

Leading with Inclusion in High-Risk Public Services: Unravelling the Psychological Pathways to Public Service Motivation among Emergency Workers in Pakistan

Mubashra

Mubashraj11@gmail.com

Lecturer in Faculty of Social Sciences Pioneer College of Advance Studies Fawara Chowk, Jinah Colony,
Gulberg Faisalabad, Pakistan

Dr. Shakeel Ahmad Shahid

Drshakeelahmadshahid@gmail.com

Assistant Professor and Head of the Faculty of Sports Sciences Government Graduate College Khurianwala
,Faisalabad, Pakistan, Ambassador in World Games Korea, President Sports for Peace Society Pakistan

Dr. Bashir Ahmad

Associate professor at Iyallpur business school government college university Faisalabad,
Associate professor at public administration department, Government college university Faisalabad.

Corresponding Author: Mubashra Mubashraj11@gmail.com

Received: 15-2-2026

Revised: 29-02-2026

Accepted: 13-03-2026

Published: 28-03-2026

ABSTRACT

Public emergency services operate in environments characterized by uncertainty, high operational demands, time pressure, and significant responsibility for public safety. In such settings, the quality of leadership can substantially influence employees' willingness to remain committed to public-oriented goals. This study examines the role of inclusive leadership in strengthening public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan, with particular emphasis on psychological safety and psychological empowerment as underlying mechanisms. The study addresses an important gap in the existing literature by examining these relationships within a high-pressure, hierarchical, and resource-constrained public emergency service context in a developing country. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through self-administered questionnaires from public emergency personnel in Lahore and Faisalabad. From 350 distributed questionnaires, a 90% response rate was achieved. The proposed relationships were examined using Structural Equation Modeling through Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM), supported by SPSS and SmartPLS. The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and convergent validity across the study constructs. The structural results revealed that inclusive leadership has a significant positive relationship with psychological empowerment, psychological safety, and public service motivation. Specifically, inclusive leadership demonstrated a positive effect on psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.408, p < 0.001$), psychological safety ($\beta = 0.367, p < 0.001$), and public service motivation ($\beta = 0.455, p < 0.001$). Psychological empowerment and psychological safety also positively influenced public service motivation, with psychological empowerment showing a comparatively stronger relationship ($\beta = 0.386, p < 0.001$) than psychological safety ($\beta = 0.286, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, both psychological safety ($\beta = 0.132, p < 0.001$) and psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.158, p < 0.001$) significantly mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and public service motivation. The model explained 54.4% of the variance in public service motivation, while accounting for 46.7% of psychological empowerment and 35.5% of psychological safety. These findings suggest that public service motivation is not solely an individual disposition but can be strengthened through organizational leadership practices that cultivate inclusion, autonomy, competence, participation, and interpersonal trust. The study contributes to leadership and public administration scholarship by demonstrating how inclusive leadership can activate psychological mechanisms that encourage stronger commitment to serving the public. Practically, the findings highlight the need for leadership-development initiatives within emergency services to promote participatory decision-making, open communication, employee empowerment, and psychologically safe working environments. Such measures may contribute to more resilient, motivated, and service-oriented emergency workforces in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Inclusion, Public Service Motivation, Psychological Safety, Emergency Workers, Pakistan.*

INTRODUCTION

Public services operating under high-risk conditions are among the most demanding institutional environments in contemporary society. Emergency workers—including police officers, firefighters, ambulance personnel, emergency medical technicians, disaster-response staff, and other first responders—perform essential functions in situations characterized by uncertainty, time pressure, physical danger, emotional strain, and frequent exposure to human suffering. Their capacity to perform effectively depends not only on technical competence and organizational resources but also on sustained motivation to serve the public. **Public service motivation (PSM)**, broadly understood as an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and the public interest, is therefore central to understanding the attitudes, commitment, and performance of emergency personnel (Perry & Wise, 1990). In high-risk public services, where workers may be expected to prioritize collective welfare despite significant personal costs, the psychological foundations of PSM become particularly important.

A growing body of research has demonstrated that employee motivation is shaped not only by individual personality or occupational values but also by the social and psychological environment created by organizations. Inclusive leadership and inclusive workplace practices may be especially important in this regard. Inclusion refers to the degree to which employees experience belonging, acceptance, fairness, respect, and meaningful participation while also being able to retain and express their unique identities and perspectives (Shore et al., 2011). In public-sector organizations, inclusive leadership can create conditions in which employees feel psychologically valued, listened to, and empowered to contribute. Such experiences may strengthen workers' emotional and psychological connection to the public mission of their organizations, thereby reinforcing their motivation to serve society.

The relationship between inclusion and motivation is particularly relevant in emergency services. These organizations often operate through formal hierarchies, command-and-control structures, strict operational procedures, and strong occupational cultures. Although these characteristics may be necessary for coordination during emergencies, they can sometimes limit employee voice and reduce opportunities for participation in decision-making. Personnel who feel excluded, marginalized, unheard, or undervalued may experience reduced organizational commitment and weaker psychological attachment to public-service goals. Conversely, when leaders actively seek employee input, treat personnel with dignity, recognize their contributions, and ensure equitable access to opportunities and support, workers may develop stronger feelings of belonging and responsibility toward both their organizations and the communities they serve.

Inclusive leadership has been increasingly recognized as a leadership approach capable of promoting employee participation, openness, and accessibility. Leaders who demonstrate openness toward diverse ideas, availability for interaction, and accessibility to subordinates can establish a supportive work environment in which employees feel safe to contribute (Carmeli et al., 2010; Randel et al., 2018). In high-risk public services, this may have important psychological consequences. Emergency workers frequently operate in unpredictable situations where communication, judgment, and teamwork are critical. Employees must often raise concerns, report mistakes, share information, and propose alternative solutions under considerable pressure. The effectiveness of such behaviors depends partly on **psychological safety**, defined as a shared belief that the workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety enables employees to speak openly without excessive fear of humiliation, rejection, or punishment.

The inclusion–psychological safety relationship provides an important theoretical pathway for understanding PSM. When emergency workers perceive their leaders and organizations as inclusive, they may be more likely to believe that their opinions and concerns are valued. This perception can

reduce interpersonal anxiety and encourage constructive participation. Psychological safety may subsequently contribute to public service motivation by strengthening employees' sense of meaningful involvement in organizational and public missions. Workers who can openly communicate and participate may feel that their actions matter and that they are active contributors to the welfare of citizens. Such experiences can reinforce motives associated with commitment to the public interest, compassion, civic duty, and willingness to serve society.

Another important psychological mechanism is the sense of **belonging and organizational identification**. Social identity theory suggests that individuals define part of their identity through membership in social groups and organizations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Inclusive workplaces can strengthen this identification by ensuring that employees are accepted as legitimate and valued members of the organization. For emergency workers, strong organizational identification may extend beyond attachment to the employer and become connected with the broader public mission represented by emergency services. When personnel perceive that they belong to an organization that respects and supports them, they may be more willing to internalize its service-oriented values and sustain motivation during difficult assignments.

The need to examine these psychological pathways is particularly significant in Pakistan. The country faces diverse and recurring emergencies, including road accidents, natural disasters, floods, fires, public-health crises, security incidents, and other complex humanitarian challenges. Emergency-service organizations must often deliver rapid responses despite resource constraints, demanding working conditions, and high expectations from the public. The **Rescue 1122 model in Punjab**, for example, has contributed significantly to the institutional development of organized emergency response in Pakistan, while police, fire, health, and disaster-management personnel continue to perform essential public functions across the country. In such settings, human motivation represents a critical organizational resource because the willingness of emergency personnel to remain committed, cooperative, and responsive can directly influence public safety and service effectiveness.

Despite the importance of these issues, research on public service motivation has largely focused on general public-sector employees, administrative organizations, and public management systems. Comparatively less attention has been given to emergency workers in high-risk environments, particularly in developing-country contexts. Existing research also frequently examines direct relationships between leadership and employee outcomes without sufficiently explaining the internal psychological processes through which inclusive leadership may influence public-oriented motivation. As a result, there remains a need to investigate whether psychological mechanisms such as psychological safety and organizational belonging help explain how inclusion translates into stronger PSM among emergency workers.

Pakistan provides an important context for addressing this gap because cultural values, organizational hierarchies, occupational risks, and institutional conditions may shape the experience of inclusion differently from Western public-sector environments where much of the existing literature has been developed. The findings of international studies cannot automatically be generalized to Pakistani emergency organizations. Employees may interpret leadership behaviors, participation, authority, and public duty through culturally specific norms. Therefore, context-sensitive research is necessary to determine how inclusive leadership operates within Pakistan's emergency-service institutions and whether the psychological benefits of inclusion contribute to sustained motivation for public service.

Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between inclusive organizational practices and public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan, with particular attention to the psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship. It proposes that inclusion may strengthen PSM not simply as a direct managerial influence but through psychological experiences that make employees feel safe, respected, valued, and connected to their organizational and public missions. By focusing on emergency workers, the study extends research on inclusion beyond conventional office-based public organizations

and highlights the distinctive realities of high-risk service environments. The study also contributes to public administration and organizational psychology by integrating inclusion, psychological safety, and public service motivation within a single explanatory framework.

Ultimately, leading with inclusion should be understood as more than a normative commitment to fairness. In high-risk public services, it may represent a strategic leadership approach that supports the psychological conditions necessary for sustained public commitment. Understanding these pathways can help public organizations develop leadership practices and workplace cultures that protect not only employees' well-being and participation but also their enduring motivation to serve communities. In a context where emergency workers regularly confront significant personal and professional challenges, strengthening the psychological foundations of public service motivation may be essential for building resilient, responsive, and citizen-oriented public institutions in Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Service Motivation in High-Risk Public Services

Public service motivation (PSM) is a central concept in public administration research and refers to an individual's orientation toward serving society and pursuing the public interest. Perry and Wise (1990) conceptualized PSM as a motivational predisposition that encourages individuals to act in response to motives associated with public institutions and public service. Perry (1996) subsequently developed a multidimensional approach emphasizing attraction to public policymaking, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Although the dimensions of PSM have been refined and debated across cultural contexts, the concept remains closely associated with employees' willingness to contribute to collective welfare beyond narrow self-interest.

Research has consistently linked PSM with positive employee and organizational outcomes. Publicly motivated employees often demonstrate higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, engagement, and performance (Ritz et al., 2016; Vandenabeele, 2007). Meta-analytic research also suggests that PSM has meaningful relationships with work attitudes and prosocial behaviors (Harari et al., 2017). These outcomes are especially important in high-risk public services, where emergency workers may be required to perform difficult tasks under conditions involving physical danger, emotional distress, and substantial uncertainty. Their commitment to public welfare can therefore serve as an important motivational resource that supports persistence and prosocial behavior during challenging operational situations.

However, PSM should not be viewed solely as a stable personal characteristic. Recent scholarship increasingly recognizes that organizational environments, leadership behaviors, and work experiences can shape the expression and development of public-oriented motivation (Vandenabeele, 2014). This perspective is particularly relevant to emergency-service organizations because employees' motivation may be influenced by whether they experience fairness, respect, participation, and recognition within their workplaces.

Inclusion and Inclusive Leadership

Workplace inclusion has emerged as an important concept for understanding how employees experience membership within organizations. Shore et al. (2011) describe inclusion as the simultaneous fulfillment of belongingness and uniqueness. Employees feel included when they are accepted as legitimate members of their work groups while also being able to express their distinctive perspectives and identities. This definition is particularly relevant in emergency services, where teamwork and organizational cohesion are essential but should not suppress employee voice or diversity of thought.

Inclusive leadership represents a leadership approach that promotes openness, accessibility, and availability. Carmeli et al. (2010) argue that inclusive leaders encourage employee involvement and create conditions that support participation. Similarly, Randel et al. (2018) propose that inclusive leadership enhances employees' perceptions that they are valued members of the organization and can contribute to important organizational processes. Inclusive leaders may demonstrate fairness, invite diverse perspectives, acknowledge employee contributions, and provide opportunities for meaningful participation.

In high-risk public-service organizations, inclusion may be particularly significant because hierarchical structures can restrict communication between leaders and frontline employees. While formal authority is often operationally necessary during emergencies, employees must still be able to raise concerns and share information. Inclusive leadership can therefore help balance organizational discipline with interpersonal openness. Employees who feel respected and recognized may be more willing to internalize organizational values and develop stronger commitment to the public mission.

Psychological Safety as a Mediating Mechanism

Psychological safety provides an important explanation for how inclusion may influence employee motivation. Edmondson (1999) defines psychological safety as a shared belief that a work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. In psychologically safe environments, employees are more comfortable asking questions, reporting errors, seeking assistance, and expressing different opinions. Such behaviors are particularly important in emergency services, where communication failures may have serious consequences for workers and citizens.

Inclusive leadership can foster psychological safety by demonstrating that employee participation is valued rather than punished. When leaders are accessible, open to questions, and receptive to alternative views, employees may experience reduced fear of negative interpersonal consequences (Carmeli et al., 2010). Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) similarly found that leader inclusiveness can strengthen psychological safety by encouraging participation from employees across professional and hierarchical boundaries.

Psychological safety may subsequently strengthen PSM by allowing emergency workers to engage more fully with the public mission of their organizations. Employees who feel psychologically safe are more likely to participate actively, communicate concerns, and take responsibility for collective outcomes. Such experiences can enhance the perception that individual contributions have social value, reinforcing commitment to public welfare and service. Therefore, psychological safety may operate as a psychological bridge between inclusive leadership and public service motivation.

Organizational Belonging and Public-Oriented Motivation

A second relevant psychological pathway involves employees' sense of belonging and identification. According to social identity theory, individuals derive part of their self-concept from membership in meaningful social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Strong identification with an organization can influence employees' attitudes and behaviors by encouraging them to internalize organizational goals and values (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Inclusive workplaces can strengthen this process by communicating that employees are respected and valued members of the organization. When emergency workers feel that they genuinely belong, their relationship with the organization may become more emotionally meaningful. This belonging may encourage employees to identify with the broader public mission of emergency services and increase their willingness to serve citizens.

In the Pakistani context, organizational belonging may be especially important because emergency workers frequently perform demanding public duties within structured institutional environments. Supportive leadership and inclusive practices may help personnel maintain a sense of dignity and purpose despite occupational pressures. However, limited research has examined these relationships within Pakistan's emergency-service sector. Therefore, this study addresses an important gap by examining whether inclusion strengthens PSM through psychological safety and organizational belonging. By focusing on these mechanisms, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how inclusive organizational environments can support public service motivation among workers operating under high-risk conditions.

Theoretical Framework

This study develops an integrated theoretical framework to explain how inclusion may strengthen public service motivation (PSM) among emergency workers in Pakistan. The framework is grounded primarily in **Social Identity Theory**, **Psychological Safety Theory**, and **Self-Determination Theory**. Together, these perspectives explain how inclusive leadership and workplace practices influence employees' psychological experiences, including feelings of safety, belonging, competence, autonomy, and identification with organizational goals. These psychological experiences are particularly important in high-risk public-service organizations, where employees are required to sustain commitment to collective welfare while operating under pressure, uncertainty, and personal risk.

Social Identity Theory and Organizational Belonging

Social Identity Theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), proposes that individuals derive part of their self-concept from their membership in social groups. Employees therefore define themselves not only as individuals but also as members of organizations and professional communities. Ashforth and Mael (1989) extended this perspective to organizational settings, arguing that identification with an organization influences attitudes and behaviors by connecting individual self-concepts with organizational values and objectives.

Inclusion can strengthen this process by creating a work environment in which employees feel accepted, respected, and valued. According to Shore et al. (2011), inclusion involves the simultaneous experience of belongingness and uniqueness. Employees should feel that they are legitimate members of their work group while also having opportunities to express their individual perspectives. For emergency workers, this dual experience is particularly important because effective emergency response requires both strong teamwork and the ability to communicate diverse observations and concerns.

When emergency personnel perceive inclusive leadership and practices, they may develop a stronger sense of organizational belonging and identification. This identification can encourage employees to internalize the public mission of emergency-service organizations. The desire to protect and serve citizens may therefore become psychologically connected to employees' own professional identity. Consequently, Social Identity Theory provides a foundation for explaining how inclusion can contribute indirectly to PSM through enhanced organizational belonging. Employees who perceive themselves as valued members of a public-service institution may be more likely to demonstrate commitment to the public interest and willingness to engage in prosocial service.

Psychological Safety Theory and Inclusive Work Environments

Psychological Safety Theory provides a second explanation for the relationship between inclusion and PSM. Edmondson (1999) defines psychological safety as the shared belief that a work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. In psychologically safe workplaces, employees can ask questions, seek assistance, report mistakes, express concerns, and present alternative opinions without excessive fear of embarrassment or punishment.

Inclusive leadership is expected to strengthen psychological safety because inclusive leaders demonstrate openness, accessibility, and availability to employees (Carmeli et al., 2010). By actively inviting employee participation and responding respectfully to diverse perspectives, leaders can reduce the interpersonal risks associated with speaking up. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) further demonstrated that leader inclusiveness can enhance psychological safety by encouraging participation across professional and hierarchical boundaries.

This mechanism is highly relevant to emergency services. High-risk public organizations often depend on rapid communication and accurate information sharing. Frontline workers may observe hazards or operational failures that are not immediately visible to senior management. If employees fear blame or negative consequences, important information may remain unreported. Conversely, psychologically safe employees may communicate concerns more openly and participate more actively in collective problem-solving.

Psychological safety may also strengthen PSM by enabling employees to experience meaningful participation in public-service delivery. When emergency workers feel confident that their contributions are respected, they may develop a stronger sense of responsibility and connection to collective outcomes. The freedom to contribute can reinforce the perception that individual actions have meaningful consequences for citizens and communities. Psychological safety therefore represents an important psychological pathway through which inclusive leadership may support PSM.

Self-Determination Theory and Internalized Motivation

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) further explains how inclusive environments may strengthen intrinsic and prosocial forms of motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), the quality of motivation is influenced by the satisfaction of three fundamental psychological needs: **autonomy, competence, and relatedness**. When these needs are satisfied, individuals are more likely to internalize organizational values and engage in self-determined behavior.

Inclusive leadership can contribute to all three psychological needs. Employees experience autonomy when their perspectives are considered and they have opportunities to participate in meaningful decisions. Competence may be strengthened when leaders recognize employee contributions and provide support for professional development. Relatedness is enhanced when workers feel respected, accepted, and connected to colleagues and organizational leaders. These experiences can create a motivational environment in which emergency workers perceive public service as personally meaningful rather than merely externally required.

In the context of emergency services, the satisfaction of these needs may be especially important because employees frequently encounter high workloads, stress, and occupational risk. External rewards alone may not sustain long-term commitment under such conditions. Instead, motivation may become stronger when workers internalize the values and purpose of public service. SDT therefore complements PSM theory by explaining how organizational experiences can transform public-service values into personally endorsed motivations.

Integrated Theoretical Framework

The proposed framework combines these perspectives to explain the psychological pathways linking inclusion to PSM. Inclusive leadership and workplace practices are expected to create conditions in which emergency workers feel respected, accepted, and able to contribute. These conditions strengthen **organizational belonging and identification** through the processes described by Social Identity Theory. Simultaneously, inclusive behaviors promote **psychological safety**, enabling employees to communicate and participate without fear of negative interpersonal consequences. Through Self-

Determination Theory, inclusion can also satisfy employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, supporting the internalization of public-service values.

The framework therefore proposes that inclusion contributes to PSM both directly and indirectly through psychological experiences. Among emergency workers in Pakistan, feeling included may help transform demanding public-service work into a stronger sense of purpose, responsibility, and commitment to collective welfare. By integrating Social Identity Theory, Psychological Safety Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, the study provides a comprehensive explanation of why inclusive leadership may be particularly valuable in high-risk public-service environments.

Research Gap and Hypotheses Development

Research Gap

Although public service motivation (PSM) has received extensive scholarly attention since the foundational work of Perry and Wise (1990), important conceptual, empirical, and contextual gaps remain. Existing research has established that PSM is associated with positive outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement, prosocial behavior, and performance (Ritz et al., 2016; Vandenabeele, 2007). However, a substantial proportion of this literature has concentrated on the outcomes of PSM rather than the organizational and psychological conditions through which it can be developed or strengthened. While PSM was initially conceptualized partly as an individual predisposition, contemporary research increasingly recognizes that organizational environments and leadership practices can influence motivational experiences. Nevertheless, the role of **inclusion** as an antecedent of PSM remains insufficiently examined.

The first gap concerns the limited integration of **inclusive leadership and workplace inclusion** within the PSM literature. Existing leadership research has demonstrated that inclusive leaders can promote employee participation, voice, creativity, engagement, and psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2010; Randel et al., 2018). Similarly, inclusion research has shown that employees are more likely to experience positive organizational outcomes when they feel both a sense of belonging and an ability to express their uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011). However, relatively little research has directly investigated whether these inclusive experiences strengthen employees' willingness to serve the public interest. This represents an important omission because inclusion may not only improve internal organizational relationships but also influence how employees connect psychologically with the broader public mission of their institutions.

A second gap relates to the limited examination of **psychological mechanisms** linking inclusion with PSM. Studies often examine direct relationships between leadership styles and employee outcomes, without adequately explaining how leadership influences employees' internal motivational states. This limitation creates a "black box" between organizational practices and public-oriented motivation. Psychological safety offers a theoretically important mechanism for addressing this gap. Inclusive leaders who encourage participation and treat employees with openness and respect may reduce fear and create a safe environment for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999). In turn, employees who feel psychologically safe may participate more actively in organizational activities and develop a stronger sense of responsibility for collective outcomes. However, the mediating role of psychological safety in explaining the relationship between inclusion and PSM remains underdeveloped, particularly in high-risk public-service settings.

A third gap concerns the role of **organizational belonging and identification**. Inclusion is fundamentally associated with the experience of being accepted as a legitimate and valued member of a group (Shore et al., 2011). Social Identity Theory suggests that belonging can strengthen employees' identification with organizational values and objectives (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In public-service organizations, stronger identification may facilitate the internalization of

collective values and public-service goals. Nevertheless, research has rarely integrated inclusion, organizational belonging, and PSM into a unified explanatory framework. This study therefore addresses the need to examine whether employees' sense of belonging serves as a psychological pathway through which inclusive leadership contributes to greater PSM.

A fourth gap is related to the **occupational context** of existing research. Much of the literature on PSM and inclusive leadership has been developed using general public-sector employees, administrative personnel, healthcare professionals, or corporate employees. Comparatively less research has focused specifically on emergency workers operating in high-risk public-service environments. Emergency personnel regularly encounter physical danger, traumatic events, intense workloads, time pressure, and unpredictable working conditions. These circumstances may make the psychological foundations of motivation particularly significant. Unlike conventional office environments, emergency workers must often make rapid decisions and communicate across organizational and professional boundaries. Therefore, findings derived from low-risk organizational settings cannot automatically be generalized to emergency services.

The fifth and most important gap concerns the **geographical and institutional context of Pakistan**. Much of the dominant empirical literature on PSM, psychological safety, and inclusive leadership has emerged from Western or developed-country settings. Pakistan represents a significantly different context in terms of public administration, organizational hierarchy, cultural values, resource availability, and emergency-service systems. High power-distance relationships and formal institutional structures may influence employees' willingness to express opinions, challenge authority, or participate in decision-making. Consequently, inclusion and psychological safety may be particularly meaningful for emergency workers operating within structured and hierarchical public organizations. There is a clear need for context-specific evidence regarding how inclusive practices influence public service motivation among emergency personnel in Pakistan.

Based on these gaps, the present study makes three principal contributions. First, it positions inclusion as an important organizational antecedent of PSM. Second, it opens the psychological "black box" by examining psychological safety and organizational belonging as mediating mechanisms. Third, it extends these relationships to high-risk emergency workers in Pakistan. The study therefore integrates public administration, leadership, and organizational psychology to provide a contextually grounded explanation of how inclusive workplaces may strengthen the motivation of employees who are responsible for protecting and serving the public.

Hypotheses Development

Inclusion and Public Service Motivation

Inclusive workplaces communicate that employees are respected, valued, and able to participate in meaningful organizational processes. When emergency workers perceive that their contributions are recognized, they may develop stronger emotional attachment to the public mission of their organizations. Inclusive leadership may also strengthen employees' perceptions that their work has value and social significance. Through the satisfaction of belonging, relatedness, and participation needs, employees may become more willing to pursue collective rather than purely personal goals. Therefore:

H1: Workplace inclusion has a significant positive effect on public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan.

Inclusion and Psychological Safety

Inclusive leadership encourages openness, accessibility, and employee participation. When leaders listen to diverse perspectives and respond constructively to employee concerns, workers may perceive lower interpersonal risks associated with speaking up. Psychological safety is particularly important in emergency organizations because employees may need to report mistakes, question decisions, or communicate potential risks. Accordingly:

H2: Workplace inclusion has a significant positive effect on psychological safety among emergency workers in Pakistan.

Psychological Safety and Public Service Motivation

Psychological safety enables employees to contribute openly to organizational objectives without excessive fear of negative consequences. Emergency workers who feel safe to communicate may participate more actively in solving problems and protecting collective interests. This meaningful involvement can strengthen employees' sense of responsibility and connection to the public mission. Therefore:

H3: Psychological safety has a significant positive effect on public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan.

The Mediating Role of Psychological Safety

Based on Psychological Safety Theory, inclusion may first create a supportive interpersonal environment that enables employees to participate openly. These psychologically safe experiences may subsequently strengthen public-oriented motivation by increasing employees' sense of meaningful contribution. Thus:

H4: Psychological safety mediates the positive relationship between workplace inclusion and public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan.

Inclusion and Organizational Belonging

According to Social Identity Theory, individuals develop stronger identification when they perceive acceptance and membership within a valued group. Inclusive practices can strengthen emergency workers' sense of belonging by communicating that they are respected and legitimate members of their organizations. Therefore:

H5: Workplace inclusion has a significant positive effect on organizational belonging among emergency workers in Pakistan.

Organizational Belonging and Public Service Motivation

Emergency workers who experience strong organizational belonging may be more likely to internalize the public values and service mission of their institutions. As a result, organizational belonging may strengthen their commitment to serving citizens and the broader public interest. Therefore:

H6: Organizational belonging has a significant positive effect on public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan.

The Mediating Role of Organizational Belonging

Inclusive organizational practices may increase PSM by first strengthening employees' sense of membership and identification. When emergency workers feel that they genuinely belong, they may be more likely to identify with the organization's public mission and translate this identification into stronger motivation to serve society. Accordingly:

H7: Organizational belonging mediates the positive relationship between workplace inclusion and public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan.

Overall, the proposed hypotheses conceptualize inclusion as an organizational resource that influences PSM directly and indirectly through psychological safety and organizational belonging. The model responds to identified theoretical and empirical gaps by explaining not only whether inclusion influences public service motivation but also the psychological pathways through which this relationship operates in the high-risk public-service context of Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Philosophical Approach

This study adopted a **quantitative, cross-sectional research design** to examine the psychological pathways through which workplace inclusion influences public service motivation (PSM) among emergency workers in Pakistan. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to test theoretically derived relationships among clearly defined constructs and to evaluate the proposed hypotheses using statistical techniques. The study was guided by a **post-positivist philosophical perspective**, which assumes that social phenomena can be investigated systematically through empirical observation and measurement, while recognizing that human perceptions and social realities cannot be measured with complete certainty (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research employed a **deductive approach**. The proposed relationships among workplace inclusion, psychological safety, organizational belonging, and PSM were developed from established theoretical perspectives, including Social Identity Theory, Psychological Safety Theory, and Self-Determination Theory. Based on these theories and previous empirical findings, the study formulated seven hypotheses and tested them using survey data. The cross-sectional design enabled the collection of data from a relatively large number of emergency workers at a single point in time and provided an appropriate basis for examining the proposed structural relationships among the study variables.

Study Population and Research Context

The target population consisted of employees working in high-risk public emergency services in Pakistan. These included personnel involved in emergency response, rescue operations, ambulance services, firefighting, disaster management, and related frontline public-safety activities. Emergency workers represent a particularly important population for this study because their responsibilities involve direct exposure to uncertain, stressful, and potentially dangerous situations. Their effectiveness depends not only on technical skills and organizational resources but also on sustained motivation to serve the public.

The Pakistani emergency-service context provides a relevant environment for investigating inclusion and PSM. Emergency organizations typically operate through formal hierarchies and structured command systems while requiring strong coordination and rapid communication among personnel. The study therefore focused on emergency workers employed in public-sector organizations, with particular attention to institutions operating under provincial or government emergency-management structures. Where organizational access permitted, employees were approached from rescue and emergency-

response institutions, ambulance services, firefighting units, disaster-response organizations, and other public emergency-service departments.

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size.

The study employed a **purposive sampling strategy**, as participants were required to meet specific eligibility criteria. Respondents had to be currently employed in a public emergency-service organization and have direct or indirect involvement in emergency-response activities. Participants were also required to have sufficient work experience to evaluate their perceptions of inclusion, psychological safety, organizational belonging, and public service motivation.

Because emergency-service organizations are geographically dispersed and operational access can be difficult, a combination of **purposive and convenience sampling** was used. Administrative permission was sought from relevant organizations before distributing the questionnaire. Supervisors and organizational contact persons assisted in circulating the survey among eligible employees, although participation remained voluntary.

A minimum sample size of approximately 300 respondents was considered appropriate for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), particularly given the complexity of the proposed model and the number of relationships being tested. To account for incomplete or unusable questionnaires, the study aimed to collect between **350 and 450 responses**. The final usable sample was retained after screening for missing values, incomplete responses, and response-pattern abnormalities. This sample size was considered sufficient to provide adequate statistical power for examining both direct and mediating relationships.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed in paper-based and electronic formats depending on organizational access and participant preference. Before data collection, participants received a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the procedures adopted to protect confidentiality.

The questionnaire included two main sections. The first collected demographic and professional information, including age, gender, educational qualification, organizational role, years of service, and type of emergency-service organization. The second section measured the principal study constructs: workplace inclusion, psychological safety, organizational belonging, and public service motivation.

To reduce common method bias, several procedural safeguards were adopted. Respondents were assured that there were no right or wrong answers and that their individual responses would remain anonymous. The questionnaire also used clear and neutral wording to minimize social desirability bias. Construct items were presented in separate sections, and respondents were encouraged to answer honestly based on their actual workplace experiences. Completed questionnaires were reviewed before analysis, and responses containing excessive missing data or clear response patterns were excluded.

Measurement of Study Variables

All major constructs were measured using previously validated multi-item scales adapted to the context of emergency services in Pakistan. Workplace inclusion was measured through items reflecting employees' perceptions of belonging, acceptance, respect, and meaningful participation within their organizations. The scale was conceptually informed by inclusion research emphasizing the dual dimensions of belongingness and uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011).

Psychological safety was measured using items adapted from Edmondson's (1999) established psychological safety scale. The measure assessed the extent to which respondents believed that they could speak up, ask questions, report mistakes, and express concerns without fear of humiliation or negative consequences.

Organizational belonging was measured through items reflecting employees' emotional connection, acceptance, and perceived membership within the organization. The construct was theoretically aligned with organizational identification and social identity research (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Public service motivation was measured using items derived from established PSM measures based on Perry's (1996) multidimensional conceptualization and later international refinements of the construct. The items captured key aspects of commitment to the public interest, compassion, civic responsibility, and willingness to contribute to collective welfare.

Unless otherwise specified, respondents evaluated statements using a **five-point Likert-type scale**, ranging from 1 (**strongly disagree**) to 5 (**strongly agree**). The wording of some items was adapted to ensure relevance and linguistic clarity within the Pakistani emergency-service context. If the survey was administered in more than one language, translation and back-translation procedures were used to maintain conceptual equivalence between versions.

Data Analysis Strategy

Data were analyzed using **SPSS and SmartPLS software**. SPSS was used for preliminary screening, descriptive statistics, and demographic analysis. The proposed conceptual model and hypotheses were tested using **Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)**. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for analyzing complex relationships involving multiple latent constructs and mediating variables, particularly when the objective is theory development and prediction (Hair et al., 2022).

The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, the **measurement model** was assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs. Internal consistency reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and rho_A. Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

Second, the **structural model** was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships. The analysis examined collinearity, path coefficients, t-values, p-values, confidence intervals, and explained variance (R^2). Predictive relevance was also assessed where appropriate. A bootstrapping procedure with **5,000 resamples** was used to test the statistical significance of direct and indirect relationships. Mediation hypotheses were evaluated by examining the significance of the indirect effects of workplace inclusion on PSM through psychological safety and organizational belonging.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed accepted ethical principles for social-science research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. No personally identifying information was required for statistical analysis, and responses were treated confidentially.

Because emergency workers may face organizational pressures when participating in research, particular attention was given to protecting anonymity. Managers and supervisors were not provided with individual responses, and the findings were reported only in aggregated form. The study also avoided collecting sensitive operational or security-related information. Ethical approval was obtained

from the relevant academic or institutional ethics review body before the commencement of formal data collection.

Through this methodological design, the study provides a systematic and empirically testable approach for examining how workplace inclusion contributes to public service motivation among emergency workers in Pakistan and whether psychological safety and organizational belonging explain the psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship.

RESULTS AND TABLES

Important note. The numerical values in this document are illustrative templates based on the previously drafted results. Replace all figures with actual SPSS/SmartPLS output before journal submission. Empirical findings must not be fabricated.

1. Respondent Profile

The final sample comprised [insert actual sample size] emergency workers from public emergency-service organizations in Pakistan. Table 1 should be completed using the actual demographic distribution of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	[]	[]
	Female	[]	[]
Age	20–30 years	[]	[]
	31–40 years	[]	[]
	41–50 years	[]	[]
	Above 50 years	[]	[]
Education	Secondary/Higher Secondary	[]	[]
	Bachelor's degree	[]	[]
	Master's degree or above	[]	[]
Experience	Less than 5 years	[]	[]
	5–10 years	[]	[]
	More than 10 years	[]	[]

2. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed through internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The illustrative values indicate acceptable levels of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE).

Table 2. Illustrative Reliability and Convergent Validity Results

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE	Interpretation
Workplace Inclusion	.89	.92	.66	Acceptable
Psychological Safety	.87	.91	.68	Acceptable
Organizational Belonging	.88	.92	.70	Acceptable
Public Service Motivation	.91	.93	.64	Acceptable

Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The illustrative values were below commonly used thresholds, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 3. Illustrative HTMT Results

Construct	1	2	3	4
1. Workplace Inclusion	—			
2. Psychological Safety	.71	—		
3. Organizational Belonging	.68	.62	—	
4. Public Service Motivation	.59	.57	.64	—

3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The illustrative correlation results indicate positive relationships among workplace inclusion, psychological safety, organizational belonging, and public service motivation.

Table 4. Illustrative Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Workplace Inclusion	3.84	0.71	1			
2. Psychological Safety	3.71	0.76	.54**	1		
3. Organizational Belonging	3.88	0.68	.49**	.46**	1	
4. Public Service Motivation	4.02	0.63	.43**	.39**	.52**	1

Note. **p < .01.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The illustrative structural model results indicate significant positive relationships between workplace inclusion and public service motivation, psychological safety, and organizational belonging. Both psychological safety and organizational belonging also positively predicted public service motivation.

Table 5. Illustrative Direct Effects and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Inclusion → PSM	.24	3.12	.002	Supported
H2	Inclusion → Psychological Safety	.54	9.18	< .001	Supported
H3	Psychological Safety → PSM	.19	2.74	.006	Supported
H5	Inclusion → Organizational Belonging	.49	8.02	< .001	Supported
H6	Organizational Belonging → PSM	.36	5.47	< .001	Supported

Mediation Analysis

The illustrative mediation analysis suggests that both psychological safety and organizational belonging significantly mediated the relationship between workplace inclusion and public service motivation. Organizational belonging showed the comparatively stronger indirect effect.

Table 6. Illustrative Mediation Results

Hypothesis	Indirect Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H4	Inclusion → Psychological Safety → PSM	.10	2.61	.009	Supported
H7	Inclusion → Organizational Belonging → PSM	.18	4.21	< .001	Supported

Explained Variance

The illustrative R^2 values show that the model explained meaningful variance in psychological safety, organizational belonging, and public service motivation.

Table 7. Illustrative Explained Variance

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Interpretation
Psychological Safety	.29	Moderate
Organizational Belonging	.24	Moderate
Public Service Motivation	.46	Moderate to substantial

FIGURES

Figure 1. Proposed Structural Model with Illustrative Results

Workplace Inclusion

$$\beta = .54^{***}$$



Psychological Safety — $\beta = .19^{**}$ —► Public Service Motivation

Workplace Inclusion

$$\beta = .49^{***}$$



Organizational Belonging — $\beta = .36^{***}$ —► Public Service Motivation

Workplace Inclusion — $\beta = .24^{**}$ —► Public Service Motivation

Note. $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

Figure 2. Illustrative Relative Strength of Direct Effects on Public Service Motivation

Organizational Belonging $\beta = .36$

Workplace Inclusion $\beta = .24$

Psychological Safety $\beta = .19$

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, the illustrative findings support all seven proposed hypotheses. Workplace inclusion was positively associated with public service motivation both directly and indirectly. Psychological safety and organizational belonging acted as significant mediating mechanisms. The model suggests that emergency workers may demonstrate stronger public service motivation when they experience

acceptance, meaningful participation, psychological safety, and a genuine sense of belonging within their organizations.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the psychological pathways through which workplace inclusion influences public service motivation (PSM) among emergency workers in Pakistan. Drawing on Social Identity Theory, Psychological Safety Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, the study proposed that workplace inclusion would influence PSM directly and indirectly through psychological safety and organizational belonging. The findings, based on the illustrative results presented in the previous section, support the proposed conceptual model and suggest that inclusion is an important organizational resource for strengthening public-oriented motivation in high-risk public-service environments. The results also demonstrate that the effects of inclusion are not limited to general employee attitudes; rather, inclusive workplace experiences may influence the psychological conditions through which emergency workers develop a stronger commitment to serving citizens and the public interest.

The first finding indicates that workplace inclusion has a significant positive relationship with public service motivation, supporting H1. This result suggests that emergency workers who feel respected, valued, accepted, and involved in organizational processes are more likely to demonstrate stronger motivation to serve the public. This finding is consistent with the broader PSM literature, which increasingly recognizes that public-oriented motivation is influenced not only by stable individual values but also by organizational and institutional experiences (Perry & Wise, 1990; Vandenabeele, 2007). In the context of high-risk emergency services, inclusion may communicate to employees that their role and contribution are meaningful. When workers experience respect and recognition from their organizations, they may be more likely to reciprocate through stronger commitment to organizational and public-service objectives.

This finding is particularly relevant to emergency workers because their work involves significant personal and professional demands. Employees who regularly encounter dangerous, stressful, or traumatic situations may require more than formal job obligations to sustain their commitment. Inclusive workplace practices can reinforce the social and moral meaning of emergency-service work by demonstrating that the organization values the people responsible for delivering these services. Consequently, inclusion may contribute to the development of a reciprocal relationship in which employees who feel valued are more willing to invest effort in protecting and serving others. This perspective supports the argument that inclusive leadership should be considered a strategic resource rather than merely an administrative or ethical requirement.

The results also show a significant positive relationship between workplace inclusion and psychological safety, supporting H2. This finding is consistent with Edmondson's (1999) conceptualization of psychological safety and with previous research demonstrating that inclusive leadership encourages employees to participate, ask questions, and express concerns without excessive fear of negative interpersonal consequences. Carmeli et al. (2010) and Nemphard and Edmondson (2006) similarly emphasized the importance of leader openness and accessibility in creating psychologically safe workplaces. The present findings extend this argument to the high-risk public-service context of Pakistan. Psychological safety is especially important among emergency workers because operational effectiveness often depends on the rapid sharing of information. Frontline personnel may observe hazards, identify procedural weaknesses, or recognize emerging risks that are not immediately visible to supervisors. In highly hierarchical organizations, however, employees may hesitate to raise concerns if they fear blame, criticism, or punishment. The positive relationship between inclusion and psychological safety therefore suggests that inclusive workplace practices may help reduce these barriers. When leaders actively invite participation and respond respectfully to employee concerns, workers may become more willing to communicate openly. In emergency environments, such openness

can have implications not only for employee attitudes but also for organizational learning, coordination, and public safety. The study further found that psychological safety positively influenced public service motivation, supporting H3. This result suggests that emergency workers who feel safe to participate in workplace interactions may develop a stronger connection to their public-service mission. Employees who can speak openly, ask for support, and contribute ideas may experience greater involvement in achieving collective objectives. This sense of meaningful participation can strengthen the perception that their individual efforts contribute to outcomes that affect citizens and communities. The result therefore provides evidence that PSM may be strengthened through psychologically supportive organizational conditions. The mediation analysis supported H4 by showing that psychological safety mediated the relationship between workplace inclusion and PSM. This finding is theoretically important because it demonstrates that inclusion does not influence public-oriented motivation solely through a direct relationship. Instead, one important pathway involves the creation of a psychologically safe environment. In other words, emergency workers may respond to inclusive practices by becoming more confident in taking interpersonal risks and participating in organizational processes, which subsequently strengthens their motivation to contribute to public welfare. This finding helps address the “black box” between leadership behavior and public service motivation by identifying a specific psychological mechanism through which inclusion can produce motivational outcomes. The results also demonstrated a significant positive relationship between workplace inclusion and organizational belonging, supporting H5. This finding is strongly aligned with Social Identity Theory and the conceptualization of inclusion as the simultaneous experience of belongingness and uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011). Emergency workers who perceive themselves as respected and accepted members of their organizations may develop a stronger emotional connection with their professional groups. In high-risk occupations, where teamwork and collective identity are particularly important, a sense of belonging may serve as a major psychological resource.

The positive relationship between organizational belonging and PSM, supporting H6, further suggests that employees may translate identification with their organizations into commitment to the broader public mission. According to Social Identity Theory, individuals often internalize the goals and values of groups with which they strongly identify (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In the present context, employees who experience a strong sense of belonging may increasingly view the organization’s public mission as part of their own professional identity. The motivation to serve citizens can therefore become connected to how employees understand themselves as members of an emergency-service organization. The mediation analysis also supported H7, indicating that organizational belonging mediated the relationship between workplace inclusion and PSM. Importantly, the illustrative results suggested that this indirect pathway was stronger than the pathway through psychological safety. This indicates that although employees’ freedom to communicate is important, their emotional sense of acceptance and membership may be especially influential in shaping public-oriented motivation. For emergency workers, a strong sense of belonging may reinforce collective responsibility, professional pride, and commitment to the organization’s public mission. The Pakistani context provides additional significance to these findings. Emergency-service organizations often operate within formal and hierarchical structures in which authority, discipline, and operational coordination are necessary. However, these structural requirements should not prevent the development of inclusive relationships. The findings suggest that organizations can maintain operational discipline while simultaneously creating an environment in which employees feel heard, respected, and psychologically supported. In fact, inclusion may strengthen rather than weaken organizational effectiveness by encouraging communication, identification, and commitment. Overall, the findings contribute to the literature by integrating inclusion, psychological safety, organizational belonging, and PSM within a unified framework. The results demonstrate that the relationship between workplace inclusion and public service motivation is multidimensional and psychologically grounded. Emergency workers are more likely to sustain a strong commitment to public service when they experience both the interpersonal security to speak openly and the emotional experience of belonging to a valued organization. The study therefore advances an important practical conclusion: public-service motivation in high-risk environments cannot be understood only as an individual characteristic. It can also be

cultivated through inclusive leadership and organizational practices that strengthen employees' psychological connection to their work, organization, and public mission.

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Implications

The findings of this study have important theoretical, managerial, and policy implications for understanding public service motivation (PSM) among emergency workers in Pakistan. First, the study contributes theoretically by positioning **inclusive leadership as an important antecedent of PSM** and by highlighting the psychological processes through which inclusion may translate into stronger motivation to serve the public. Rather than treating PSM as an exclusively individual disposition, the findings suggest that organizational environments and leadership behaviours can strengthen employees' willingness to contribute to public welfare. This perspective extends existing public administration research by connecting inclusive leadership with psychological safety, perceived inclusion, work engagement, and public service motivation. Recent research in Pakistan similarly indicates that inclusive leadership can strengthen psychological safety and prosocial employee behaviours. Second, the study has significant **managerial implications for emergency-service organizations**. Emergency workers operate under conditions involving uncertainty, time pressure, physical risk, emotional demands, and hierarchical decision-making. In such environments, leaders should actively encourage employee voice, respect diverse perspectives, recognize contributions, and ensure that personnel can communicate concerns without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety is particularly important because emergency operations depend on rapid information sharing and effective teamwork. Evidence from Pakistani public-sector healthcare organizations demonstrates that inclusive leadership and perceived inclusion can contribute to psychologically safer work environments. Third, the findings suggest that emergency-service organizations should incorporate **inclusive leadership competencies into recruitment, promotion, and leadership-development programmes**. Training should move beyond technical command-and-control skills and include communication, active listening, fair decision-making, conflict management, recognition of diverse employee experiences, and mechanisms for encouraging constructive feedback. Such practices could strengthen employees' sense of belonging and organizational value, ultimately supporting their motivation to serve citizens. The study also has implications for **public-sector policy**. Policymakers should recognize that maintaining PSM among emergency workers requires more than financial incentives or formal employment benefits. Leadership quality, organizational justice, psychological safety, and meaningful participation can represent important institutional resources. Pakistani research has also shown that public leadership can influence job performance partly through PSM, while environmental complexity can weaken the conversion of motivation into performance. Consequently, reforms should address both employee motivation and the organizational conditions that enable motivated employees to perform effectively.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, if the study relies primarily on a **cross-sectional research design**, causal relationships among inclusive leadership, psychological mechanisms, and PSM cannot be established with complete certainty. Although the theoretical model may suggest that inclusive leadership produces psychological safety and subsequently strengthens PSM, longitudinal evidence would provide stronger support for these causal pathways.

Second, reliance on **self-reported questionnaire data** may create common-method bias and social-desirability effects. Emergency workers may be reluctant to express negative perceptions about supervisors or organizations, particularly within hierarchical public-sector institutions. Future research should therefore combine employee surveys with supervisor assessments, administrative performance records, observational data, and qualitative interviews.

Third, the **Pakistan-specific context** may limit generalizability. Emergency services operate within distinctive institutional, cultural, administrative, and resource environments. Consequently, findings may not automatically apply to emergency workers in other countries or to private-sector organizations. Furthermore, differences among police, ambulance personnel, firefighters, disaster-response workers, and other emergency professionals may produce different psychological experiences.

Finally, emergency workers operate in highly dynamic environments, and factors such as workload, exposure to traumatic events, organizational politics, resource availability, and operational risk may influence PSM. Recent Pakistani research demonstrates that psychological safety can moderate relationships involving PSM and organizational conditions, suggesting that these contextual factors deserve greater attention.

Future Research

Future studies should employ **longitudinal and multi-wave designs** to examine whether inclusive leadership produces sustained changes in psychological safety, work engagement, and PSM over time. Experimental or quasi-experimental studies could further evaluate whether leadership-development interventions actually increase inclusion and motivation among emergency personnel.

Future research should also investigate **mediating and moderating mechanisms** in greater depth. Psychological safety, perceived organizational support, organizational identification, work meaningfulness, and employee engagement could be examined as mediators, while organizational justice, resilience, perceived risk, workload, and organizational politics could function as moderators. A multi-level framework could examine how individual perceptions interact with team-level inclusive climates.

Comparative studies across **Rescue 1122, police, firefighting, ambulance services, disaster-management agencies, and other emergency institutions** would provide a more comprehensive understanding of whether the psychological pathways identified in this study operate consistently across different high-risk occupations. Cross-provincial and cross-cultural comparisons would further improve generalizability. Finally, future research should examine whether inclusive leadership and PSM ultimately translate into measurable outcomes such as **service quality, employee retention, emergency response effectiveness, organizational citizenship behaviour, and citizen satisfaction**. Such research would help establish whether inclusion is not only psychologically beneficial but also strategically important for building resilient and effective public emergency services in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

This study, “**Leading with Inclusion in High-Risk Public Services: Unravelling the Psychological Pathways to Public Service Motivation among Emergency Workers in Pakistan**,” highlights the importance of leadership and psychological conditions in sustaining the motivation of employees who perform demanding and high-risk public duties. Emergency workers operate in environments characterized by uncertainty, operational pressure, personal risk, emotional demands, and limited resources. Under such circumstances, maintaining public service motivation (PSM) cannot depend solely on individual commitment; it also requires organizational environments in which employees feel respected, valued, heard, and psychologically secure. The study demonstrates the theoretical importance of **inclusive leadership** as a potential organizational resource for strengthening PSM. Inclusive leaders who encourage participation, recognize diverse perspectives, demonstrate accessibility, and create opportunities for employee voice can contribute to a stronger sense of belonging and organizational value. These leadership behaviours are particularly relevant in emergency services because effective response frequently depends on communication, teamwork, rapid information exchange, and the willingness of employees to speak up about operational risks. Evidence from Pakistan's public-sector organizations similarly indicates that inclusive leadership can strengthen psychological safety,

perceived inclusion, and positive employee behaviours. The study further emphasizes that the relationship between leadership and PSM is not necessarily direct. **Psychological safety, perceived inclusion, work meaningfulness, and employee engagement** can constitute important psychological pathways through which leadership influences employees' willingness to serve the public. Recent research involving Pakistani emergency services has likewise demonstrated relationships among public leadership, work meaningfulness, PSM, and work engagement, reinforcing the relevance of psychological mechanisms in high-pressure public-service environments. The findings also contribute to the growing evidence that PSM is shaped by organizational and contextual conditions. Research involving Pakistani civil servants has found that public leadership can positively influence performance through PSM, while environmental complexity can weaken the translation of motivation into performance. This suggests that simply recruiting highly motivated emergency personnel is insufficient; public organizations must create institutional conditions that allow motivation to be converted into effective service. Overall, the study concludes that **inclusive leadership should be regarded as a strategic component of resilient emergency-service management in Pakistan**. Strengthening leadership capability, psychological safety, employee voice, fairness, recognition, and meaningful participation can help create organizations in which emergency workers remain motivated despite demanding operational conditions. The broader implication is that effective public service begins not only with capable employees but also with leaders and institutions that enable those employees to contribute fully. Future evidence-based leadership reforms can therefore support both employee well-being and the quality, responsiveness, and resilience of emergency public services in Pakistan.

REFERENCES

- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands–Resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056>
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.
- Brewer, G. A. (2003). Building social capital: Civic attitudes and behavior of public servants. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 13(1), 5–26. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpart/mug002>
- Carmeli, A., Reiter-Palmon, R., & Ziv, E. (2010). Inclusive leadership and employee involvement in creative tasks in the workplace: The mediating role of psychological safety. *Creativity Research Journal*, 22(3), 250–260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2010.504654>
- Cropanzano, R., Anthony, E. L., Daniels, S. R., & Hall, A. V. (2017). Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Annals*, 11(1), 479–516. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2015.0099>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>
- Edmondson, A. C. (2018). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*. Wiley.

- Grant, A. M. (2008). Does intrinsic motivation fuel the prosocial fire? Motivational synergy in predicting persistence, performance, and productivity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(1), 48–58. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.48>
- Grant, A. M. (2008). The significance of task significance: Job performance effects, relational mechanisms, and boundary conditions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(1), 108–124. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.108>
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256287>
- Liu, B., Perry, J. L., & Green, R. D. (2010). Organizational commitment and public service motivation: An empirical investigation. *Public Management Review*, 12(5), 665–684.
- Moynihan, D. P., & Pandey, S. K. (2007). The role of organizations in fostering public service motivation. *Public Administration Review*, 67(1), 40–53. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00695.x>
- Perry, J. L. (1996). Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 6(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a024303>
- Perry, J. L., & Hondeghem, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Motivation in public management: The call of public service*. Oxford University Press.
- Perry, J. L., Hondeghem, A., & Wise, L. R. (2010). Revisiting the motivational bases of public service: Twenty years of research and an agenda for the future. *Public Administration Review*, 70(5), 681–690. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02196.x>
- Perry, J. L., & Wise, L. R. (1990). The motivational bases of public service. *Public Administration Review*, 50(3), 367–373.
- Qasim, S., Usman, M., Ghani, U., & Khan, K. (2022). Inclusive leadership and employees' helping behaviors: Role of psychological factors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 810902. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.810902>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.
- Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(7), 600–619. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940610690169>
- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701–716. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164405282471>
- Siddique, A., Liu, L., Farooq, S., & Ud Din, Q. M. (2025). Addressing work engagement in the presence of organizational politics: The roles of public service motivation and psychological safety climate in public-sector hospitals. *Acta Psychologica*, 257, 105069. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105069>

- Usman, A., Hanif, M. Z., & Ahmed, S. (2025). How public leadership shapes work engagement: The role of work meaningfulness and public service motivation in emergency services. *Indus Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(4), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.59075/ijss.v3i4.1941>
- Verka, S. T., Sabharwal, M., & Hassan, S. (2025). Impact of public leadership on public service motivation and performance in complex environments. *Public Administration and Development*, 45(1), 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.2069>
- Yousaf, M., Khan, M. M., & Paracha, A. T. (2022). Effects of inclusive leadership on quality of care: The mediating role of psychological safety climate and perceived workgroup inclusion. *Healthcare*, 10(11), 2258. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10112258>
- Wright, B. E. (2008). Methodological challenges associated with public service motivation research. In J. L. Perry & A. Hondeghem (Eds.), *Motivation in public management: The call of public service* (pp. 80–98). Oxford University Press.
- Wright, B. E., Moynihan, D. P., & Pandey, S. K. (2012). Pulling the levers: Transformational leadership, public service motivation, and mission valence. *Public Administration Review*, 72(2), 206–215. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2011.02496.x>
- Wright, B. E., Hassan, S., & Park, S. M. (2016). Does a public service ethic encourage ethical behaviour? Evidence from Korea. *Public Service Motivation Research*, 1–20.
- Wright, B. E., & Grant, A. M. (2010). Unanswered questions about public service motivation: Designing research to address key issues of emergence and effects. *Public Administration Review*, 70(5), 691–700. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02197.x>