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INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEE: A KEY INDICATOR OF DECENT WORKPLACE AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS

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Abstract

This research paper underscores the importance of innovation and creativity as driving forces behind an organization's ability to create a competitive advantage, enhance performance, and develop radical solutions. It accentuates the importance of collaboration and structural and cultural transformations in an interconnected world. The study examines the impact of empowerment and organizational culture on employee innovation and explores how job stress moderates the relationship between the innovative behavior of employees and workplace happiness. To explore the influence caused by workplace happiness on the innovative behavior of employees. Circulating Survey data applies quantitative research methodology among 327 employees from different hotels in Karachi. By employing Smart PLS 3.0, statistical analysis indicates that four dimensions could potentially explain a 48 percent variance in the creative conduct of an individual. The findings reveal that workplace happiness consistently influences the innovative behavior of employees in the hotel industry, regardless of varying levels of job stress. Addressing job stress through training and support can contribute to employee well-being and indirectly enhance innovation. Strategic interventions that prioritize happiness and stress reduction are essential for fostering an innovative culture in hotel organizations.

Keywords: Employee Innovative Behavior, Workplace Happiness, Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Culture, Collaboration, Sustainable Development 8.

Introduction

Globalization has had mixed effects, necessitating a focus on sustainability and balancing economic, social, and environmental factors (Masterclass, 2022; Gopinath & Parker, 2019; World, 2020). Inclusive economic growth, sustainable development goal 8 requires resilience-building, education, supportive policies for small enterprises,

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and efforts to reduce inequality and promote social inclusion (United Nations, 2018; Environment, 2018; Council Science, 2023; Fonseca et al., 2022; Crowley, 2021; Sodirjonov, 2020). Increased complexity calls for a holistic perspective and understanding of the ripple effects of decisions (George et al., 2022; Bacon, 2021; Stallkamp & Schotter, 2021; Kenney, 2021). Cultural shifts and structural changes are crucial for fostering creativity, innovation, collaboration, and critical thinking (Zheng et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2020; Rayman-Bacchus & Radavoi, 2020; Gardiner, 2020; Kembara et al., 2019; Wróblewski et al., 2019). In the 21st century, competitive advantage relies on human skills, professional development, and knowledge creation (Strock, 2023; Blakely, 2001; Chan et al., 2020). Knowledge creation contributes to improved job performance and organizational success (Adeinat et al., 2019). Innovation and creativity are essential for organizational success and survival in today's fast-paced digital era (Acar, 2019; Lee et al., 2020). Organizations that can adapt, embrace change, and continuously innovate are more likely to thrive (Farooq, 2019; Adeinat & Abdulfatah, 2019). It is significantly important to comprehend the factors contributing to the innovative behavior of an employee in an organization; his actions and performance are some of the factors showing his creativity (Adeinat & Abdulfatah, 2019; Farooq, 2019)

Autonomy and firm culture impact well-being and job contentment, which will enhance the creativity and innovation of employees (Mutonyi et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022; Slatten et al., 2020). Job stress is one of the crucial and important factors that hinders creativity; on the other hand, a firm’s culture that encourages risk-taking challenges and new experimentation will impact employees' performance (Kwon & Kim, 2020; Ren & Zhang, 2015).

Pakistan's tourism sector endures many challenges and obstacles, such as safety issues, social and service sector challenges, inadequate infrastructure, and digitalization are some of the pressing concerns of recent times (Ahmed et al.,2022; Arshed et al.,2018). These challenges delay the progress and growth of the service and social sectors ((IIPS, 2022; Alasttal & Burdey, 2017; Ilyas et al., 2017). To remain the competitive world tourist industry of Pakistan has to embrace digitalization, employees' creativity, a suitable organizational atmosphere, workplace happiness, employee empowerment and reduce job-related fears and anxiety (Shahzaday, 2023; Mutonyi et al., 2021; Kwon & Kim, 2020, and Slatten et al., 2020; Rasool et al., 2021 and Lin et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

Managing innovation is key to fostering innovative employees, but it is challenging as employees become adaptive to their situation (Kim & Kwon, 2020). Successful organizations have a unique culture that evolves to overcome challenges. Effective cultural transformation is crucial for subjective well-being and innovative productivity. However, psychological empowerment faces challenges such as delegating authority, technical complications, scarce resources, and work stress (Shahzaday, 2023).

The study explores the link between organizational culture, employee empowerment, workplace satisfaction, and job anxiety, emphasizing the need to

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Volume 3, Issue 2, Page 111-128, December 31, 2023

enhance these factors for innovation, creativity, teamwork, and organizational growth in the hotel industry.

Objective of the study

This paper focuses on innovative behavior in the service business. Previous study has mostly examined the manufacturing sector (Javed et al., 2017; Lai et al., 2016; Li & Hsu, 2016). This paper also focuses on constructing and testing a model that examines the influence of workplace happiness on job stress, in addition to the moderating role of job stress on workplace happiness and the innovative behavior of employees. Furthermore, the research objectives are to explore the attributes of innovative behavior, particularly in Karachi, Pakistan (Dutta et al., 2015).

Rational of the study

This study examines the impact of empowerment and corporate culture on workplace happiness, focusing on individual creativity in the service industry. It highlights the importance of fostering a positive environment that promotes healthy relationships, psychological empowerment, team integration, and reduced job stress. The findings suggest that employees with happiness, satisfaction, and autonomy are more likely to excel in creativity and innovation.

Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the hospitality industry in Karachi, Pakistan, specifically three to five-star hotels. The researcher encountered difficulties in finding enough respondents due to the high occupancy ratios and managers' prior commitments. Further research could be done in other cities for more diverse results.

Literature Review

The self-determination theory suggests that autonomy, relatedness, and competencies are key motivators for individuals (Stone et al.,2009). Studies highlight the significance of these factors in promoting motivation and innovation (Martela & Riekki, 2018**;** Wang et al.,2019; Bureau et al.,2022). Organizations should create an environment that supports these needs through decision-making, skill development, and teamwork to foster innovation (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Guay, 2022).

Psychological empowerment, workplace happiness, and innovative behavior

In 2016, Sinha, Priyadarshi, and Kumar conducted a study on 324 employees from 73 service organizations in India's IT industry. The study found that psychological empowerment has a positive impact on job satisfaction, commitment, and innovation while negatively impacting turnover intention. The researchers suggested further research on the relationship between citizenship behavior and empowerment, as well as emphasis on stress and proactivity. Psychological autonomy or empowerment is influenced by meaning, impact, self-determination, and competence. Confidence in employees' ideas for productivity improvement from managers fosters psychological empowerment. Moreover, psychological

empowerment has been found to be associated with increased innovation and happiness at work (Chenji & Sode, 2019).

Organizational Culture, Workplace Happiness, and Innovative behavior

According to Barnard (1994), organizational structure refers to the intentional connection and synchronization of people working towards a common cause or goal in an organization. Schein (1980) defines an organization as a group of people sharing knowledge and skills, following a chain of command, and fulfilling obligations under guidance. March et al. (1958) note that organizational structure involves establishing communication and connections among individuals on a common platform. Deshpandé and Webster (1989) define culture as shared beliefs and traditions that guide behavior within an organization. Van der Westhuizen et al. (2005) identify tangible and intangible aspects of culture, including mutual values, patterns, behaviors, and attitudes. Culture has an impact on many areas of an organization, including procedures, customs, figuring out solutions, and ethical principles (Atay, 2001). It encompasses philosophies, ethical codes, faith, convictions, traditions, and practices. Culture shapes individual behavior and convictions within an organizational setting (Guclu, 2003).

Workplace happiness and innovative behavior of employees

Creativity and innovation are phrases that are frequently used interchangeably. However, they can be differentiated based on their impact rather than their subject (Creativity means to generate fresh ideas, while innovation involves implementing and embracing those ideas (Kanter, 1998). Employee's innovative behavior encompasses the initiation, development, and acceptance of creative ideas at various levels (West, 2002). This behavior follows a multi-step process, starting with identifying a problem in the work environment (Larson, 2011), utilizing innovative skills to solve it with the support of colleagues (Janssen, 2004), and implementing the ideas to create new structures or frameworks. Employee innovative behavior contributes to improved organizational performance and outcomes (Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009).

Job stress, innovative behavior of employees and workplace happiness

Extensive research supports the notion that job stress has a detrimental effect on employees' creative capacity. Studies conducted by Saleem et al. (2015) and Bashabsheh (2010) both emphasize that job stress is inefficacious and hampers employees' ability to generate creative ideas. When individuals experience high levels of stress, their enthusiasm for creativity tends to diminish, ultimately hindering their innovative output. Additionally, it is important to contemplate the role of a happy work atmosphere in fostering creativity. Research conducted by Roche and Rolley (2011), Lazarus and Folkman (1984), and Emmons (1992) all highlight the significance of workplace happiness in promoting employees' creative behavior. Employees' creativity is hampered in the absence of a positive and encouraging work environment. It is inferred that job stress has a direct degenerative influence on employees' creative behavior, while workplace happiness acts as a protective factor against stress and enhances employees' innovative capabilities.

ISSN (Print): 2790-7848, ISSN (Online): 2790-7856
Volume 3, Issue 2, Page 111-128, December 31, 2023

Hypothesis Development

Luoh, Tsaur, and Tang (2014) studied the relationship between employee empowerment, work standardization, and innovative worker performance. They found that a higher degree of empowerment can alleviate the negative effect of work standardization on inventive behavior. This study collected data from frontline service employees in 76 tourist hotels in Taiwan. The researchers used hierarchical regression analysis to explore the relationships among the variables. Bowen and Lawler (1992) argued that mental enablement is crucial for employee innovation. Future studies could consider the causal relationships among variables, team culture, and knowledge sharing.

H_1: Psychological empowerment has a significant impact on workplace happiness.

H_2: Psychological empowerment has a significant relationship with employees' innovative behavior.

Sarros, Cooper, and Santora (2008) found that organizational culture is an essential component for developing an innovative climate and improving work performance. The study included 1158 managers from private sector industries in Australia. Leaders play a crucial role in shaping the organizational culture and driving change in the organization. Results generated show clearly that organizational culture and transformational leadership are the basic components for an innovative climate and productive performance of workforces.

H_3: Organizational culture has a significant impact on workplace happiness.

H_4: Organizational culture has a significant relationship with employees' innovative behavior.

Zhou (2003) found that supervisors who closely monitor their employees under favorable psychological conditions can produce astonishing results concerning employee innovative behavior. Both personal attributes and social environment influence workplace happiness. Two studies confirm that coworker and supervisor monitoring enhances innovativeness and that workplace happiness increases innovative behavior.

H_5: Workplace happiness has a significant impact on the innovative behavior of employees.

Bashir and Ramay (2010) studied the impact of stress on the banking sector in Pakistan with 144 participants. Organizations strive for a competitive edge to keep up with the rapidly evolving world of technology. To meet deadlines and seize opportunities, employees are under constant pressure, leading to a tense atmosphere. Stress reduces worker performance, and organizations should encourage innovation by fostering a supportive and relaxed culture.

H_6: Job stress has a significant impact on the innovative behavior of employees.

H_7: Job stress moderates the relationship between workplace happiness and the innovative behavior of employees.

1. Methodology

Research Design

To investigate the link between variables, the study used a quantitative research design. This approach is particularly useful in investigating connections between variables to establish cause-and-effect relationships. The study makes connections between organizational culture (OC), psychological empowerment (E), Job Stress (JS), workplace happiness (WPH), and innovative behavior of employees (IB). The paper delves into quantitative techniques to statistically test the model and systematically test the data collected from variables, exploring the trends, patterns, and correlations that exist between the constructs.

Research Purpose

The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of organizational culture and psychological empowerment on workplace happiness, along with the mediating role of job stress on workplace happiness and the innovative behavior of employees.

Target Population

The Karachi hotel industry's service sector is the focus of the study, and data is collected from managers, assistant managers, executives, and officers of the relevant field.

Sample Size and Data Collection Method

The questionnaire is filled with 346 respondents from the hotel sector of Karachi.

Measurement instrument

The study employs a questionnaire developed from various sources to measure psychological empowerment, organizational culture, job stress, and workplace satisfaction, using a five-point Likert scale for consistency and data analysis (Bani-Melhem, 2018).

Statistical technique

The study used a pragmatic approach to investigate variables in Karachi, Pakistan, combining logical analysis, subjective experience, and observation to enhance theory transferability and assess causal linkages in quantitative data (Morgan, 2007).

ISSN (Print): 2790-7848, ISSN (Online): 2790-7856
Volume 3, Issue 2, Page 111-128, December 31, 2023

Ethical consideration

The research report prioritizes ethical considerations, ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy for respondents. The questionnaire adheres to Fouka and Mantzorou's (2011) principles, and participants can exit the study at any point.

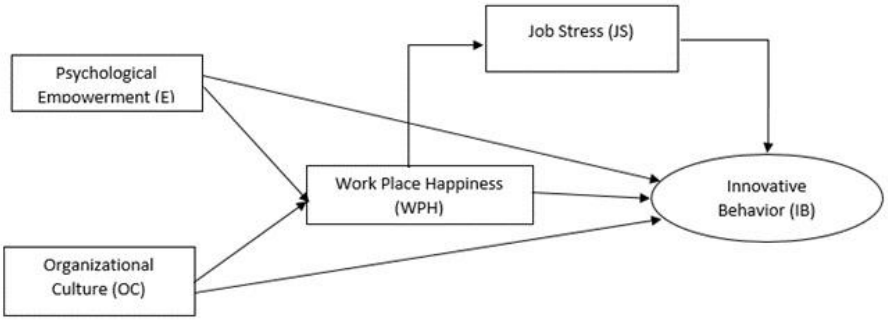


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

2. Analysis and Results

Reliability Analysis

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (Hair et al., 2014).

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Empowerment (E)	6	0.80
Organizational Culture (OC)	7	0.809
Workplace Happiness (WPH)	6	0.826
Job Stress (JS)	5	0.786
Innovative Behavior (IB)	6	0.782

The research instrument was validated through reliability analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 2022. The pilot study consisted of 30 items divided into five constructs, and the overall reliability score obtained was 0.80. the reliability and consistency of data is 80%, which is depicted by the value of Cronbach's alpha, surpassing the minimum threshold of 60%. Each construct's reliability is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with values above 0.6 indicating good reliability (Hair et al.,2014). This analysis confirmed the reliability of the research instrument and provided confidence in the data collected.

The Measurement Model

Convergent Validity / Reliability Testing

SMART PLS analysis evaluates construct reliability and validity using factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance explained. (Campbell and Fiske, 1959).

Table 2: Convergent Validity / Reliability Testing (Campbell & Fiske, 1959)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	C.R	AVE
Psychological Empowerment(E)	0.666	0.857	0.750
Organizational Culture (OC)	0.721	0.843	0.642
Workplace Happiness (WPH)	0.735	0.850	0.653
Job Stress (JS)	0.619	0.838	0.721
Innovative Behavior (IB)	0.716	0.841	0.638

Path Analysis

Path analysis and blindfolding reveal a significant impact of independent variables on dependent variables, except psychological empowerment on innovative behavior of employees at a 5% significance level (Kock, 2016).

Table 3: Hypotheses Testing (Kock, 2016)

	Coefficient	T Stats	P Values	Results
Psychological Empowerment -> Innovative behavior	-0.006	0.106	0.916	Rejected
Psychological Empowerment -> Workplace Happiness	0.213	4.125	0.000	Accepted
Organizational Culture -> Innovative behavior	0.152	2.422	0.017	Accepted
Organizational Culture -> Workplace Happiness	0.433	8.423	0.000	Accepted
Workplace Happiness -> Innovative behavior	0.336	5.183	0.000	Accepted
Job Stress (moderator) -> Innovative Behavior	0.144	2.612	0.009	Accepted
Workplace happiness * job stress	0.082	10514	0.130	Not significant

ISSN (Print): 2790-7848, ISSN (Online): 2790-7856
Volume 3, Issue 2, Page 111-128, December 31, 2023

The table shows:

Psychological Empowerment -> Innovative Behavior

- Coefficient: -0.006, T stats: 0.106, P value: 0.916 (rejected)
- This path is rejected, indicating that there is no statistically significant association between psychological empowerment and innovative behavior. This is in coherence with prior research by Ahearne et al. (2005) and Siegall and Gardner (2000), which found a similar lack of influence on employee innovation.

Psychological Empowerment -> Workplace Happiness

- Coefficient: 0.213, T Stats: 4.125, P Value: 0.000 (accepted)
- This path is accepted, suggesting a statistically significant positive relationship between psychological empowerment and workplace happiness.

Organizational Culture -> Innovative Behavior

- Coefficient: 0.152, T Stats: 2.422, P Value: 0.017 (accepted)
- This accepted path shows that a statistically positive and significant relationship exists between organizational culture and the innovative behavior of employees.

Organizational Culture -> Workplace Happiness

- Coefficient: 0.433, T Stats: 8.423, P Value: 0.000 (accepted)
- The association between organizational culture and workplace happiness is statistically significant and positive. It is a mainstream ideology that truly happy workers are most likely engaged in more proactive work with improved outcomes (Chia & Chu, 2016; Abdullah et al., 2016).

Workplace Happiness -> Innovative Behavior

- Coefficient: 0.336, T Stats: 5.183, P Value:0.000 (accepted)
- This path suggests a statistically positive significant relationship exists between workplace happiness and the innovative behavior of the employee.

Job Stress (moderator) -> Innovative Behavior

- Coefficient: 0.144, T Stats: 2.612, P Value: 0.009 (accepted)
- This accepted path depicts a statistically positive and significant relationship that exists between job stress and innovative behavior.

Workplace Happiness * Job Stress

- Coefficient: 0.082, T Stats: 10514, P Value: 0.130 (Not significant)

- This interaction term is not statistically significant (P Value: 0.130), suggesting that the moderating effect of job stress on the relationship between workplace happiness and innovative behavior is not supported.

- While Workplace Happiness and Job Stress individually have significant effects on innovative behavior, the interaction between Workplace Happiness and Job Stress does not significantly moderate the relationship. The non-significant interaction suggests that the impact of workplace happiness on innovative behavior remains consistent, regardless of the level of job stress (Bani-Mehlem et al., 2018; Anjum et al., 2022). Job stress's impact is nuanced; it may not always yield negative consequences. In certain situations, stress can enhance competitiveness and stimulate innovative thinking, depending on the context, highlighting its dual potential for negative and positive effects (Rosdaniati et al.,2021).

Top of Form

- This absence of consistency implies that interventions aimed at improving workplace happiness may not distinctly alter innovative behavior in the face of different levels of job stress. Caution should be exercised in making definitive conclusions or implementing targeted strategies based on the moderating effect, as the observed relationship may be subject to variability or external factors not fully captured in the current analysis (Saleem et al., 2015; De Clercq et al.,2016).

Blindfolding calculates Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value, indicating predictive relevance in a PLS path model. All independent variables have Q^2 values greater than 0, indicating relevance.

Table 4: R Square (Sarstedt et al.,2012)

	R square	R square adjusted	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Innovative Behavior (IB)	0.492	0.482	0.288
Job Stress (JS)	0.272	0.270	0.186
Workplace Happiness (WPH)	0.423	0.418	0.258

R-squared measures the fit between data and regression lines (Sarstedt et al.,2012), while adjusted R-squared considers the impact of independent variables. In a model, innovative behavior and workplace happiness explain 41% of the variance, while job stress explains 27%. The table shows that 42% of workplace happiness variance is explained by psychological empowerment and organizational culture, and 48% of creative conduct variance is explained by the chosen variables. Finally, 27% of job stress variance is explained by workplace happiness.

While the overall moderation effect was initially found to be non-significant, the blindfolding analysis supports the stability of this finding, reinforcing that the interaction effect is not a spurious result influenced by specific data points.

ISSN (Print): 2790-7848, ISSN (Online): 2790-7856
Volume 3, Issue 2, Page 111-128, December 31, 2023

The model's adjusted R-squared values provide a conservative measure of model fit, while the Q^2 values indicate good predictive relevance for all three constructs, with Innovative Behavior having the highest Q^2.

Conclusion

Employee creativity is essential to an organization's success in the twenty-first century. The study's conclusions give organizations important guidance on how to create a vibrant, innovative ecosystem that promotes sustainable growth and advances social and economic development.

Managing innovation is crucial for fostering innovative employees, but it can be challenging as employees adapt to their situation. Effective cultural transformation is crucial for well-being and productivity. Psychological empowerment faces challenges such as delegation, technical issues, resources, and stress. Managers have this responsibility to reduce work stress as it is one of the major factors in seizing opportunities and reducing economic growth. When the stress level is alleviated, the chances for future challenges and navigation become brighter, and more empowered employees can play their part; it will help to boost collaboration on intra- and inter-organizational levels. The investment in digitization, developmental initiatives, promotion of diversity and inclusion, and partnership will enhance employees' innovative behavior and job performance. These proactive approaches and techniques will foster and cultivate an innovative climate, cooperation and collaboration will expand, and more empowered employees will thrive in an innovative environment. Organizations may encourage their employees to take challenges and risks and think creatively to overcome job anxiety, and in return, a robust support system will automatically energize employees to take creative approaches. The study discovers that there is no association between job anxiety and workplace contentment and innovative behavior. Job stress does not always lead to the creative conduct of employees; similarly, workplace happiness is one of the reasons for the mundane behavior of employees by reducing job stress levels. It is critical to evade decisive deductions.

Managerial Implications and Recommendations

In a rapidly advanced world where change is inevitable, organizations need to be up-breast, continuously innovate, and strive for sustainability. Research is one of the prime tools in achieving newness and sustainability; research helps organizations to improve and gain an understanding of the key areas that can prove vital for innovation, sustainability, and creativity. Some of the major key areas are empowerment, teamwork, cooperation among employees, co-worker support, training and mentoring, technology adoption, continuous learning programs, leadership policy frameworks, and ethical parameters. Fostering a sense of ownership among staff members leads to increased job satisfaction, creativity, and innovation. This is known as employee empowerment. Better results require teamwork. Workers who receive training and education are better able to work together, solve problems, and reach decisions as a team.

Technology may help make operations more efficient, enhance communication, and make businesses more adaptable and responsive. Leadership styles have the power to establish a culture of integrity and accountability by setting

the standard for moral leadership behavior. Organizations that wish to adopt sustainable practices for a more affluent future should think about how their actions will affect stakeholders, the environment, and society.

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