., 2017; Hunsaker & Ding, 2022).

As researchers have suggested, one needs positive energy to cope with uncertainty and failure in the innovation process (Ma et al., 2016; Michael, 2016). Employees hold a high level of identification with organizational values, which can enhance the individual's meaning of work and sense of community in the entrepreneurial process through the workplace spirituality of the higher-order inner experience, which will strengthen the passion and intrinsic motivation to work on innovation (Williams et al., 2017) and ultimately further enhance the innovative behavior of the employees. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:
H4: Workplace spirituality mediates the effect between person-organization fit and innovative behavior.

**Moderating effects of inclusive leadership between person-organization fit and innovative behavior**

The inclusive leadership definition has been described as the positive behaviors and attitudes of leaders that are key to engaging employees in creative work (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). It has been found that positive leadership, such as inclusive leadership, can further promote employee creative behavior and have a motivational effect (Aslan, 2019). In addition, positive leadership helps people get extra resources in terms of value matching and makes people work harder (Aslan, 2019).

Whereas, positive leadership helps people to get additional resources in the interaction of person-organization fit, demand-supply fit, and demand-competence aspects of values and makes people work harder (Aslan, 2019). Whereas employees with better person-organization fit are satisfied with their tasks and intrinsically motivated, organizations with inclusive leaders can easily motivate employees (Fang et al., 2019; Roberson & Perry, 2022; Shore & Chung, 2022) and are also more likely to exhibit innovative behaviors. It is hypothesized that:

H5: Inclusive leadership has a positive moderating effect between person-organization fit and innovative behavior.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between person-organization fit and innovation behavior among R&D personnel in high-tech firms in Beijing, China, and the mediating and moderating roles of workplace spirituality and inclusive leadership in these relationships.

**Methodologies**

**Methods, samples, and procedures**

The respondents were R&D personnel from high-tech companies in Beijing, China, and the data were collected by an online questionnaire using a random sampling method. A balanced consideration of research ethics was taken into account, and it was started with the consent of the respondents and the organizations mentioned. We conducted the survey in November 2023. A total of 603 questionnaires were collected, 77 of which were invalid, and the final valid sample totaled 526, with an effective rate of 89.8%.

**Measurement**

Person-Organisation Fit Scale: designed by Cable & Derue (2002), divided into 3 dimensions: individual-organization fit (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.91$), demand-supply fit (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.89$), and demand-competence fit (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.89$), with 9 questions.

Innovative Behaviour Scale: Designed by Scott and Bruce (1994), unidimensional integration of innovative ideas, thinking, and methods, 6 questions (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$).

Workplace Spirituality Scale: Derived from Milliman et al. (2003), divided into 2 dimensions: meaning at work (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.88$), sense of community (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.91$), and 12 questions.
Inclusive Leadership Scale: Designed by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), a unidimensional combination of dispositions and attitudes with 3 questions (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.75$).

The overall model had $2/df = 1.497$, RMSEA = 0.031, SRMR = 0.034, NFI = 0.937, and CFI = 0.978.

Analysis of results

Distribution of population characteristics

Tab. 1 shows that, among the genders, 448 people are male, accounting for 85.17%, and 78 people are female, accounting for 14.83%; among the ages, the majority of people are 31 to 40 years old, accounting for 222 people, accounting for 42.205%; among the changes in the tenure of the current company, the majority of people are in the position of 5 to 6 years, accounting for 213 people, accounting for 40.494%; among the annual incomes, the majority of people are in the position of 90,000 yuan or less, accounting for 242 people, accounting for 46.008%. In terms of annual income, the majority of people within 90,000 yuan account for 242 people, or 46.008%.

Among the degrees, 283 people, or 53.802 percent, have bachelor's degrees.

Table 1 - Sample information analysis

(made by the author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (of a thing)</th>
<th>Options (as in computer software settings)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinguishing between the sexes</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>85.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>14.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>23-30 years old</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>34.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>42.205</td>
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<td></td>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>14.639</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51 and over</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current company position</td>
<td>1-4 years</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>24.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>40.494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-9 years</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>30.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.183</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual income</td>
<td>$90,000 and under</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>46.008</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-150,000</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>31.939</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-200,000</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>14.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>210,000 and above</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places</td>
<td>Associate degree/first class and below</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>29.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
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<td>53.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
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<td>15.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.711</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=526

Correlation analysis

Tab. 2 shows that person-organization fit is positively correlated with innovative behavior and workplace spirituality ($\beta=0.461***$, $0.527***$, $p<0.05$), and workplace spirituality is positively correlated with innovative behavior ($\beta=0.541***$, $p<0.05$), and hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are valid.
Table 2 - Correlation Analysis
(made by the author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
<th>CR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Person-organisation fit</td>
<td>3.717</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>0.796</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Workplace Spirituality</td>
<td>3.756</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>0.527***</td>
<td>0.799</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>0.779</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Inclusive leadership</td>
<td>3.559</td>
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<td>0.186***</td>
<td>0.207***</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>0.822</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Innovative behaviour</td>
<td>3.814</td>
<td>0.824</td>
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<td>0.308***</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.638</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>0.632</td>
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</table>

Note: p*<0.05.

Analysis of intermediaries
Tab. 3 presents the results of the Bootstrap mediation effect test. The direct effect of person-organization fit on innovative behavior is 0.253, with a 95% confidence interval [0.171, 0.334], not including 0, which means that the direct effect is significant, and the indirect effect is 0.231, with a 95% confidence interval [0.179, 0.284], not including 0, which means that the indirect effect is significant.

That is, workplace spirituality mediates the relationship between person-organization fit and innovative behavior, and finally, the total effect is 0.482, with a 95% confidence interval [0.408, 0.556], not containing 0, indicating a significant total effect. Therefore, it can be proved that workplace spirituality plays a mediating role between person-organization fit and innovative behavior, and hypothesis H4 is valid.

Table 3 - Intermediary Analysis
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<th>M</th>
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</table>

Note: p*<0.05.

Reconciliation analysis
Tab. 4 shows that model M4 is a regression model of person-organization fit and innovative behavior and an interaction term (person-organization fit x inclusive leadership) on innovative behavior with the inclusion of control variables, and the model has an R2 of 0.338 and an F of 32.954***, indicating that the overall model is significant.

The analysis of the regression model shows that the interaction term (person-organization fit x inclusive leadership) has a0β=0.113*** (p=0.000).

This indicates that inclusive leadership has a significant positive moderating effect between person-organization fit and innovative behavior, and hypothesis H5 is valid.
Conclusions

The results show that person-organization fit has a significant positive effect on innovative behavior, which is consistent with previous research (Aslan, 2019). That is, the higher the person-organization fit, the higher the innovative behavior. This implies that a stronger person-organization fit better stimulates the innovative behavior of employees. The level of person-organization fit affects the psychology of employees; the higher the fit with the organization, the better the employees understand the organizational goals and, in turn, strive to achieve the organizational goals with more positive and aligned behaviors (Afsar & Rehman, 2015).

And the more employees identify with organizational values, the more likely they are to have higher motivation and thus engage in more innovative behaviors that are expected by the organization (Afsar & Rehman, 2015).

As Ma et al. (2016) suggest, the way organizations can improve the innovative behavior of their employees is to have effective management values. Organizations should foster and develop positive values, as this influences the innovative behavior of individuals. As a positive value, person-organization fit can be effective in enhancing the level of innovative behaviors of employees (Aslan, 2019) by boosting their morale (Michael, 2016). Therefore, the results suggest that person-organization fit can have a positive impact on the innovative behavior of T&R employees, especially when they have a high level of recognition of organizational values.

The results indicate that person-organization fit has a significant positive effect on workplace spirituality, which is consistent with previous research (Palframan & Lancaster, 2019). That is, higher person-organization fit is associated with higher workplace spirituality. This means that a stronger person-organization fit better stimulates workplace spirituality among employees.
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This can be illustrated according to the complementary demand-supply perspective of person-organization fit theory, which states that fit will occur when the organization meets an individual's needs, desires, or preferences (Kristof, 1996), which provides a basis for integrating workplace spirituality into the traditional workplace of an individual who identifies with the values of the organization.

As stated by Seong & Choi (2019), person-organization fit is a positive value that increases employees' beliefs and enhances their inner experience. Therefore, the results suggest that person-organization fit can have a positive impact on the workplace spirituality of T&R employees, especially when they have a high level of recognition of organizational values.

The results show that workplace spirituality has a significant positive effect on innovative behavior, which is consistent with previous research (Williams et al., 2017). That is, higher workplace spirituality is associated with higher innovative behavior.

This implies that stronger workplace spirituality better stimulates employees' innovative behavior. Therefore, workplace spirituality at work is an important resource because workplace spirituality is an important antecedent for enhancing innovative behavior (Williams et al., 2017). Therefore, organizations need to improve employee innovative behavior and should effectively manage positive experiences in mental factors, as this influences individual behavior (Haldorai et al., 2019).

As stated by Williams et al. (2017), workplace spirituality helps to achieve a sense of purpose and direction, which motivates employees' creativity and further contributes to the development of innovative behavior. Therefore, the results suggest that workplace spirituality positively affects the innovative behavior of T&R employees, especially when their internal experience level is high.

The results suggest that workplace spirituality has a mediating effect between person-organization fit and innovative behaviors, unlike previous research (Williams et al., 2017). Previous research has used workplace spirituality as a mediator that can further mediate the relationship between servant leadership and employee creativity (Williams et al., 2017).

In contrast, this study explores the mediating role of workplace spirituality in terms of the relationship between person-organization values fit and innovative behavior, which expands the path of mediating innovative behavior. This implies that person-organization fit can further increase employees' innovative behavior through the mediating effect of workplace spirituality. The workplace spirituality experienced by R&D and technical staff in high-tech firms can motivate employees to continuously take on new tasks and challenges. Even in the face of difficulties and setbacks, they will actively engage in psychological construction, support, and even package to surpass themselves and challenge them to complete the task, and sometimes they can do better than usual.

Therefore, companies should pay attention to the development of employees' mental strength in the workplace to promote innovative behaviors in the actual work tasks. As stated by Palframan & Lancaster (2019), personal identification with organizational values can strengthen workplace spirituality experienced internally and stimulate employees' intrinsic motivation, which will ultimately further enhance employees' behaviors in favor of the organization.

The results of the study suggest that person-organization fit can further influence innovation behavior by enhancing the workplace spirituality of T&R employees, especially when their inner experience is high.
The results indicate that inclusive leadership has a facilitating effect between person-organization fit and innovation behavior, which is different from previous studies. Previous studies have used inclusive leadership as a facilitating mechanism that can further promote the relationship between entrepreneurship and green innovation intentions.

In contrast, this study explores the facilitating role of inclusive leadership in terms of the relationship between different person-organization values and innovation behavior, which expands the path of facilitation of innovation behavior. This implies that person-organization fit can further increase employees’ innovative behavior through interaction with inclusive leadership. Person-organization fit can directly influence individual evaluations. And when individual values fit with organizational values, a corporate culture that encourages innovation and an organizational innovation climate will motivate employees to innovate, and the motivation to innovate will have an impact on employee behavior.

When employees encounter setbacks in the process of innovation, appropriate encouragement and support from superiors can well match employees' needs and supply, enhance employees' confidence to continue to innovate, help employees solve problems better, and give full play to their own innovative ability and innovative spirit.

Aslan (2019) suggests, positive leadership helps people get extra resources in terms of person-organization fit of values, demand-supply fit, and demand-capability and makes people work harder. Whereas employees with better person-organization fit are satisfied with their tasks and intrinsically motivated, organizations with inclusive leadership can easily motivate employees’ intrinsic motivation (Fang et al., 2019) and are more likely to exhibit innovative work behaviors.

Therefore, the results of the study suggest that person-organization fit can have a facilitating effect on the innovative behavior of T&R employees through interaction with inclusive leadership, especially when they are subjected to higher attitudinal and supportive actions from inclusive and positive superiors.

Research limitations and future prospects

This study also has some limitations. The first limitation is the use of self-reported data. The tests relied on self-reported data via an online survey instrument, which, although widely used in survey research, may reduce the objectivity of the findings as well as the sensitivity of the questions and may trigger socially desirable responses. Instead, one way to address social consensualism is to ask questions in the third person rather than directing them to individuals. Additionally, we operationalized all constructs using well-established and previously validated scales. Finally, although self-reported data were considered a limitation, socially desirable response bias was lower when the survey method was via the Internet.

In addition, the recovered data information is only available in one city, Beijing, and the conclusions obtained from the data analysis have certain adaptability shortcomings. Therefore, it is recommended to expand the data area to meet the needs and adaptability of different enterprises in future correlation studies on innovation behavior.

Based on the findings, some ideas for future research are presented, and further suggestions are made to improve future research on the role of person-organization fit in innovative behavior. An important extension of this study would be to examine other types of innovation that may be similar to innovation. For example, improvisational creative behavior on the other hand, the results of this study also suggest that workplace spirituality and
inclusive leadership mediate and facilitate the influence of innovation behavior through person-organization fit.

Therefore, it may be interesting for future research to further expand the study of innovative behaviors from a wider range of intermediate paths, such as empowering climate, organizational transparency, legacy motivation, awe-inspiring experiences, craftsmanship, calm mind, emotional regulation flexibility, emotional social sharing motivation, and kind personality.

References


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