

A Systematic Literature Review on Employee Performance through Innovative Work Behavior

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Abstract

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method through a systematic literature review of 29 empirical studies published between 2018 and 2025, spanning various countries and sectors, to explore how leadership styles influence innovative work behavior (IWB) and employee performance. The findings show that leadership, especially transformational, ambidextrous, relational, and adaptive, significantly enhances IWB, which in turn mediates improvements in employee performance. In addition to leadership, individual factors like creative self-efficacy and work engagement, and organizational aspects such as innovation culture and supportive HR systems, also contribute meaningfully to the development of IWB and performance. Digitalization further enriches this dynamic by facilitating innovation through technology adoption and digital literacy, though its effectiveness depends on moderating factors such as leadership support, psychological safety, and employee digital readiness. These findings indicate a synergistic process in which leadership, organizational culture, individual capability, and digital transformation combine to foster innovation and performance. Implications suggest the need for integrated leadership development, innovation-driven HR practices, and digital capability enhancement. Future research should include longitudinal and cross-cultural designs, consider emerging work patterns like hybrid and remote work, and adopt advanced data analytics to capture the complex interactions among variables shaping IWB and employee outcomes.

Keywords: Innovative Work Behavior, Employee Performance, Systematic Literature Review, Leadership Styles, Digitalization

Introduction

With the emergence of accelerated technological advancements, globalization, and shifting workforce trends, organizations today are not only expecting their employees to work with efficiency but also to think creatively and behave innovatively. (Kvirchishvili, 2024). With this change, Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), i.e., the intentional creation, introduction, and realization of new ideas at a role, group, or organization level, has emerged as a central behavioral variable for enhancing Employee Performance (EP) (AlEsa & Durugbo, 2022). This link has drawn significant research over the last two decades, as more interest has grown in determining how and under what circumstances IWB enhances performance outcomes. (Bauwens et al., 2024).

Despite a significant body of research attesting to the positive correlation between IWB and EP, results have differed widely between studies, indicating that this link is multifaceted and influenced by numerous internal and external factors (Wider et al., 2024). Recent literature stresses the importance of mediating variables (i.e., motivation, work engagement, psychological empowerment) and moderating conditions (i.e., leadership, organizational climate, autonomy) that influence the strength and nature of this relationship (Sarwar et al., 2023). Furthermore, growing literature suggests that multilevel effects—individual, team, and organization levels—are the key to

facilitating or frustrating innovative behaviors and their attendant impact on performance (Khanagha et al., 2022).

Despite these developments, no systematic synthesis clearly mapping the course of this research stream, deriving lasting patterns, and revealing knowledge gaps for future work has been conducted. Earlier reviews usually consider IWB or EP in isolation, or focus on direct effects alone without considering the advanced dynamics between these concepts systematically. Moreover, new workplace trends such as telecommuting, digitalization, and intergenerational diversity require an updated and integrated model of innovation-performance dynamics.

This study aims to accomplish this by conducting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of the IWB and EP relationship from 2018 to 2025, highlighting mediators, moderators, and multilevel influences. Through strict SLR protocols (PRISMA), the study systematically identifies, evaluates, and synthesizes pertinent empirical and theoretical contributions. The purpose is to provide a coordinated knowledge base, clarify inconsistencies in the literature, and propose a research agenda for the future that realistically reflects the intricacy of contemporary organizational behavior.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do leadership styles impact employee performance through innovative work behavior?

RQ2: What individual and organizational factors significantly enhance innovative work behavior and employee performance?

RQ3: How does digitalization, including technology adoption and digital competence, influence innovative work behavior and its effect on employee performance?

Literature Review

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative Work Behavior is the organized effort of employees to introduce, force, or install new ideas, processes, or goods into their job, team, or company (Lesnikova et al., 2021). It does not merely entail the creation of innovative ideas, but additionally actively executing them for increasing productivity, solving problems, or creating value added, as compared with normal job satisfaction (Messmann et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2024; Yousaf et al., 2024). IWB is forward-moving and action-driven and normally involves risk-taking (Volery & Tarabashkina, 2021), creativity (Volery & Tarabashkina, 2021), and persistence (Janapati & Vijayalakshmi, 2024). It is most commonly understood to be a multi-stage process comprising idea exploration, idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation (Bratianu et al., 2023; Dahiya & Raghuvanshi, 2022). IWB is a key part of organizational flexibility and competitiveness, especially within rapidly changing environments where innovation is both a growth and survival imperative (Anser et al., 2021). Leadership support, job autonomy, psychological safety, and organizational culture have been found to have very significant roles in influencing employees' disposition and ability to engage in innovative behavior.

Employee performance

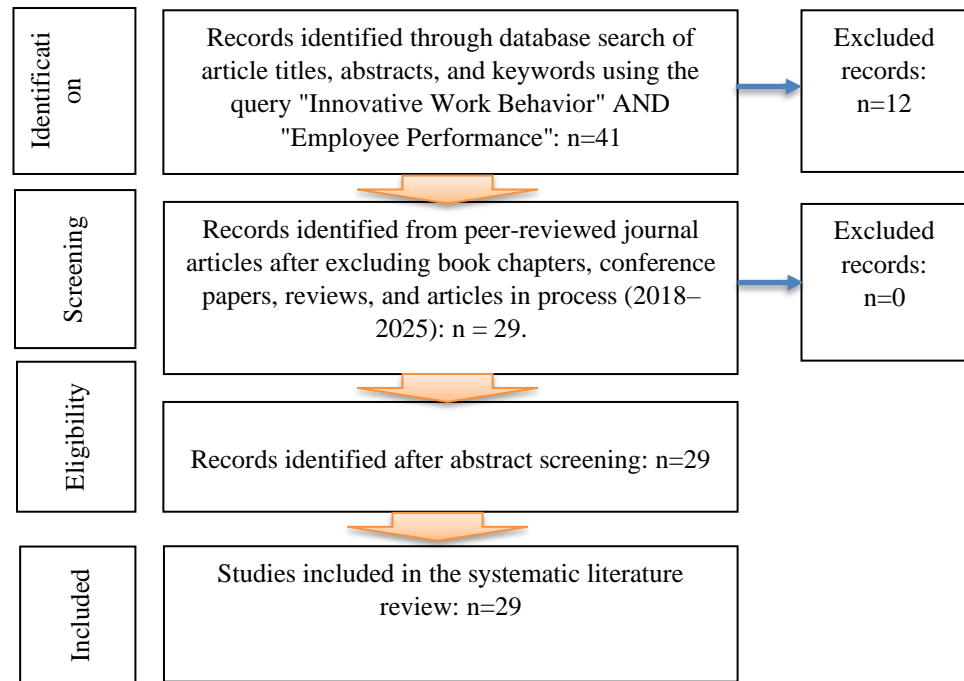
Employee performance is how an individual is successful in his/her work requirements and contributes to the organization's goals (Razaq et al., 2025; Rigtering et al., 2024; F. Zain et al., 2022). It encompasses both the quantity and quality of work performed, meeting deadlines, solving problems, communication, teamwork, and overall reliability (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). Performance is typically measured by master indicators such as productivity, efficiency, task achievement, and workplace conduct (Tapasco-Alzate et al., 2022). It may be influenced by a variety of determinants, varying from motivation, job satisfaction, leadership style, training, and organizational support (Aljumah, 2023). High employee performance enhances organizational performance as well as reflects workforce involvement and alignment with company objectives (Ababneh, 2021). In the

modern workplace, performance is not just regarded as task-oriented but increasingly encompasses active behaviors such as innovation, adaptability, and relentless change (Aftab et al., 2025).

Research Method

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive method using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively examine global studies on the relationship between Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) and Employee Performance. The SLR method ensures a structured, transparent, and replicable process for identifying, selecting, analyzing, and synthesizing existing academic literature.

Figure 1. Literature Review Method



Source: (Sulistyowati et al., 2025; Sulistyowati & Husda, 2023a, 2023b; Sulistyowati & Sukati, 2024)

Following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, this review maintains high standards of methodological rigor and clarity. Data were collected from the Scopus.com database, with the search conducted on June 2, 2025, initially yielding 41 papers. The review was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2018 and 2025, with further filtering based on relevant subject areas. After applying these criteria, a total of 29 relevant articles were selected for detailed analysis.

Result/Findings

The reviewed studies share a focus on innovative work behavior (IWB) as the main cause of employee performance, but differ in context, study design, and means through which IWB exerts its influence. Most studies, particularly from Indonesia (Sitepu et al., 2024; Supardi et al., 2025; Wibisono et al., 2025; R. D. C. Zain et al., 2025) center on the government or public organization and emphasize leadership styles, digital literacy, and facilitative roles towards IWB adoption and performance. Foreign studies (Kim, 2022; Leong et al., 2025; Schuh et al., 2018), on the other hand, emphasize psychological and relational predictors such as AI-induced insecurity, self-esteem, or leader-member exchange (LMX), with longitudinal or multisource methodology. Sector differences

also occur, with applications in education, healthcare, IT, and hospitality, and while the majority of studies affirm IWB's mediating role between organizational culture or leadership and performance, others (Azmy A. & Perkasa D.H., 2024; Supardi; et al., 2024; Supardi et al., 2025) reported partial effects or non-significance, pointing to contextual and individual moderating variables. Despite methodological diversity—from SEM and regression to multilevel and dyadic ones—the overall findings emphasize IWB's strategic significance but caution against over-assuming its impact everywhere, and instead point to the need for adaptive, context-dependent innovation management.

Table 1. Scopus-Indexed Articles on Innovative Work Behavior and Employee Performance (2018–2025)

Author (Year)	Country	Scope	Method	Finding
(R. D. C. Zain et al., 2025)	Indonesia	Immigration Office – employee performance & IWB	Cross-sectional, PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4.0), 200 personnel	Ambidextrous leadership significantly affects IWB; IWB improves performance. Creative work practices mediate performance outcomes.
(Sitepu et al., 2024)	Indonesia	Government agencies – fresh graduates	Survey, multiple linear regression, 300 respondents	Service digitalization improves IWB and employee performance; technology adoption enhances innovation.
(Leong et al., 2025)	Macao	Hospitality industry – AI disruption	Two-wave survey, moderated mediation analysis, 500 employees	AI threat increases tech insecurity, reduces thriving, affecting IWB and performance; trait self-esteem moderates these effects.
(T. Pham et al., 2025)	Vietnam	Marketing & services sector	Survey, SPSS & SmartPLS 4.0, 286 respondents	Transformational leadership and adhocracy culture positively impact IWB and performance.
(Schuh et al., 2018)	Germany/ US/China	Multisource innovation appraisal	Multisource study (self, supervisor, colleague), mediation model	High-quality LMX enhances performance appraisal via IWB; leader perception mediates the effect.
(Kim, 2022)	South Korea	Virtual work – relational leadership	Longitudinal survey, 237 newcomers	Relational leadership enhances IWB; psychological contract mediates the relationship.
2023)	Indonesia	Private universities – lecturers	SEM, 263 respondents	Individual agility & intergenerational learning enhance IWB; age diversity climate mediates; intergenerational leadership moderates.
(Yiğit & Toker, 2025)	Turkey	Healthcare – work stress & IWB	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 4.0, 177 respondents	IWB and contextual performance affect work stress; ergonomics moderates the effect.
(EL JUNUSI et al., 2023)	Indonesia	Public universities – academic staff	SEM, 164 respondents	EE enhances IWB and performance; IWB and proactive behavior mediate–performance link.
(van Zyl et al., 2021)	Netherlands	ICT sector – innovation & performance	Cross-sectional survey, census sampling, 232 employees	Work engagement drives IWB, which improves task performance.

Author (Year)	Country	Scope	Method	Finding
(Supardi et al., 2025)	Indonesia	Regional government – digital competence	SEM with SmartPLS, 357 civil servants	Creative self-efficacy influences IWB & performance; IWB does not mediate all effects; digital literacy is not a strong moderator.
(Dinesh Babu et al., 2024a)	India	IT sector – ambidextrous leadership	Cross-sectional, PLS-SEM, 371 employees	Ambidextrous leadership enhances IWB and indirectly improves employee performance.
(Yanto et al., 2025)	Indonesia	Dairy industry employee's creative performance	Survey, primary & secondary data, 420 employees	Transformational leadership, creative self-efficacy, and OCB influence creative performance via innovative work behavior; innovative climate moderates. Proposed new neo-configuration model.
(Rahman et al., 2022)	Indonesia	Banking sector, cyberloafing impact	PLS-SEM, 210 online questionnaires	Cyberloafing and person-organization fit positively relate to innovative work behavior, which mediates their effects on employee performance.
(Khan et al., 2020)	Pakistan	Higher education institutions	Survey, 160 respondents	Leadership styles positively affect innovative work behavior, mediated/moderated by organizational culture and citizenship behavior.
(J & Anbu, 2025)	Not specified *	Automotive industry employee performance	Purposive sampling, questionnaire, SPSS, AMOS	Organizational innovation culture and OCB influence employee performance via innovative work behavior. Employees show high levels of OIC, OCB, and IWB, impacting performance.
(Li et al., 2022)	Not specified *	General workplace, abusive supervision effect	Two-point survey, 474 responses, Smart-PLS	Abusive supervision positively impacts job performance; innovative work behavior and challenge stressors partially mediate; leader-member exchange moderates the relationship.
(Made Astrama et al., 2020)	Indonesia	Rural Bank industry in Bali	Questionnaire, SEM-PLS, 156 employees	Organizational culture positively influences innovative work behavior and employee performance; innovative work behavior mediates culture's effect on performance.
(Gašić et al., 2024)	Serbia	Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) impact on behavior	PLS-SEM, 582 employees	Employee commitment fully mediates FWAs' effect on innovative work behavior and partially mediates effect on employee performance; FWAs enhance satisfaction, innovation, and productivity.

Author (Year)	Country	Scope	Method	Finding
(Siregar & Suma, 2024)	Indonesia (Yogyakarta & Central Java)	Effect of innovative work behavior and curiosity on employee performance in financial companies	Explanatory research; Sample: 200 finance employees; Purposive sampling; Data analyzed using AMOS 23.0	Employee performance improves with increased creative work behavior and curiosity. Provides a new perspective on predictors of employee performance.
(Fiernaningsih et al., 2022)	Indonesia (East Java)	Impact of transglobal leadership, work engagement, and innovative work behavior on vocational lecturers' performance	SEM analysis using SmartPLS; Sample: 316 vocational lecturers; Slovin formula for sample size	Transglobal leadership positively affects work engagement and innovative work behavior; innovative work behavior positively affects performance.
(Kumar et al., 2021)	China	Relationship between performance lower than expectations, motivation, innovation, and counterproductive behavior in R&D employees	Cross-sectional survey; Sample: 340 employees in 65 teams; Confirmatory factor analysis & hierarchical linear modeling with Mplus 7.3	Performance below expectations is linked to promotion focus and innovative behavior; also linked to counterproductive behavior via prevention focus.
(Aisyah et al., 2025)	Indonesia (North Sumatera)	Transformational leadership's effect on employee performance and innovative work behavior in government institutions	Quantitative cross-sectional; Sample: 259 government employees; PLS-SEM analysis	Transformational leadership positively impacts employee performance; no significant effect on innovative work behavior; IWB positively influences performance.
(Khalid & Al Bakri, 2024)	Saudi Arabia	Adaptive leadership's impact on healthcare employee performance with mediators (self-efficacy, acceptance of change, IWB)	SEM analysis using SPSS-28 and SmartPLS4; Sample: 456 healthcare workers	Adaptive leadership positively impacts employee performance; self-efficacy, acceptance of change, and innovative work behavior mediate this effect.
(Fiernaningsih et al., 2023)	Indonesia (East Java)	Role of transglobal leadership and organizational support on innovative work behavior and performance of vocational lecturers	Quantitative; Sample: 316 lecturers; SmartPLS 3.0 SEM; Proportional random sampling	Organizational support and transglobal leadership positively influence work engagement and innovative work behavior; these improve performance.
(Wibisono et al., 2025)	Indonesia (Riau Islands)	Effect of creative self-efficacy, training & development, and digital literacy on innovative work behavior and	Mixed method; Sample: 357 civil servants; SEM with SmartPLS	Creative self-efficacy and training positively affect innovative work behavior; however, innovative work behavior and training don't significantly affect performance; digital literacy does not moderate the IWB-performance relationship.

Author (Year)	Country	Scope	Method	Finding
		employee performance		
(Azmy A. & Perkasa D.H., 2024)	Indonesia (public transport company)	Relationship between transformational leadership, innovative work behavior, and employee performance	Purposive sampling; Sample: 303 employees; SEM-PLS analysis	Transformational leadership positively affects employee performance and innovative work behavior; however, IWB does not significantly influence performance; leadership is key to performance.
(Lasisi et al., 2024)	Nigeria	Impact of innovation-based HR system on employee proactivity, innovative work behavior, and performance in airport employees	Dyadic survey of 247 employees and managers; mediation analysis	Innovation-based HR system positively affects proactivity and IWB; both mediate the relationship with performance, with IWB being a stronger mediator.

Source: Scopus, as of June 2, 2025

RQ1: How do leadership styles impact employee performance through innovative work behavior?

Leadership styles significantly influence employee performance through the mediation of innovative work behavior (IWB). Studies across diverse contexts demonstrate that transformational, ambidextrous, relational, and adaptive leadership styles enhance IWB, which in turn leads to improved performance. (R. D. C. Zain et al., 2025) and (Dinesh Babu et al., 2024b) found that ambidextrous leadership fosters IWB, which mediates and strengthens employee performance. Similarly, transformational leadership was shown to boost both IWB and performance in studies by (Azmy A. & Perkasa D.H., 2024; T. Pham et al., 2025) and (Yanto et al., 2025), although in some cases (Aisyah et al., 2025), IWB did not significantly mediate the performance outcome. Relational and transglobal leadership styles also encourage IWB through mechanisms like psychological contracts or work engagement (Kim, 2022). Furthermore, leadership's role is often enhanced by moderating factors such as organizational support, self-efficacy, or cultural fit, as shown by ("Individual Agility and Intergenerational Learning on Innovative Work Behavior: The Role of Age Diversity Climate and Intergenerational Leadership," 2023; Khalid & Al Bakri, 2024; Khan et al., 2020). In sum, effective leadership not only directly shapes employee behavior but also cultivates an environment where innovation flourishes, ultimately translating into better performance outcomes.

RQ2: What individual and organizational factors significantly enhance innovative work behavior and employee performance?

Individual and organizational factors play an active role in encouraging innovative work behavior (IWB) and employee performance across contexts. Leadership styles, such as ambidextrous, transformational, adaptive, transglobal, and relational leadership, consistently emerge as robust predictors of IWB and performance (Fiernaningsih et al., 2022, 2023; Khalid &

Al Bakri, 2024; Kim, 2022; Q. H. Pham & Vu, 2024; R. D. C. Zain et al., 2025). These leadership types foster climates that foster creativity, autonomy, and proactive behaviors. Organizational cultures, especially innovation culture, adhocracy, and supportive climates, also positively influence IWB and performance by fostering employees' commitment and engagement (J & Anbu, 2025; Made Astrama et al., 2020; Q. H. Pham & Vu, 2024; Sitepu et al., 2024). Individual traits such as creative self-efficacy, individual agility, work engagement, and curiosity also consolidate employees' intentions and ability to innovate, leading to improved performance outcomes ("Individual Agility and Intergenerational Learning on Innovative Work Behavior: The Role of Age Diversity Climate and Intergenerational Leadership," 2023; Siregar & Suma, 2024; Supardi; et al., 2024; van Zyl et al., 2021). Additionally, HR systems that are innovation-driven and digital literacy are also accountable for enhancing proactivity and IWB, thereby enabling performance improvement (Lasisi et al., 2024; Sitepu et al., 2024). Some studies indicate mediating roles of factors such as psychological contracts, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and work engagement that relate leadership and cultural factors to IWB and performance (Fiernaningsih et al., 2023; Schuh et al., 2018; Yanto et al., 2025). Though innovative work behavior is shared to mediate the interrelations among these variables and employee performance, in some cases, leadership directly impacts performance, emphasizing the significance of effective leadership as a determining factor of organizational effectiveness (Aisyah et al., 2025; Azmy A. & Perkasa D.H., 2024). Overall, the interaction among empowering leadership, enabling and innovative organizational culture, and employee personal competence forms the foundation for inspiring innovative behaviors and achieving exemplary employee performance.

RQ3: How does digitalization, including technology adoption and digital competence, influence innovative work behavior and its effect on employee performance?

Digitalization, such as technology uptake and digital competences, is a major driver of innovative work behavior (IWB) that impacts employee performance, though the size and sign of such impacts vary across environments. Studies in line with (Sitepu et al., 2024) in public institutions in Indonesia find that service digitalization directly improves IWB and employees' performance through innovation adoption. Simultaneously, (Supardi et al. (2024; Supardi et al., 2025) find that training and creative self-efficacy enhance IWB, but digital literacy alone may not improve the IWB–IWB–IWB-performance relationship. In contrast, Leong et al. (2025) observe that technology adoption can potentially generate insecurity beliefs that negatively impact flourishing and IWB unless moderated by person variables like self-esteem. Other research emphasizes the role of leadership in using digital technology to support IWB, with transformational and ambidextrous leadership increasing both IWB and performance (Dinesh Babu et al., 2024b; R. D. C. Zain et al., 2025). Generally, digitalization gives employees the capacity to perform innovative behavior that is generally thought to mediate improved performance, but its worth depends on companion factors such as leadership, psychological safety, and individual digital competency.

Conclusion

This literature systematic review shows that employee performance is affected by leadership styles—more specifically, transformational, ambidextrous, relational, and adaptive leadership—more significantly to innovate work behavior (IWB), which is a key mediator in this relationship. Individual elements of creative self-efficacy and work engagement, and organizational elements of innovation culture and supportive HR systems, are equally significant too to further enhance IWB and employee performance. Digitalization also informs this dynamics by enabling innovative conduct through technology adoption and digital proficiency, yet its effect is contingent

upon intervening variables like leadership support, psychological safety, and employees' readiness for the digital age. All of these come together to create a synergistic process where leadership, culture, individual talent, and digital change blend towards facilitating innovation and facilitating employees' performance in diverse situations.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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