

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# INNOVATIVENESS AS A PREDICTOR OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

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**Abstract:** Discretionary employee behaviors have become critical to the long-term sustainability of organizations faced with rapid technological change and intense competition. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which includes voluntary actions by employees beyond those formally required by their jobs, enhances organizational effectiveness and increases the potential for the development of positive and sustainable employee behaviors. Additionally, employee innovativeness has emerged as a key behavioral capability for organizations to develop new ways to operate and grow. Although the concepts of OCB and employee innovativeness are theoretically relevant, relatively little empirical research has investigated innovativeness as an antecedent of OCB, particularly within industrial sector contexts. This study empirically examines the impact of innovativeness on OCB based upon survey data collected from 300 employees in public and private sector organizations. Reliability, correlation, and regression analyses were conducted using SPSS. The findings suggest that innovativeness is positively and significantly related to OCB and explains a large portion of the variance in citizenship behavior exhibited by employees. Therefore, the study contributes to the developing literature on positive organizational behavior by providing evidence that innovativeness is a key predictor of OCB. The study also provides practical implications for managers seeking to create an environment that fosters cooperative and proactive employee behaviors.

**Keywords:** *Innovativeness, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Employee Behaviour, Industrial Sector, SPSS.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizations today face rapid technological advancements, globalization, and intense competitive forces that have made the old model of relying on formal job descriptions to achieve sustained organizational performance obsolete. Organizations now depend heavily on employees' discretionary and voluntary behaviors that go beyond the scope of their formal job responsibilities.

These behaviors, known as Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs), are becoming more and more important to creating a culture of cooperation, increasing efficiency, and facilitating organizational adaptation (Organ et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2019). Prior research has demonstrated a consistent link between OCBs and positive organizational outcomes such as improved productivity, service quality, reduced turnover intentions, and greater teamwork (Huang et al., 2022; Mackenzie et al., 2023).

In addition to their general benefits, OCBs also play a critical role in industrial sector organizations. In many industrial organizations, formalized roles and hierarchies dictate how people do their jobs, and OCBs help employees to respond flexibly to operational issues and to ensure that all functions in the organization work together effectively. Therefore, understanding what factors lead to OCBs has become a major focus for researchers and practitioners alike.

While there is an increasing amount of attention being paid to the study of OCBs, another emerging area of interest is the study of employee innovativeness as a key capability for organizational survival and growth. Innovativeness is defined as an employee's propensity to generate, promote, and implement new ideas that can improve the processes, products, or services of their employer (Janssen, 2000; De Jong & Den

Hartog, 2010). Recently, organizations across various sectors have come to recognize that innovation cannot simply be the domain of top management or R&D departments, but rather that it must be supported by the day-to-day behaviors of employees (Anderson et al., 2014; Li et al., 2023). Recent empirical research indicates that employees who are considered innovative tend to exhibit high levels of proactivity, learning orientation, and adaptability - all qualities that are similar to those of individuals who engage in discretionary work behaviors (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Montani et al., 2022).

Many times, innovative employees will collaborate with their coworkers, share their knowledge, and volunteer to contribute to organizational improvement projects, illustrating the commonalities between the behaviors of innovative employees and those of employees who demonstrate OCB. Even though there appears to be a clear conceptual overlap between the two, very little empirical research has directly investigated the relationship between innovativeness and OCB. One theoretical perspective that could explain why innovativeness might predict OCB is social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

According to social exchange theory, workplace relationships are established based on reciprocal exchanges of value. When employees believe that their organization supports their creativity, autonomy, and ability to express new ideas, employees are more likely to reciprocate through positive behaviors that benefit the organization.

In addition, employees who feel safe to express new ideas are more likely to take ownership and demonstrate a sense of commitment to their organization, leading them to demonstrate discretionary behaviors such as helping others, volunteering for organizational projects, and contributing to the organization through extra-role behaviors, all of which are common dimensions of OCB.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) suggests that when employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled, employees are motivated intrinsically to perform extra-role behaviors that are not externally dictated but internally rewarding.

As such, innovativeness can be viewed not only as a performance-enhancing behavior, but also as a social signal of commitment and engagement that may lead to higher levels of citizenship behavior (Wang et al., 2020; Afsar et al., 2021).

While extensive research exists regarding the traditional antecedents of OCBs, such as leadership styles, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support, relatively little empirical evidence exists regarding behavioral antecedents such as innovativeness (Podsakoff et al., 2019).

This gap is particularly true in industrial sector contexts, and even more so in developing countries, where organizations face tremendous pressure to modernize their operations while operating in highly structured and regulated environments. Further, the changing demographics of the workforce, including the increasing diversity in age and gender, require a better understanding of how innovativeness and citizenship behaviors exist across different types of employees.

Therefore, investigating innovativeness and OCB in industrial organizations provides valuable insight into how innovative and discretionary behaviors can coexist and reinforce one another in traditional work environments. To address these gaps, the current study will investigate empirically the relationship between innovativeness and organizational citizenship behavior using primary data collected from employees working in public and private sector organizations in the industrial sector.

Using robust statistical methods, including reliability, correlation, and regression analyses, the study aims to provide empirical evidence for whether and how innovativeness contributes to citizenship behavior in the workplace. The study will make three important contributions. First, it extends the OCB literature by providing evidence that innovativeness is a statistically significant behavioral antecedent of citizenship behavior. Second, it expands the innovation literature by demonstrating that employee innovativeness not only predicts performance-related outcomes but also predicts prosocial behaviors in the workplace.

Third, the study provides practical implications for managers and policymakers in the industrial sector by emphasizing the importance of promoting an innovative work climate to encourage volunteers in employees to contribute to the organization.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

### Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is defined as the discretionary employee behaviors that are not formally rewarded but that collectively contribute to organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988). Examples of OCBs include helping fellow workers, being responsible, exhibiting a positive attitude in adversity, and participating in organizational affairs. Over time, OCB has evolved into a multi-dimensional construct that includes altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

The literature consistently shows that OCB is important to both individual and organizational outcomes. At the organizational level, OCB improves operational efficiency, service quality, and organizational performance (Podsakoff et al., 2019). At the individual level, employees who demonstrate citizenship behaviors report greater job satisfaction, stronger social relationships, and higher career success (Ng et al., 2021). In industrial organizations where coordination and interdependence among employees is a necessity, OCB is critical to the effective operation of the organization.

Recent studies have further emphasized the strategic importance of OCB in dynamic and uncertain environments. Mackenzie et al. (2023) propose that OCB serves as a behavioral "buffer" during organizational change, allowing employees to collectively adapt to new systems and processes. Given the increasing adoption of technology and lean systems in industrial organizations, citizenship behaviors are necessary for maintaining productivity and employee morale.

### Innovativeness

Employee innovativeness refers to an employee's tendency to generate, promote, and realize novel ideas, methods, or solutions within the workplace (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

Unlike organizational innovation, employee innovativeness focuses on micro-level behaviors that occur during daily work activities. Janssen (2000) defines innovativeness as a three-phase process: generating, promoting, and realizing an idea. More recently, research has defined employee innovativeness as a proactive and self-initiated behavior that reflects an employee's intrinsic motivation, learning orientation, and psychological empowerment (Anderson et al., 2014; Li et al., 2023).

Innovative employees are active in seeking out opportunities to improve current work processes, collaborating with colleagues, and experimenting with new approaches to problem solving. These behaviors are particularly beneficial to industrial organizations as they allow employees to continuously improve existing processes and increase organizational efficiency.

Research has shown that innovativeness is positively related to job performance, work engagement, and organizational commitment (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Montani et al., 2022). Many times, employee innovativeness requires employees to interact and cooperate with their coworkers, including sharing ideas and obtaining feedback, and as such is an example of a behavior that goes beyond an employee's formal role.

### Theoretical Foundation Linking Innovativeness and OCB

There are several theoretical foundations that can be used to explain the relationship between employee innovativeness and organizational citizenship behavior. The theoretical foundation most relevant to this study is social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). According to social exchange theory, workplace relationships are established based on reciprocal exchanges of value. When employees perceive that their organization values their creativity, autonomy, and ability to express new ideas, employees are more likely to reciprocate through positive behaviors that benefit the organization.

Research has suggested that employee innovativeness is most likely to occur in workplaces that are characterized by a culture of trust, fairness, and psychological safety (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Employees who feel psychologically safe to express new ideas are more likely to take ownership and demonstrate a sense of commitment to their

organization, ultimately leading to discretionary behaviors such as helping others, volunteering for organizational projects, and contributing to the organization through extra-role behaviors, all of which are common dimensions of OCB. In addition, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) proposes that fulfilling an employee's psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness leads to internal motivation to perform behaviors that are not externally directed but are internally rewarding.

Therefore, employee innovativeness can be seen as not only a performance-enhancing behavior, but also as a social signal of commitment and engagement that may lead to higher levels of citizenship behavior (Wang et al., 2020; Afsar et al., 2021).

### **Empirical Evidence Linking Innovativeness and OCB**

Even though few studies have directly investigated the relationship between employee innovativeness and OCB, the indirect evidence available suggests a clear connection between the two. For example, research has indicated that employees who engage in creative and proactive behaviors are more likely to engage in collaborative and prosocial behaviors in the workplace (Wang et al., 2020). Afsar et al. (2021) also found that employees who engaged in innovative work behavior were more likely to demonstrate team-oriented behaviors, suggesting that innovation is a precursor to collaboration and mutual support.

Similarly, Montani et al. (2022) found that innovative employees are more likely to demonstrate contextual performance, which has been linked to OCB. A recent meta-analysis has provided additional evidence that proactive and creative behaviors are powerful predictors of discretionary performance outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2019).

In industrial sector contexts, where innovations are typically incremental in nature and involve making small improvements to existing systems, employees who innovate are frequently called upon to assist their coworkers, share their knowledge and expertise, and coordinate efforts across departments. These behaviors are characteristic of organizational citizenship behaviors and provide additional theoretical

justification for expecting a positive relationship between innovativeness and OCB.

### **Research Gap**

Although there is a rapidly expanding body of research focused on both employee innovativeness and OCB, there are still several areas of research that need to be explored. Most of the existing research focusing on OCB has focused on attitudinal and leadership-based antecedents of OCB, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and leadership styles. Very little research has investigated behavioral antecedents of OCB, such as innovativeness. Further, very little empirical research has investigated this relationship in industrial sector contexts, particularly in developing economies.

Finally, much of the existing research has focused on treating innovativeness as a performance-related outcome, rather than a behavioral driver of prosocial workplace behaviors. To fill this gap, this study will empirically investigate innovativeness as an antecedent of OCB.

### **Hypothesis Formulation**

Given the theoretical rationale presented above, along with the empirical evidence that illustrates a close relationship between innovative and discretionary behaviors, it is expected that employees who are innovative will exhibit higher levels of OCB. The expectation is that innovativeness will encourage employees to exhibit proactive engagement, collaboration, and a sense of personal responsibility towards the goals of their organization, which are the core components of OCB. Based on this theoretical rationale, the following hypotheses were developed:

**H1:** Innovativeness has a positive and significant effect on organizational citizenship behaviour

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Collection and Sampling Technique**

This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional methodology to examine the relationship between employee innovativeness and OCB in the industrial sector. A quantitative methodology was chosen because it allows researchers to

measure objectively latent constructs and evaluate statistically the relationships between those constructs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population for this study consisted of employees in the industrial sector, specifically public and private sector organizations. Employees in the industrial sector were chosen for this study because of the growing emphasis on innovation, efficiency, and cooperation among employees in this sector.

Because of the desire to gather data representative of the industrial sector, the sample consisted of employees of varying demographics, including age, gender, marital status, and type of industry. A total of 300 usable responses were gathered.

Regression analysis is appropriate for examining predictive relationships between

independent and dependent variables and has been widely used in organizational behavior research (Field, 2018)

### Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. Respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and anonymity to reduce social desirability bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. To minimize common method bias, several procedural remedies were implemented, including clear instructions, psychologically separating the measurement of independent and dependent variables, and using established and validated scales (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012).

**Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the sample**

| Characteristics         | Classification     | Percentage |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Gender</b>           |                    |            |
|                         | Male               | 53.7       |
|                         | Female             | 46.3       |
| <b>Age</b>              |                    |            |
|                         | Less than 20 years | 13.3       |
|                         | From 21to 30 year  | 43.7       |
|                         | 31 to 40 years     | 32.3       |
|                         | More than 40 years | 10.7       |
| <b>Marital status</b>   |                    |            |
|                         | Married            | 55         |
|                         | Unmarried          | 43         |
|                         | divorced           | 2          |
| <b>Type of industry</b> |                    |            |
|                         | Public             | 68         |
|                         | Private            | 32         |

Source: author's calculation

The socio-demographic profile indicates that the sample was relatively well balanced in terms of gender, with 53.7% male and 46.3% female respondents, suggesting adequate gender representation. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents belonged to the 21–30 years age group (43.7%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (32.3%). A smaller proportion of respondents were below 20 years (13.3%), while 10.7% were above 40 years. This distribution reflects a predominantly young to mid-career workforce. Regarding marital status, 55% of respondents were married, 43% were unmarried, and only 2% were divorced, indicating that most participants had stable family backgrounds. With respect to the type

of industry, a substantial majority of respondents (68%) were employed in the public sector, while 32% worked in the private sector. This suggests that the study's findings are more reflective of employees working in public sector organisations. Overall, the demographic profile demonstrates a diverse and representative sample, suitable for examining the relationship between employee resilience and career success across different personal and occupational characteristics

### Measurement of Variables

#### Innovativeness

Innovativeness was measured using a four-item scale, capturing employees' tendency to

generate and implement new ideas at work. The items assess behaviors such as suggesting new methods and seeking innovative solutions to work-related problems. This scale has been widely used in prior research and demonstrates strong psychometric properties (Scott & Bruce, 1994; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010).

### Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour was measured using a four-item scale, assessing voluntary behaviors such as helping coworkers, showing initiative, and contributing beyond formal job requirements. The scale reflects the core conceptualisation of OCB as discretionary and extra-role behavior (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000).

### Control Variables

Demographic variables, including age, gender, marital status, and type of industry, were included as control variables.

Prior studies suggest that demographic characteristics may influence discretionary behaviours and innovative tendencies (Ng & Feldman, 2013; Huang *et al.*, 2022). Controlling for these variables enhances the internal validity of the findings.

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Likert-type scales are widely used in behavioral research due to their simplicity, reliability, and ability to capture respondents' perceptions and attitudes effectively (Joshi *et al.*, 2015).

### Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The values exceed the recommended threshold of .70, confirming satisfactory internal consistency and scale reliability (Nunnally, 1978; Hair *et al.*, 2019).

**Table 2: Assessment of reliability**

| Variable       | Reliability Statistics |            |
|----------------|------------------------|------------|
|                | Cronbach's Alpha       | N of Items |
| Innovativeness | .865                   | 4          |
| OCB            | 0.857                  | 4          |

Source: Authors calculation

The results indicate that Innovativeness, measured using four items, achieved a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.865. This value exceeds the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70, suggesting a high level of internal consistency among the items measuring innovativeness. This implies that the items reliably capture the underlying construct and are well correlated with one another.

Similarly, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), also measured using four items, yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.857, which is well above the acceptable benchmark. This demonstrates that the OCB scale possesses strong internal consistency and that the items consistently measure employees' discretionary and extra-role behaviors. Overall, the reliability coefficients for both constructs are well within acceptable limits, confirming that the measurement instruments used in the study are reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

These findings are consistent with the recommendations of Nunnally (1978) and Hair *et al.* (2019), who suggest that Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 indicate satisfactory reliability. The scales used to measure innovativeness and organizational citizenship behaviour exhibit strong internal consistency, ensuring the robustness and credibility of subsequent correlation and regression analyses

### Validity Assessment

Construct validity was assessed through correlation analysis. The intercorrelations among study variables were below the recommended threshold of .70, indicating the absence of multicollinearity and supporting discriminant validity (Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999). Furthermore, the use of established measurement scales supports content validity.

### Correlation analysis of innovativeness and OCB with demographic variables

**Table 3: Correlation analysis of innovativeness with demographic variables**

| Variables               | ER      | Age     | Gender | Marital status | Type of ind. |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>ER</b>               | 1       |         |        |                |              |
| <b>Age</b>              | .305**  | 1       |        |                |              |
| <b>Gender</b>           | -.191** | -.166** | 1      |                |              |
| <b>Marital status</b>   | .051    | .052    | -.054  | 1              |              |
| <b>Type of industry</b> | .044    | -.132   | .065   | -.055          | 1            |

Note: N=300. \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among demographic variables and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Age shows a moderate and positive correlation with OCB ( $r = .360$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that older employees tend to exhibit higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior. Gender is negatively and significantly related to OCB ( $r = -.162$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting the presence of gender-based differences in discretionary workplace behaviors. In contrast, marital status ( $r = -.028$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and industry type ( $r = -.028$ ,  $p > .05$ ) do not show significant relationships

with OCB, indicating that these demographic factors are not meaningfully associated with citizenship behavior in the present sample. Among the demographic variables, age is negatively correlated with gender ( $r = -.166$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and industry ( $r = -.132$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while no significant associations are observed between marital status and the other variables. All correlation coefficients are well below the threshold of .70, suggesting no multicollinearity concerns and supporting the inclusion of these variables as control variables in subsequent mediation analyses.

**Table 4: Correlation analysis of OCB with demographic variables**

| Variables               | Age     | Gender  | Marital status | Type of ind. | OCB |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|----------------|--------------|-----|
| <b>Age</b>              | 1       |         |                |              |     |
| <b>Gender</b>           | -.166** | 1       |                |              |     |
| <b>Marital status</b>   | .052    | -.054   | 1              |              |     |
| <b>Type of industry</b> | -.132   | .065    | -.055          | 1            |     |
| <b>OCB</b>              | .360**  | -.162** | -.028          | -.028        | 1   |

Note: N=300. \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among innovativeness and selected demographic variables. Innovativeness shows a moderate and positive correlation with age ( $r = .305$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that older employees tend to report higher levels of innovativeness. Innovativeness is also negatively and significantly related to gender ( $r = -.191$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting gender-based differences in innovative behavior. However, innovativeness does not exhibit a significant relationship with marital status ( $r = .051$ ,  $p > .05$ ) or industry type ( $r = .044$ ,  $p > .05$ ),

implying that these demographic characteristics are not meaningfully associated with employees' innovativeness in the present sample. Among the demographic variables, age is negatively correlated with gender ( $r = -.166$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and industry ( $r = -.132$ ,  $p < .05$ ). No significant associations were observed between marital status and other demographic variables. All correlation coefficients are below the recommended threshold of .70, indicating no multicollinearity concerns and supporting the inclusion of these variables as control variables in subsequent mediation analysis.

**Table 5: Correlation between Innovativeness and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**

| Correlations |                     |     |        |
|--------------|---------------------|-----|--------|
|              |                     | inn | OCB    |
| inn          | Pearson Correlation | 1   | .569** |
|              | Sig. (2-tailed)     |     | .000   |

|                                                              |                     |        |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|-----|
|                                                              | N                   | 300    | 300 |
| OCB                                                          | Pearson Correlation | .569** | 1   |
|                                                              | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000   |     |
|                                                              | N                   | 300    | 300 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |                     |        |     |

Source: Authors calculation

Table 5 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between innovativeness and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among the study participants (N = 300). The results reveal a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between innovativeness and OCB ( $r = .569$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This indicates that employees who report higher levels of innovativeness also tend to exhibit higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviour. In practical terms, individuals who actively generate and implement new ideas are more likely to engage in discretionary behaviors such as helping colleagues, demonstrating initiative,

and contributing beyond formal job requirements. The significance value ( $p = .000$ , two-tailed) confirms that the observed relationship is not due to chance. The magnitude of the correlation (.569) suggests a moderate-to-strong association, implying a meaningful relationship between the two constructs in the industrial sector context. Overall, the findings provide preliminary empirical support for the proposed hypothesis that innovativeness is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour and justify further analysis using regression techniques to examine the predictive effect of innovativeness on OCB.

**Table 6: Regression analysis between innovativeness and OCB**

| Hypothesis | Regression weight | Beta Coeff. | R <sup>2</sup> | F- value | p- value | Result |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|----------|----------|--------|
| H1         | Inn→OCB           | .605        | .324           | 142.807  | .000     | yes    |

The regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of innovativeness on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). As shown in the table, innovativeness has a positive and statistically significant effect on OCB ( $\beta = .605$ ,  $p < .001$ ), providing strong support for Hypothesis H1. The model explains 32.4% of the variance in OCB ( $R^2 = .324$ ), indicating that innovativeness is a substantial predictor of employees' discretionary and extra-role behaviors.

The overall regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 142.807$ ,  $p < .001$ ), confirming that the model provides a good fit to the data. These findings suggest that employees who demonstrate higher levels of innovativeness are more likely to engage in behaviors that go beyond their formal job requirements, such as helping colleagues, showing initiative, and contributing positively to organizational functioning.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the role of employee innovativeness to promote organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in the industrial sector.

The results from this study provided strong support for the proposed hypothesis. Employee innovativeness was shown to be positively and significantly associated with OCB. In addition, the results showed that innovativeness was a highly predictive variable in explaining the amount of variance in OCB. The remainder of this section will discuss the results in light of relevant theoretical perspectives and contemporary empirical research.

### Innovativeness and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

The positive association between employee innovativeness and OCB was supported by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory explains that employee behavior is influenced by reciprocal exchanges between individual employees and the organization in which they work.

The organizational context that provides autonomy, trust, and support for creative expression of employee behavior is more likely to elicit innovative behavior from employees. In response to a supportive organizational context, employees are likely to reciprocate with discretionary behaviors

that benefit the organization (e.g. assisting coworkers, being conscientious, volunteering for organizational activities). Therefore, the current study supports the reciprocal logic of social exchange theory and demonstrates that innovative employees are more likely to engage in citizenship behavior.

From the self-determination theory perspective (Deci & Ryan, 2000), employee innovativeness fulfills the psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness of employees. When employees participate in innovative activity they feel a sense of control over their work, mastery of skills and meaningful connections with their colleagues. The fulfillment of these needs enhances intrinsic motivation which in turn increases the likelihood of employees going beyond their formal job requirements and exhibiting OCB.

The strong association observed in this study supports recent empirical research that indicates that intrinsically motivated employees are more likely to engage in sustained discretionary behaviors (Gagné et al., 2015; Ng et al., 2021). The study's findings can also be explained using the lens of proactive behavior theory (Parker et al., 2010). According to proactive behavior theory, innovative behavior is a type of forward looking and self-initiated behavior designed to improve the work environment.

Proactive employees do not simply complete their tasks but also seek opportunities to improve processes and help their coworkers. It is logical that such behaviors will extend to include citizenship behaviors such as knowledge sharing, helping behavior and organizational involvement. Consistent with this view, recent studies have demonstrated that proactive and innovative behaviors are among the strongest predictors of contextual performance and OCB (Wang et al., 2020; Montani et al., 2022).

### **Contextualizing the Findings in the Industrial Sector**

The industrial sector context adds to the relevance of the results. Industrial organizations are typically characterized by formal structures, standardized procedures, and defined roles. In order for innovative behavior to occur in such structured environments, employees must take the initiative to coordinate with their coworkers,

share their expertise, and assist their coworkers in developing incremental improvements. Collaborative efforts of this sort require employees to perform discretionary and cooperative behaviors that align with the core characteristics of OCB. The results of this study suggest that even in structured environments, employee innovativeness serves as a catalyst for OCB, supporting the idea that innovation and cooperation are complementary rather than competitive demands.

The association observed in the study is consistent with recent studies indicating the increasing importance of behavioral competencies in industrial settings undergoing digital transformation and process modernization (Li et al., 2023). As organizations continue to rely on employee-driven improvements, the capacity of employee innovativeness to produce OCB becomes increasingly valuable.

### **Consistency with Prior Empirical Research**

The results of the study are consistent with previous empirical research that has established relationships between innovative work behavior and positive organizational outcomes. For example, Afsar and Umarani (2020) demonstrated that employees who display innovative behavior tend to have higher levels of engagement and cooperative behavior than employees who do not display innovative behavior. Afsar et al. (2021) demonstrated that employees who exhibit innovation-oriented behaviors have higher levels of team citizenship and helping behavior.

Finally, the results of several meta-analyses have consistently demonstrated that proactive and creative behaviors explain large amounts of variance in discretionary performance outcomes including OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2019; Mackenzie et al., 2023). The results of the current study provide additional empirical validation for this relationship in the industrial sector.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study provides several contributions to the organizational behavior literature. First, the study expands our knowledge of the antecedents of OCB by providing evidence of the role of employee innovativeness as a behavioral precursor of OCB. Historically,

the study of OCB has focused on the role of attitudes (e.g. organizational commitment) and leadership-related predictors (e.g. transformational leadership). Second, this study enriches our knowledge of innovation by demonstrating that employee innovativeness not only produces benefits in terms of increased performance-related outcomes, but also fosters prosocial and cooperative workplace behaviors.

Third, by integrating social exchange theory, self-determination theory and proactive behavior theory, this study provides a multifaceted theoretical explanation of the relationship between employee innovativeness and OCB.

## LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the current study provides useful empirical insights into the relationship between employee innovativeness and OCB, there are some limitations of the study that are worthy of consideration and provide potential areas for future research. First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design which limits the ability to make causal inferences.

While the results of the study provide strong and significant associations between employee innovativeness and OCB, future research may employ longitudinal research designs or time lagged designs to establish causality and examine the dynamic relationships between these behaviors over time.

For example, future research could examine if sustained levels of employee innovativeness lead to sustained levels of OCB, or if the relationship between employee innovativeness and OCB is reciprocal. Second, the reliance on self-report measures may lead to common method variance and social desirability bias.

While the study employed procedural remedies to minimize these biases (e.g. anonymity assurances and the use of validated scales), future studies may be able to increase methodological rigor by employing multi-source data (e.g. supervisor rated OCB or peer assessments of employee innovative behavior). Mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative methods (e.g. surveys) with qualitative methods (e.g. interview studies) may also provide additional insights

into the ways in which employee innovative behaviors translate into discretionary workplace actions. Third, the study is limited to the industrial sector, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other types of organizational contexts. As work structures, innovation demands, and citizenship expectations vary across organizational contexts, future research may want to replicate the model in service, health care, educational, and knowledge-intensive industries.

Cross cultural studies would also increase the external validity of the findings by examining contextual and institutional influences. Fourth, although demographic variables were controlled for, the study did not examine mediators or moderators that may influence the relationship between employee innovativeness and OCB. Future research may examine mediator variables such as employee engagement, psychological safety, resilience, and organizational commitment as well as moderator variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support.

Finally, the study treated the constructs of employee innovativeness and organizational citizenship behavior as unidimensional. Future research may treat these constructs as multidimensional and examine the relationship between specific dimensions of employee innovativeness and specific dimensions of OCB. Such a multidimensional approach would provide more nuanced theoretical explanations and more targeted recommendations for managers.

Overall, the limitations identified above provide multiple avenues for future research that may build upon the findings of the current study. By employing longitudinal research designs, multi-source data, varied sample populations, and more sophisticated theoretical models, future research may be able to more fully understand the ways in which employee innovativeness influences discretionary employee behaviors in today's organizations.

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