Inclusive Leadership Behaviours in the Public Sector and Employee Pro-social Rule Breaking Behaviour and the Mediational Effect of Psychological Safety: Cognitive and Affective processes

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction problem

The covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of organisational adaptability in the face of crisis. The pandemic has led to increased environmental complexity in the organisational environment. In this highly complex environment, organisational performance is aided by adopting a more adaptive approach (Uhl-Bien, 2021). However, public organisations are rigid by design. Citizens need to know that they can continuously rely on public organisations and their services. Thus, public organisations need to be dependable and stable over long periods of time. Furthermore, the government governs public organisations. These organisations are therefore subject to politics and election cycles. Accountability and standard operating procedures are therefore important, which increase the rigidity of public organisations. This means it is more difficult for public organisations to adopt an adaptive approach when faced with a highly complex organisational environment (e.g. because of a crisis).

Organisations use policies, rules and regulations to make sure employees fulfil the organisational needs. The organisational rules are intended to keep the organisation running smoothly and to help achieve the organisational goals (Gajduschek, 2003). However, sometimes because of changes in the organisational environment (e.g. a pandemic) rules can become counterproductive. Instead of helping the operation of an organisation, these rules now impede the operation. When rules become counterproductive it leaves employees with a dilemma. Either they follow the counterproductive rules and are therefore unable to perform their jobs (to the fullest extent), which in turn leads to lower organisational performance. Or they break the rules, helping the organisation reach its goals, and then they face the personal risks associated with breaking organisational rules. Because of this, rule breaking can

sometimes be beneficial for organisations, but at the personal expense of the rule breaking employee.

Rule breaking is generally seen as negative deviant behaviour (Morrison, 2006). Negative deviant behaviour is behaviour that goes against an organisation their customs, policies, or internal regulations and which jeopardises the well being of the organisation or its citizens (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). However, as seen in the previously discussed dilemma, some rule breaking is intended to help, not jeopardise the organisation. Therefore not all rule breaking behaviour is negative deviant behaviour. Instead, some rule breaking behaviour is positive deviant behaviour. Positive deviant behaviour is when employees intentionally depart from the norms of a referent group (i.e. an organisation) in an honourable way (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003, as cited in Cameron & Caza, 2008). A form of positive deviant behaviour is pro-social rule breaking. Pro-social rule breaking is defined as "an intentional violation of a formal organisational policy, regulation, or prohibition with the primary intention of promoting the welfare of the organisation or one of its stakeholders" (Morrison, 2006, pp. 7–8). Pro-social rule breaking behaviour reflects a desire to 'do good' or to do things better in the context of the person's organisational role (Morrison, 2006).

Coming back to the dilemma of employees faced with counterproductive rules, an employee breaking the counterproductive rules to aid the organisational performance is a form of pro-social rule breaking. Pro-social rule breaking allows employees to circumvent counterproductive rules that would impede them from (fully) performing their job. Furthermore, it can also serve as a signal to which rules need to be re-examined. The 'bad' rules can then be altered or eliminated or when the problem has become institutionalised, the organisation can be changed (Morrison, 2006). When faced with unanticipated circumstances (e.g. a pandemic), pro-social rule breaking can increase organisational adaptability and flexibility (Morrison, 2006). Therefore this concept is especially interesting for public

organisations, which are more rigid by design. However, despite the potential benefits, there has been no prior research into what influences pro-social rule breaking in public organisations.

According to the social information processing theory, employees choose their behaviour based on the information that is available to them in the social environment (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). In this social environment, leaders form an important source of information (Boekhorst, 2015). Therefore, theoretically, in public organisations, the behaviour of public leaders should be an important influence on the employee pro-social rule breaking behaviour.

There have been a couple of research papers on the subject of pro-social rule breaking in the private sector. In these studies, leadership behaviour has been linked to pro-social rule breaking, specifically inclusive leadership (He et al., 2021; Wang & Shi, 2021). These studies suggest that inclusive leadership can positively influence pro-social rule breaking.

One way inclusive leaders might influence pro-social rule breaking is by increasing the perceived psychological safety (Wang & Shi, 2021). The personal risk associated with rule breaking is an important factor in determining whether or not an employee will break the rules. When an employee perceives a workplace as psychologically safe, they perceive this workplace to be safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999). Thus, theoretically in a completely psychologically safe work environment, there is no perceived interpersonal risk to pro-social rule breaking. Therefore the personal risks associated with pro-social rule breaking are gone and only the benefit to the organisation or stakeholder remains. Meaning that when employees perceive their work environment to be (completely) psychologically safe they are more likely to partake in pro-social rule breaking when they deem this beneficial to the organisation (or one of its stakeholders) (Wang & Shi, 2021).

Although there have been two studies on the relationship between employee pro-social rule breaking and inclusive leadership, the topic is under-researched (Fleming, 2020). There is

especially a gap as to this relationship in the public sector. To this date, only a few studies have researched how leadership behaviour influences pro-social rule breaking. These existing studies have only been conducted in the Chinese private sector. However, because of the potential benefits, pro-social rule breaking can bring to the public sector, especially during times of crisis. It is important to research whether inclusive leadership behaviour does relate to pro-social rule breaking in the context of the public sector.

1.2 Research objective and question

The focus of this research shall be to extend what is known about pro-social rule breaking by looking at how this concept is influenced by leadership behaviour in the public sector. Specifically looking at inclusive leadership behaviour as an antecedent and whether psychological safety plays a mediating role in this relationship. Aiming to lay the foundation for whether or not public managers can influence employee pro-social rule breaking through their leadership behaviour. Allowing public leaders a mechanism to increase organisational adaptability and in turn organisational performance during crises.

The research will be conducted using survey responses of Dutch government employees collected from the Dutch Office for the Senior Civil Service (Bureau Algemene Bestuursdienst) focused on how managers and employees experience leadership and other contextual factors in their own work environment. This leads us to the following research question:

> *"How is perceived inclusive leadership behaviour in the Dutch public sector related to employee pro-social rule breaking behaviour and is this relationship mediated by perceived psychological safety?"*

1.3 Societal and scientific relevance

1.3.1 societal relevance

This research question is societally relevant because if inclusive leadership behaviour increases pro-social rule breaking in the public sector, this could allow lower-level public managers a mechanism to intervene in public organisations when current rules impede the functioning of the organisation. Organisational change is often a long process for public organisations and is decided by the higher levels of management. So between the time that a rule becomes counterproductive and the higher management of the organisation changes said rule, a lot of time can pass. During which the performance of the organisation is impeded by the rule, which means customers are not being (fully) helped (e.g. during the Dutch childcare benefits scandal). Lower-level public managers are closer to the front lines of the organisations and thus more likely to find problems before they reach the top levels. If inclusive leadership behaviour increases pro-social rule breaking in the public sector, lower level managers can utilize this mechanism to decrease the negative impact of a counterproductive rule. This would potentially mean fewer customers fall through the cracks between the time that a rule becomes counterproductive and the higher-level management changes the rule. Furthermore, leadership behaviour is free. So if this can be utilised as a mechanism it would also reduce the cost burden of a counterproductive rule.

Secondly, research into the topic of pro-social rule breaking may help lower the negative association with rule breaking and help increase public awareness of positive deviant behaviour. Lastly, this research may illustrate another potential benefit of inclusive leadership behaviour and having a psychologically safe work environment. Which can increase the popularity of this management style, which would benefit (public) employees. An inclusive and psychologically safe workplace is a more pleasant workplace for all employees, but especially historically marginalised employees.

1.3.2 scientific relevance

Furthermore, the research question is scientifically relevant because it expands upon a research topic that thus far has been under-researched (Fleming, 2020). The current theoretical framework of pro-social rule breaking is limited. Furthermore, how pro-social rule breaking relates to leadership behaviour has seen little research, especially when looking at inclusive leadership (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022).

Researching this relationship in the context of the Dutch public sector has two distinct scientific advantages. Firstly and most notably, the public sector has high public service motivation (Jacobsen, 2021). The concept of public service motivation has seen a lot of research but the behavioural implications of public service motivation have seen very little research (Esteve et al., 2016). This research can help fill this gap because it focuses on leadership and employee behaviours in a high public service motivation setting.

Secondly, the relationship between inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking has thus far only been researched in the context of the Chinese private sector. A context which is highly collectivistic and has lower public service motivation. The Dutch public sector in contrast is extremely individualistic (Hofstede Insights, 2021) and has a high public service motivation (Jacobsen, 2021). Both aspects can be an important influence on pro-social rule breaking behaviour.) People from a highly individualistic culture, compared to people from a highly collectivistic culture, possibly give different weights to the perceived personal risk of intentional rule breaking and the perceived benefits of promoting the welfare of their organisation or one of its stakeholders. People from a highly collectivistic culture, compared to those of a highly individualistic culture, may be more inclined to perceive the benefit to the organisation or one of its stakeholders to outweigh the personal risk of pro-social rule breaking. Whereas, people from a highly individualistic culture may perceive the personal risk to outweigh the benefit of pro-social rule breaking to the organisation or one of its

stakeholders. Furthermore, according to Weißmüller (2020), individuals with a high public service motivation are more likely to engage in pro-social rule breaking. People with high public service motivation are more likely to break the rules when they perceive the cause as noble. So people with high public service motivation are more likely to engage in pro-social rule breaking because pro-social rule breaking reflects the same desire to 'do good' (Weißmüller**,** 2020).

Additionally, answering the research question may expand upon what is known about the leadership outcomes of inclusive leadership, especially through its effect on psychological safety. The link between inclusive leadership and psychological safety has seen increased research in the last two decades (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022). The researched leadership outcomes that follow this relationship however are still limited. This research can thus help expand upon this.

1.4 Roadmap

In the next chapter (chapter 2), a theoretical framework is built using literature on all key concepts. These are; perceived inclusive leadership, employee pro-social rule breaking, and psychological safety. In chapter 3, the design of the empirical analyses is discussed. The results of these analyses are presented in chapter 4. They are discussed further in chapter 5. Lastly, in chapter 6, the conclusion, limitations of the research, implications for future research, and advice for practitioners are given.

2. Theory

This chapter contains a literature review for all relevant concepts: pro-social rule breaking, inclusive leadership behaviour, and psychological safety. These concepts are each defined, and the relationships between them are explored. Based on the existing literature, hypotheses for all the relationships between concepts were formed and tested in chapter 4. The literature review and hypotheses cumulate into a single conceptual framework. Which later is used to analyse the research question. This conceptual framework is graphically displayed at the end of the chapter (see figure 1).

2.1 Pro-social rule breaking

Pro-social rule breaking is a relatively new construct coined by Morrison in 2006. Morrison (2006) defines pro-social rule breaking as "an intentional violation of a formal organisational policy, regulation, or prohibition with the primary intention of promoting the welfare of the organisation or one of its stakeholders" (pp. 7–8). Within this definition lie three important aspects of pro-social rule breaking.

Firstly, an important aspect of pro-social rule breaking behaviour is that the primary motivation of the rule breaking should reflect a desire to 'do good' or to do things better. The rule breaking can be motivated by mixed motives, so long as the primary motivation is pro-social (Morrison, 2006). Furthermore, the pro-social part of pro-social rule breaking is only based on the primary motivation, regardless of its outcome. Pro-social rule breaking has the primary intention of promoting the welfare of the organisation or one of its stakeholders. It three distinguishable types of motivation: pro-social rule breaking for efficiency, to help customers, or to help colleagues (Dahling et al., 2012; Morrison, 2006). But pro-social rule breaking can have negative outcomes and still be considered pro-social because of its primary motivation. For the same reason can pro-social rule breaking be classified as a form of

constructive organisational deviance (Dahling et al., 2012). Rule breaking is often classified as destructive organisational deviance, motivated by self-interest or negative emotions. But a pro-social rule breaker defies the organisation with the main aim of being helpful (Morrison, 2006). To surmise, rule breaking can only be considered pro-social if the primary intention of the rule break was to promote the welfare of the organisation or one of its stakeholders, regardless of its outcome (Morrison, 2006).

Secondly, another important defining aspect of pro-social rule breaking is that it is intentional. This is an important distinction to make because rule breaking can only be classified as pro-social rule breaking when a person does so knowingly and deliberately. Unintentional rule breaking (i.e. by accident), therefore, does not fall under pro-social rule breaking. Even if the rule breaking had a pro-social motivational component (Morrison, 2006).

Lastly, pro-social rule breaking is always about formal rules, organisational policies, regulations, or prohibitions. The breaking of informal rules, organisational policies, regulations, or prohibitions, (for example norms) is therefore not considered pro-social rule breaking. Even if the rule breaking had a pro-social motivation and was done intentionally (Morrison, 2006).

Another important distinction that needs to be made but that is not explicitly part of the definition used by Morrison (2006) is the distinction between employee pro-social rule breaking and managerial pro-social rule breaking. So long as people meet the previously discussed criteria, all members of an organisation, regardless of their function, can do pro-social rule breaking. However, previous research has further specified pro-social rule breaking by differentiating two types of pro-social rule breaking individuals: managers and their employees. For the purposes of this research, this is an important distinction to make. This research only focuses on pro-social rule breaking by employees, not pro-social rule

breaking by managers, because the aim is to find how leadership behaviour influences pro-social rule breaking amongst employees.

2.2 Inclusive leadership behaviour

As previously discussed leaders play an important role in shaping the behaviour of their employees (Boekhorst, 2015). Inclusive leadership behaviour especially has been linked to pro-social rule breaking in de private sector (He et al., 2021; Wang & Shi, 2021). Inclusive leadership has seen a lot of different definitions and diverging conceptualisations over the years (Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022). One commonly agreed upon goal of inclusive leadership is that inclusive leaders aim to stimulate their employees' sense of inclusion. From Brewer's (1991) optimal distinctiveness theory combined with Shore et al. (2011) their inclusion framework; a working definition of inclusion and thus, inclusive leadership can be derived.

Brewer's (1991) optimal distinctiveness theory states that individuals have two fundamental and competing needs, the need for differentiation and the need for inclusion, that can be met by membership in moderately inclusive (but optimally distinct) groups.

Shore et al. (2011) build further upon Brewer's optimal distinctiveness theory but add that the needs for differentiation (uniqueness) and inclusion (belongingness) are not mutually exclusive but both work together to create feelings of inclusion. They argue that when the group accepts a unique individual and their uniqueness is valued, this uniqueness provides opportunities for improved group performance (Shore et al., 2011)

Inclusion can thus be defined as an employee perceiving him or herself as an esteemed member of their workgroup by having their needs for both belongingness and uniqueness satisfied (Shore et al., 2011). Because a commonly agreed upon goal of inclusive leadership is to stimulate their employees' sense of inclusion, inclusive leadership by extension can be defined as the following:

Inclusive leadership is leadership behaviour that accommodates and facilitates employees' experience of simultaneously feeling a sense of uniqueness and belongingness (Shore et al., 2011). These two dimensions of inclusive leadership (i.e. uniqueness and belongingness) are stimulated and supported through two distinct processes. Inclusive leadership behaviour, therefore, has two dimensions. Firstly, there is a cognitive dimension in which inclusive leadership involves stimulating cognitive processes that enable individuals to express their uniqueness. Secondly, there is an affective dimension in which inclusive leadership involves supporting affective processes that foster a shared team identity and individuals' feelings of belongingness (Ashikali, 2019).

So to summarise, inclusive leadership can be defined as leadership behaviour that accommodates and facilitates employees' experience of simultaneously feeling a sense of uniqueness and belongingness (Shore et al., 2011). This is done via two processes, one on the cognitive dimension (aimed at uniqueness) and one on the affective dimension (aimed at belongingness) (Ashikali, 2019).

This thesis will use the above-mentioned definition of inclusive leadership borrowed from Shore et al. (2011) and Ashikali (2019). The multi-dimensional multi-level definition of inclusive leadership created by Veli Korkmaz et al. (2022), which seeks to incorporate all different dimensions of inclusive leadership, is for the purpose of this thesis both too extensive and not robust enough (not yet tested).

2.2.1 Causal mechanism Perceived Inclusive Leadership & Employee Pro-Social Rule Breaking

The question still remains how are inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking related? The predicted relationship between perceived inclusive leadership and employee pro-social rule breaking can theoretically be explained using Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) social information processing theory. According to the social information processing theory, the social environment, in which individuals operate, contains different types of information that affect their behaviours and attitudes. Through the interpretation of social situations and through cognitive processing individuals adopt behaviour that they deem appropriate. Environmental factors determine to a large extent the behaviour and attitude of people because of this (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Leaders are an important source of social information in the work environment. Employees focus on their leaders and look to them for social clues (Boekhorst, 2015). Therefore leaders form an important influence on employee behaviour and attitudes in the work environment.

According to the social information processing theory, before employees engage in pro-social rule breaking, they will try to interpret their social environment to see if this behaviour can be deemed appropriate. Employees will look to their leaders, because they present important sources of social information in the work environment, to see if these leaders will criticise or praise their actions (Wang & Shi, 2021).

Leaders who show inclusive leadership behaviour will lead to more pro-social rule breaking amongst employees. This is because these leaders stimulate employees' uniqueness through cognitive processes, which stimulates employees to exchange information and participate in decision-making. This stimulation of uniqueness through information exchange and increased participation in decision-making may lead to employees being more able to make decisions by themselves and learning from each other to break the rules. At the same

time, these leaders support employees' belongingness through affective processes, which stimulate employees' feelings of appreciation and support. This stimulation of belongingness through employees' increased feelings of appreciation and support may lead to employees feeling supported and appreciated in their decisions. Stimulating them to make otherwise more difficult decisions like breaking the rules. This leads us to the first hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a. Inclusive leadership that stimulates cognitive processes that enable individuals to express their uniqueness will be positively related to employee pro-social rule breaking.

Hypothesis 1b. Inclusive leadership that supports affective processes that foster a shared team identity and individuals' feelings of belongingness will be positively related to employee pro-social rule breaking.

2.3 The Role of Psychological Safety

The relationship between perceived inclusive leadership and employee pro-social rule breaking may (at least in part) be mediated by psychological safety. Psychological safety can be defined as "a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking" (Edmondson, 1999, p.354). Meaning that in a psychologically safe environment, individual members of a team feel secure to bring up dissenting opinions, discuss mistakes, and take (intrapersonal) risks. Colleagues respect and trust each other and feel able (almost obligated) to speak up or be candid (Edmondson, 2018).

Psychological safety is a result of inclusive leadership behaviour. This is because leaders play a critical role in promoting psychological safety (Hirak et al., 2012). Inclusive leaders accommodate and facilitate employees' simultaneous experiences of a sense of uniqueness and belongingness (Shore et al., 2011). On the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership, employees are stimulated to exchange, discuss, and learn from the different individual

backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas in the work environment (Ashikali, 2019). This leads to employees feeling more able to speak up or be candid. Employees feel stimulated by their leaders to discuss dissenting opinions and exchange ideas. Therefore inclusive leadership on the cognitive dimension (at least partly) leads to increased psychological safety. Since employees feel psychologically safe when they feel that they are able (almost obligated) to bring up dissenting opinions, discuss mistakes, and take (intrapersonal) risks (Edmondson, 2018). This leads us to the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. Inclusive leadership that stimulates cognitive processes that enable individuals to express their uniqueness will be positively related to psychological safety.

On the affective dimension of inclusive leadership, employees are encouraged to value and appreciate individual differences and leaders try to foster employees' sense of belongingness (Ashikali, 2019). Colleagues feel more belongingness and appreciation for each other. Leading to an increase in a shared feeling of trust and lower perceived interpersonal risks. Therefore inclusive leadership on the affective dimension (at least partly) leads to increase psychological safety. This leads us to the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Inclusive leadership that supports affective processes that foster a shared team identity and individuals' feelings of belongingness will be positively related to psychological safety.

Furthermore, psychological safety is a causal antecedent of pro-social rule breaking. As previously discussed, according to the social information processing theory, inclusive leadership will lead to more employee pro-social rule breaking. This effect has two reasons.

Firstly, employees perceive these inclusive leaders (and colleagues) as less likely to criticise their rule breaking behaviour. Furthermore, inclusive leaders encourage employees to voice dissenting opinions and diverging perspectives and ideas are valued in the work environment.

Psychological safety is an antecedent of pro-social rule breaking because in a psychologically safe work environment team members feel safe to take interpersonal risks. Thus the perceived risk of criticism of rule breaking behaviour by the leader (or colleagues) is lowered. Which lowers the barriers to pro-social rule breaking behaviour.

Secondly, in a psychologically safe work environment, individual team members feel able (almost obligated) to speak up or be candid. They are encouraged to bring up dissenting opinions and to discuss mistakes. Therefore psychological safety leads to more pro-social rule breaking because employees are encouraged to voice dissenting opinions and diverging perspectives and ideas, which are valued in the work environment. This increases the likelihood of individuals pro-socially breaking the rules because they disagree with the current rules. This leads us to the fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. Psychological safety will be positively related to pro-social rule breaking.

So overall, inclusive leadership behaviour increases employees' feelings of uniqueness through cognitive processes and increases employees' feelings of belongingness through affective processes. Which both in turn increase the perceived psychological safety amongst employees. This in turn increases their pro-social rule breaking behaviour. This leads us to our fifth and final hypothesis:

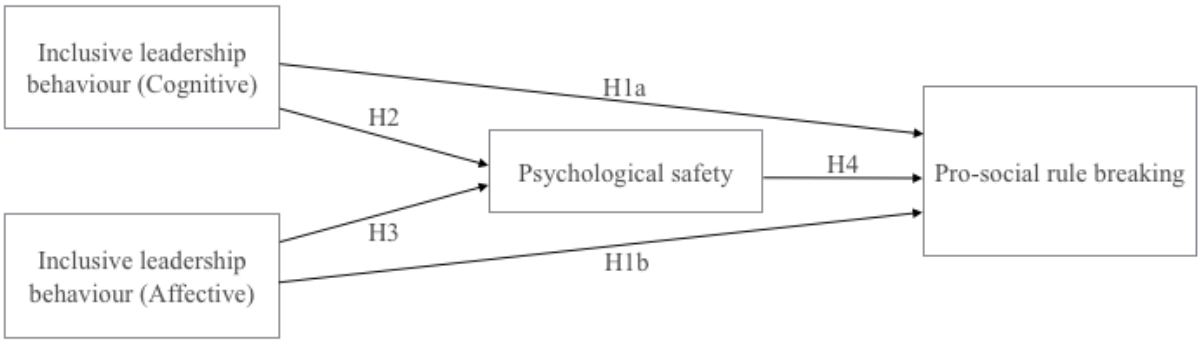
Hypothesis 5. The positive relationship between inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking is (partly) mediated by psychological safety.

2.6 graphic representation of research

The four above discussed relationships and hypotheses give us the following conceptual framework. See figure 1. Here you can see inclusive leadership split into its two dimensions (cognitive and affective), and that psychological safety is expected to (at least partly) mediate the relationship between the inclusive leadership dimensions and pro-social rule breaking.

Figure 1.

Conceptual framework



3. Research Design

In this chapter, the method of data collection is discussed. After which, all concepts from the previous chapter are operationalized. Followed by a discussion of the method of analysis. At the end of the chapter, the validity and reliability of the research design are reflected upon.

3.1 Research design

To explain what the relationship is between perceived inclusive leadership behaviour in the Dutch public sector and employee pro-social rule breaking behaviour, and if this is mediated by perceived psychological safety, the conceptual framework needs to be tested. To test our conceptual framework a correlational research design will be used, because the relationship between the variables can be tested via correlations. Specifically, Baron & Kenny (1986) their method to establish mediation was used. In this method, the paths in the

mediational model are estimated using multiple regressions to test whether or not the mediation is established.

These correlations are preferably done with large-N quantitative data. It was chosen to use secondary data because this allowed for a bigger sample size to be used than the author would have been able to collect by himself. Furthermore, a bigger sample size is preferable because it decreases the margin of error when making interments from the sample (Cook et al., 2002).

The secondary quantitative data comes from survey responses collected from a random sample of the government of the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid). Having a randomly selected sample is preferable since this ensures that the sample and population are identical on all measured and unmeasured variables within the limits of sampling error. Helping us approximate a measurement of the entire population and allowing for more generalizable statements to be made based on the sample (Cook et al., 2002). Furthermore, surveys are a good measurement tool because they allow researchers to collect data from large sample sizes, and thus large amounts of reliable data, relatively quick and with minimal effort (Ponto, 2015). The survey was conducted by the Leiden Leadership Centre (Leiden University) alongside two other research methods (explorative focus groups and conjoint analysis). The survey part of their research aimed to identify the leadership behaviours present in the government of the Netherlands, as perceived by both the managers themselves and their employees. Apart from identifying leadership behaviours, the survey also mapped relevant outcome variables, contextual variation, and personal characteristics of the Dutch public managers and their employees. This allows researchers to research meaningful relationships between leadership behaviour, contextual factors, outcome variables, and personal characteristics.

This survey was chosen as the source for this research because it includes large-N quantitative data on the concepts of inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and pro-social rule breaking and was measured in the setting of interest namely, the Dutch public sector.

The survey was sent amongst three target groups in the government of the Netherlands. The first target group consisted of managers from the Dutch Office for the Senior Civil Service (Bureau Algemene Bestuursdienst). The second target group consisted of managers from the government of the Netherlands that were not part of the Dutch Office for the Senior Civil Service. Lastly, the last target group consisted of a sample of employees of the government of the Netherlands that did not possess any formal managerial responsibilities. For the purposes of this research, only the survey data of the last target group is relevant. So the survey data from this target group is the only survey data that will be used.

The sample of employees of the government of the Netherlands is well suited for the purposes of our research. The aim of this research is to find the relationship between inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking in the context of the Dutch public sector and if this is mediated by psychological safety. One of the largest organisations in the Dutch public sector is the government of the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid). This makes the government of the Netherlands a good data source for looking at the Dutch public sector.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

As previously mentioned this research will be using secondary data collected by survey from a random sample of employees of the government of the Netherlands that did not possess any formal managerial responsibilities sample (n=6119).

The employees digitally received the survey. The response rate yielded 1029 responses (16.82%). However, of those responses, only 530 respondents (51.51%) did not have any missing data for all variables of interest (including control variables). So this is the number of

observations left in the dataset used in this research. This is still sufficient for the purpose of this research.

3.3 Operationalization data

The questions in the survey were categorised into different modules. Most of which will not be used for this research and are therefore irrelevant. I mention this however because at the beginning of each module (except the last about demographic characteristics) the respondents were shown a variation of the following passages (in Dutch).

> *"In the remainder of the questionnaire, various aspects of leadership are discussed. The following statements relate to the behaviour of your immediate supervisor."*

After the opening passages respondents were presented with a list of statements accompanied by a 7-point Likert scale per statement. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'. The English translations of the statements used per variable are discussed below. For the original Dutch statements see appendix A-C.

3.3.1 Operationalization pro-social rule breaking

Although Pro-social rule breaking has three distinguishable types of motivation: (i.e. for efficiency, to help customers, or to help colleagues) (Dahling et al., 2012; Morrison, 2006). In this thesis the focus will be on 'general' pro-social rule breaking, not distinguishing between types of pro-social rule breaking motivation. Since the dataset used to operationalize pro-social rule breaking only encompasses pro-social rule breaking motivated to achieve the 'best end results for citizens'. The concept of (employee) pro-social rule breaking was operationalized using three measurement items developed by Dahling et al. (2012). They are as follows:

1. *"If necessary, I break rules or procedures that get in the way of the best end result for the citizen."*

2. *"If necessary, I bend rules or procedures so that I can achieve the best end result for the citizen."*
3. *"If necessary, I ignore rules or procedures that prevent me from achieving the best end result for the citizen."*

Using SPPS 26 the Cronbach's Alpha is calculated. The three statements for pro-social rule breaking have a Cronbach's Alpha of .851. This shows that the scale used to measure pro-social rule breaking has a good internal consistency. Using the compute function in SPSS one variable was created from the three measurements to represent the perceived employee pro-social rule breaking. This variable is used later on in the multiple regressions.

3.3.2 Operationalization inclusive leadership

Cognitive inclusive leadership

In the survey, the concept of the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership was operationalized using seven measurement items developed by Ashikali et al. (2021). They are as follows:

1. *My leader encourages me to discuss diverse viewpoints and perspectives to problem solving with colleagues.*
2. *My leader makes sure I have the opportunity to express diverse viewpoints.*
3. *My leader stimulates me to exchange different ideas with colleagues.*
4. *My leader encourages me to use colleagues' diverse ethnic–cultural backgrounds for problem solving*
5. *My leader makes sure that I use colleagues' diverse ethnic–cultural backgrounds as a source for creativity and innovation.*
6. *My leader stimulates me to learn from colleagues' ethnic–cultural backgrounds.*
7. My leader stimulates me to actively participate in the team.

The seven statements have a Cronbach's Alpha of .941. This shows that the scale used to measure the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership has an excellent internal consistency.

Affective inclusive leadership

In the survey, the concept of the affective dimension of inclusive leadership was operationalized using six measurement items developed by Ashikali et al. (2021). They are as follows:

8. *My leader makes sure I am treated as an equal member of the team.*
9. *My leader tries to prevent me to think in negative stereotypes about other colleagues.*
10. *My leader tries to prevent employees to form groups that could exclude other colleagues.*
11. *My leader makes sure I have the opportunity to be myself in the team.*
12. *My leader communicates the benefits of ethnic–cultural diversity for the team to employees.*
13. *My leader makes sure I have the opportunity to have a voice in the team.*

The six statements have a Cronbach's Alpha of .912. This shows that the scale used to measure the affective dimension of inclusive leadership has an excellent internal consistency.

Factor analysis inclusive leadership measurements

A factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis with rotation by Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization) was conducted to check if the items of inclusive leadership actually belong to two different factors.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test produced a KMO of .953. Showing that the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity produced a significance of .000. This is lower than the alpha level of $p < .001$. Showing there are enough correlations for factor analysis.

The factor analysis shows (see table 1) that item 2 and item 7 of the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership are best factored with the items of the affective dimension. Whereas, item 12 of the affective dimension of inclusive leadership would best be factored with the items of the cognitive dimension. Lastly, the factor analysis suggests that item 9 of the affective dimension, can both be factored within its current dimension and in the factor with mostly cognitive items. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

The decision was made to drop items 2, 7, 9, and 12 because the factor analysis showed that they could not match the dimensions that they were developed for. This left items 1, 3, 4 5, and 6 for the operationalization of the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership. For the operationalization of the affective dimension of inclusive leadership this left items 8, 10, 11, and 13. New Cronbach's alpha tests show that the measurements left for the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership now have a Cronbach's alpha of .946 (previously .941). So the cognitive measurements still have an excellent internal consistency (even slightly higher than before). For the measurements left in the affective dimension a Cronbach's alpha test yields a Cronbach's alpha of .894 (previously .912). So the affective measurements still have a good internal consistency (although slightly lower than before).

Like before, using the compute function in SPSS one variable was created from the five cognitive measurements to represent the perceived cognitive inclusive leadership behaviour and one variable was created from the four affective measurements to represent the perceived affective inclusive leadership behaviour. These variables are used later on in the multiple regressions.

Table 1

Factor analysis items scale inclusive leadership (both dimensions)

Item	Factor	
	1	2
Item 8 (Affective)	.964	
Item 13 (Affective)	.944	
Item 11 (Affective)	.937	
Item 7 (Cognitive)	**.815**	
Item 2 (Cognitive)	**.663**	
Item 10 (Affective)	.508	
Item 5 (Cognitive)		-1.000
Item 4 (Cognitive)		-.983
Item 6 (Cognitive)		-.935
Item 1 (Cognitive)		-.694
Item 12 (Affective)		**-.610**
Item 3 (Cognitive)		-.599
Item 9 (Affective)	***.401***	***-.419***

Note. This table shows a factor analysis of all survey items used to measure the concept of inclusive leadership that were developed by Ashikali et al. (2021). The extraction method that was used was Principal Component Analysis and rotated using Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. Rotation converged in 12 iterations. The items were originally dived into two dimensions: a cognitive dimension (item 1-7) and an affective dimension (item 8-13). The items that belong to a different dimension according to the factor analysis have been made bold. Item 9 was made bold italic because it can go in either factor according to the factor analysis.

3.3.3 Operationalization psychological safety

The concept of psychological safety was operationalized using seven measurement items developed by Edmondson (2018). They are as follows:

1. *If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.*
2. *Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.*
3. *People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.*
4. *It is safe to take a risk on this team.*
5. *It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.*
6. *No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.*
7. *Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.*

It is important to note that items 1, 3, and 5 are reversed and should be reverse coded before adding them to a single scale variable. The seven statements have a Cronbach's Alpha of .766. This shows that the scale used to measure psychological safety has an acceptable internal consistency. Using the recode function in SPSS, the reversed items were reverse coded. After which, using the compute function in SPSS one variable was created from the seven measurements to represent the perceived psychological safety. This variable is used later on in the multiple regressions.

3.4 Control variables.

In the statistical analysis *gender*, *age*, *educational level*, *organizational tenure*, *work domain*, *centralisation,* and *formalisation,* are controlled for to rule out the impact of these variables on pro-social rule breaking. Certain demographic characteristics such as gender, age, level of education, tenure, or the work domain can have implications for how likely a person is to pro-socially break the rules. Therefore these are best controlled for. Furthermore,

previous research has shown that certain organisational attributes (or structures) such as the levels of organisational centralisation and rule formalisation can influence pro-social rule breaking. Organisations with higher levels of formalisation promote rule following and thus diminish employees' willingness to break the rules (Fleming, 2020; John & Shafi, 2020). Alternatively, organisations with lower levels of centralisation reduce deviant behaviour due to having more flexibility, autonomy, and open communication (John & Shafi, 2020). For these reasons, centralisation and formalisation will also be controlled for. The operationalization of the control variables is discussed below.

3.4.1 Operationalization control variables demographic characteristics

All below discussed operationalization were asked in Dutch. However below they will be presented in English.

For gender, respondents were asked 'What is your gender?' and then presented with a multiple-choice answer. They could choose to answer: 'man', 'woman', 'other', or 'prefer not to say'. In the dataset answers that included 'other' or 'prefer not to say' (63 responses or 6.12%) were dropped. Using SPPS a dummy variable was created that scored 1 if the respondent was female and 0 if they were not (i.e. male). This variable is later controlled for in the multiple regression analysis.

For age, respondents were asked 'What is your age in years?' respondents could respond with any number. Missing data (171 responses) was dropped. Age is later controlled for in the multiple regression analysis.

For educational level, respondents were asked 'What is your highest completed level of education?' and then presented with a multiple-choice answer. Respondents could respond with 'Primary education', 'VMBO (LBO, VBO, LTS, MAVO, IVO, MULO etc.)', 'HAVO/VWO (MMS, HBS, etc.)', 'MBO (MTS, MEAO, SPD1 etc.)', 'HBO (Bachelor,

HTS, HEAO etc.)', 'WO (Bachelor, Kandidaats, Master, PhD, etc.)', or 'no answer'. Which are all the different possible levels of education in the Netherlands, ranging from primary education to university level. Respondents who responded with 'no answer' (25 respondents) were dropped. Furthermore, no respondents responded with primary education as their highest level of completed education. SPSS was used to create dummy variables for educational levels of VMBO, HAVO/VWO, and MBO. The dummy variables gave a score of 1 if the educational level corresponded with the respondents' highest level of completed education, else it would give a score of 0. HBO and WO were chosen as reference category since these belong to respondents who have completed higher education, which was the norm for the respondents. The dummy variables for educational levels were controlled for in the multiple regressions.

For organisational tenure, respondents were asked 'How many years have you been working for your current organisation?' respondents could respond with any number. Missing data (111 respondents) was dropped. Organisational tenure was controlled for in the multiple regressions.

For work domain, respondents were asked 'Within which domain do you think your own organization fits best?' and then presented with a multiple-choice answer. Respondents could respond with 'Policy', 'Inspection', 'Implementation', 'Business operations', or 'Other'. Respondents who responded with 'Other' (61 respondents) were dropped. SPSS was again used to create dummy variables for the work domains of policy, inspection, and business operations. The dummy variables gave a score of 1 if the work domain corresponded with the respondents' work domain, else it would give a score of 0. The implementation work domain was chosen as reference category since most respondents belonged to this domain. The dummy variables for work domain were controlled for in the multiple regressions.

3.4.2 Operationalization control variables organisational attributes

The concepts of *centralisation* and *formalisation* were controlled for as previously discussed. The statements used to operationalize these concepts were originally in Dutch and are presented as such in appendix D and F. Below the operationalization is discussed in English.

The concept of centralisation was operationalized using four measurement items developed by Aiken & Hage (1968). Per statement, a 7-point Likert scale was given. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'. The items are as follows:

1. *Before a supervisor has approved a decision, little action can be taken.*
2. *A person who likes to make his or her own decisions will be quickly discouraged in my organization.*
3. *Even minor issues must be referred to someone higher up for a final decision.*
4. *Every decision made in my organization must have the approval of a supervisor.*

The four statements have a Cronbach's Alpha of .783, which shows that the scale used to measure the centralisation has an acceptable internal consistency. Using the compute function in SPSS one variable was created from the four measurements to represent the centralisation. This variable is controlled for later on in the multiple regressions.

The concept of the formalisation was operationalized using three measurement items developed by Deshpande & Zaltman (1982). Per statement, a 7-point Likert scale was given. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'. The items are as follows:

1. *Whatever situation I face in my work, there are procedures on how to act.*
2. *There is a complete, written task description for all aspects of my work.*

3. *It is always emphasized that I must perform my work according to the proper rules and procedures.*

The three statements have a Cronbach's Alpha of .681. This shows that the scale used to measure the centralisation has an acceptable internal consistency. Using the compute function in SPSS one variable was created from the three measurements to represent the formalisation. This variable is controlled for later on in the multiple regressions.

As previously mentioned, with all missing data dropped, 530 respondents (51.51%) are left who responded to all the variables used in this research. This number is sufficient for the purpose of this research.

3.5 Method of data analysis

To analyse the data and to test the conceptual framework, via the hypotheses, IBM's SPSS Statistics version 26 is used. Descriptive statistics were generated first. Frequencies were used to find the distribution of each measured concept. Next, the central tendency was determined (with the exception of the dummy variables) using the mean of each concept. Following, the variability is determined (with the exception of the dummy variables) using the standard deviation. After the descriptive statistics, a correlation analysis was carried out. Using bivariate correlations to calculate Pearson's R, relationships between variables can be established. After this, a regression is run with employee pro-social rule breaking as the criterion variable and the (dummy) control variables as the predictor, to establish the effects of the control variables on the dependent variable.

To test the conceptual framework developed in the previous chapter, the method of Baron & Kenny (1986) to establish mediation was used. In this method, the paths in the mediational model are estimated using multiple regressions to test whether or not the mediation is established (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the first regression, employee pro-social rule breaking

is used as the criterion variable and both dimensions of inclusive leadership behaviour as the predictors. To establish that there is a direct effect between the causal and outcome variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the second regression, psychological safety is used as the criterion variable and both dimensions of inclusive leadership behaviour as the predictors to estimate and test the relationship between the independent and mediator variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the third and last regression, employee pro-social rule breaking is used as the criterion variable and psychological safety and both dimensions of inclusive leadership behaviour as the predictors to estimate and test that the mediator affects the dependent variable. Furthermore, this last regression establishes if the effect of the inclusive leadership on pro-social rule breaking is fully mediated by psychological safety.

3.6 Reflection research design

There are some limitations to the proposed research design that may impact the validity and reliability of the outcomes. Firstly, a lot of responses were dropped because of missing data. There is a possibility this data was not missing (completely) at random but missing not at random. If this is the case ignoring this data can introduce bias into our data.

Secondly, The factor analysis of the scales for perceived inclusive leadership showed that some items belonged within a factor other than the theoretically assigned dimension (i.e. items 2,7, and 12), or in either dimension (i.e. item 9). The decision was made to drop items 2, 7, 9, and 12 because the factor analysis showed that they could not match the dimensions that they were developed for. This still left five items to measure the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership and increased the Cronbach's alpha slightly (from .941 to .946). Indicating an excellent internal consistency. Furthermore, this drop still left four items to measure the affective dimension of inclusive leadership, which decreased the Cronbach's alpha slightly (from .912 to .894). Indicating a good internal consistency. Although the

number of items left to measure the concepts is still sufficient and both scales have a sufficient internal consistency, dropping the items means that the results may not be directly compared to other research using the measurement tool developed by Ashikali et al. (2021). This is not necessarily a problem, especially because there has been no prior research into this topic using this measurement tool, but still heeds a word of caution for those looking to compare their results.

Another possible limitation of the research design is that secondary data was used. This has implications for how certain concepts were operationalized. Theoretically, psychological safety is a group level construct. The current way this concept is operationalized in the survey does not measure at the group level but at the individual level. This means only individual perceptions of this group level construct were measured. Although psychological safety theoretically exists at the group level, I argue that measuring the individual perception of psychological safety is sufficient for the purpose of this research. Firstly because this research does not attempt to measure which group is or is not psychologically safe. So there is no need for group level data to establish whether or not a group is psychologically safe. Secondly, the research is interested in individual perceptions and their influence on behaviour. Therefore, even if the perceptions of psychological safety of an individual do not match the perceptions of other individuals in the same group, this should not matter; the individual perception of this group level construct is enough to influence their behaviour. The self-perception should suffice as an indicator that individuals felt psychologically safe and thus (potentially) altered their behaviour. Furthermore, the dataset does not contain any self-perceptions of the managers' leadership behaviour. However, I argue that for the sake of this thesis this is not needed. How the employees perceive the leadership behaviour of their manager is a better measurement because the perception of employees is what influences their behaviour. It is,

therefore, better to measure how employees perceive their managers instead of measuring how managers perceive themselves.

Another important research design decision that may influence the validity of the research is that respondents that labelled their gender as 'other' were dropped. This means people that do not fit the conventional gender identities of 'male or female' were not included in this study. This of course lowers the generalizability of the findings, but I argue is warranted because gender only functions as a control variable. 'Other' is too broad of a gender category to control for its effect on pro-social rule breaking. If gender was not a control variable I do not think it is warranted to drop respondents because they do not fit traditional gender norms.

4. Empirical findings

In this chapter, the empirical findings of the research are presented. First, the findings of the descriptive statistics are presented. Followed by the results of the correlation analysis. Ending with the results of the mediation analysis (using multiple regressions).

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for all research variables. The following observations can be made about the data from this table. Firstly, for the independent variables, it can be observed that the means are 4.8 and 5.4. Since these variables were measured with a 7-point Likert scale, it can be inferred that the central tendency of the respondent lies with somewhat agreeing (M = 4.8) that their leader shows inclusive leadership on the cognitive dimension. And between somewhat agreeing and agreeing (M = 5.4) that their leader shows inclusive leadership on the affective dimension. For the mediator, variable a mean of 5.2 is found. Showing again that for this variable the central tendency of the respondent lies with

somewhat agreeing (M = 5.2) that they perceive their team to be psychologically safe. Furthermore, psychological safety is the only concept measured with a Likert scale in which the minimum value is greater than 1 (min = 1.71). This means none of the respondents strongly disagreed with their team being psychologically safe.

Interestingly for the dependent variable, a mean is observed of 3.7. This means that the central tendency of the respondent lies with neither agreeing nor disagreeing (M = 3.7) that they pro-socially break the rules. This means most respondents neither confirmed nor denied pro-socially breaking the rules, but if they do most people lean more towards denying than confirming (3.7<4).

For the control variables, the following things can be observed. Firstly, just like with the dependent variable, the mean of formalisation (M = 3.9) and centralisation (M = 3.8) lies around 4. Because these concepts were also measured using a seven-point Likert scale this means that the central tendency of the respondent lies with neither agreeing nor disagreeing that their organisation is formalised or centralised. Secondly, the table shows that the average age of the respondents is around 49.2 years old, with the youngest employee being 24 years old and the oldest being 70 years old. Furthermore, the table shows that the average organisational tenure of an employee is around 12.3 years. The respondent who has worked there the shortest has been with their organisation for 0.25 years, whereas the respondent who has had the longest tenure with their organisation has worked there for 46 years. The table further shows that most of the respondents were male (60.4%). None of the respondents has primary education as their highest completed educational level. Most respondents have a degree in higher education (80.2%). Lastly, most respondents categorise themselves as working in the implementation work domain (48.5%).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for all variables

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Independent variables					
Perceived inclusive leadership (Cognitive)	530	4.8	1.5	1.00	7.00
Perceived inclusive leadership (Affective)	530	5.4	1.3	1.00	7.00
Mediator					
Perceived psychological safety	530	5.2	1.0	1.71	7.00
Dependent variable					
Employee pro-social rule breaking	530	3.7	1.5	1.00	7.00
Control variables					
Age	530	49.2	10.9	24.00	70.00
Organisational Tenure	530	12.3	11.5	0.25	46.00
Formalisation	530	3.9	1.4	1.00	7.00
Centralisation	530	3.8	1.4	1.00	7.00

Categorical control variables

	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender		
Male	320	60.4%
Female	210	39.6%
Educational level		
Primary education	0	0%
VBMO	15	2.8%
HAVO/VWO	19	3.6%
MBO	71	13.4%
HBO/WO	425	80.2%
Work domain		
Policy	102	19.2%
Inspection	126	23.8%
Implementation	257	48.5%
Business operations	45	8.5%

4.2 Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis was performed and the results are presented in table 3 (page 39). We find that the correlations between the predictors and independent variables do not exceed 0.7 or -0.7 so there is no indication of multicollinearity. The correlation analysis shows that the two dimensions of inclusive leadership were found to be strongly positively correlated, $r(528) = .71$, $p < .01$. Meaning that if the score of one of perceived the inclusive leadership dimensions increases the score of the other perceived the inclusive leadership dimension also increases.

The correlation analysis further shows that the perceived inclusive leadership behaviour dimensions were both found to be moderately positively correlated with perceived psychological safety. With a correlation of $r(528) = .42$, $p < .01$ for the cognitive dimension of inclusive leadership behaviour and psychological safety and a correlation of $r(528) = .57$, $p < .01$ for the affective dimension of inclusive leadership behaviour and psychological safety.

Interestingly, no statistically significant correlations were found between the dependent variable and the independent variables or mediator. Furthermore, apart from being statistically insignificant, the scores of the correlations were extremely low (r=.03, r=.04, and r=-.01). The data thus gives the impression that pro-social rule breaking is not significantly influenced by inclusive leadership behaviour or psychological safety.

For the control variables, the correlation analysis shows the following things. The independent, dependent and mediator variables are not significantly correlated with the age of the respondents. Furthermore, organisational tenure also has no statistically significant correlations with the independent, dependent or mediator variables.

The correlation analysis further shows that formalisation is very weakly positively correlated with the two dimensions of inclusive leadership. For formalisation and inclusive leadership on the cognitive dimension $r(528) = .18$, $p < .01$ is found and formalisation and

inclusive leadership on the affective dimension $r(528) = .10$, $p = .018$ is found. Meaning that respondents who perceive their work environment to be more formalised also score their leaders perceived inclusive leadership behaviour higher.

There was no statistically significant correlation found between formalisation and perceived psychological safety. Between formalisation and employee pro-social however a very weak negative correlation is found, $r(528) = .-09$, $p = .33$. This means that respondents who perceive their work environment to be more formalised also report slightly lower employee pro-social rule breaking.

The correlation analysis further shows that centralisation is very weakly negatively correlated with inclusive leadership behaviour on the cognitive dimension, $r(528) = -.18$, $p < .01$ and weakly negatively correlated with inclusive leadership behaviour on the affective dimension, $r(528) = -.25$, $p < .01$. Furthermore, centralisation is weakly negatively correlated with perceived psychological safety, $r(528) = -.33$, $p < .01$. Centralisation is not statistically significantly correlated with employee pro-social rule breaking.

Lastly, some statically significant correlations are found between the control variables. Like the moderate positive correlation between age and organisational tenure, $r(528) = .55$, $p < .01$. This shows that older respondents also report working longer at their organisation. Organisational tenure also has a very weak positive correlation with formalisation, $r(528) = .12$, $p < .01$. This means that people who work longer at the organisation also report the organisation to be more formalised. Lastly, there is a weak positive correlation between formalisation and centralisation, $r(528) = .33$, $p < .01$. This means that respondents who perceive the organisation as more centralised also perceive it as more formalised.

Table 3

Correlations between study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Independent variables							
1. Perceived inclusive leadership (Cognitive)							
2. Perceived inclusive leadership (Affective)	.71**						
Mediator							
3. Perceived psychological safety	.42**	.57**					
Dependent variable							
4. Employee pro-social rule breaking	.03	.04	-.01				
Control variables							
5. Age	.03	.02	.03	.08			
6. Organisational Tenure	-.04	-.03	-.00	.04	.55**		
7. Formalisation	.18**	.10*	-.01	-.09*	.07	.12**	
8. Centralisation	-.18**	-.25**	-.33**	.01	-.02	-.06	.33**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$ (2-tailed). The control variables for gender, educational level, and work domain were not included in the correlation analysis because these are categorical variables.

4.3 Regressions control variables

In the statistical analysis *gender*, *age*, *educational level*, *organizational tenure*, *work domain*, *centralisation,* and *formalisation,* are controlled for to rule out the impact of these variables on pro-social rule breaking. A regression model was run with employee pro-social rule breaking as the criterion variable and the (dummy) control variables as predictors. The results of this regression are presented below in table 4. No statically significant regression was found ($F(11, 518) = 2.402$, $p = .007$), with an adjusted R^2 of .028. So although some significant relationships were found in the model (age, HAVO/VWO, inspection domain) these can be disregarded because the model was not found to be statically significant.

Table 4

Linear regression with employee pro-social rule breaking as dependent and all control variables as independent

Variable	*B*	95% CI		*β*	*t*	*p*
		LL	UL			
(Intercept)	3.13				7.25	.00
Female	-.06	-.33	.22	-.02	-0.40	.69
Age	.02*	.00	.030	.11*	2.10	.04
VMBO	-.72	-1.52	.072	-.08	-1.79	.08
HAVO/VWO	-.82*	-1.52	-.12	-.10*	-2.30	.02
MBO	-.04	-.43	.35	-.01	-0.21	.84
Organisational Tenure	.00	-.01	.02	.03	0.63	.53
Policy Domain	.23	-.13	.59	.06	1.27	.20
Inspection Domain	-.36*	-.68	-.05	-.10*	-2.25	.03
Business Operations Domain	.04	-.43	.52	.01	0.17	.86
Formalisation	-.09	-.19	.02	-.08	-1.66	.10
Centralisation	.04	-.05	.14	.04	0.89	.37

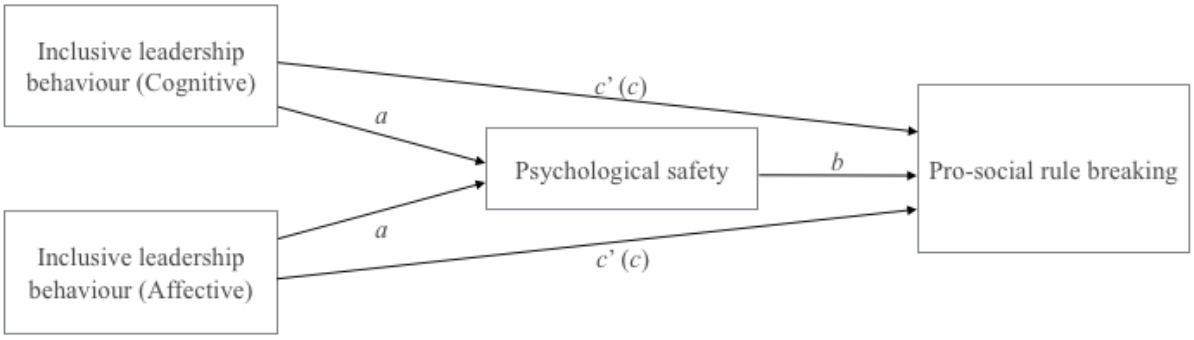
Note. R^2 adjusted = .028, F(11, 518) = 2.402, p = .007. CI = confidence interval for *B*. * p < .05, ** p < .001

4.4 Multiple regressions mediation analysis

To test the hypotheses a mediation analysis was conducted using multiple regressions, using the steps developed by Baron & Kenny (1986). Figure 2 (on the next page) shows a mediation diagram of all steps. In this mediation diagram the four paths are shown (*a*, *b*, *c*, and *c*'). The results of the mediation analysis are reported in table 5 (see page 43).

Figure 2

Mediation diagram with steps Baron & Kenny (1986)



Note. Path *c* is the total effect (direct effect + indirect effect) and path *c*' is the direct effect (with path *ab* being the indirect effect).

Table 5 (see page 43) shows a summary of the mediational analysis. During each regression the control variables were controlled for. In the first step it is found that inclusive leadership behaviour (and the control variables) do not explain a significant amount of variance in pro-social rule breaking, $F(13, 516) = 2.24$, $p = .007$, $R^2 = .053$, $R^2_{adjusted} = .030$. The regression coefficient for cognitive inclusive leadership ($B = .05$, 95% CI [-.077, .175], $p = .444$) and the regression coefficient for affective inclusive leadership ($B = .04$, 95% CI [-.103, .181], $p = .590$) were both not statically significant. Thus no significant total effect was of inclusive leadership behaviour on employee pro-social rule breaking (path *c*).

In the second step it is found that inclusive leadership behaviour (and the control variables) do explain a significant amount of variance in perceived psychological safety, $F(13, 516) = 23.25$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .369$, $R^2_{adjusted} = .354$. The regression coefficient for cognitive inclusive leadership ($B = .03$, 95% CI [-.042, .094], $p = .461$) was not statically significant. The regression coefficient for affective inclusive leadership ($B = .37$, 95% CI [.294 .447], $p < .001$) however, was statically significant. This means that when respondents scored the affective inclusive leadership one point higher, the score for psychological safety also

increased with .37. Thus only for path *a*, from the affective inclusive leadership dimension to psychological safety, a significant effect was found. No significant effect was found on path *a* from the cognitive inclusive leadership dimension to psychological safety.

In the third and fourth step it is found that psychological safety and inclusive leadership behaviour (and the control variables) do not explain a significant amount of variance in pro-social rule breaking, $F(14, 515) = 2.19$, $p = .007$, $R^2 = .056$, $R^2_{adjusted} = .031$. The regression coefficient for perceived psychological safety ($B = -.10$, 95% CI [-.261, .060], $p = .219$) was not statically significant. Thus no significant effect was found for path *b* (from psychological safety to pro-social rule breaking).

Lastly, the regression coefficients for cognitive inclusive leadership ($B = .05$, 95% CI [-.074 .178], $p = .421$) and affective inclusive leadership ($B = .07$, 95% CI [-.078 .230], $p = .331$) in step 3 and 4 were not statically significant. This means no significant direct effect was found (path *c*') from perceived inclusive leadership behaviour to employee pro-social rule breaking.

So no significant total, direct or indirect is found between perceived inclusive leadership behaviour and employee pro-social rule breaking. The filled out mediation diagram is shown in figure 3 (see the next page). From this mediation analysis, there cannot be concluded that there is an effect between the dependent variable or independent variable, with or without mediation.

Table 5

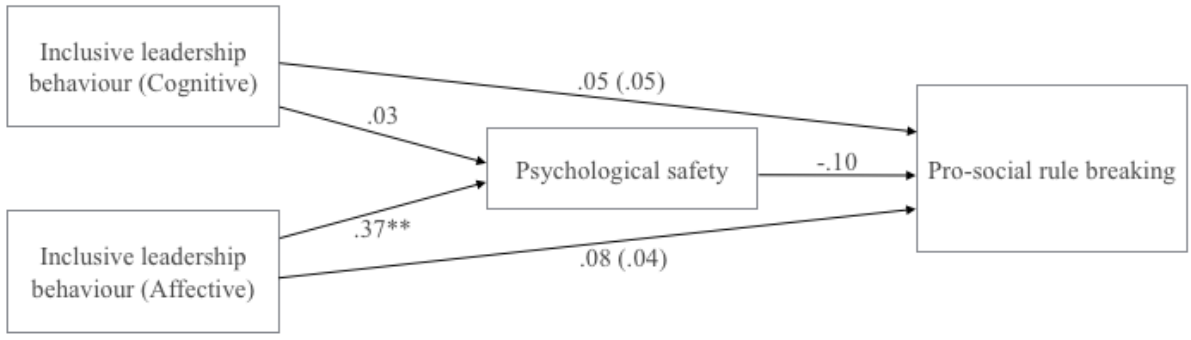
Mediation analysis with steps Baron & Kenny (1986) results

Step	Path	Variable	*B*	95% CI		β	*t*	*p*
				LL	UL			
1	c	Cognitive IL	.05	-.077	.175	.05	0.77	.444
		Affective IL	.04	-.103	.181	.03	0.54	.590
2	a	Cognitive IL	.03	-.042	.094	.04**	0.74	.461
		Affective IL	.37**	.294	.447	.49	9.52	.000
3	b	Psychological safety	-.10	-.261	.060	-.07	-1.23	.219
4	c’	Cognitive IL	.05	-.074	.178	.050	.81	.421
		Affective IL	.08	-.078	.230	.066	.97	.331

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .001. IL is inclusive leadership. In all steps all control variables were controlled for (*gender*, *age*, *educational level*, *organizational tenure*, *work domain*, *centralisation,* and *formalisation*). Step 3 and 4 were computed in the same regression model to control for the other variable(s).

Figure 3

Filled out mediation diagram with steps Baron & Kenny (1986)



Note. ** p < .001. Only the path from affective inclusive leadership to psychological safety had a significant effect.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, the results from the previous chapter are analysed and discussed. The results are applied to the theoretical framework, the hypotheses developed in chapter 3 are accepted or rejected, and finally, possible alternative explanations are discussed.

5.1 Application theoretical framework

In chapter 3, a theoretical framework was developed in which the relationship between all the research concepts was hypothesised. The relationships were tested in chapter 4. Based on the analyses the following conclusions can be made about the theoretical framework.

The first hypothesis (1a) '*Inclusive leadership that stimulates cognitive processes that enable individuals to express their uniqueness will be positively related to employee pro-social rule breaking'* cannot be accepted. A linear correlation of $r(528) = .03$, $p = .525$ was found between cognitive inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking, which shows that there is no significant correlation. Furthermore, the mediation analysis showed that no significant effect ($B = .05$, 95% CI [-.077, .175], $p = .444$) could be established. No effect paths from cognitive inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking were found to be significant. Thus, the results of the correlation analysis and the mediation analysis both show that there is no significant relationship between perceived inclusive leadership on the cognitive dimension and employee pro-social rule breaking and hypothesis 1a cannot be accepted and must be rejected.

Hypothesis 1b '*Inclusive leadership that supports affective processes that foster a shared team identity and individuals' feelings of belongingness will be positively related to employee pro-social rule breaking*' can also not be accepted. A linear correlation of $r(528) = .04$, $p = .393$ was found between affective inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking, which shows that there is no significant correlation. Furthermore, the mediation analysis showed that

no significant effect (B = .04, 95% CI [-.103, .181], p = .590) could be established. No effect paths from affective inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking were found to be significant. Thus, the results of the correlation analysis and the mediation analysis both show that there is no significant relationship between perceived inclusive leadership on the affective dimension and employee pro-social rule breaking and hypothesis 1b cannot be accepted and must be rejected.

For hypothesis 2, 'Inclusive leadership that stimulates cognitive processes that enable individuals to express their uniqueness will be positively related to psychological safety.' there also was no significant evidence found in the data to accept this hypothesis. A linear correlation of $r(528) = .42$, $p < .01$ was found between cognitive inclusive leadership and perceived psychological safety, which indicated a significant correlation. However, when also controlling for the affective dimension of inclusive leadership. As done in step two of the mediation analysis, no significant effect (B = .03, 95% CI [-.042, .094], p = .461) could be established. The effect path between cognitive inclusive leadership and perceived psychological safety was not found to be significant. Thus hypothesis 2 cannot be accepted and must be rejected.

The significant linear correlation coefficient between cognitive inclusive leadership and psychological safety may be explained by the relationship between affective inclusive leadership and psychological safety. As seen in the correlation analysis, the dimensions of inclusive leadership are strongly positively correlated, $r(528) = .71$, $p < .01$. Furthermore, there is sufficient evidence to accept hypothesis 3 '*Inclusive leadership that supports affective processes that foster a shared team identity and individuals' feelings of belongingness will be positively related to psychological safety'*. A linear correlation of $r(528) = .57$, $p < .01$ was found between affective inclusive leadership and perceived psychological safety, which indicates a significant correlation. When also controlling for the cognitive dimension of

inclusive leadership, as done in step two of the mediation analysis, a significant effect (B = .37, 95% CI [.294 .447], $p < .001$) could be established. This significant effect of affective inclusive leadership on perceived psychological safety combined with the strong positive linear correlation between the two dimensions of inclusive leadership may explain the seemingly significant correlation found between cognitive inclusive leadership and psychological safety. So although hypothesis 2 cannot be accepted, hypothesis 3 can be accepted. Inclusive leadership that supports affective processes that foster a shared team identity and individuals' feelings of belongingness is positively related to perceived psychological safety.

Hypothesis 4 '*Psychological safety will be positively related to pro-social rule breaking.*' however, cannot be accepted. A linear correlation of $r(528) = -.01$, $p = .780$ was found between perceived psychological safety and employee pro-social rule breaking, which does not indicate a significant correlation. Furthermore, the mediation analysis showed that no significant effect (B = -.10, 95% CI [-.261, .060], $p = .219$) could be established. The effect path from perceived psychological safety and employee pro-social rule breaking was found not to be significant. Thus, the results of the correlation analysis and the mediation analysis both show that there is no significant relationship between perceived psychological safety and employee pro-social rule breaking and hypothesis 4 cannot be accepted and must be rejected.

Finally, hypothesis 5 '*The positive relationship between inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking is (partly) mediated by psychological safety.*' can also not be accepted. Because based on the data no mediation could be established. For mediation to be established both paths *a* and *b* had to have a significant effect path. Based on the mediation analysis effect path *b* was not significant. So no significant mediation effect path could be established. Hypothesis 5 can therefore not be accepted and must be rejected.

To summarise, no significant effect could be found of inclusive leadership (either dimension) on employee pro-social rule breaking, direct or indirect. No evidence was found that perceived psychological safety acts as a mediator in this relationship. Lastly, the only thing that the data could confirm is that inclusive leadership on the affective dimension has a positive effect on perceived psychological safety.

5.2 Possible explanation findings

The findings of this research go against nearly all theoretical expectations. It is therefore important to consider if the theoretical expectations are incorrect. Firstly, I do not think the theoretical expectations were wrong. I do still expect that perceived inclusive leadership has an effect on employee pro-social rule breaking and that this effect is at least partly mediated by psychological safety. However, it is possible that the current theoretical expectations do miss certain relevant factors. An important factor I think to consider is the possibility that the behaviours of people in the public sector differ from the behaviours of people in the private sector. As previously discussed, the public sector has higher levels of public service motivation. This can have important implications on how both leaders and employees behave. Perhaps, public employees are less influenced by their leadership in their decision to pro-socially break the rules, because they have different considerations than private sector employees. Perhaps, public leaders show different behaviour toward pro-social rule breaking employees than private sector leaders. This might deflate the specific effect of inclusive leadership as a type of leadership behaviour on employee pro-social rule breaking. Maybe the way pro-social rule breaking was operationalized did not measure the type of pro-social rule breaking most affected by inclusive leadership. Pro-social rule breaking was conceptualised as ‘general’ pro-social rule breaking, but pro-social rule breaking has three distinguishable types of motivation: (i.e. for efficiency, to help customers, or to help colleagues) (Dahling et

al., 2012; Morrison, 2006). The dataset used to operationalize pro-social rule breaking only measured pro-social rule breaking motivated by achieving the 'best end results for citizens'. This form of pro-social rule breaking could be unaffected by the inclusive leadership behaviour of public leaders. Furthermore, the negative association with rule breaking may affect the findings. For the dependent variable, a mean is observed of 3.7. Because a seven-point Likert scale was used this means that the central tendency of the respondent lies with neither agreeing nor disagreeing (M = 3.7) that they pro-socially break the rules. This means most respondents neither confirmed nor denied pro-socially breaking the rules, but if they do most people lean more towards denying than confirming (3.7<4). Employee pro-social rule breaking was self-reported. However, if employees do not want to admit that they pro-socially break the rules because they associate this behaviour with negative deviant behaviour, this will influence the measurement of employee pro-social rule breaking. Furthermore, it is unlikely for psychological safety not to affect on pro-social rule breaking. For argument's sake, we can simplify an employee's decision whether or not to (pro-socially) break the rules to the personal costs and benefits of this decision. Psychological safety should affect this decision since this would (in a perfectly psychological safe work environment completely) reduce the costs associated with rule breaking. Therefore do think that there is an effect of psychological safety on pro-social rule breaking. This means that there should at least be an indirect effect of inclusive leadership (via the affective dimension and psychological safety) on employee pro-social rule breaking. The limitations of this research will be discussed in the next chapter. It is highly possible that no significant effect was found because of the research limitations.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to extend what is known about the relationship between employee pro-social rule breaking and inclusive leadership behaviour in the public sector. To this end, a theoretical framework was formed based on previous literature and Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) social information processing theory. To test this theoretical framework data was used, collected from the Dutch Office for the Senior Civil Service (Bureau Algemene Bestuursdienst). This data focused on how managers and employees experience leadership and other contextual factors in their own work environment.

Analysis of this data found no evidence for a relationship between inclusive leadership behaviour, mediated or otherwise. The only significant relationship that was found was between inclusive leadership behaviour positively affecting perceived psychological safety through affective processes.

Based on this research the research question *"How is perceived inclusive leadership behaviour in the Dutch public sector related to employee pro-social rule breaking behaviour and is this relationship mediated by perceived psychological safety?"* can thus be answered as follows. Perceived inclusive leadership behaviour in the Dutch public sector is not related to employee pro-social rule breaking behaviour, neither directly nor mediated by psychological safety. This finding forms a basis for future research into the relationship between leadership behaviour and pro-social rule breaking, especially in the context of the public sector.

6.2 Research limitations and future research

This research saw several limitations that future research could address. Firstly, in the way, the concepts were operationalized. The measurements of inclusive leadership were based on Ashikali et al. (2021) their measurement tool. This measurement divides inclusive leadership into two dimensions. However, based on a factor analysis, certain items were dropped from the scales of each dimension. Not allowing the results of this study to be directly compared to other studies using this measurement tool. Future research could utilize the measurement tool as intended for their studies into the relationship between inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking. Alternatively, once the multi-dimensional multi-level definition of inclusive leadership created by Veli Korkmaz et al. (2022) has been sufficiently tested, researchers could use this for their measurements of inclusive leadership.

Secondly, pro-social rule breaking was operationalized using measurement items developed by Dahling et al. (2012). This limited the measurement of this concept to pro-social rule breaking motivated by 'the best end result for citizens'. Future research may adopt different measurement items that distinguish between all three forms of employee pro-social rule breaking (i.e. for efficiency, to help customers, or to help colleagues).

Lastly, psychological safety was measured using the items developed by Edmondson (2018). These measurements were done at the individual level, with no way to aggregate this data to the group level. Although this proved sufficient for the purpose of this research, psychological safety is by definition a group level construct. Future research may consider measuring this concept in such a way that this concept may (also) be measured at the group level. So that a more nuanced understanding of this concept can be formed.

Furthermore, both pro-social rule breaking behaviour and inclusive leadership behaviour were based on reports from the employee's perspective. Although this way of measuring is sufficient to capture the concepts in this research, future research may consider measuring

these concepts differently. For instance a measurement of inclusive leadership behaviour based on the aggregate of a team their perception of their leader. Or a different way of measuring employee pro-social rule breaking that is not self-reported. This may reduce the influence of social approval effects on these measurements. Another limitation of the measurements of the concepts is that these were done at a single point in time, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Future research may choose to do multiple measurements over time to reduce possible bias.

Another limitation of this study is that it did not consider the effect of respondents that labelled their gender as 'other' opting to drop these respondents. This lowers the generalizability of the findings. Future research that wants to control for gender may opt to include respondents who do not fit in the dichotomous gender system.

Future researchers may also expand the concept of pro-social rule breaking by looking at managerial pro-social rule breaking in the public sector. Additionally, future researchers could look into controlling for different control variables refining the regression models.

Finally, based on the current findings it is recommended for public leaders not to use inclusive leadership behaviour as a means of influencing the pro-social rule breaking of employees.

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Appendix A

Table 6

Statements used to operationalize pro-social rule breaking (Dutch).

Item	Statement
Item 1	Indien nodig, breek ik regels of procedures die het beste eindresultaat voor de burger in de weg staan.
Item 2	Indien nodig, buig ik regels of procedures zodat ik het beste eindresultaat voor de burger kan realiseren.
Item 3	Indien nodig, negeer ik regels of procedures die mij belemmeren om het beste eindresultaat voor de burger te behalen.

Note. This table shows all items used to measure the concept of pro-social rule breaking. The measurements developed by Dahling et al. (2012) were used. The statements were presented in Dutch. Per statement a 7-point Likert scale was given. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'.

Appendix B

Table 7

Statements used to operationalize both dimensions of precieved inclusive leadership (Dutch).

Item	Statement
	Cognitive dimension
Item 1	Mijn leiding gevende stimuleert mij om met collega's verschillende standpunten en perspectieven op probleemoplossing te bespreken.
Item 2	Mijn leiding gevende maakt het mogelijk dat ik afwijkende standpunten kan uiten in het team.
Item 3	Mijn leiding gevende stimuleert mij om diverse ideeën te delen met collega's.
Item 4	Mijn leiding gevende stimuleert mij om de diverse achtergronden van collega's te benutten voor het oplossen van problemen.
Item 5	Mijn leiding gevende stimuleert mij om de verschillende achtergronden van collega's te benutten als bron voor nieuwe inzichten.
Item 6	Mijn leiding gevende stimuleert mij om te leren van collega's met diverse achtergronden.
Item 7	Mijn leiding gevende stimuleert mij om actief te participeren in het team.
	Affective dimension
Item 8	Mijn leiding gevende zorgt ervoor dat ik als een gelijkwaardig lid van het team wordt behandeld.
Item 9	Mijn leiding gevende probeert te voorkomen dat ik in negatieve stereotyperingen over andere collega's denk.
Item 10	Mijn leiding gevende probeert te voorkomen dat teamleden subgroepen vormen die andere collega's mogelijk uitsluiten.
Item 11	Mijn leiding gevende zorgt ervoor dat ik mezelf kan zijn in het team.

Item 12	Mijn leiding gevende communiceert naar teamleden de meerwaarde die diversiteit kan hebben in het team.
Item 13	Mijn leiding gevende maakt het mogelijk dat ik een eigen inbreng kan hebben in het team.

Note. This table shows all items used to measure the concept of perceived inclusive leadership. The two dimensions of perceived inclusive leadership are specified per item. The measurements developed by Ashikali et al. (2021) were used. The statements were presented in Dutch. Per statement a 7-point Likert scale was given. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'.

Appendix C

Table 8

Statements used to operationalize psychological safety (Dutch).

Item	Statement
Item 1[a]	Als leden van mijn team een fout maken, wordt hen dat vaak kwalijk genomen.[a]
Item 2	Leden van mijn team kunnen problemen en moeilijke kwesties ter sprake brengen.
Item 3[a]	Leden van mijn team wijzen soms anderen af omdat ze anders zijn.[a]
Item 4	Het is veilig om in mijn team een risico te nemen.
Item 5[a]	Het is voor leden van mijn team moeilijk om anderen om hulp te vragen.[a]
Item 6	Niemand in mijn team zal doelbewust iets doen om inspanningen van anderen te ondermijnen.
Item 7	Als leden van mijn team met elkaar werken, worden hun unieke vaardigheden en talenten gewaardeerd en benut.

Note. This table shows all items used to measure the concept of psychological safety. The measurements developed by Edmondson (2018) were used. The statements were presented in Dutch. Per statement a 7-point Likert scale was given. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'.

[a] These items are reverse coded

Appendix D

Table 9

Statements used to operationalize centralisation (Dutch).

Item	Statement
Item 1	Voordat een leidinggevende een besluit heeft goedgekeurd kan in mijn organisatie weinig actie ondernomen worden.
Item 2	Een persoon die graag zijn of haar eigen beslissingen neemt, zal in mijn organisatie snel worden ontmoedigd.
Item 3	Zelfs kleine zaken moeten worden doorverwezen naar iemand hogerop voor een definitief besluit.
Item 4	Iedere beslissing die in mijn organisatie genomen wordt moet de goedkeuring van een leidinggevende hebben.

Note. This table shows all items used to measure the concept of centralisation. The measurements developed by Aiken & Hage (1968) were used. The statements were presented in Dutch. Per statement a 7-point Likert scale was given. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'.

Appendix F

Table 10

Statements used to operationalize formalisation (Dutch).

Item	Statement
Item 1	Met welke situatie ik in mijn werk ook te maken krijg, er zijn procedures over hoe ik moet handelen.
Item 2	Er is een complete, schriftelijke taakbeschrijving voor alle aspecten van mijn werk.
Item 3	Het wordt steeds benadrukt dat ik mijn werk volgens de juiste regels en procedures moet uitvoeren.

Note. This table shows all items used to measure the concept of formalisation. The measurements developed by Deshpande & Zaltman (1982) were used. The statements were presented in Dutch. Per statement a 7-point Likert scale was given. With 1 being 'I completely disagree' and 7 being 'I completely agree'.