

Strategic Leadership and Employee Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment and the Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

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Article Details	Abstract
Received: 27 Feb 2024 Accepted: 26 March 2024 Published: 27 June 2024 ¹Dr. Areeba Khan ²Hamza Khan Copyright @Author Corresponding Author: *Dr. Areeba Khan	Organizations are more and more reliant on innovation to be both adaptable and competitive, as well as perform well in the long run. However, if employees do not have the authority, confidence, or backing of the organization to suggest and implement new ideas, then they may be reluctant to do so. This manuscript elaborates on the conceptual model that strategic leadership can foster employee innovative work behavior by psychological empowerment, and that perceived organizational support can serve as a bridge between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior. The paper draws on strategic leadership literature, psychological empowerment literature, social exchange literature and organizational support literature to suggest that leaders who provide direction, encourage learning, allocate resources, and involve employees in decision-making can boost employees' perceived meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. The psychological states are supposed to facilitate idea generation, idea promotion and idea implementation. Perceived organizational support is suggested as a boundary condition because employees may feel more inclined to behave in ways that align with their empowered identity when they feel that their work is valued and that they are cared for by the organization. The manuscript presents testable hypotheses and a research design in quantitative terms for service and manufacturing organizations. It also reviews theoretical contributions, implications for management, limitations and future research directions. It is a conceptual and proposed empirical study and therefore no survey results or statistics are fabricated or made up.

key words : strategic leadership, innovative work behavior, psychological empowerment, perceived organizational support, management sciences, and employee innovation.

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INTRODUCTON

Organizations are subject to technological changes, changing customer expectations, competition and uncertainty. In those circumstances, ideas and innovation don't just come from the research and development groups; it's also on the shoulders of other employees who see problems, think of solutions, convince others to buy into their ideas, and bring concepts to fruition. Organizational renewal at the micro level is thus an important source of innovative work behavior.

One factor that can impact the way employees perceive innovation being encouraged, risky, or not part of their responsibilities is leadership. Strategic leadership sets direction and coordinates people and resources to the long-term goals of the organization. But strategic messaging alone can be not enough to create innovation if people feel they are incapable of taking action, do not have much discretion over their work, or if they feel that their ideas will be discredited. The psychological mechanisms linking leadership and innovation in employees are thus significant for research and practice in management.

One possible explanation is psychological empowerment. It is related to employees' beliefs that their work is important, they are capable of doing their work, that they are self-determining, and that they can make a difference. Staff who have these thoughts might be more likely to be proactive and continue to work hard when the innovation process demands it. However, empowerment is not always correlated to innovative behaviour. Employees also read the organization's "cues" of its appreciation for their work and its willingness to allow for reasonable experimentation.

Based on these theoretical frameworks, this manuscript introduces an integrated model intervening between strategic leadership with innovative work behavior and moderated by perceived organizational support between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior. The proposed model is aimed at linking leadership practices to the inner motivation of the employees and the organizational environment where innovation occurs.

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1.1 Research Problem

One of the frequent management challenges is the disconnect between organizations' statements of commitment to innovation and the willingness of employees to bring about change. Seemingly high expectations from leadership can be met with passive responses from employees when there is little delegation of authority, consequences for errors are harsh, and there is doubt about new ideas. Studies focusing on the linkages between leadership and innovation can then ignore the processes and events that shape how leadership acts.

1.2 Research Objectives

To explore the relationship between strategic leadership and employee innovative work behaviors proposed.

To explain the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the leadership–innovation relationship.

To examine the mediating role of perceived organizational support between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior.

To provide practical suggestions for managers who want to develop a workplace that encourages employee-initiated innovation.

1.3 Research Questions

How is strategic leadership expected to relate to employee innovative work behavior?

Is the relationship proposed by psychological empowerment a possible explanation?

What circumstances within an organization enable psychological empowerment to be linked to innovative work behaviour?

The Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation will be included. The Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation will be included.

2.1 Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership is about the actions taken by the senior and line leaders to provide direction, to "decode" and make sense of change in the environment, to coordinate the organization's resources, and to shape people's thinking and

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behavior to support longer-term goals. The current model views strategic leadership as a series of behaviors that are observable by employees: setting a clear vision, fostering strategic thinking, facilitating learning, engaging employees in decision making, providing the teams with resources to pursue strategic opportunities. Such actions could be a way to explain why innovation is important and to indicate that employees are legitimate stakeholders in organizational improvement.

The construct needs to be carefully operationalised. Strategic leadership does not equal charisma, transformational leadership and executive position. In a study, the level of analysis and measures should correspond to the level observed by the leader (in the real world). When employees rate their immediate supervisor, the manuscript should focus on employee perceived strategic leadership behaviors, not on organization-wide executive capability.

2.2 Employee Innovative Work Behavior

Typically, the three activities in innovative work behavior are idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization, which are interrelated. Generation means problem solving and creating new solutions. Promotion is communicating an idea and obtaining approval from co-workers, supervisors or other stakeholders. Realization is a process of testing, adapting and implementing the idea. Resources needed for these stages include creativity (autonomy and time), promotion (influence and interpersonal confidence) and implementation (coordination and persistence).

Innovation is not synonymous with creativity in work. Creativity tends to focus on generating novel and useful ideas, while innovative work behavior comprises a set of interpersonal and implementation work behaviors necessary to implement ideas. This distinction is important because it can be the case that there are lots of suggestions made on a workplace that don't have the authority and support to be put into practice.

2.3 Psychological Empowerment

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Meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact are each viewed as one of the four cognitions of psychological empowerment. The meaning of a work is what they see as valuable in the work; competence is their level of confidence that they have the ability to do the work; self-determination is their perception that they can choose when and how to do the work; and impact is their sense of their ability to affect the outcome of work. These dimensions are not only a reflection of a formal delegation policy, but a reflection of the employee's experience of agency as well.

Empowerment can be supported by strategic leaders through explaining the purpose of work, offering developmental feedback, delegating discretion to the right persons, inviting employees to problem-solving and making resources available. But empowerment can in turn help to improve the chances that employees assume responsibility for improvements. Empowerment cannot replace skills, resources, and clear boundaries, however. It works best when staff are aware of the organization's priorities and have opportunities for support in responsibly experimenting.

2.4 Perceived Organizational Support

POS is defined as the overall attitude of people working in the organization towards their efforts and towards the organization's well-being. Support can be delivered via fair procedures, supervision, access to learning, recognition, adequate tools and positive responses to reasonable failures. In a social exchange context, those employees who feel supported are more likely to try to invest in the role beyond minimum expectations.

In this model, POS is not only considered as another predictor but is also suggested as a moderator. Motivated employees might not take the initiative to be innovative if they think they'll be rejected, blamed or resources will be unavailable. In organizations with little support, workers may worry that their efforts will not be taken seriously, and that they will face the organization's challenges on their own. In high-support organizations, workers may feel more

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secure that their initiative will be considered fairly and that the organization will assist them to overcome any implementation barriers.

2.5 Theoretical Lenses

The model is based on complementary theory perspectives. Strategic leadership theory provides insights on how leaders set direction and mobilize resources. Psychological empowerment theory helps to understand how work environments are associated with individual psychological feeling of meaning, competence, choice, and impact. Social exchange and organizational support perspectives account for employees' willingness to return to the treating organization in the form of discretionary contributions. Both of these viewpoints indicate that leadership can have an impact on the internal motivational climate, and the external climate of support can affect whether that is manifested as innovation.

Theory / perspective Core proposition Application in this manuscript:

Strategic leadership Leaders bring people, priorities and resources together to achieve their strategic goals. Describes how direction, learning and participation can enable employee innovation.

Agency is influenced by psychological empowerment, which is manifested in employees' feelings of meaning, competence, autonomy and impact. Describes the suggested mediation between leadership and innovation.

Reciprocal effort and contribution can be encouraged in supportive treatment through social exchange. Describes how organizational support can enable employees to be proactive.

Organizational support Employees develop opinions about the value and support which the organization gives them. Describes the recommended boundary condition which results in innovation for empowerment.

The conceptual framework and hypotheses are presented.

The resulting framework indicates that strategic leadership is the independent variable, employee innovative work behavior is the dependent variable, psychological empowerment is the mediator in the empowerment-innovation

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relationship, and perceived organizational support is the moderator in the relationship between employee psychological empowerment and employee innovative work behavior. The framework is designed for testing and should not be considered as a proven causal outcome.

Strategic Leadership is to Psychological Empowerment. Strategic Leadership is to Psychological Empowerment is as x is to y.

→ Employee Innovative Work Behavior

Perceived Organizational Support moderates the empowerment → innovation relationship

Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework (author-developed).

The student has demonstrated strategic leadership and innovative work behavior. The student has exhibited strategic leadership and innovative work behavior.

Clear strategic priorities, the ability to challenge inefficient routines and link local ideas to wider strategic goals can increase the likelihood that innovation will occur through strategic leadership. Leaders can also help ease the uncertainty by making clear what sorts of experimentation are acceptable and by protecting time for improvement work. Based on this, the manuscript suggests that strategic leadership has a positive influence on innovative work behavior.

The relationship between strategic leadership and the employees' innovative work behavior was positive.

3.2 The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

Leadership behaviours might also contribute to innovation to some extent because they affect the employee's perception of their role. If leaders clarify the purpose of tasks, give opportunities for employees to become competent, give them suitable discretion to do them and ask their suggestions, employees might feel more empowered to influence what they do. Such thoughts can lead to a more open-minded attitude among employees to look for and promote ideas.

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Psychological empowerment is therefore considered to be a part of the relationship between strategic leadership and innovative work behavior.

H2: Psychological empowerment is positively related to strategic leadership.

The relationship between psychological empowerment and employee innovative work behavior is positive.

H4: Psychological empowerment plays a mediation role between strategic leadership and employee innovative work behavior.

The Moderating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support

Translation of empowerment to innovation can hinge on the organizational climate. In the absence of a supportive organisation, employees may think they are capable and autonomous, but it is not worth risking to propose change. In environments with high levels of PORS, workers are likely to believe that they could receive positive feedbacks, resources, and good consideration for their ideas. Workers are likely to think they will receive positive feedbacks, resources, and good consideration for their ideas if they perceive that the organization is supportive. Hence, the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behaviour is expected to be higher in the case of higher perceived organizational support.

H5: The relationship between psychological empowerment and employee innovative work behavior is positively moderated by perceived organizational support, such that the relationship is more positive in the higher level of perceived organizational support.

3.4 Conditional Indirect Effect

Indirect effect may be moderated by levels of perceived organizational support if psychological empowerment is a mediator between strategic leadership variables and innovative work behavior, and organizational support is a strengthener in the path from psychological empowerment to innovation. This conditional indirect effect test provides a more comprehensive evaluation of the proposed process than separate tests of mediation and moderation.

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H6: The relationship between strategic leadership and employee innovative work behavior is indirect and its strength is greater when P.O.S is high.

4. Proposed Methodology

4.1 Research Design

An explanatory research design is suggested, and will be quantitative. A time-lagged survey is better than a single-wave survey, since it can enhance the temporal separation between the predictor, mediator, and outcome measures. For instance, strategic leadership and control variables may be assessed at Time 1, while psychological empowerment and perceived organizational support may be assessed at Time 2 and innovative work behavior may be assessed at Time 3. A three-wave design is not as powerful on its own as establishing causality, but it can mitigate some of the common method issues, and increase the likelihood that the proposed ordering is the correct one.

4.2 Population and Sampling

The target population can be medium to large size service and manufacturing employees. A single-industry sample would allow closer control of contextual differences and a multi-industry sample would increase the breadth. An advance definition of eligibility is important for researchers, for example, length of service with the current supervisor and sufficient time within the organization for assessing leadership and support practices.

The number of subjects should be calculated by performing a power analysis, based on the smallest effect of interest, number of predictors, desired statistical power, and planned analysis. If a team or organization is being represented, the design should take account of the clustering; data from multiple employees within a team may necessitate multilevel modeling or cluster-robust standard errors. Convenience or purposive sampling can be feasible, but there is a need to seek out limitations for generalizability.

4.3 Measures and Operationalization

Uses validated scales with established reliability and validity if possible, but adjusts wording to accurately reflect ideas if needed. The research team should

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secure copyright permission for copyrighted instruments as necessary, perform cognitive interviews or a pilot test, and evaluate the quality of the translation (if questionnaires are translated into multiple languages). A five- or seven-point scale can be used throughout the entire answer.

Constructs Operational definition Suggested approach to measuring them.

Strategic leadership Employee-perceived actions of the leader that convey direction, learning support and work in the context of longer term goals.

Adopt a validated leadership assessment scale that is congruent with the hypothesized construct; do not re-label another assessment scale without a good reason.

Psychological empowerment Meaningful work, competence, self-determination, and impact at work. Adopt an existing four dimension psychological empowerment tool.

POSS Overall attitude regarding the importance of the organization's support of employee contribution and the organization's concern for employee well-being.

Adopt an existing measure of perceived organizational support.

Innovative work behavior Employee idea generation, promotion and implementation. Utilize an innovative work behavior instrument that has been validated; take into account ratings by supervisors to prevent same-source bias.

Control variables Demographic, job and organizational characteristics that could be important. Use theory and not the statistical norm for selecting controls.

4.4 Data Collection Procedure

Before recruitment, researchers should get approval from the relevant ethics committee or institutional review board. The participants must be told the purpose of the study, that it is voluntary, that they may take all the time they need, that their confidential information will be protected, and that they have the right to discontinue their participation. Supervisors must not be able to see responses

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to questions in identifiable form. If two or more waves are involved, a code can be developed to connect responses without putting names into the analytic dataset, thus maintaining privacy.

The wording of the survey should be neutral, and should avoid leading statements and have the predictor and outcome sections separated when possible to minimize response bias. In cases of having enough room, employees are able to rate the leadership and their own empowerment, and supervisors evaluate employees' innovative work behavior independently. There should be no pressure on employees to participate, and participation or not should not affect employment.

4.5 Proposed Analysis Plan

The analysis should start with data screening, evaluation of missing data, descriptive statistics and scale reliability assessment. To investigate if the constructs are empirically distinguishable, confirmatory factor analysis can be used. Appropriate indicators of convergent and discriminant validity should be assessed and meaningful groups should be compared using measurement invariance.

Depending on the nesting and the sample size, hypotheses can be tested using regression-based mediation/moderation, SEM, or an appropriate multilevel approach. Confidence intervals for the indirect effect should be estimated using the bootstrap procedure. The interaction between psychological empowerment and perceived organizational support should be explored at relevant levels of the moderator, and a conditional indirect effect should be reported along with confidence intervals. Research should present the effect size and uncertainty, not just a statistical significance assessment.

Research question / hypothesis	Suggested test	Reporting emphasis
H2: Innovation → leadership	Regression or structural path estimate	Coefficient, confidence interval, effect size, model controls.
Regions: Leader → Empowerment	Regression or structural path estimate	Coefficient, confidence interval, reliability of measures.

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H3: Empowerment → innovation Regression or structural path estimate

Coefficient, confidence interval, incremental explanatory value.

Mediation Bootstrap indirect-effect estimate; indirect effect and confidence interval; direct effect (if applicable)

Intermediate steps to analyze the interaction effect between an independent variable and a moderator, following H5. Intermediate steps to test the interaction between an independent variable and a moderator using conditional estimate, plotted slopes, and interaction coefficient, after H5.

H6: Conditional indirect effect Moderated mediation analysis

Conditional indirect effects and index/interval appropriate to method.

5. Expected Contributions

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

First, the model moves from the traditional focus on a leadership–innovation connection to a process explanation. Psychological empowerment gives a motivational mechanism by which behaviors of leaders become the behaviors of employees. Second, the perceived organizational support reflects the fact that the internal sense of agency may be limited if the organisational context is not supportive of trying new and different. Third, the model incorporates leadership, empowerment, and support concepts within a framework of hypotheses that can be validated in other industries and organizational contexts.

The contribution is deliberately presented as a suggestion for integration and not as a claim that all relationships are new or already formed. The value of the study will be related to the theoretical precision, the quality of the measurements, the sample and the ability to separate this study's findings from previous studies of related leadership and/or innovation constructs.

5.2 Managerial Contributions

The model can be used as a useful diagnostic tool for managers. Leaders should check if their strategic priorities are obvious, employees are competent and know what they can do, and if employees' suggestions are acted upon in a positive way.

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To encourage innovation, it's not enough to just ask employees to think outside the box. It's necessary to provide time for them to think outside the box, feedback on their thinking, decision-making authority to implement, and access to implementation resources.

Establish a clear vision and mission and articulate how team-level improvement contributes to organisational objectives.

Involve workers in problem solving and grant them discretion, within clear boundaries.

Develop skills by coaching, job-specific training, feedback, and exploring concepts within a manageable scope.

Know that valuable experimentation is done and mistakes are understood within the context of the process rather than as outright errors.

Provide clear avenues for employees to submit, review, and track ideas, enabling them to understand the process of putting their ideas out there and seeing what happens.

Offer hands-on assistance in the form of cross-functional access, data, tools, time and sponsorship for innovative efforts.

The consequences of poor Human Resource Management 5.4 The consequences of good Human Resource Management

Human resource systems can help or hinder the behaviors of leadership that are expressed in the model. Selection and development practices can equip supervisors to coach employees, promote learning, and manage responsible experimentation. Performance management should focus on rewarding constructive improvement activity, rather than reward volume of ideas. Recognizing systems should take into account the quality, feasibility, collaboration and implementation of ideas, as well as the fact that employees are not being punished for raising legitimate concerns.

Organisations must also make sure that empowerment is not used as a means of passing responsibility on without giving resources. Giving away responsibilities without giving away power, time and/or support can lead to higher levels of

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frustration, not innovation. The boundaries of employees' decision-making power should be clear and there should be procedures for escalating decisions beyond employees' authority.

6. Discussion

Based on the proposed model, the level of innovation among employees is expected to be influenced by a combination of leadership actions, psychological experiences of employees and perceived support environment. Strategic leadership can ensure direction and legitimisation of improvement work, and psychological empowerment can help employees feel like they are capable actors and not passive recipients of instructions. In turn, P.O.S can affect the employees' determination to make that agency an innovative event and whether it is worthwhile and safe to do so.

The model also brings a number of distinctions to the fore for interpretation. Leadership to innovation could not be a direct relationship by itself to constitute mediation. Under the assumptions of the study, there would be a significant indirect effect, but there may also be other plausible explanations. Similarly, a meaningful interaction would suggest that at each level of empowerment, there would be a different relationship with innovation, rather than organizational support would inevitably lead to innovation. Longitudinal, multi-source or intervention-based designs would be helpful in strengthening causal interpretation.

Reverse and reciprocal relationships should be taken into account when conducting research. Frequent innovators could get more attention/autonomy from leaders and successful innovation could improve perceptions of support. The climate of a team, autonomy in work, workload, climate of psychological safety and availability of resources may also affect upon the relationships. These alternatives should be integral to the design and discussion and not be considered as possible 'afterthoughts'.

7. Limitations and Future Research

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Overlap with strategic leadership measures: strategic leadership measures can overlap with transformational, empowering or supportive leadership. Discriminant validity should be established and an explanation of why the selected leadership construct is relevant should be provided in future studies.

Common-method bias: correlations might be inflated due to all the variables being collected in the same way and at the same time from the same respondents. Time separation and supervisor-rated outcomes can help but are not a solution to all the bias.

Generalizability: Outcomes that are found in one country, industry or organization may not be applicable to other settings. There is a need for replication across sectors and national contexts.

Causal inference: observational surveys are not able to prove causality. More robust evidence would come from a longitudinal study, a field experiment, or a leadership-development program.

Level of analysis: employees may be nested within supervisors and/or organizations. In future studies, team and organizational effects should be included in the model if the sampling plan allows.

Outcome breadth: Innovative work behavior is measured on the basis of self-reports, supervisor ratings, or objective measures. Multiple sources can project various facets of the subject of innovation.

Potential future research can focus on what effect job autonomy, psychological safety, learning climate, or failure tolerance could be as an additional boundary condition. Additionally, researchers might be able to differentiate incremental innovation from more radical changes, or verify if the proposed model varies between public, private, family-owned, and technology-intensive organizations.

8. Conclusion

It is a testable model of the relationship between strategic leadership and employee innovative work behavior mediated by psychological empowerment and moderated by perceived organizational support (POS) in the domain of management sciences. The main thrust of the argument is that employees are

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more likely to contribute to innovation when leaders provide direction and give employees agency, and when the organization signals that employees' contributions are valued. The proposed methodology provides a viable way to test these relationships without making any a priori assumptions. The model for managers highlights the importance of a system of leadership, employee capability and discretion, and credible organizational support that enable innovation.

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This Appendix provides a suggested structure for the questionnaire.

The questionnaire structure is not a substitute for validated scales items. Researchers are advised to use validated tools, check any permissions and do not use the prompts below as a validated scale.

Section	Example instruction / content	Response format
A. Background	Role, tenure, department, industry, supervisory responsibility (only collect data that is necessary for research).	Categorical / numeric
B. Strategic leadership:	how well is the direction communicated, learning encouraged, and work aligned to priorities on a daily basis by relevant leader(s). The level of agreement is measured on a 5- or 7-point scale.	
C. Psychological empowerment:	Rate work meaning, competency, self-determination and perceived impact. The scale response options are validated.	
D. Organizational support	Evaluate the organization's commitment to contributions and the care of employees. Validated scale response options	
E. Innovative work behavior –	Evaluate idea generation, promotion and implementation, supervisor ratings may be used where appropriate. Scale reponses that have been validated	

Hypothesis Summary (B)

Code	Hypothesis	Relationship
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	The positive relationship exists between strategic leadership and employee innovative work behavior.	Direct association
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	There is a positive relationship between strategic leadership and psychological empowerment.	Predictor → mediator
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The relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior of employees is positive. Mediator → outcome

The relationship between strategic leadership and employee innovative work behavior is mediated through the psychological empowerment. Mediation

H5 support perceived organizational support to enhance the positive association between psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior.

Moderation

This indirect effect of strategic leadership on innovative work behavior via psychological empowerment is stronger when POS is high. Moderated

mediation

Don't combine the handling with material and don't humanise the flow chart and table and refreance

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