Psychological Safety and Innovative Work Behavior: Does Socially Responsible Leadership Matter?

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The present study investigates the relationship between innovative work behavior (IWB) and socially responsible leadership (SRL). The role of psychological safety in this relationship is also further explored in this study.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were gathered from Ugandan public universities for this study. For this study, 214 employees were invited to take part. The research hypotheses were evaluated using Processes Macro and Amos.

Findings – SRL has been found to effectively improve followers' Innovative work behaviour using data from Ugandan public universities. Furthermore, the primary impact of SRL on IWB of staff in public universities is mediated by psychological safety.

Originality/value – This is one of the first studies to look into the relationship between followers' IWB and SRL and the mediating role of psychological safety among employees. Secondly, by investigating the mediation of psychological safety, this study expands our knowledge that binds SRL to IWB. In conclusion, our study draws from data gathered in Uganda and may offer novel perspectives to the predominantly western literature currently in circulation.

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Introduction

The social behavior of organizational leaders has drawn concern in recent years because of their involvement in a number of corporate scandals and unethical business practices. According to Brooks et al. (2023), leaders in organizations are expected to act ethically because they want to prevent scandals and promote moral behavior. Earlier studies have reinforced the usefulness of SRL in improving creativity, commitment and performance among employees (Kyambade et al., 2023; Haque, 2023; Luu, 2023). Research on SRL supports its effectiveness on organizational outcomes that are beyond moral outcomes (Alizadeh et al., 2023; Kyambade et al., 2024a). The literature on SRL has paid little attention to workers' IWB, despite the fact that it is a critical

employee outcome and a factor in organizational survival, competitiveness, and long-term success (Yasir et al., 2023; Bacher et al., 2023). Because IWB is a complicated work phenomenon with many risks and challenges, it needs strong leadership to be beneficial (Al-Hyari, 2023). Management scholars have prominently and generally suggested the role of leadership in firm innovation. For example, Jawad et al. (2023) maintained that decentralized control, employee empowerment, and innovation are the key characteristics of outstanding businesses. Similar to this, (Raoush, 2023) discussed innovation as a critical component of risk-taking behavior in the dynamic business setting and as one of the primary drivers of organizational effectiveness. They also suggested that leadership is essential to the success of firm innovations.

More recently, Asif et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between employees' intrinsic work behavior and socially responsible leadership in a Chinese context. They discovered that socially responsible leadership positively affects IWB through intrinsic motivation. Although some management scholars have presented general arguments and Kyambade et al. (2023) has worked extensively, our understanding of the circumstances in which SRL may impact followers' IWB remains relatively narrow. Our goal in this work is to add to the literature on IWB and SRL by examining the psychological safety of employees as a fundamental mechanism. First, we suggest that SRL is positively related with followers' IWB based on the study of (Wen & Chi, 2023) and given the traits of socially responsible leaders, for example being people-oriented, putting emphasis on molarity and encouraging followers to speak up. Additionally, research on IWB has demonstrated that workers are likely to be innovative when they believe that taking risks is encouraged and that failing has no detrimental impact (Elsayed et al., 2023). Psychological safety is the state of mind that is characterized by the absence of risk and/or uncertainty in relation to expressing one's opinions and coming up with fresh concepts and solutions (Durrah, 2023). According to this study, employees view their leader as a crucial resource for managing the risks involved in innovative processes and averting potential consequences, given the inherent uncertainties and risks associated with them.

In situations like these, the concept of SRL can be useful because it emphasizes sincere and truthful relationships, fosters interpersonal trust and values mutual respect. All of these qualities help to increase psychological safety of workers, which in turn motivates them to participate in IWB. Consequently, we contend that the relationship between IWB and SRL is likely to be strengthened by employees' sense of psychological safety. This study aims to add to the body of literature in multiple ways. In order to better understand the mechanisms tying IWB and SRL together, this study first examines the mediating role of psychological safety. Lastly, the data used in our study came from Uganda, which may also offer some fresh perspectives to the literature that has been primarily written by people from the West. Uganda is a nation in development. Uganda shares a collectivistic culture and comparatively high power distance, in contrast to certain Western countries (Rarick et al., 2013). Therefore, the cultural and economic disparities that exist between Uganda and the majority of Western nations may present a chance to clarify the impact of SRL on workers' outcomes under disparate circumstances.

Literature Review and Hypothesis

SRL and IWB

Innovative work practices and SRL are two key ideas that can support long term success of organizations. Studies of Dong & Zhong (2021) found that employees' innovative behavior is positively influenced by SRL. The study also discovered that the relationship between responsible leadership and creative behavior is mediated by socially responsible human resource management and organizational pride. Kim et al. (2021) discovered in another study that SRL fosters creative work behaviors in workers by promoting psychological safety, work engagement, and openness to new experiences. The development and application of novel concepts, procedures, goods, or services that enhance organizational performance is referred to as IWB.

It's critical to comprehend the connection between SRL and creative work practices in order to fully discuss the literature on these topics. According to Kyambade et al. (2023a), SRL entails prioritizing the needs and interests of society over those of an individual or organization. It encompasses acts of morality, care of the environment, charity, and other endeavors that serve the interests of society as a whole as opposed to just personal or group gain. One important factor influencing organizational performance is IWB. To stay competitive in the fast-paced business world of today, organizations must cultivate an innovative culture. Innovative projects can be stimulated by SRL in a responsible way. Organizations can stimulate creative projects that benefit society as a whole by encouraging ethical behavior and responsible leadership. Innovative work practices and SRL are two key ideas that can support organizations in achieving long-term success. Organizations can stimulate creative endeavors in a socially responsible way by encouraging ethical behavior and responsible leadership. While existing research has established a positive association between socially responsible leadership and innovative work behavior, there is limited understanding of the underlying processes that explain how and why socially responsible leadership influences employees' innovative behaviors.

H1. SRL is positively related to IWB.

Psychological safety and IWB

Psychological safety is the shared belief among team members that it is safe to take interpersonal risks, such as speaking up, asking questions, or admitting mistakes, without fear of negative consequences. According to Xu and Suntrayuth's study (2022), knowledge sharing and psychological safety act as moderators in the relationship between innovative work practices and organizational innovation climate. The study, which involved R&D personnel from Chinese high-tech companies, discovered a positive correlation between IWB and psychological safety. Through the mediating role of intrinsic motivation, psychological safety has a positive impact on IWB, according to a different study by Cao and Zhang (2020). The study, which involved workers at a sizable Chinese manufacturing company, discovered that psychological safety significantly improved intrinsic motivation, which in turn significantly improved creative work practices. The relationship between psychological safety and IWB must be understood in order to fully discuss the literature on these two topics especially in public universities. The development and application of novel concepts, procedures, goods, or services that enhance organizational performance is referred to as IWB. Psychological safety is an important factor that influences IWB (Liu et al., 2023). By fostering a culture of psychological safety, organizations can encourage employees to take interpersonal risks and engage in IWB. In conclusion, psychological safety is an important factor that influences IWB. By fostering a culture of psychological safety, organizations can encourage employees to take interpersonal risks and engage in IWB (Kyambade et al., 2024c). While existing research has established a positive association between psychological safety and innovative work behavior, there is a scarcity of cross-sectional studies that examine how changes in psychological safety levels influence subsequent innovation outcomes. cross-sectional research designs would allow for the examination of the temporal sequence of events, shedding light on whether improvements or deteriorations in psychological safety precede changes in innovative behavior and vice versa. Understanding the temporal dynamics of psychological safety and innovation can provide insights into the causal pathways and reciprocal relationships between these constructs, thus offering a more nuanced understanding of their interplay. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to foster a culture of psychological safety to promote innovation.

H2: Psychological safety is positively related to IWB

Psychological Safety as a Mediator

IWB carries a high risk (Ayoub et al., 2023), employees may be reluctant to participate unless they think that failing would not have a negative consequence. Under these circumstances, we think that SRL can make a significant difference in employees' psychological safety that is, the psychological state in which workers feel secure enough to take chances with one another (Edmondson, 1999). This will encourage staff members to engage in IWB. Kahn (1990) defined psychological safety as the mindset that enables employees to "show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career." An individual will believe that the workplace is psychologically safe when coworkers embrace their willingness to take interpersonal risks, such as by being proactive in coming up with ideas, owning up to mistakes, and asking questions (Edmondson, 1999).

Leaders are always seen as crucial in influencing followers' psychological safety because they are important sources that shape followers' perceptions of the workplace (Frazier et al., 2017). It is anticipated that the actions of a socially responsible leader will encourage workers to take personal risks, treat one another with respect, and have faith in their coworkers (Liu et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2023; Burhan et al., 2023; Zafar et al., 2023). A leader who embodies social responsibility is one who is sincere, compassionate, transparent, and supportive of two-way communication. Socially responsible leaders reassure their followers that looking out for the best interests of their staff is their top priority (Malik et al., 2023). Based on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, earlier research has demonstrated that followers tend to learn from and attempt to imitate the actions of socially responsible leaders (Kyambade et al., 2023a) because they are viewed as role models. Consequently, it promotes trust and respect for one another when a socially responsible leader communicates openly and demonstrates genuine concern for their well-being. This is advantageous in influencing the psychological safety of followers.

Additionally, a socially responsible leader guarantees followers the value of taking risks and their safety from any unfavorable outcomes in the event that they fail by maintaining open lines of communication ( ). Detert and Burris (2007) posit that followers who are liberated from interpersonal risks and the possibility of harm to their personal reputation are more likely to contribute original ideas because they are not frightened of criticism for possible mistakes. Research indicates that workers who perceive psychological safety as high are less likely to be afraid to voice new ideas and respectfully disagree with one another, which leads to a greater degree of creativity (Oh et al., 2023). In particular, people who are in a psychologically safe environment don't feel threatened by their surroundings and are sure that trying new things and taking chances won't make them feel less valuable or ashamed (Liu et al., 2023). On the other hand, people who do not feel psychologically safe lack confidence, which makes them more defensive and makes them feel uncomfortable participating in risky activities like IWB (Liu et al., 2023). Since psychological safety is the foundation of IWB, interpersonal trust and respect have been found to be particularly beneficial in fostering it among employees (Saxena & Prasad, 2023). Since psychological safety has been shown to be a strong precursor to IWB, SRL is thought to be a significant factor in enhancing psychological safety (Liu et al., 2023). Consequently, given these claims, this study implies that psychological safety mediates the relationship between IWB and SRL.

H3. SRL and followers' IWB is positively mediated by psychological safety.
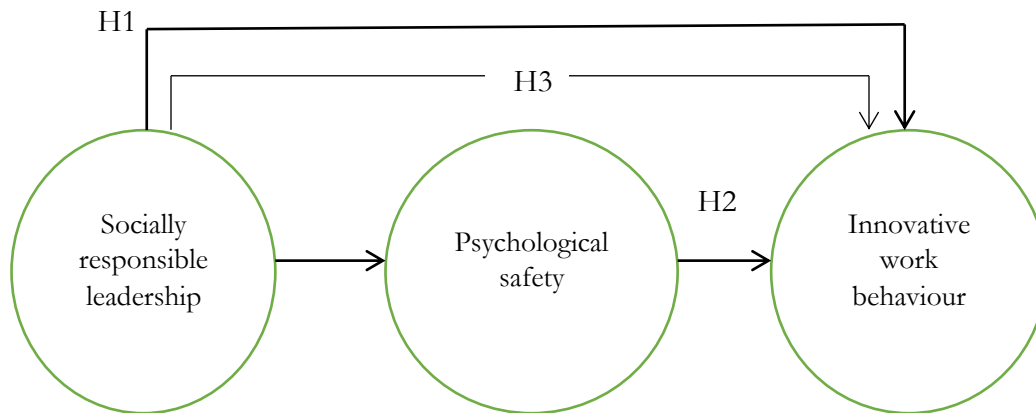
Figure 1: Hypothesis Model

Methods

Sample and Procedure

Three public universities located in Uganda provided the data used in this investigation. For this study, a total of 250 employees were invited to participate. Academic registrars and human resource managers at public universities provided access to the participants. We included a cover letter with each questionnaire, outlining the goals of the study and how it was conducted. Through a cover letter, we also guaranteed each participant's anonymity and confidentiality. They distributed the questionnaires. Subordinates were asked to rank the SRL, psychological safety, and IWB of their immediate supervisors. 214 complete and fully matched responses (85.6%) were received overall. Of the sample used in this study, 55.1% are men. 86% of those surveyed held a bachelor's degree or above. In addition, 74.7% of participants were younger than 34, with an average age of 28 years, and the average tenure within the organization was 5.52 years.

Variable Measurement

A five-point Likert-like scale, ranging from 1–5 strongly disagree to 5–5 strongly agree, was used to measure each variable in the survey.

SRL: To gauge SRL, we employed a 10-item scale created by Dugan (2006). The SRL style of their supervisors was rated by the respondents. "Common values drive an organization" was one example of an item. The reliability was 0.89.

IWB: A 7-item scale that was modified from Janssen (2000) was used to measure employees' IWB. "Employee looks for new working techniques" was the sample item. In this study, the reliability for these nine items was 0.88.

Psychological safety: To assess the employees' perceived psychological safety, we modified a 5-item Detert and Burris (2007) scale. "I can speak up at work without fear" was the example item. The alpha reliability was 0.81.

Analysis

Before testing hypothesis, Using AMOS 20.0, we performed confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to validate the measurement model's discriminant and convergent validity, as well as the uniqueness of the study variables (i.e., psychological safety, IWB, and SRL). According to the CFA results, our suggested three-factor

model substantially fits the data better than all other alternative models shown in Table 1 (χ2 **5** 582.62, df **5** 296, p < 0.01). This is demonstrated by the following metrics: comparative fit index (CFI) **5** 0.87, incremental fit index (IFI) **5** 0.88, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) **5** 0.86, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) **5** 0.061. There is evidence for discriminant validity in the three-factor model's very good fit when compared to other alternative models. Additionally, each item loaded significantly on its own latent factor. Furthermore, chi-square change was significant in the hypothesized framework, and Table 1's substitute frameworks illustrate how well respondents were able to distinguish the constructs.

Table 1: Results of CFAs:comparison of measurement models

Models	χ²	Df	Δχ2	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Three factor model	582.62	296	230.12	0.87	0.88	0.86	0.06
Two factor model	854.38	298	501.88	0.76	0.76	0.74	0.09
One factor model	1493.73	299	1141.2	0.49	0.50	0.45	0.14

Note(s): [a]SRL and psychological safety combined. [b]SRL, psychological safety and IWB combined. [c]All combined in one factor.

We also compute average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) in order to demonstrate convergent validity. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), in order to demonstrate convergent validity, the CR value must be greater than 0.60, and the AVE value must be greater than 0.50. As can be seen from Table 2, the range of values for CR and AVE is 0.80 to 0.89 and 0.50 to 0.62, respectively. These findings support the appropriate convergent validity of our study constructs. Furthermore, in accordance with the suggestions made by Podsakoff et al. (2003), we verify the common method variance (CMV) using Harman's single-factor test. The unrotated factor structure does not have a general factor, according to the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) result, as the single factor only explains 29.58% of the variance. Finally, to make sure multicollinearity wasn't a problem in this study, we computed the variance inflation factor (VIF) values before beginning our analyses. Given that the VIF values fell well below the threshold of 10, ranging from 1.11 to 1.23, Multicollinearity doesn't seem to be a concern for this study.

Table 2 displays the correlations, standard deviations, and means for each variable of the study. Bivariate correlation results indicate a positive and significant relationship between followers' psychological safety and followers' IWB and SRL. Furthermore, there was a significant and positive correlation found between followers' IWB and psychological safety.

Table 2:Correlation, Reliability, Standard Deviations and Mean

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age	1.87	0.83	1							
Gender	1.78	0.31	0.15*	1						
Education	2.30	0.60	0.42**	0.05	1					
Organization tenure	5.49	2.62	0.27**	0.00	0.05	1				
SRL	3.58	0.52	-0.010	-0.18**	0.09	0.13	(0.91)			
Psychological safety	3.52	0.83	-0.12	-0.08	0.05	-0.04	0.35**	(0.85)		
IWB	3.82	0.53	0.13*	0.03	0.09	0.01*	0.30**	0.35**	(0.91)	
CR							0.89	0.82	0.88	0.80
AVE							0.50	0.62	0.50	0.62

Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; IWB **5** innovative work behaviour, CR **5** composite reliability, AVE **5** average variance extracted. Parentheses surround the reported Cronbach alphas.

Hypothesis Testing

To put our research hypotheses to the test, we used two analytical techniques. To test mediation, we first carried out a number of hierarchical regression analyses using the methods outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Second, we used the PROCESS macro in SPSS along with the bootstrapping approach recommended by Hayes, (2013) to assess the statistical implication of mediation.

We hypothesized with H1 that SRL improves workers' IWB. Table 3 shows M2 (β **5,** 0.29, R2 **5,** 0.12, F (**5,** 196) **5** 5.61, p < 0.001), we discovered that followers' IWB was positively correlated with SRL, supporting this prediction. According to H2, there is a mediating role of psychological safety in the association between IWB and SRL. In order to investigate this hypothesis, we employed the mediation procedures described by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results indicated that: SRL had a positive relationship with IWB, as demonstrated by M2 (β **5,** 0.31, R2 **5,** 0.13, F (**5,** 196) **5** 5.59, p < 0.001); SRL had a positive relationship with psychological safety, as demonstrated by M4 (β **5,** 0.51, R2 **5,** 0.14, F(1, 196) **5,** 6.69, p < 0.001); and the positive correlation between SRL and IWB was considerably diminished when psychological safety was taken into account as a mediator. (β **5,** 0.29, p < 0.001 to β **5** 0.18, p < 0.01). Thus, these findings offered preliminary evidence in favor of H2. Using the bootstrapping approach (Hayes, 2013) one of the most effective and reliable ways to test the effects of intervening variables, To further validate the mediation, we evaluated the statistical significance of the indirect effect of SRL on IWB through psychological safety (Zhao et al., 2010; Hayes, 2009). Bootstrap test results, which were derived from 5,000 bootstrap samples, indicate that SRL has an indirect effect of 0.10 on IWB through psychological safety. For the indirect effect, the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval is [0.0391, 0.2014]. Since the CI had no zero, it suggests that SRL had a considerable indirect impact on IWB through psychological safety, supporting H2 even more. Similarly, Model **5**'s overall mediation model (ΔR² **5** 0.08, ΔF (1, 195) **5** 21.51, p < 0.001) explains the significant further change in IWB.

Table 3: Mediation Regressions results

	IWB	IWB	PS	PS	IWB	IWB	IWB
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7
Control variables							
Age	0.05	0.06	0.15	-0.13	-0.08	0.05	0.06
Gender	0.02	0.10	0.12	-0.01	0.09	0.08	0.08
Education	0.04	0.01	0.16	0.10	0.01	-0.02	0.02
Organizational tenure	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01	-0.02	0.02	0.02
Predictor							
SRL		0.31***		0.51***	0.18**	0.25***	0.20**
Mediator							
Psychological safety					0.20**		
F	1.99	5.59	1.58	6.69	8.82	5.66	6.58
R²	0.03	0.13	0.03	0.14	0.21	0.14	19.00
ΔR²	—	0.08*	—	0.11*	0.08**	0.02*	0.04**
ΔF	—	19.67**	—	26.29**	21.51**	5.00*	10.41**

Note: *n* **5** 214, unstandardized beta coefficients are reported, *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. SRL, PS **5** psychological safety, IWB **5** innovative work behaviour

Discussion

This research offered a theoretical framework for analyzing the connection between SRL and the IWB of subordinates through psychological safety, both directly and indirectly. Psychologists argue that environments have an impact on people's behavior (Stojanovic et al., 2023, Kyambade et al., 2024c). There is no doubt that creative work practices and SRL go hand in hand. It puts forth the theory that open, morally grounded, and socially responsible leaders create an atmosphere that is favorable to creativity. Socially responsible executives create a safe environment that supports the kind of risk-taking that is essential to creativity. They foster innovation by fostering justice and transparency, which reassures their team members that their innovative ideas will be fairly taken into account. This unbreakable connection provides more proof of the need for a leader's style to be consistently woven into the fabric of ethics, integrity, and openness to new ideas. With the world moving toward an unprecedented era of creativity and uniqueness, it is critical to cultivate and improve SRL. The dynamic nature of today's business environment necessitates the continuous development of new ideas and the application of creative problem-solving techniques. Innovative work practices are being used by an increasing number of organizations to obtain a competitive advantage. But fostering an environment where original thought can thrive can often be complex and multifaceted.

One essential element that is believed to support this dynamic behavior is psychological safety (Liu et al., 2023). Organizations must understand why creative thinking is fostered in psychologically safe environments because creative work behavior is strongly influenced by psychological safety. This might be the case because psychological safety encourages employees to challenge the status quo, reframe problems, and try out creative solutions. Such unafraid conduct can be seen as the foundation of creativity and innovation, particularly in an organizational setting (Alami et al., 2023). Moreover, people's willingness to share knowledge is often a prerequisite for the success of creative work practices (Acevedo & Diaz-Molina, 2023). When workers feel psychologically secure, they are more likely to share ideas and information, which fosters a collective cognitive capability (Durrah, 2023). Increased ability to think divergently, improved problem-solving techniques, and the generation of more original ideas are typically the results (Orzechowski et al., 2023).

A positive team dynamic is further supported by an environment of psychological safety, which cultivates respect and trust among team members. This might encourage more staff members to participate in decision-making, creating a democratic atmosphere that encourages original thought (Nabi & Akter, 2023). A strong and positive relationship has been observed between psychological safety and creative work practices, as can be seen from the examination of the concept and how it relates to fostering an environment that supports such practices. This correlation highlights how important it is to establish psychologically safe spaces in the workplace to foster creativity and innovation. Despite the present intricacies, empirical data unequivocally demonstrates the importance of psychologically secure work environments in fostering innovative conduct.

According to Suhandiah et al. (2023), IWB is the application of new ideas, concepts, procedures, instruments, or strategies in the workplace. This necessitates the involvement of SRL, which provides an illustration of fairness and integrity in institutional decision-making (Kyambade et al., 2023a). Comfort and a sense of security are necessary in an environment to encourage creative behavior. Edmondson (1999), highlights that psychological safety allows employees to voice their opinions without fear of negative outcomes. A socially responsible leader has a positive effect on IWB. Several studies, including those by, bolster the notion that socially responsible leaders can increase the drive, inventiveness, and productivity of their teams. The socially responsible boss creates a soothing environment that boosts team productivity and fosters creative teamwork.

Psychological safety acts as a mediating factor, bridging the gap between innovative work practices and SRL. Psychological safety, according to Frazier et al. (2017), creates an atmosphere that affects how creatively behaved workers are under SRL. Because their leaders are morally upright, workers in psychologically safe environments are more likely to devise creative strategies and ideas. By understanding the role psychological

safety plays as a mediator in the relationship between SRL and creative work behavior, organizations can foster a creative environment. Encouraging leaders who uphold high ethical standards encourages staff members to submit creative and impactful ideas. Thus, to progress in the future, it is imperative to cultivate the relationship which is bolstered by psychological safety between creative work behavior and SRL. Under SRL, the impact of psychological safety on creative work behavior cannot be overstated. More research is obviously needed, but the existing discourse provides sufficient evidence for this crucial triadic relationship.

Theoretical Implications

This study adds to the body of knowledge already available on employees' IWB and SRL in a number of ways. Given the empirical data that has demonstrated the value of SRL in encouraging positive attitudes and behaviors in workers, such as IWB, there is a need to comprehend the boundary conditions and linking mechanisms. In response, we hypothesized and examined the connection between IWB and SRL, as well as the psychological safety that serves as this link. SRL is characterized by open communication, genuine concern for followers, and caring for them. These traits foster interpersonal respect and safety, which in turn influences followers' psychological well-being (Kyambade et al., 2023b). When there is psychological safety, workers feel free to express themselves, identify issues, make recommendations, and come up with fresh ideas. This makes it easier for workers to engage in IWB. Therefore, the findings of this study supported the hypothesis that psychological safety serves as a crucial mediating mechanism between SRL and employees' perceived well-being (IWB); that is, employees' perceptions of psychological safety are influenced by SRL behaviors, which in turn affects their experiences of psychological safety.

The fact that this study tested our hypotheses in Uganda and offered more empirical support for the value of SRL in encouraging IWB among workers is another significant contribution. While a large body of research has been done in Western societies on the effectiveness of SRL, little of it has been done in developing nations like Uganda. Uganda exhibits a higher degree of collectivism and power distance orientation than Western societies. Consequently, it is not straightforward to assume that SRL will have the same impact in Ugandan societies. But, at least in Uganda, our findings offered concrete proof of the SRL construct's generalizability and applicability in developing nations. The results of this study therefore contribute to our growing understanding of the efficacy of SRL in a variety of nations with varying degrees of development.

Practical Implications

Important practical implications for leaders are also provided by our study. First, our results and those of () imply that, at least in developing nations like China and Uganda, SRL conduct encourages IWB in workers. In industries like education, which is fiercely competitive and changing quickly, IWB is very beneficial for organizational success. Consequently, companies must give their workers a work environment that supports IWB. To further inspire followers, leaders must act morally in the workplace by treating staff members fairly and decency. They should also set an example of moral behavior for others to follow. Our research indicates that SRL significantly improves IWB in followers; hence, for optimal outcomes, organizations should foster SRL behavior. Second, since IWB carries a risk of unpredictability, leaders must create an environment in the workplace where workers feel psychologically secure enough to take calculated risks. Organizations must therefore encourage SRL behavior in the workplace because it plays a significant role in fostering IWB and improving psychological safety in workers. This could be accomplished by creating leadership workshops with a focus on developing socially responsible leaders, or by implementing appropriate training programs. Organizations must prioritize moral principles in leadership and employee relations in order to accomplish this goal. We recommend that leaders working in the educational sector exercise caution when considering the aforementioned implications, as our study was carried out within the Ugandan context.

Limitations and Future Research

It is important to recognize the limitations of our study when interpreting the findings. To begin with, the research's data is cross-sectional. In order to better understand causality, research design based on experiment and longitudinal are needed in the future. The study's findings cannot be applied to a wider range of Ugandan universities because the sample was limited to staff members. As a result, it is necessary to reevaluate and confirm that the results of our study can be applied to other organizational structures and work environments. Second, even though we used a variety of data sources to gather information for this study, the majority of our study variables came from the same source subordinates. Consequently, there's a chance that common method bias affected the study's conclusions. But after conducting an empirical assessment of the matter in our study, we concluded that it is not a major issue because all of the measures we employed have been thoroughly examined in other empirical studies. Lastly, prior meta-analytic research discovered that while SRL is different from other comparable leadership philosophies, it is connected to them. Since our study did not account for these strategies, more research on related leadership philosophies that have been found to be positively related with SRL would be helpful. As a result of this study, the relationship between IWB and SRL can be strengthened by taking into account the psychological safety of employees. We anticipate that the results of our study will stimulate further investigation into IWB and SRL, as well as into the intervening mechanisms that link these concepts to significant employee outcomes.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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