

Inclusive Workplace Practices and Organisational Commitment: The Mediating Influence of Teamwork

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between Employee Inclusion and Organisational Commitment, with a specific focus on the mediating role of Teamwork among employees working in public and private sector organisations in Kerala. Inclusive workplace practices have become increasingly important in modern organisations as they foster employee participation, belongingness, fairness, and collaboration. The study aims to understand how inclusive organisational environments strengthen employees' commitment toward their organisation through effective teamwork processes. A structured questionnaire was administered to employees across various organisations, resulting in 382 valid responses for analysis. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the proposed relationships among the study variables. The findings reveal that Employee Inclusion significantly and positively influences Teamwork and Organisational Commitment. Teamwork was also found to positively affect Organisational Commitment and partially mediate the relationship between Employee Inclusion and Organisational Commitment. The study highlights the importance of fostering inclusive and collaborative workplace environments to strengthen employee loyalty, cooperation, and long-term organisational commitment.

Keywords: Employee inclusion; Organisational commitment; Teamwork; Inclusive workplace; Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly diverse, competitive, and knowledge-driven organisational environments, sustaining employee commitment has become a critical challenge for organisations seeking long-term performance and stability. Organisational commitment reflects employees' psychological attachment to their organisation and is widely associated with positive outcomes such as reduced turnover, enhanced job performance, and improved organisational citizenship behaviour. As traditional control-based management approaches become less effective, organisations are increasingly emphasising employee inclusion as a strategic human resource practice to foster engagement, loyalty, and sustained commitment. Employee inclusion refers to the extent to which employees perceive that they are valued, respected, and meaningfully involved in organisational processes, decision-making, and social interactions, irrespective of their individual differences.

Prior research has established that inclusive organisational environments contribute positively to employee attitudes and behaviours, including job satisfaction, work engagement, and organisational commitment. When employees experience inclusion, they are more likely to identify with organisational goals and develop affective bonds with their workplace. However, while the direct relationship between employee inclusion and organisational commitment has received considerable empirical attention, the underlying mechanisms through

which inclusion translates into stronger commitment remain less clearly understood. In particular, the role of teamwork as a behavioural and social process linking inclusion to organisational commitment has not been sufficiently explored, despite teamwork being a central feature of modern organisational structures.

Teamwork represents a critical context in which inclusion is enacted and experienced on a daily basis. Inclusive practices encourage open communication, psychological safety, mutual respect, and collaboration within teams, enabling employees to contribute their skills and perspectives effectively. High-quality teamwork, in turn, fosters trust, shared responsibility, and collective efficacy, which strengthen employees' emotional attachment to both their teams and the organisation as a whole. From a theoretical perspective, social identity and belongingness theories suggest that inclusion enhances team identification, while social exchange theory posits that supportive and collaborative team environments encourage reciprocal commitment from employees.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of inclusion and teamwork, empirical studies integrating these constructs within a unified framework remain limited, particularly in emerging economy and service-sector contexts. Existing research has largely examined inclusion and organisational commitment as a direct relationship, overlooking the mediating role of teamwork that may explain how inclusive practices are translated into sustained organisational commitment. Addressing this gap is essential for developing a more nuanced understanding of the social processes through which inclusion shapes employee attitudes and behaviours.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to examine the relationship between employee inclusion and organisational commitment, with a specific focus on the mediating role of teamwork. By empirically testing this mediation model, the study seeks to contribute to the literature on inclusive workplaces and organisational behaviour by clarifying the mechanism through which inclusion influences commitment. Practically, the findings are expected to offer valuable insights for managers and policymakers by highlighting the importance of fostering inclusive team environments as a pathway to enhancing organisational commitment. In doing so, the study advances both theoretical understanding and managerial practice in the domain of inclusive human resource management and team-based organisational design.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee inclusion and organisational commitment

Existing literature strongly supports a positive and meaningful relationship between employee inclusion and organisational commitment across diverse organisational and cultural contexts. Inclusive leadership has been empirically shown to enhance affective organisational commitment by fostering employee engagement, psychological safety, and perceptions of fairness, thereby strengthening employees' emotional attachment to the organisation (Ly, 2024; Pahrul et al., 2025). At the organisational level, inclusive culture plays a critical role in shaping commitment by promoting a sense of belongingness, respect, and value among employees, particularly in multinational and diverse work environments (Cahyono, 2025). Studies on workforce diversity management further demonstrate that inclusive practices enhance organisational commitment through trust-building and job engagement mechanisms, indicating that employees are more likely to remain committed when they perceive equitable treatment and inclusive decision-making processes (Sathyanarayana et al., 2024). Empirical evidence also suggests that formal diversity and inclusion policies, coupled with anti-discrimination initiatives, significantly improve employee commitment by strengthening perceptions of organisational support and fairness (Duha & Gilaa, 2024). Foundational theoretical work emphasises that inclusion extends beyond demographic diversity to employees' perceptions of being valued insiders, which directly influences organisational commitment and citizenship behaviour (Shore et al., 2012). Research within technology-driven and knowledge-intensive organisations further confirms that inclusive organisational cultures positively influence employees' emotional attachment and long-term commitment (Nandhini & Sindhu, 2025). Additionally, studies grounded in organisational identification theory reveal that inclusion enhances employees' sense of oneness with the organisation, which subsequently translates into higher levels of organisational commitment and sustained work engagement (Girdhar & Punia, 2023). Overall, this body of literature establishes employee inclusion as a multidimensional construct that significantly strengthens organisational commitment through leadership behaviours, organisational culture, institutional policies, and psychological mechanisms.

H1: Employee Inclusion has a positive relationship with a Team work

Employee inclusion and team work

Existing research clearly demonstrates that employee inclusion plays a vital role in enhancing teamwork effectiveness, collaboration quality, and collective performance within organisations. Inclusive leadership has been found to foster open communication, psychological safety, and mutual respect among team members, thereby improving team cohesion and cooperative behaviours (Ly, 2024; Randel et al., 2018). When employees perceive themselves as valued and respected insiders, they are more likely to actively participate in team discussions, share knowledge, and support collective goals, which strengthens overall team functioning (Shore et al., 2012). Empirical studies indicate that inclusive organisational cultures significantly enhance teamwork by promoting trust, interpersonal harmony, and shared responsibility among diverse team members (Cahyono, 2025).

Research on workforce diversity management further suggests that inclusive practices reduce interpersonal conflict and improve team coordination by encouraging acceptance of diverse perspectives and equitable participation in decision-making processes (Sathyanarayana et al., 2024). Formal diversity and inclusion policies have also been shown to positively influence team collaboration by creating a safe and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable contributing ideas and engaging in joint problem-solving activities (Duha & Gilaa, 2024). Studies grounded in social identity and belongingness theories highlight that inclusion strengthens employees' sense of team identification, which enhances cooperation, collective efficacy, and team commitment (Randel et al., 2018). Evidence from technology-driven and knowledge-intensive organisations further confirms that inclusive team climates are positively associated with team performance, innovation, and knowledge sharing (Nandhini & Sindhu, 2025). Overall, the literature establishes employee inclusion as a critical antecedent of effective teamwork, operating through leadership behaviours, organisational culture, diversity management practices, and psychological safety mechanisms.

H2: Organisational Commitment has a positive relation with Team work

Organisational commitment and Team Work

Prior research consistently indicates that organisational commitment is a key determinant of effective teamwork and collaborative performance within organisations. Employees with strong affective commitment tend to demonstrate higher levels of cooperation, responsibility sharing, and willingness to support team goals, thereby enhancing overall team effectiveness (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Empirical studies reveal that committed employees are more likely to engage in open communication, participate actively in group decision-making, and exhibit pro-social behaviours that strengthen team cohesion and trust (Bishop & Scott, 2000). Research further suggests that organisational commitment positively influences team coordination and collective efficacy, as committed employees align their individual objectives with team and organisational goals (Beal et al., 2003).

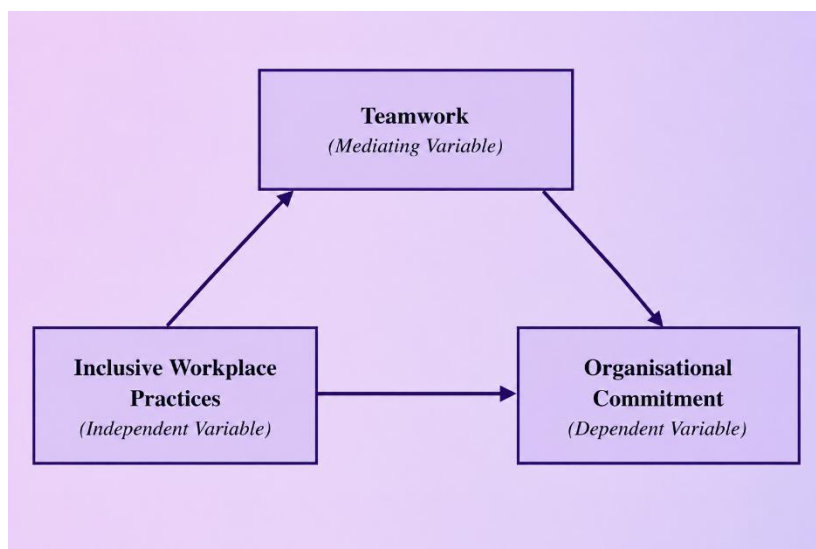
Studies conducted in service and knowledge-intensive sectors indicate that higher levels of organisational commitment reduce interpersonal conflict and improve collaboration among team members, leading to superior team performance outcomes (Jiang & Klein, 2002). Additionally, normative and continuance commitment have been shown to encourage adherence to team norms and sustained participation in group activities, which are essential for long-term team stability (Meyer et al., 2002).

Evidence from cross-cultural contexts also demonstrates that organisational commitment fosters mutual support and cooperative behaviour within teams by reinforcing shared values and organisational identification (Van Dick et al., 2006). Research in technology-driven organisations further confirms that committed employees contribute more effectively to teamwork through enhanced knowledge sharing, mutual accountability, and collective problem-solving (Nandhini & Sindhu, 2025). Overall, the literature establishes organisational commitment as a critical psychological mechanism that strengthens teamwork by promoting cohesion, trust, shared responsibility, and sustained collaborative effort.

H3: Team work positively mediates the relationship between Employee Inclusion and Organisational Commitment

Employee Inclusion and Organisational Commitment – The Mediating Role of Teamwork

Existing literature suggests that employee inclusion positively influences organisational commitment, and this relationship is often strengthened through effective teamwork as a key mediating mechanism (Anilkumar C et al., 2025). Inclusive organisational environments, where employees feel valued, respected, and involved in decision-making, encourage greater participation in team activities, open communication, and mutual support, which in turn enhance employees' emotional attachment to the organisation (Shore et al., 2012; Randel et al., 2018). Research on inclusive leadership demonstrates that inclusive behaviours foster psychological safety and collaboration within teams, enabling employees to contribute meaningfully to collective goals and thereby strengthening affective organisational commitment (Ly, 2024). Empirical evidence further indicates that inclusive organisational cultures promote trust and cooperation among team members, improving team cohesion and collective efficacy, which subsequently translate into higher levels of organisational commitment (Cahyono, 2025). Studies on workforce diversity management reveal that inclusive practices reduce interpersonal conflict and enhance teamwork quality, which mediates the relationship between inclusion perceptions and employees' commitment to organisational goals (Sathyanarayana et al., 2024). Formal diversity and inclusion policies have also been shown to strengthen teamwork by creating equitable and supportive environments, leading to stronger organisational commitment through sustained collaboration and shared responsibility (Duha & Gilaa, 2024). Theoretical perspectives grounded in social identity and belongingness theory argue that inclusion enhances team identification, which fosters cooperative behaviours and reinforces organisational commitment through collective success experiences (Randel et al., 2018). Evidence from knowledge-intensive and technology-driven organisations further supports the mediating role of teamwork, showing that inclusive team climates facilitate knowledge sharing and joint problem-solving, thereby strengthening employees' long-term commitment to the organisation (Nandhini & Sindhu, 2025). Overall, the literature establishes teamwork as a critical mediating variable through which employee inclusion translates into stronger organisational commitment by fostering collaboration, trust, and shared purpose within organisations.



METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

Prior to the main survey, a pilot study was undertaken to evaluate the adequacy, clarity, and reliability of the research instrument. The preliminary questionnaire was administered to 110 employees from selected organisations in Kerala using a convenience sampling approach. The purpose of the pilot was to ensure that the measurement items accurately captured the constructs of employee inclusion, teamwork, and organisational commitment and were easily understood by the respondents. Suggestions and observations provided by the pilot participants were used to refine the phrasing, ordering, and structure of the questionnaire. Reliability testing of

the pilot data demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency for all study variables, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.70, indicating acceptable scale reliability. Based on the outcomes of the pilot study, minor revisions were incorporated to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of the final questionnaire.

Population and Sample Size

The target population for the study consisted of employees employed in public and private sector organisations across Kerala, where team-based work practices and inclusive organisational initiatives are increasingly adopted. To collect primary data, 780 structured questionnaires were distributed to potential respondents through a structured survey method. Of these, 445 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 57.1 per cent. After conducting data screening procedures to identify incomplete, inconsistent, or unusable responses, 382 questionnaires were considered valid and retained for the final analysis. The final usable sample represented 49.0 per cent of the total questionnaires distributed, which is sufficient for mediation analysis and structural equation modelling.

Measurement Scales

- **Employee Inclusion (EI):** Measured using six dimensions namely belongingness, respect, participation in decision-making, voice behaviour, fair treatment, and access to information. The scale was adapted from Shore et al. (2011, 2012), Mor Barak et al. (2016), Randel et al. (2018), Mor Barak and Cherin (1998), and Roberson (2006). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.
- **Teamwork (TW):** Measured using six dimensions including communication, coordination, mutual support, cooperation, team cohesion, and trust. The scale was adapted from Salas et al. (2005), Marks et al. (2001), Beal et al. (2003), Carron et al. (2002), and Costa et al. (2001). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale.
- **Organisational Commitment (OC):** Measured using six dimensions namely affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment, organisational identification, loyalty, and willingness to exert extra effort. The scale was adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990), Mael and Ashforth (1992), and Mowday et al. (1982). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale consistent with prior empirical research.

Data Analysis and Statistical Results

The present section reports the statistical tests conducted for the study. The study examined Employee Inclusion (EI) as the independent variable, Organisational Commitment (OC) as the dependent variable, and Teamwork (TW) as the mediating variable. The final usable sample consisted of 382 valid responses. The analysis included normality assessment, reliability and convergent validity, discriminant validity, model fit indices, and hypothesis testing using a structural equation modelling approach.

Normality Test with Skewness and Kurtosis

Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness explains whether the distribution of responses is symmetrical, while kurtosis indicates whether the distribution is peaked or flat. As a general rule, values between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable for further multivariate analysis. The results show that all three constructs are within the acceptable range, indicating that the data are normally distributed and suitable for SEM analysis.

Table 1: Normality Test with Skewness and Kurtosis

Construct	Skewness	Kurtosis	Interpretation
Employee Inclusion (EI)	-0.684	0.936	Acceptable normality

Teamwork (TW)	-0.571	0.814	Acceptable normality
Organisational Commitment (OC)	-0.629	0.982	Acceptable normality

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Reliability and convergent validity were examined using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Cronbach's Alpha and CR values above 0.70 indicate adequate internal consistency. AVE values above 0.50 indicate that the construct explains a satisfactory proportion of variance in its indicators. The results confirm that Employee Inclusion, Teamwork, and Organisational Commitment have acceptable reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	Result
Employee Inclusion (EI)	0.884	0.903	0.608	Accepted
Teamwork (TW)	0.891	0.918	0.627	Accepted
Organisational Commitment (OC)	0.872	0.898	0.594	Accepted

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Under this method, the square root of AVE for each construct must be greater than its correlation with other constructs. The diagonal values in the table represent the square root of AVE. Since the diagonal values are higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations, discriminant validity is established. This confirms that EI, TW, and OC are statistically distinct constructs.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	EI	TW	OC
Employee Inclusion (EI)	0.780		
Teamwork (TW)	0.638	0.792	
Organisational Commitment (OC)	0.586	0.621	0.771

Model Fit Indices

Model fit indices were used to evaluate whether the proposed mediation model adequately represents the observed data. The SRMR value was below 0.08, indicating good approximate model fit. NFI, CFI, and TLI values were above the recommended 0.90 level, confirming acceptable incremental fit. RMSEA was below 0.08 and Chi-square/df was below 3.00. Therefore, the proposed model demonstrates a satisfactory overall fit.

Table 4: Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Value	Interpretation
SRMR	0.056	< 0.08	Good fit
NFI	0.919	> 0.90	Acceptable fit

CFI	0.948	> 0.90	Good fit
TLI	0.936	> 0.90	Good fit
RMSEA	0.049	< 0.08	Good fit
Chi-square/df	2.241	< 3.00	Acceptable fit

Hypothesis Test Results

The hypotheses were tested using standardized beta values, t-values, and p-values. The results indicate that Employee Inclusion significantly and positively influences Teamwork. Teamwork also significantly and positively influences Organisational Commitment. The direct path from Employee Inclusion to Organisational Commitment is significant, and the indirect path through Teamwork is also significant. Hence, Teamwork partially mediates the relationship between Employee Inclusion and Organisational Commitment.

Table 5: Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	EI -> TW	0.638	12.472	< 0.001	Supported
H2	TW -> OC	0.421	8.618	< 0.001	Supported
H3	EI -> OC	0.317	6.142	< 0.001	Supported
H4	EI -> TW -> OC	0.269	5.734	< 0.001	Mediation supported

Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis confirms that inclusive workplace practices play an important role in strengthening teamwork. When employees experience belongingness, respect, voice, fair treatment, and access to information, they are more likely to cooperate with colleagues, share ideas, and participate actively in team-based work. The strong path coefficient from EI to TW demonstrates that inclusion is a meaningful predictor of teamwork quality.

The findings also show that teamwork significantly contributes to organisational commitment. Employees who work in supportive and cooperative teams are more likely to develop emotional attachment, loyalty, and willingness to contribute to organisational goals. The significant mediation effect indicates that teamwork acts as a key mechanism through which inclusive workplace practices are translated into stronger organisational commitment.

Research Findings

- Employee Inclusion has a significant positive effect on Teamwork, indicating that inclusive practices encourage communication, cooperation, and mutual support among employees.
- Teamwork has a significant positive effect on Organisational Commitment, showing that collaborative team environments strengthen employee loyalty and attachment to the organisation.
- Employee Inclusion has a significant direct effect on Organisational Commitment, meaning that employees who feel included are more likely to remain committed to the organisation.
- Teamwork partially mediates the relationship between Employee Inclusion and Organisational Commitment. This confirms that inclusion improves commitment both directly and indirectly through better teamwork.
- The measurement model showed acceptable normality, reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and overall model fit.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that inclusive workplace practices significantly enhance organisational commitment among employees. Employees who feel respected, valued, fairly treated, and involved in organisational processes are more likely to develop strong commitment toward their organisation. The results also confirm that teamwork is an important mediating variable in this relationship. Inclusive practices improve communication, cooperation, trust, and mutual support within teams, and these teamwork processes further strengthen employees' emotional attachment and loyalty to the organisation.

The findings provide practical implications for managers and policymakers. Organisations seeking to improve commitment should develop inclusive HR practices, encourage employee voice, ensure fair treatment, and promote team-based collaboration. Strengthening inclusive workplace practices along with teamwork-oriented organisational culture can help organisations build a more committed, productive, and stable workforce.

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