

The Relationship Between Social Connections and Innovative Behavior Among Employees

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the study to investigate “The effect of Social Connections on employees Innovative Behavior”. According to, Leiberman, M. (2013) “Social connections are the relationships we have with others, including family, friends, colleagues and community members, that provide emotional support, practical assistance and a sense of belonging” and according to, Tavalae (2013), “Innovative behavior involving implementation of new ideas among group or organizational group or working benefits”. Nicola Cangialosi, Carlo Odoardi, Marco pene-Jimenez, and Mirko Antino (2023) conducted a study on the relationship between employees social tie diversity, innovative work behavior, informal field based learning and reciprocity. The author mentioned that social tie diversity positively influences innovative work behavior and their relationship is mediated by informal field based learning. Additionally, reciprocity strengthens the indirect link between social tie diversity and innovative work behavior. The present study aims to identify the effect of social connections on employees innovative behavior among Lorven pharmaceuticals private limited employees. 75 samples were collected based on random sampling methods. In order to collect the data regarding social connections, social connectedness scale (Dr. Richard M.lee,2001) was used and for innovative behavior, Individual innovativeness scale (Hurt, H.T. Joseph, K.K. Cook, C.D, 1977) was used to collect the data. The research formulates the hypothesis that, there will be a significant effect in there social connections and innovative behavior. In order to test the hypothesis linear Corelation is used. The result of the study concluded that there is low level of Social Connection and Innovative Behavior.

Keywords: *Social Connections, Innovative Behavior*

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, innovation has become a crucial driver of organizational success. As companies strive to stay ahead of the competition, they rely increasingly on their employees' ability to generate novel solutions and approaches. However, fostering innovative behavior among employees remains a significant challenge. Recent research suggests that social connections play a pivotal role in unlocking employee innovation. By examining the complex interplay between social connections and innovative behavior, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of how organizations can cultivate a culture of innovation. Specifically, this research investigates the relationship

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between social connections and employee innovative behavior, exploring how factors such as network size, diversity, and strength influence an individual's propensity to engage in innovative activities. By shedding light on this critical dynamic, this study provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to leverage social connections to drive innovation and sustain competitive advantage. Organizations rely heavily on employee innovation to stay competitive, but fostering a culture of creativity remains a significant challenge. This study investigates the role of social connections in unlocking employee innovative potential, shedding light on strategies to enhance collaboration, experimentation, and innovation. The modern workplace is characterized by complex networks of relationships, influencing employee behavior and performance. This study delves into the relationship between social connections and innovative behavior, providing insights for organizations seeking to cultivate innovative cultures. Innovation drives business success, but understanding the factors influencing employee innovative behavior is essential. This study examines the impact of social connections on employee innovative behavior, exploring how social relationships shape creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking.

Meaning of Social connections

- Social connections refer to the social relationship, network and norms that shapes the quality of our public life and enable collective action (Putnam, R.D.2000).
- Social connections are the relationship we have with others, including family, friends, colleagues and community members, that provide emotional support, practical assistance and a sense of belonging (Lieberman, 2013)
- Social connections can be defined as the experience of belonging to a social relationship or network (Lee & Robbins, 1995)

Components of Social connections

Social connection can be broadly characterized as encompassing 3 major components:

1. social connection as a source of structural support via the physical or behavioral presence of relationships in our lives (eg., size of social network, marital status, living alone, frequency of social contact)
2. social connection as a source of functional support via the resources or functions our relationships provide or are cognitively perceived to be available (eg., perceived or received support, loneliness)
3. social connection as a source of quality support via the positive and negative emotional nature of our relationship (eg., relationship satisfaction, conflict, strain).

Need for Social connections in workplace

Many adults spend more waking hours at work than they do with their own families, relationships may have a significant and chronic influence on our health and well-being. The influence of these relationships (or lack thereof) may affect individuals across the spectrum of workplace environments, roles, and hierarchy. For example, according to a recent Harvard Business Review CEO snap shot survey, half of CEOs report experiencing feelings of loneliness. The feelings of isolation, and associated repercussions, are also reported by others in leadership positions. Likewise, even among health-care professionals whose job is to help others adjust, loneliness was positively associated with somatization, exhaustion, and work alienation. Therefore, perceptions of loneliness may be prevalent in the workplace. Social disconnection in the workplace may also be the result of poor quality relationships. While obstacles, deadlines, and mistakes certainly contribute to workplace stress, coworkers can contribute significantly as an important source of interpersonal stress. Workplace

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relationships can be rife with incivility (eg, interpersonal mistreatment, disregard for another feelings, rude or condescending comments. Across type of job and industry, 8.3% of those surveyed report being bullied. Work-related bullying might take the form of excessive monitoring of work, unreasonable deadlines, unmanageable workload, and meaningless tasks; while person-related bullying may take the form of obvious verbal abuse persistent criticism, overt threats, or more cunning acts like excluding or isolating the person, gossip or rumors, and or practical jokes. Some may not see a clear role for institutions and employers in addressing social connection (or disconnection), believing it to be an issue of one's private, personal life. However, fostering social connection may be good for employees and employers in a variety of tangible ways that extend far beyond just "feeling good." There is now sufficient evidence to document that social disconnection has significant health and economic costs.

Social connection is need for business

Fostering social connections may also be good for business. Feelings of loneliness among CEOs may also negatively impact performance. For instance, among those who report loneliness, 61% report that it hinders their performance. This was particularly true for first-time CEOs: 70% of those who experience loneliness report that the feelings negatively affect their performance. Regardless of organizational status, lonelier individuals are more likely to feel estranged and less connected to coworkers and more likely to experience a lack of belongingness at work, both of which may lower commitment to their organizations. This is troubling because greater commitment has been demonstrated to lead to harder work and better performance compared to weaker commitment. Conversely, having strong meaningful connections at work is associated with better outcomes. For example, a Gallup poll found 30% of respondents indicated that they had a best friend at work. Those who had a best friend at work produced higher quality of work, reported higher well-being, were less likely to get injured on the job, and were 7 times more likely to be engaged in their jobs compared to those who did not report having a best friend at work. In an experiment where workers wore high-tech badges that monitored movement and interactions on a second-by-second basis to determine when workers were most and least efficient, researchers found that even small increases in social cohesion had large influences on better productivity. This was true even when interactions were not work related, suggesting that it wasn't so much about the interaction as it was about having a relationship. Thus, time spent socializing is not wasted time. Taken together, these data suggest fostering social connection in the workplace may increase productivity and lead to transable economic gain.

Meaning of Innovative behavior

Innovative behavior is a deliberate and executive behavior involving implementation of new ideas among group or organizational tasks to take advantage of the organizational, group, or working benefits (Tavalae, 2013).

Innovative behavior can be seen as a comprehensive concept that includes all the behaviors through which employees can pass the innovation process and it is expected that result and output to be innovation (Jeroen and Deanne, 2014)

Innovative behavior is introduced as all unique measures in the production and its implementation in every level of the organization consists of various practices such as the opportunity to explore, mass production, support, and application (Ahsani Zadeh, 2015).

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Factors affecting Innovative behavior

Organizational values

Innovation should be institutionalized in organizational values. Research shows supportive work environment, incentive increase innovative and producing ideas. Some of the contributing factors include: leadership and supportive management practices, assessment and constructive feedback, rewards, incentives and supportive colleagues. An organizational culture that supports innovative behavior encourages risk taking and participation in decision-making. There are certain goals and rewards for innovation and it provides a psychological safety with regard to production of ideas.

Innovative recognition and reward

Most organizations need innovative recognition and reward. Research shows that innovative behavior in organizations is directly associated with the reward assigned to them. Nearly one of every three investigated organizations showed that individual motivations or reward programs that encourage innovation are the most effective factor for innovative behavior. In addition, in small number of organizations, financial reward affected innovative behavior. However, in the majority of organizations, the intrinsic rewards had positive impact on innovative behavior.

Organizational structure

Organizational structure and accepting the failure at the acceptable level lead to facilitated innovation. The size of the organization can be a barrier in the incidence of innovative behavior. Research shows that innovative behavior is high in small organizations, which are often less susceptible to a more hierarchical structure. In addition, in organizations where culture of bureaucracy and authoritative and controlling leadership is more common, innovative behavior is lower compared to organization where participatory culture is more common. In addition, in organizations that their focus is on long-term results and the tolerance of failure and taking risk is high, there is great possibility for success in innovative behaviors.

Management style

To promote innovative behavior, specific organizational goals must be considered. In support of these goals, the most common practice in order to facilitate innovative behavior is the management support so that employees can exhibit special performance. As a result, management support for employee performance can be effective in promoting innovation.

Adequate resources

Too much financial constraints, lack of time, and lack of adequate resources are 3 obstacles to innovation. The lack of adequate resources and appropriate incentives for innovative behavior has been reported as a barrier in many large organizations, especially in the public sector. The findings suggest that organizations with poor financial resources cannot bring new ideas to action.

Effect of Social connections and Innovative behavior

Social connections significantly influence innovative behavior, yielding both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, social connections facilitate knowledge sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and emotional support, thereby enhancing creativity and motivation. Diverse connections, including weak ties and online networks, expose individuals to novel perspectives and ideas. Conversely, social connections can also stifle innovation through conformity pressure, limited information exchange, and fear of social

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rejection. Research highlights the importance of strong ties for knowledge sharing and weak ties for accessing diverse perspectives. Effective management of social connections can foster innovative behavior, emphasizing the value of collaboration, diversity, and open communication within organizations.

Need for the Study

The importance of innovation in today's fast-paced business environment cannot be overstated, and employees' individual innovative behavior plays a pivotal role in driving organizational success. Despite the growing body of research on innovation and employee behavior, there exists a significant knowledge gap regarding the impact of social connections on individual innovative behavior. Existing literature primarily focuses on organizational-level factors, neglecting the crucial role social relationships play in fostering employee innovation. To address this gap, this study aims to investigate the effect of social connections on employee innovative behavior. By exploring this relationship, organizations can better understand how to enhance innovation capacity, improve employee engagement and motivation, foster collaborative work environments, and develop effective talent management strategies. The findings of this study will provide actionable recommendations for designing effective social networking strategies, fostering innovative work environments, and developing training programs that enhance social connections and innovation.

Furthermore, this research will contribute to the theoretical understanding of the intersection of social connection and individual innovation research, shedding light on the mechanisms underlying the relationship between social connections and innovative behavior. By examining the moderating role of contextual factors, this study will provide valuable insights into the boundary conditions of social connections' impact on innovative behavior. Ultimately, this research will bridge the existing knowledge gap, offering organizations and scholars a deeper understanding of the critical role social connections play in shaping employee innovative behavior.

Significance of the Study

This study on the effect of social connections on employee's individual innovative behavior holds significant implications for both theoretical and practical applications. Theoretically, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by elucidating the mechanisms through which social connections influence innovative behavior, thereby advancing our understanding of the complex interplay between social relationships and employee innovation. Practically, the findings of this study will provide organizations with actionable insights to foster innovative work environments, enhance employee engagement and motivation, and develop effective talent management strategies. By identifying the critical role of social connections in driving employee innovation, organizations can design targeted interventions to leverage social relationships, promote collaborative problem-solving, and ultimately drive business success. Furthermore, this study's outcomes will inform human resource management practices, organizational development initiatives, and innovation strategies, ultimately contributing to the competitiveness and sustainability of organizations in today's rapidly changing business landscape.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review done to clarify this previous research of journal, articles, scholarly books and source of research. The review may also include a discussion of methodological issues and suggestions for future research. Conducting a literature review should enable a

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researcher to find out what research has already been done and identify what is unknown within the researchers topic. So, the studies of already literature place a vital role in the field of research in psychology. Literature review as a critical description and appraisal of a topic (Jesson,2011). Research is a process of exploration, it is an investigation for something new, which has remained hidden or unnoticed. In other words, it is the process of gathering, recording and analyzing relevant data about the problem in a select branch of human activity. The researcher needs up to date information about from which he intends to take up the problem of research.

Research related studies

Reviews

Nicola Cangialosi, Carlo Odoardi, Marco Pena - Jimenez, and Mirko Antino (2023) conducted a study on relationship between employees' social tie diversity, innovative work behavior, informal field-based learning, and reciprocity (bidirectional ties proportion). A sample of 182 workers from an Italian clothing manufacturing company was analyzed. The findings reveal that social tie diversity positively influences innovative work behavior, and their relationship is mediated by informal field-based learning. Additionally, reciprocity strengthens the indirect link between social tie diversity and innovative work behavior. This research contributes to the network and innovation literature by corroborating the role of social tie diversity in promoting innovative work behaviors, highlighting the importance of informal field-based learning, and emphasizing the impact of reciprocity. By doing so, this study offers insights into processes and conditions under which social tie diversity has the greatest impact on employee innovation, providing practical implications for fostering innovative work behaviors in organizations.

Alisher Tohirorich Dedahanov, Changjoon Rhee, Junghyun Yoon (2017) investigate the mediating role of innovative behavior on the relationships between organizational structure, such as centralization, formalization, integration, and organizational innovation performance. The authors collected data from 140 functional managers of manufacturing organizations in the Republic of Korea. The authors used structural equation modeling procedure to evaluate the validity of proposed hypotheses. The results suggest that innovative behavior mediates the links among centralization, formalization, and organizational innovation performance. However, the findings indicate that innovative behavior does not mediate the relationship between integration and organizational innovation performance. This work is the first to examine the mediating role of innovative behavior on the associations among centralization, integration, and organizational innovation performance.

Sidra Riaz, Yusen Xu and Shahid Hussian (2019) conducted to the Top management in organizations have begun to realize that innovative employees add to the competitive edge of a company which serves to maintain their position in intense market competition. For this purpose, management needs to seek new ways to combine the social environment and employees in the workplace in an inextricable manner that supports innovation. The purpose of this paper was to examine the role of thriving at work and its effects on an individual's innovative behavior. Based on the socially embedded model of thriving, we aimed to assess the relevant related work on structured potential effects with relational ties (i.e., strong versus weak). Particularly, these ties affect the heedful relating differently. This study examined the antecedents of thriving at work and the innovative behavior among employees at a global investment company. Using partial least squares modeling on a sample of 412 observations (strong and weak ties), strong support was found for the theory-driven

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hypothesized relationships. The results contribute to a better understanding of the relational roles concerning recently emerging constructs of “thriving at work” and “positive organizational scholarship.” The implications and limitations of this study are further discussed.

Albert Amankwaa, Pattanee Susomrith and Pi sheen seet (2021) conducted a study focuses on how service firms can nurture innovative behavior of employees through the important role of leadership. Despite the growth in innovation research, scholars have been slow to move from an R&D (i.e., technical capital) focus to that focusing on employee innovative behavior. However, organizations’ innovation initiatives heavily depend on employee human capital and behavior at work as these are key inputs in the value creation process. We focus on a specific type of leadership, transformational leadership, and explore a nascent employee concept, job embeddedness, to enhance our understanding of the mechanisms and conditions by which leaders may encourage follower innovative behavior. We collected data from employees working in the hotel service sector in Ghana, and analyzed the data using structural equation modelling and Hayes’ PROCESS Macro. Our results revealed that leaders can promote innovative behavior among service workers only when the workers are embedded in the organization. Further, our results showed positive relationships between transformational leadership and organizational embeddedness, and organizational embeddedness and innovative behavior. However, we found no evidence to suggest that employees’ embeddedness in their community might alter the relationship between organizational embeddedness and innovative behavior. We conclude that to support innovation among employees, the behaviors of leaders are important especially in terms of encouraging employees to proactively embed themselves in their organizations, thereby contributing to the development of the hospitality industry and other service sectors in emerging economies.

Wei Wang, Jaeseung Moon (2021) conduct a purpose of this research is to test the impact of social connectedness and team psychological safety on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, and moderating role of usage frequency of SNS. A total of 299 questionnaires, completed by Chinese employees, analyzed using SPSS 22 and AMOS 22. For the assessment of goodness of fit of the models, TLI, CFI, RMSEA indices were used. The empirical results are as follows. First, social connectedness had a mediating effect in the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance, practiced creativity. Second, team psychological safety had a mediating effect in the relationship between transformational leadership and social connectedness, job performance, practiced creativity. Finally, the moderating effect of frequency of employee SNS usage were not significant. This study analyzes the mediating role of employee social connectedness and team psychological safety on the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance, practiced creativity, which is helpful for the expansion of related theories and provides practical implications for effective human resource management.

Nanguang su and Hsuan-Po- Wang (2022) analyze the article objective of this study is to examine the sense of social connectedness and prosocial behavior (PB) of students in Guangxi higher education institutions in China and to further understand the factors influencing PB of higher education students. In this study, a total of 1,007 students were sampled from 8 Guangxi higher vocational schools through purposive sampling using questionnaires, of which 676 (67.1%) were male students and 331 (32.9%) were female students. This study further enriches self-determination theory by exploring the effects of

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teachers' character teaching behaviors and social support on PB, using the SSC as an intrinsic motivation. In addition, the results of the study revealed that SSC, perceived teacher character teaching behaviors and perceived social support (PSS) were positively related to students' PB. SSC affects PB not only directly, but also indirectly through the mediating role of perceived teacher character teaching behavior and perceived teacher support. Teacher character teaching behaviors and PSS also play a chain mediating role in the relationship between SSC and PB. Finally, this study provides strategies to optimize school character management for higher education students in order to meet their basic psychological needs and thus promote the production of PB.

Damianus Abun, Libertine Gertrude R. Macaspact, Elita B. Valdez, Fredolin P. Julian (2023) examine the effect of an innovative work environment on the innovative work behaviour of employees. To broaden the concept of the study, related literature was reviewed. The study used a descriptive assessment and correlational research design and the population of the study was all employees from the two colleges (DWCL and DWCV). The data was gathered through research questionnaires and used inferential statistics to analyze the data. The study found that the innovative work environment and innovative work behaviour are high but not very high. The ANOVA result suggests that there is a significant correlation between an innovative work environment and the innovative work behaviour of employees. It recommends that nurturing innovative work behaviour is to nurture an innovative workplace. The study recognizes its limitation and recommends further investigation concerning different dimensions of innovative work environments and their effect on work performance.

METHODS

Objectives, hypotheses, research design, sampling method, sample size, instruments used statistical analysis in the present research study were discussed here:

Objectives

The objectives of the present study were:

- To assess the level of Social Connections on employees
- To analyze the level of Innovative Behavior on employees
- To identify the effect of Social connections on employees Innovative behaviour.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were formulated based on the objectives of the study:

- Social connections are significant prediction for innovative behavior among employees

Research Design

This study employed a simple random sampling technique, yielding a sample size of 75 samples from "Lorven pharmaceuticals" employees. The demographic factors such as age, gender, education, family type, marital status, place of residence and socioeconomic status are considered.

Instruments used

The following instruments were used for data collection.

- **Social Connectedness Scale - Revised** scale was developed by Dr. Richard M Lee (2001) This scale is a 6 point scale (strongly disagree - 1, disagree - 2, mildly

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disagree - 3, mildly agree - 4, agree - 5, strongly agree - 6). This scale is used to relevant age for 12 years to older. This scale consists of all 20 original items (10 positive and 10 negative). The negatively worded items are reverse scored and summed together with the positively worded items to create a scale score with a possible range from 20 to 120. The range of 71 - 120 is consider as a strong sense of social connections and the range of 20 - 70 is consider as a weak sense of social Connections. This scale indicates the high internal consistency 0.93 and they had satisfactory reliability 0.85.

- **Individual Innovativeness Scale** was developed by Hurt, H.T. Joseph, K. K. Cook, C.D (1977)' This scale is a 5 point scale (strongly disagree - 1, disagree - 2, neutral - 3, agree - 4, strongly agree - 5). this scale is used to relevant age for above 18 years. This scale consists of totally 20 items. This scale score with a possible range from 20 to 120. The range of above 68 is consider as a highly innovativeness and the range of below 68 is consider as a low in innovativeness. The reliability of the scale is 0.85 and 0.75.

Procedure for adopting data collections

The data was collected from organizational employees from Lorven pharmaceuticals private limited at Thirubhuvanai palayam, Puducherry. All the participants who meet to provide with information about the procedure and the need for the study was explained in the language they understand the best. Consent was taken after a brief explanation about the study of the participants. It was assured that all the information collected from the participants would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. The demographic details and responses were collected from the participants.

Statistical tool used

The data was collected and analyzed by using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0. The results are inferred through statistical techniques like Descriptive and Inferential statistical methods were used for data collections.

Statistical Analysis

Table shows the Correlation between Social connections and Innovative behavior.

Variables	Social Connections
Innovative Behavior	- .042

Ho: There is no significant difference between Social Connections and Innovative Behavior.

Table showed the correlation between Social connections and Innovative behavior. The obtained results showed that the value is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. However, the result revealed that there was a negative correlation between the two variables. The individuals scored the low level of Social connections and low level of Innovative behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

The study aims to summarize the relationship between the Social connections on employees Innovative behavior. The research design used for quantitative research design. In this study adopts random sampling technique. The sample has been collected for this study was 75 samples. The samples were collected at the Lorven Pharmaceuticals Private Limited, located at Thirubuvanai, Pondicherry. Social Connectedness Scale (Dr. Richard M Lee - 2001) and Individual Innovativeness Scale (Hurt, H.T. Joseph, K.K.Cook , C.D - 1977) questionnaires

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are used to collect responses for the participants. The participants scored low level of Social Connections and low level of Innovative Behavior.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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