Research on the Influence Mechanism of Inclusive Leadership on the Safety Advice Behavior of Generation Z Employees in Airlines

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ABSTRACT

To promote safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees in airline and examine how inclusive leadership influences this behavior, this research constructs a dual-mediation model grounded in social exchange, conservation of resources, and role identity theories. Then hypotheses were tested via multilevel regression analysis, by data collected through a survey of 296 Generation Z employees from multiple airlines. Results indicate that inclusive leadership significantly enhances safety advice behavior, mediated by organizational self-esteem and advice role identity. Employee-organizational values matching positively moderates these mediating effects. This research is the first to systematically reveal the mechanism and process through which inclusive leadership influences safety advice behavior, providing important theoretical and practical insights for promoting safety advice behavior among Generation Z employees and enhancing the sustainable safety performance of airlines. It also offers feasible paths and management guidance for optimizing leadership styles and engaging Generation Z employees in safety governance.

Keywords: Inclusive leadership; Safety advice behavior; Generation Z employees; Organizational self-esteem; Advice role identity

1. Introduction

Aviation safety underpins an airline's viability and development, demanding collective employee participation. The capacity of airline staff to identify potential hazards preemptively and provide proactive feedback is a pivotal mechanism for ensuring flight safety [1]. Generation Z, encompassing individuals born from 1995 to 2009, is defined by its immersion in digital technology, independent values, and inclination toward inclusive leadership [2][3]. As Generation Z employees increasingly dominates the workforce, their behavioral tendencies, career expectations, and value orientations are reshaping traditional leadership paradigms. Authority-based management styles are becoming less effective, prompting a shift toward more egalitarian, open, and interactive forms of organizational governance [4]. Consequently, Adapting leadership to foster safety advice behavior among Generation Z employees carries critical implications for averting major incidents and sustaining civil aviation safety [5].

Existing research has confirmed that employees' safety advice is a critical pathway to

achieving sustainable organizational safety. Du Jiusong (2016) posited that proactive safety suggestions enhance safety management [6]. Zhang J, Mei Q, and Liu S (2019) used multi-agent simulations to link safety advice with improved safety levels in Chinese SMEs [7]. Xie Yinghui (2020) emphasized frontline employees' role in leveraging firsthand insights for safety recommendations [8]. Zhao Linyi (2022) framed safety advice as a proactive tool for identifying risks, spanning reporting and peer advice [9]. Mathisen Gro Ellen and Tjora Tore (2023) introduced the Safety Advice Climate Scale (SVCS) to measure safety advice climate [10]. Nicolle (2023) highlights the importance of integrating workplace safety into sustainable development strategies, emphasizing the critical role of employee involvement in ensuring long-term organizational safety and sustainability [11]. Antoine and Matthew (2023) demonstrate that sharing accident data across organizations and applying machine learning models can more effectively predict and prevent safety incidents, underscoring the importance of employee safety voice in building organizational safety knowledge [12].However, most existing international studies on safety advice behavior concentrate on traditional industries such as manufacturing, with limited research in the aviation sector—especially concerning Generation Z employees. In the Chinese context, empirical exploration in this area remains limited and underdeveloped.

Inclusive leadership significantly shapes employee behavior and expression [13]. As Generation Z joins the workforce, their emphasis on equality and preference for approachable leadership renders authoritarian styles inadequate, highlighting the merits of inclusive leadership [14]. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) defined inclusive leadership as encouraging and praising employees to boost engagement [15]. Chen Mengqian (2020) argued that leaders' openness to suggestions drives employee advice behavior, with inclusive leadership exemplifying this stance [16]. Dai Huiyi (2022) noted that inclusive leaders foster proactivity and innovation by supporting subordinates [17]. Shan J, Guofeng M, and Ding W (2023) confirmed inclusive leadership's role in predicting promotive advice in project teams [18]. Zheng Min et al (2025) based on self-determination theory and social exchange theory, demonstrated that inclusive leadership has a significant positive impact on the job performance of young university faculty [19]. Although inclusive leadership has gained increasing attention, its impact on the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees in the airline industry remains largely unexplored, leaving a clear gap in the existing literature.

This research targets Generation Z airline employees, integrating theoretical and empirical methods to examine how inclusive leadership influences their safety advice behavior. It seeks to enrich theoretical frameworks for safety advice behavior while offering practical strategies to enhance safety advice within organizational contexts.

2. Theoretical Analysis and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Inclusive leadership and Safety Advice Behavior

Safety advice behavior, a voluntary extra-role behavior, is essential for maintaining airline safety. Due to its discretionary and high-risk nature, employees assess potential risks before engaging. In modern organizations, supervisors are typically the primary recipients of employee advice, making leadership style a critical factor in promoting safety advice behavior [20].

Drawing on social exchange theory's reciprocity principle, employees respond to beneficial organizational resources with pro-organizational actions [21]. Inclusive leadership fosters a supportive climate by valuing individuality, encouraging participation, and welcoming suggestions. This reduces psychological barriers, encouraging employees to exhibit safety advice behavior [22].

Inclusive leaders also support employee development with guidance and resources, aligning with Generation Z's traits—unique personalities, strong learning abilities, and a desire to contribute. Feeling valued, these employees are motivated to exceed role expectations, such as reporting safety hazards [23]. Additionally, the trust cultivated by inclusive leaders mitigates risk concerns, promoting proactive safety input [24]. Based on this analysis, we propose:

H1: Inclusive leadership has a significant positive effect on the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees.

2.2 The Mediating Role of Organizational Self-Esteem

Organizational self-esteem reflects an individual's assessment of their value and significance within an organization. High self-esteem emerges when employees perceive themselves as essential to the organization [25]. Leaders, who manage tasks, evaluations, and feedback, profoundly influence this perception [26]. According to conservation of resources theory, organizational support and recognition are vital resources fostering self-worth.Inclusive leadership respects employee input, listens attentively, tolerates mistakes, and offers timely support, thereby fostering a sense of care and inclusion among Generation Z employees and enhancing their organizational-based self-esteem [27]. Based on this analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2a: Inclusive leadership positively affects the organizational self-esteem of Generation Z employees.

Organizational self-esteem shapes proactive behavior [28]. Employees with high self-esteem view themselves as valuable contributors, reinforcing their commitment and encouraging extra-role behaviors [29]. Social exchange theory suggests that perceived organizational support obligates reciprocation, aligning personal and organizational goals and motivating suggestions for improvement [30]. Conversely, low self-esteem leads to feelings of insignificance and reluctance to engage beyond job requirements. Thus, we propose:

H2b: Organizational self-esteem positively affects the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees.

Employees require strong internal motivation to engage in safety advice behavior, and leadership style plays a key role in shaping this willingness. Inclusive leadership enhances motivation for safety advice behavior by fostering a sense of indispensability and elevating organizational self-esteem [31]. This alignment of personal and organizational objectives drives employees to actively contribute to safety [32]. In light of the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Organizational self-esteem mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior among Generation Z airline employees.

2.3 The Mediating Role of Advice Role Identity

Advice role identity represents an employee's internalized belief that engaging in safety advice behavior is part of their organizational role, integrating it into their perceived responsibilities [33]. Role identity theory suggests that employees develop role identities based on expectations set by others, particularly leaders, whose feedback shapes whether advice is seen as a duty [34]. Inclusive leadership encourages employees to express their views, listens attentively, and provides feedback, signaling expectations for safety advice behavior and fostering employees' advice role identity. Based on this analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3a: Inclusive leadership significantly enhances the advice role identity of Generation Z employees.

Employees assess their organizational status and advice climate to weigh the risks and benefits

of safety advice behavior, influencing their adoption of an advice role [35]. A stronger advice role identity increases the likelihood of engaging in safety advice behavior [36]. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H3b: Advice role identity significantly promotes the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees.

Inclusive leadership fosters trust and autonomy by valuing employees and supporting their input, thereby encouraging safety advice behavior. It also cultivates a advice-friendly environment, reinforcing employees' identification with the advice role and boosting their intrinsic motivation for safety advice activities. Accordingly, we propose:

H3: Advice role identity mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior among Generation Z airline employees.

2.4 The Moderating Role of Employee-Organizational Values Matching

Values shape employee behavior, and the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees in airlines is also influenced by their values. Employee-organizational values matching denotes the congruence between an employee's personal values and those of the organization [37]. Higher employee-organizational values matching congruence reflects greater alignment in shared values, which reduces communication loss and misunderstandings, thus improving communication efficiency [38]. It also enhances employees' confidence that their advice will be acknowledged and adopted by leaders. Given the high-risk nature of safety advice, such value congruence lowers perceived costs and strengthens employees' motivation to speak up [39].This alignment fosters psychological safety, lowers risk perception, and enhances organizational self-esteem and advice role identity, thereby promoting safety advice behavior [40]. Based on this, we propose:

H4a: Employee-organizational values matching positively moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and organizational self-esteem among Generation Z employees.

H4b: Employee-organizational values matching positively moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and advice role identity among Generation Z employees.

Building on the above analysis, this research posits that: (1) When employee-organizational values matching is high, the positive effect of inclusive leadership on organizational self-esteem is strengthened, thereby enhancing the positive relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior mediated through organizational self-esteem; (2) When employee-organizational values matching is high, the positive relationship between inclusive leadership and advice role identity is amplified, thereby strengthening the positive relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior transmitted through advice role identity. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5a: Employee-organizational values matching positively moderates the mediating effect of organizational self-esteem in the relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior among Generation Z employees.

H5b: Employee-organizational values matching positively moderates the mediating effect of advice role identity in the relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior among Generation Z employees.

The theoretical model of this research is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. The theoretical model

3.Research Design

3.1 Sample Selection and Data Collection

This research utilized an online survey to examine safety advice behavior among Generation Z employees in China's airline sector. A total of 318 questionnaires were distributed, with 296 deemed valid, resulting in a 93.08% response rate. The sample consisted of 52.03% males (154 respondents) and 47.97% females (142 respondents). Age distribution showed 29.05% aged 21–24 years and 70.27% aged 25–32 years. Educational levels were as follows: 17.23% with a college diploma or below, 61.49% with a bachelor's degree, and 21.28% with a master's degree or higher. Work experience varied, with 31.08% having less than two years, 46.62% having 3–5 years, and 22.30% having over six years. Departmental affiliations included marketing and sales (15.20%), cabin crew (11.82%), customer service (11.15%), and other areas such as flight operations, security, maintenance, and training. Company ownership comprised state-owned enterprises (37.50%), private enterprises (44.93%), and foreign-invested or joint-venture firms (16.55%).

3.2 Variable Measurement

All five variables in this research were measured using established scales from domestic and international literature, assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Inclusive Leadership: Measured using the scale developed by Carmeli et al. (2010) [41], which comprises three dimensions—openness, effectiveness, and accessibility—with a total of nine items. In this research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales were 0.878, 0.884, and 0.881, respectively, with an overall scale reliability of 0.880.

Safety Advice Behavior: Adapted from the scale developed by Le Pine and Van Dyne (1998) [42], consisting of six items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.885.

Organizational Self-Esteem: Assessed using the unidimensional scale developed by Pierce and Gardner (1989) [43], comprising ten items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.918.

Advice Role Identity: Measured with the scale developed by Duan Jinyun, Zhang Qian, and Huang Caiyun (2015) [44], consisting of five items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.887.

Employee-Organizational values matching: Evaluated using the employee-organizational values matching scale developed by Cable and DeRue (2002) [45], comprising three items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.822.

Control Variables: To mitigate the influence of extraneous variables and account for the potential effects of employees' work experience, life experience, and knowledge reserves on individual behavior, demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, marital status, organizational

department, company ownership type, and years of work experience were included as control variables.

4. Research Results

4.1 Common Method Bias and Discriminant Validity Testing

To address potential common method variance, this research employed Harman's single-factor test to examine the presence of common method bias. The results indicated that seven factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, with the largest factor accounting for 33.437% of the variance (below the 40% threshold) and a cumulative variance of 69.364% (exceeding the 60% benchmark). These findings meet the required criteria, suggesting that severe common method bias is not present in this research.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are presented in table 1. The five-factor model demonstrated a significantly better fit compared to alternative models (x^2 = 990.446, df = 481, RMSEA = 0.060, IFI = 0.910, CFI = 0.910, TLI = 0.901), indicating strong discriminant validity among the variables.

Table 1. Results of CFA analysis (N=296)

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	IFI	CFI	TLI
five-factor model	990.446	481	2.059	0.060	0.910	0.910	0.901
four-factor model	2106.588	489	4.308	0.106	0.715	0.713	0.690
three-factor model	2392.686	492	4.863	0.114	0.665	0.662	0.638
two-factor model	2928.102	494	5.927	0.129	0.570	0.568	0.538
unifactor model	3193.707	495	6.452	0.136	0.523	0.521	0.489

4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Correlation analyses were conducted for all variables, with the results presented in table 2. Inclusive leadership exhibited significant positive correlations with organizational self-esteem (r = 0.370, p < 0.01), advice role identity (r = 0.345, p < 0.01), and safety advice behavior (r = 0.498, p < 0.01). Organizational self-esteem was significantly positively correlated with safety advice behavior (r = 0.575, p < 0.01), and advice role identity also showed a significant positive correlation with safety advice behavior (r = 0.582, p < 0.01). The significant relationships among the variables are largely consistent with theoretical predictions, providing preliminary support for the subsequent hypothesis testing.

Table 2. Results of the correlation analysis

Variable name	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.Inclusive leadership	3.669	0.829	1				
2.Safety advice behavior	3.697	0.845	0.498**	1			
3.Organizational self-esteem	3.504	0.868	0.370**	0.575**	1		
4.Advice role identity	3.634	0.919	0.345**	0.582**	0.436**	1	
5.Employee-organizational values matching	3.150	0.985	0.100	0.266**	0.377**	0.337**	1

Note: N=296. * * Represents p <0.01.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1. Main effect and mediation effect testing

This research adopts hierarchical regression analysis for its clear logic, flexibility, and suitability in testing mediation and moderation effects, particularly for complex models involving dual mediation and moderation. Bootstrap analysis is also used to verify the significance of mediation paths, enhancing the robustness and reliability of the findings and providing empirical support for understanding safety voice behavior among Generation Z employees in the airline industry.

Stepwise regression analysis was conducted using SPSS 25.0 to test the hypotheses. The main effect results, presented in table 3, show that inclusive leadership significantly increased the explained variance (R^2) of safety advice behavior from 1.9% to 26.9% in model 2. Inclusive leadership exhibited a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.511$, $p < 0.001$), with a significant F-value, supporting hypothesis H1.

The mediation effect of organizational self-esteem was examined. Model 8 indicates that inclusive leadership accounted for 15.1% of the variance in organizational self-esteem ($R^2 = 0.151$), with a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.373$, $p < 0.001$) and a significant F-value, confirming hypothesis H2a. Model 3 shows that organizational self-esteem explained 33.9% of the variance in safety advice behavior ($R^2 = 0.339$), with a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.570$, $p < 0.001$) and a significant F-value, supporting hypothesis H2b. In model 4, inclusive leadership and organizational self-esteem together explained 43.7% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.437$), with organizational self-esteem's effect remaining significant ($\beta = 0.445$, $p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient for inclusive leadership decreased to 0.345 ($p < 0.001$) from 0.511 ($p < 0.001$) in model 2, indicating partial mediation and supporting hypothesis H2.

Similarly, the mediation role of advice role identity was tested. Model 10 reveals that inclusive leadership explained 14.8% of the variance in advice role identity ($R^2 = 0.148$), with a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.341$, $p < 0.001$) and a significant F-value, supporting hypothesis H3a. Model 5 demonstrates that advice role identity accounted for 35.6% of the variance in safety advice behavior ($R^2 = 0.356$), with a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.591$, $p < 0.001$) and a significant F-value, confirming hypothesis H3b. In model 6, inclusive leadership and advice role identity together explained 46.0% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.460$), with advice role identity's effect remaining significant ($\beta = 0.473$, $p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient for inclusive leadership decreased to 0.350 ($p < 0.001$) from 0.511 ($p < 0.001$) in model 2, suggesting partial mediation and supporting hypothesis H3.

Bootstrap analysis, reported in table 4, further validated the mediation effects. The 95% confidence intervals for organizational self-esteem [0.110, 0.237] and advice role identity [0.099, 0.254] excluded zero, confirming significant mediation. These effects accounted for 32.44% and 31.52% of the total effect, respectively, reinforcing hypotheses H3 and H3b.

Table 3. Main effects and mediation effects

	Safety Advice Behavior						Organizational Self-Esteem		Advice Role Identity	
Model	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Control variable										
sex	-0.083	-0.055	-0.032	-0.024	-0.037	-0.027	-0.089	-0.069	-0.078	-0.059

age	-0.044	-0.136**	-0.055	-0.115*	-0.063	-0.122	0.019	-0.048	0.032	-0.03
Education level	0.017	0.087	0.037	0.08	0.077	0.113*	-0.035	0.016	-0.1	-0.054
Marital status	0.044	0.085*	0.028	0.060*	0.045	0.073	0.027	0.058	-0.002	0.025
The department	-0.098	-0.072	-0.075	-0.063	-0.094	-0.077	-0.041	-0.022	-0.007	0.01
Company nature	0.015	-0.055	0.016	-0.032	0.02	-0.029	0	-0.052	-0.008	-0.055
Working life	0.052	0.066	0.017	0.034	-0.031	-0.005	0.062	0.072	0.14	0.149
Argument										
Inclusive leadership		0.511***		0.345**		0.350***		0.373**		0.341***
Metavariable										
Organizational self-esteem			0.570***	0.445**						
Advice role identity					0.591**	0.473***				
R^2	0.019	0.269	0.339	0.437	0.356	0.460	0.018	0.151	0.037	0.148
ΔR^2	0.019	0.250	0.319	0.168	0.337	0.190	0.018	0.133	0.037	0.111
F	0.813	13.234***	18.380***	24.706***	19.836***	27.049***	0.735	6.370**	1.563	6.224***

Note：N = 296。*p < 0.05，**p < 0.01，***p < 0.001.

Table 4. Test of mediation effect by Bootstrap method

Effect	Metavariable	Effect value	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Effect ratio
Direct effect	Organizational self-esteem	0.352	0.05	0.254	0.45	67.54%
	Advice role identity	0.357	0.048	0.262	0.452	68.48%
Mesomeric effect	Organizational self-esteem	0.169	0.032	0.11	0.237	32.44%
	Advice role identity	0.164	0.035	0.099	0.254	31.52%

4.3.2. Moderation effect testing

The results of the moderation effect testing are presented in table 5.The interaction terms between inclusive leadership and employee-organizational values matching in models 11 and 12 significantly and positively predicted organizational self-esteem (β = 0.124, p < 0.05) and advice role identity (β = 0.122, p < 0.05), respectively. Furthermore, these interaction terms accounted for an additional 1.4% of the variance in both organizational self-esteem and advice role identity (Δ R^2 = 0.014). These findings indicate that employee-organizational values matching positively moderates

the relationships between inclusive leadership and organizational self-esteem, as well as between inclusive leadership and advice role identity. Based on the data analysis, moderation effect graphs were plotted for the two influence paths involving employee-organizational values matching, as depicted in figures 2 and 3, providing further validation of the moderating role of this variable. In summary, hypotheses H4a and H4b are supported.

Table 5. Test of moderating effects

	Organizational self-esteem		Advice role identity	
	Model7	Model11	Model9	Model12
Control variable				
sex	-0.089	-0.075	-0.078	-0.065
age	0.019	-0.077	0.032	-0.057
Education level	-0.035	0.05	-0.1	-0.022
Marital status	0.027	0.047	-0.002	0.017
The department	-0.041	-0.037	-0.007	-0.002
Company nature	0	-0.044	-0.008	-0.049
Working life	0.062	0.054	0.14	0.133
Argument				
Inclusive leadership		0.333***		0.306***
Metavariable				
Organizational self-esteem		0.362***		0.314***
Interaction				
Inclusive leadership×Employee-organizational values matching		0.124*		0.122*
R^2	0.018	0.28	0.037	0.246
ΔR^2	0.018	0.014	0.037	0.014
F	0.735	11.083***	1.563	9.323***

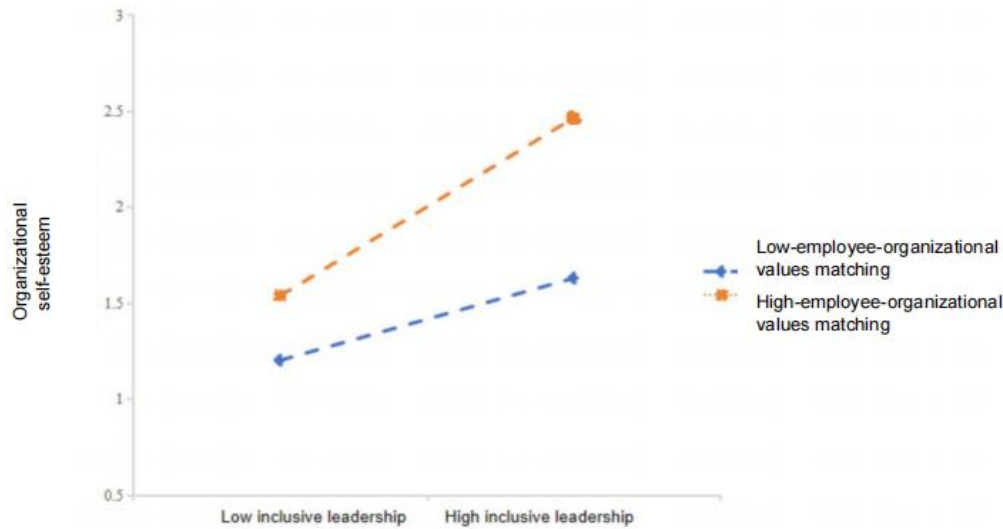Note：N = 296。*p < 0.05，**p < 0.01，***p < 0.001。

Figure 2. The regulatory role of employee-organizational values matching between inclusive leadership and organizational self-esteem
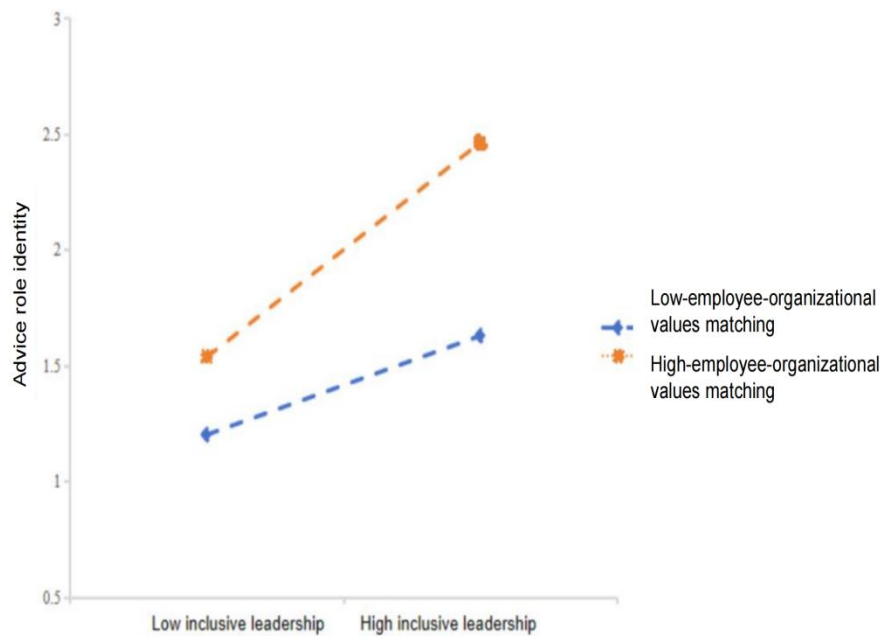

Figure 3. The regulatory role of employee-organizational values matching between inclusive leadership and advice role identity

4.3.3. Moderated mediation effect testing

The results of the moderated mediation effect testing are presented in tables 6 and 7. As shown in table 6, for the moderated mediation effect involving organizational self-esteem: at a low level of employee-organizational values matching, the mediating effect of organizational self-esteem was significant (indirect effect = 0.099, 95% CI = [0.034, 0.169]); at a high level of employee-organizational values matching, the mediating effect of organizational self-esteem remained significant (indirect effect = 0.202, 95% CI = [0.121, 0.286]). Further testing of the moderated mediation effect of employee-organizational values matching, as reported in table 7, revealed a moderation index of 0.052, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.005, 0.099]. Since the confidence interval does not include zero, the moderated mediation model is supported, confirming hypothesis

H5a.

Similarly, as indicated in table 6, for the moderated mediation effect involving advice role identity: at a low level of employee-organizational values matching, the mediating effect of advice role identity was significant (indirect effect = 0.201, 95% CI = [0.102, 0.296]); at a high level of employee-organizational values matching, the mediating effect of advice role identity also remained significant (indirect effect = 0.201, 95% CI = [0.102, 0.296]). Further testing of the moderated mediation effect of employee-organizational values matching, as shown in table 7, indicated a moderation index of 0.055, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.004, 0.114]. As the confidence interval excludes zero, the moderated mediation model is validated, supporting hypothesis H5b.

Table 6. Test of the conditional indirect effect of employee-organizational values matching

Employee-organizational values matching		Indirect effect	Boot SE	95%Boot LLCI	95%Boot ULCI
M-1SD		0.099	0.035	0.034	0.169
M	Organizational self-esteem	0.151	0.031	0.092	0.212
M+1SD		0.202	0.043	0.121	0.286
M-1SD		0.094	0.039	0.014	0.17
M	Advice role identity	0.147	0.034	0.081	0.212
M+1SD		0.201	0.05	0.102	0.296

Table 7. The regulated mediation effect test of employee-organizational values matching

Employee-organizational values matching		Index	BootSE	95%Boot LLCI	95%Boot ULCI
	Organizational self-esteem	0.052	0.024	0.005	0.099
	Advice role identity	0.055	0.03	0.004	0.114

5.Results and Discussion

5.1 Research Conclusions

This research, conducted in China, investigates how inclusive leadership influences the safety advice behavior of Generation Z airline employees, examining the mediating roles of organizational self-esteem and advice role identity, along with their boundary conditions. The main conclusions are as follows:

1.Direct Effect of Inclusive Leadership: Inclusive leadership significantly enhances the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees.

2.Mediating Mechanisms: Organizational self-esteem and advice role identity mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior. Empirical validation confirms that inclusive leadership fosters these mediators, thereby promoting greater engagement in safety advice behavior.

3.Moderating Effect of Employee-Organizational values matching: Employee-organizational

values matching significantly moderates the relationships between inclusive leadership and both mediators, as well as their mediating effects. High employee-organizational values matching amplifies these relationships, enhancing safety advice behavior.

5.2 Practical Implications

1.Meeting the management needs of Generation Z employees in airlines and promoting safety advice behavior. Generation Z employees value freedom, equality, and approachable leadership. Inclusive leadership aligns with their values and behavioral preferences. This research helps airlines better understand the psychological traits and behavioral logic of Generation Z employees, enabling more effective, targeted management. It also offers practical strategies to enhance their engagement in safety advice and to foster a participatory safety culture.

2.Encouraging leadership reflection and promoting inclusive, people-oriented management. Leadership style influences employee attitudes and behaviors. Inclusive leaders respect, listen to, and support employees, enhancing their organizational self-esteem and advice role identity. This motivates Generation Z employees to identify safety issues and offer practical suggestions. In aviation, where safety is critical, promoting inclusive leadership can support people-centered safety governance, foster open communication, and improve long-term safety performance.

5.3 Management Implications

This research offers important theoretical foundations and practical insights into how airlines can transform leadership approaches to effectively motivate Generation Z employees to actively participate in safety advice behavior, thereby improving the sustained safety level of airlines.

First, actively foster an inclusive atmosphere and promote inclusive leadership to stimulate Generation Z employees' enthusiasm for safety advice. Airlines should vigorously advocate the concept of inclusiveness and encourage members to speak freely in both work and daily life, thereby cultivating an inclusive environment. At the same time, airlines should keep pace with the times by encouraging managers to study relevant theories of inclusive leadership during their spare time and apply them in practice.

Second, enhancing employees' organizational self-esteem and cultivating their sense of organizational belonging are crucial. Leaders can grant employees certain rights within specified limits, fostering confidence in independently handling projects and strengthening their sense of organizational belonging. Simultaneously, leaders can provide more resources to employees, enabling self-improvement through these resources, fostering trust and responsibility toward the organization, enhancing employees' organizational self-esteem enables them to feel recognized, strengthens their perceived value within the organization, and motivates them to more proactively identify and report safety risks.

Third, focusing on corporate values and improving the fit between employees' and organizational values are vital. Companies can adopt measures such as refining recruitment systems and policies, continuously conveying corporate values to employees through various methods, and encouraging employees to recognize organizational values to elevate the level of Employee-Organizational values matching.

Fourth, expand safety advice channels, improve the safety advice system, and enhance the conversion efficiency of safety advice behavior. Enterprises can achieve this by providing safety culture training, broadening channels for employees to express safety concerns, and establishing incentive mechanisms, thereby lowering the threshold for safety advice, increasing Generation Z employees' participation, and improving the actual output of safety advice behavior.

5.4 Research Limitations and Future Directions

This research has several limitations. First, the selection of research variables is not sufficiently comprehensive. Among the many influencing factors, this study focuses on organizational self-esteem and advice role identity as mediators. Future research could explore additional mediating variables or construct multi-mediation models to enrich current findings. Second, due to time and resource constraints, this study adopts a cross-sectional design, which limits understanding of the dynamic nature of safety advice behavior among Generation Z employees in airlines. Longitudinal studies are encouraged to capture changes over time and across contexts. In addition, incorporating methods such as scenario-based experiments or behavioral observation could enhance data diversity and improve the external validity of the findings. Finally, as the sample is drawn primarily from the Chinese civil aviation system, the generalizability of the results remains limited. Based on these limitations, future research may proceed in two directions: (1) introducing psychological variables such as psychological safety and organizational identification to build more complex multi-path models; (2) extending the study of inclusive leadership to high-pressure or service-oriented industries such as healthcare, high-tech, and new energy, to examine its impact on constructive behaviors like advice and innovation in different organizational contexts, thereby enhancing the theoretical applicability and practical relevance.

6.Conclusions

Inclusive leadership significantly and positively influences the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees. The study elucidates the mechanisms and processes through which inclusive leadership influences safety advice behavior, providing significant theoretical foundations and practical insights for promoting safety advice behavior among Generation Z employees in the airline industry and enhancing the sustained safety performance of airlines.Based on the above findings and discussion, the following conclusions are drawn:

1.This research clarifies the mechanisms through which inclusive leadership shapes the safety advice behavior of Generation Z employees. As the "post-2000s" join the workforce, managing Generation Z employees has become a key focus in management research [46]. Although inclusive leadership is recognized as an effective style for influencing employee behavior and is well-suited to this cohort, its specific impact on safety advice behavior remains underexplored [47]. By connecting inclusive leadership to Generation Z's safety advice behavior, this research enhances the framework for understanding leadership's role in safety-related advice and provides a fresh perspective on Generation Z's workplace behavior.

2.Anchored in conservation of resources and role identity theories, this research identifies organizational self-esteem and advice role identity as mediators in the relationship between inclusive leadership and safety advice behavior among Generation Z airline employees. Existing research highlights inclusive leadership's positive effect on self-esteem and the mediating role of advice identity in leadership-advice dynamics. This research confirms that inclusive leadership, through support and care, boosts employees' perceived organizational value, enhancing self-esteem, while also cultivating a advice-friendly environment that reinforces advice role identity. By integrating social exchange, conservation of resources, and role identity theories, this research expands the theoretical basis for understanding safety advice behavior.

3.This research delineates the boundary conditions under which inclusive leadership influences safety advice behavior via organizational self-esteem and advice role identity. While prior studies

have emphasized psychological safety and safety climate as moderators[48], this research focuses on internal factors, proposing that employee-organizational value alignment amplifies motivation for safety advice behavior. By incorporating value matching into the model, this research reveals how the effects of inclusive leadership on safety advice behavior through self-esteem and advice identity depend on value congruence. Inclusive leadership, by valuing employees and encouraging their input, fosters self-esteem and advice identity, prompting Generation Z employees to proactively address safety concerns, thereby bolstering airline safety performance [49].

In managerial practice, airlines should adopt inclusive leadership, characterized by respect for employees, attentive listening to their ideas and opinions, and providing them with challenging opportunities [50]. This approach enhances Generation Z employees' organizational self-esteem and role identity in advice contexts, motivating them to proactively engage in safety advice behaviors. Inclusive leadership encourages Generation Z airline employees to actively identify safety issues and propose practical management solutions, thereby contributing to sustained improvements in organizational safety performance.

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