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## The Role of Employee Innovative Behavior in SMEs: A Systematic Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** By means of a literature review, this study attempts to methodically investigate and pinpoint the major elements impacting employee innovative behavior in small and medium businesses. It aims to create a thorough framework that will aid in upcoming scholarly research and useful interventions in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

**Research Gap:** Even with the growing importance of employee innovative behavior (EIB) in SMEs, there is still a dearth of comprehensive and contextualized knowledge about the variables affecting this kind of behavior, especially in developing nations. Furthermore, there is little theoretical integration in this area between organizational context, HRM, and leadership.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using the Scopus database and Google Scholar, covering studies from 2012 to 2022. The PRISMA guidelines were followed to ensure rigorous selection and analysis of relevant literature. One limitation is the focus on only two databases, which may exclude other relevant sources.

**The Main Findings:** The review divided the relevant factors into four major categories: supervisor feedback, contextual organizational factors, human resource management practices, and leadership. The contribution of each element to the advancement of EIB in SMEs was investigated. A conceptual framework was created to show these connections.

**Theoretical / Practical Implications of the Findings:** The findings offer theoretical insights into how various organizational elements contribute to EIB and provide a basis for future empirical research. Practically, the framework can help SME leaders and HR practitioners design supportive environments that enhance innovation at the employee level.

**Originality/Value:** This study is one of the first to provide a rigorous synthesis of the literature on EIB in SMEs spanning ten years, integrating disparate findings into a cohesive framework. By connecting theoretical and practical viewpoints, it offers fresh insights, particularly when considering developing economies.

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### 1. Introduction

Employee innovative behavior serves as a key driver of innovation within firms, involving novelty, creativity, and the pursuit of new concepts for competitive advantage (Janssen et al., 2004; Khan et al., 2015). In today's dynamic business environment, SMEs play a critical role in driving economic growth and innovation, particularly in developing economies (Omowole et al., 2024). It is expected of employees that participate in creation to contribute fresh ideas to the achievement of organizational objectives.

Consequently, it is necessary to foster innovative behavior in employees (Prieto, & Santana, 2014). However, many SMEs struggle to maintain competitiveness due to limited innovative capacity, which is often tied to the innovative behaviors of their employees (Otache, 2024).

Lukes & Stephan (2017) define employee innovative behavior as the actions considered by employees to conceive or adopt new ideas and actively work toward their implementation. Another study categorizes this behavior into four dimensions: idea generation, exploration to identify problems or opportunities, involving the right personnel, and continuous application of innovative ideas (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010).

Due to the increasingly complex, competitive, and unpredictable economic landscapes, the significance of innovative work performance has increased (Skudiene et al., 2018). Especially SMEs in developing nations are primarily responsible for generating low-cost solutions that meet the needs of regionally impoverished markets (Binnewies et al., 2007). Although idea generation is fundamental, its execution within these organizations often necessitates managerial approval instead of independent implementation (Lukes & Stephan, 2017). Seeking input from supervisors and colleagues is a crucial aspect of nurturing innovative behavior (Binnewies et al., 2007).

Numerous scholars have studied the causes of innovative work behavior, comprising the influence of leadership, personal traits, and human resource policies (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017). However, there hasn't been ample study on the innovative behavior of employees in SMEs (Helmy et al., 2019). Therefore, this study intends to review SMEs behavior towards supporting their employees for innovative thinking and implementation. SMEs now operate in a more competitive environment than they did in the past (Dadfar et al., 2013; Helmy et al., 2019).

Hence, the purpose of this research is to identify knowledge gaps that will guide future investigations and to present a thorough assessment of the body of information already available on innovative work behavior and its effects on SMEs. A systematic review, an invaluable analytical tool, provides a detailed assessment of existing research, establishing connections between previously published data. Hence, this study aims to offer wide-ranging insights into innovative work behavior, enabling decision-makers to leverage the latest literature for timely actions in SMEs. Therefore, a framework for demonstrating important contributing factors to innovative work behavior is proposed. By combining the research foundation and examining results in a multifaceted picture of concepts this framework expands our understanding of innovative work behavior's role in cultivating SMEs productivity. The central inquiry of this study revolves around fostering innovative behaviors within organizational contexts, particularly in SMEs. It delves into the processes that nurture these behaviors among employees and evaluates their subsequent impact on SMEs' overall performance. For this purpose, this study explored two databases and, using the PRISMA approach, identified and screened existing literature to identify necessary factors contributing to SME's employees' innovative behavior for enhancing performance.

The subsequent this paper's sections are organized as follows: The review technique is described in the following part, which is monitored by the critical evaluation analysis and synthesis of the review results and descriptive analysis. Finally, the article concludes by discussing potential directions for future research and presenting an overall conclusion.

### **1.1. Objective**

As can be seen from the above description, the main goal of this systematic literature review (SLR) is to recognize the aspects that affect the innovative work behavior of employees in SMEs.

### **2. Methodology**

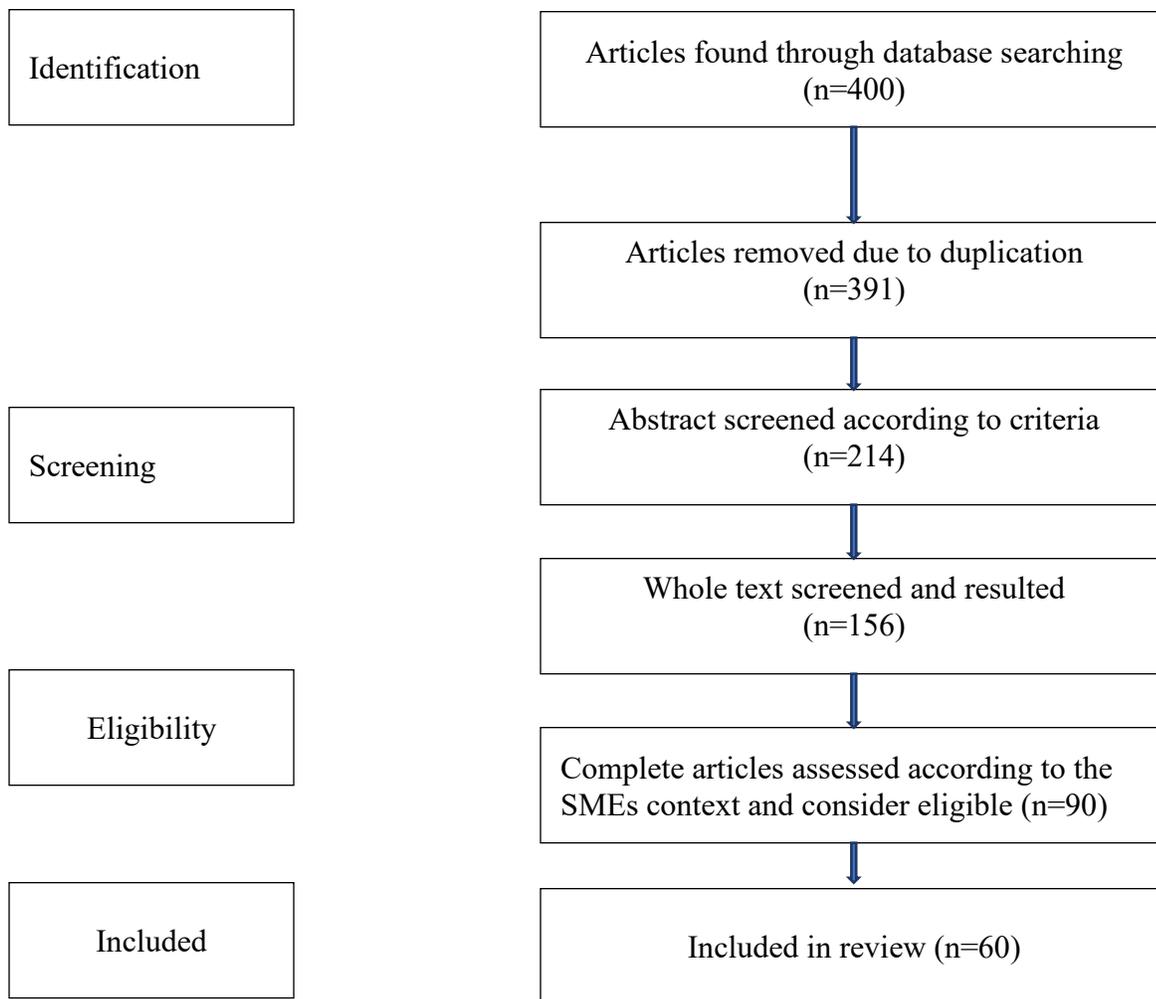
This section describes what search strategy was used and how research is synthesized in a systematic way. Because the diversity of information is systematically organized, it offers sufficient evidence to guide policy and actions (Thorpe et al., 2005). By using transparent and repeatable techniques, a systematic literature review seeks to raise the standard of the review procedure and findings by identifying the key

theoretic components and features of publications (Tranfield et al., 2003).

The research conducted a comprehensive analysis of the Scopus and Google Scholar databases in order to locate scholarly works that discussed "employee innovative behavior" in small and medium businesses (SMEs). Strict attention was paid to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which took publication dates, preferred languages, and topic relevancy into account. The PRISMA approach is used, as shown in Fig. 1. The selection process was refined, and papers that satisfied the study's strict requirements were extracted accordingly.

Targeted keywords such as "innovation," "employee innovative behavior," "innovative behavior," "innovative behavior and SMEs," and "employee innovative behavior" and "innovative work behavior" were included, which helped to refine the selection process and produced 400 articles. Some articles were removed due to duplication and reduced the number of articles to 391. Explicit keywords and Boolean operators were used in a methodical manner to improve search precision resulted in 214 articles.

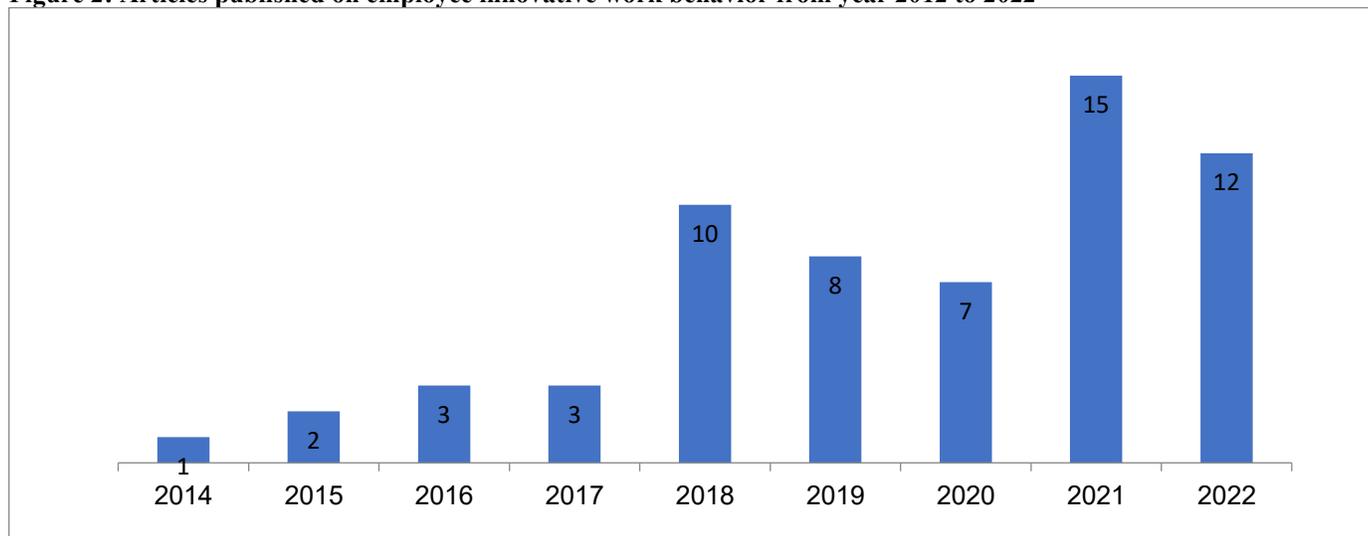
**Figure 1: Flow diagram of PRISMA for article selection process**



In order to assure relevance and recency, the search criteria were modified to include English articles from 2012 to 2022, with a primary concentration on business management and social sciences. After more adjustment and focus on particular fields in the social sciences, accounting, and business management, a corrected collection of 156 articles was produced. After screening the full text of articles according to the study's requirements, articles that met the standards were selected. Therefore, the rigorous criteria stated for this study were met by 60 papers that were found using a methodical and stringent search process.

Hence, this research synthesizes insights from an analysis of 60 articles across 34 journals spanning from 2012 to 2022, employing the rigorous PRISMA approach for article selection. The abstracts of these selected articles underwent meticulous analysis. Furthermore, the characteristics and essential details of the reviewed articles are presented in Table 3, facilitating an in-depth examination of the topic and contributing valued comprehensions to the research aims.

**Figure 2: Articles published on employee innovative work behavior from year 2012 to 2022**



### 3. Analyzing

In the analytical phase of the review, a comprehensive examination of techniques, concepts, geographical regions, and business entities was conducted across previous studies. This involved compiling and contrasting findings to discern patterns and insights. The consequences of this investigation are articulated in this section to depict the current impact of employee innovative behavior on SME literature.

### 4. Results and Descriptive Analysis

In the pool of 60 articles reviewed, six utilized a qualitative approach employing case study methodology or were review articles. Conversely, 52 studies opted for a quantitative approach, predominantly through survey methods. Only three studies accepted a mixed methods approach, focusing on both interviews and surveys (refer to Figure 3).

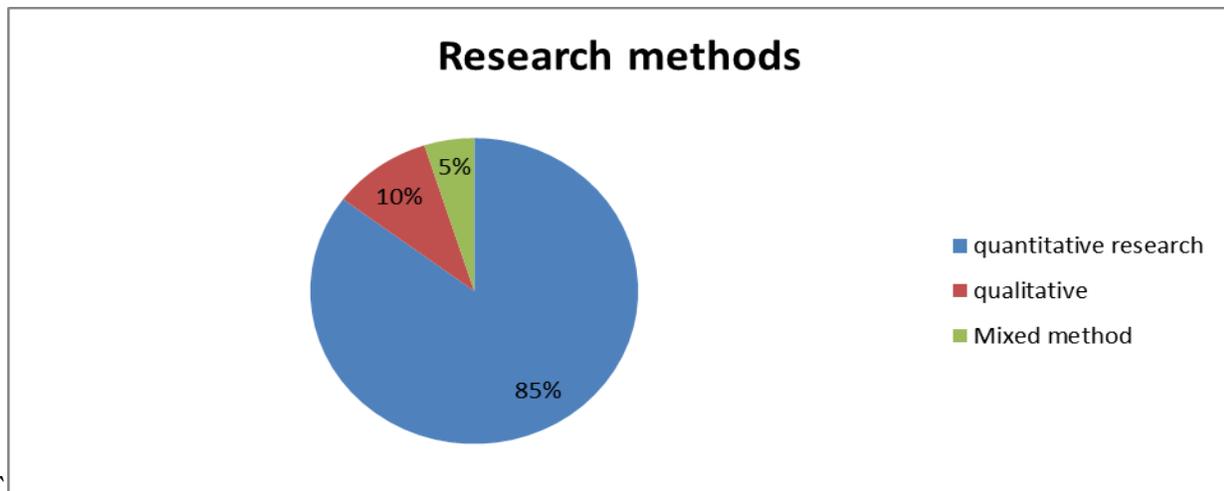
A notable trend emerges regarding the analysis techniques employed. Among the quantitative studies, structural equation modeling (SEM) was heavily favored, with 16 articles utilizing SEM for analysis. Additionally, two studies utilized SEM in conjunction with SPSS, while another two studies employed SEM with AMOS. Other analysis techniques utilized across these studies are detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

| Analysis                             | # of articles |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| STATA 17.0                           | 1             |
| SPSS, AMOS                           | 6             |
| common method variance (CMV)         | 1             |
| HLM analyses                         | 1             |
| MPULS 7.0, HLM version 6.08 software | 1             |
| Mplus7.0 and R software              | 1             |
| OLS                                  | 1             |

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Mplus                              |    |
| AMOS, SEM                          | 2  |
| regression analysis                | 4  |
| hierarchical multiple regression   | 2  |
| SPSS 19;SEM                        | 2  |
| Mplus 7.0 and SPSS 26.0            | 1  |
| NVIVO 12                           | 1  |
| hierarchical regression analysis   | 1  |
| Sobel test demonstrated            | 1  |
| Mplus 8.3, SEM                     | 1  |
| AMOS 17.0                          | 2  |
| Atlas.ti8                          | 1  |
| multiple regression analysis       | 1  |
| bibliometric analysis              | 1  |
| SEM                                | 1  |
| structural-equation-modeling (SEM) | 16 |
| SPSS                               | 5  |

**Figure 3: Research Methods Used in studies**



In the landscape of journals focusing on research related to employee innovative work behavior, "Sustainability Switzerland" emerges prominently, as highlighted in Table 2. Other sources exhibit a marginal number of publications in this particular domain.

**Table 2**

| Quantity | Journals                       |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| 1        | J. Entrep. Innov. Emerg. Econ. |
| 19       | Sustainability                 |
| 1        | Int. J. Econ. Bus. Adm.        |
| 3        | Behav. Sci.                    |
| 1        | J. Technol. Transf.            |
| 2        | Hum. Resour. Manag.            |
| 2        | J. Hosp. Tour. Res.            |
| 2        | Creat. Innov. Manag.           |

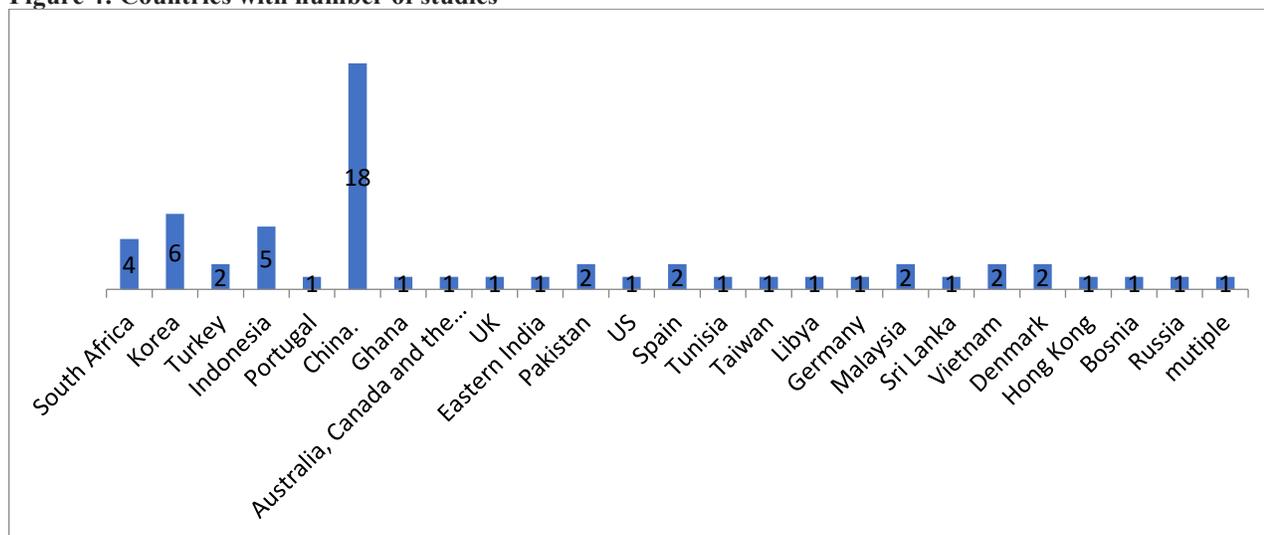
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|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | J. Organ. Eff.                      |
| 1 | J. Organ. Behav.                    |
| 1 | Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.         |
| 1 | Hum. Resour. Manag. J.              |
| 2 | Adm. Sci.                           |
| 1 | Vikalpa                             |
| 1 | Tourism                             |
| 2 | Cogent Bus. Manag.                  |
| 1 | Public Manag. Rev.                  |
| 1 | J. Innov. Knowl.                    |
| 1 | Probl. Perspect. Manag.             |
| 1 | Eur. J. Manag. Bus. Econ.           |
| 2 | Employee Relat.                     |
| 1 | Sci. Pap. Univ. Pardubice Ser. D    |
| 1 | SAGE Open                           |
| 1 | Mediterr. J. Soc. Sci.              |
| 1 | Qual. Access Success                |
| 2 | Asian Acad. Manag. J.               |
| 1 | Int. J. Process Manag. Benchmarking |
| 1 | Int. J. Ind. Eng. Manag.            |
| 1 | Found. Manag.                       |
| 1 | Decis. Sci. Inst. J.                |
| 1 | J. Ind. Eng. Manag.                 |
| 1 | SA J. Hum. Resour. Manag.           |

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In this realm of study, research has been conducted across various countries, with China prominently leading in contributions to this research area (refer to Figure 4). Both Korea and Indonesia have made equal contributions, each presenting five studies focusing on the innovative work behavior of employees within SMEs.

**Figure 4: Countries with number of studies**



All 60 articles include employee innovative behavior variable that depicts a strong sample.

**5. Synthesis**

In synthesizing the collected articles concerning employee innovative behavior and SME performance, a comprehensive understanding emerges regarding the pivotal role SMEs play in various economies.

However, due to resource limitations, these enterprises often lack the structured approach to innovation management observed in larger corporations (Sharma et al., 2014). Acknowledged as significant drivers of economic growth, the private sector holds a crucial stake in the progress of developing nations (Dutz & Connell, 2013).

The literature consistently emphasizes innovation as a linchpin for organizational performance and sustained competitive advantage (Oke et al., 2012). Across the reviewed studies, this research identifies a pattern of influential factors shaping employee innovative behavior, coalescing into four primary categories: leadership and organizational factors in human resource management techniques, creative behavior, and creative behavior, supervision and innovative behavior, and contextual factors and innovative behavior. In essence, these synthesized findings underscore the intricate interplay of leadership styles, HR practices, supervisory conduct, and contextual elements in shaping the landscape for fostering innovation within SMEs. These factors collectively influence employee innovative behavior, ultimately impacting organizational performance and competitive positioning.

### **5.1 Leadership and its Impact on Employee Innovative Behavior**

Research underscores the paramount significance of leadership in determining innovative employee behavior. Out of 60 studies examined, 20 highlighted how important leadership is in fostering innovative behaviors, largely rooted in social exchange theory. Numerous theoretical perspectives, such as leader-member exchange theory, social cognitive theory, and conservation of resources theory, have been explored by researchers examining the causes of innovative behaviors (Woodman et al., 1993; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Nazir et al., 2018; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

For example, Choi et al. (2021) indicate that the impact of leader-member interaction on creative behavior increases with perceived organizational support. Thus, organizational characteristics like leadership style have an impact on employee innovative behavior in addition to individual factors. Constructive leadership (Arasli et al., 2020), servant leadership (Newman et al., 2018; Opoku et al., 2019), transformational leadership (Zhang et al., 2018; Pradhan & Jena, 2019), transactional leadership, paternalistic leadership (Dedahanov et al., 2019), and authentic leadership (Jung et al., 2021) are just a few of the leadership philosophies that have been shown to affect employee innovative behavior.

It is argued that leadership is a major contributor to creating innovative behavior, as the general agreement among researchers is that innovative behavior is strongly and favorably correlated with both transformational and transactional leadership styles (Paulsen et al., 2013). Sethibe & Steyn (2018) also investigated the link between transformational leadership transactional and philosophies and innovative behavior and found that both of these leadership styles impact innovative behaviors. Transformational leaders are those who inspire, challenge, and authorize their supporters to reach their possible level at work, which may foster the emergence of creative work habits. (Rizki et al., 2019; Pradhan & Jena, 2019; Surucu et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2018). Li H. (2019) and Amankwaa et al. (2022) studied transformational leadership that encourages employees to grow and contribute more ideas for the development of the company (Den Hartog et al., 1997; H. Li et al., 2019).

Constructive leadership techniques impact innovative and service-oriented employee behavior, as according to the social exchange theory as a framework, constructive leadership gives staff members a psychological sense of security, which improves their ability to perform creative tasks (Arasli et al., 2020). Executives who support their team members' creativity in coming up with solutions even if they seem risky at first—have a higher chance of succeeding in promoting innovation throughout the company (Sethibe & Steyn, 2018). Therefore, supportive leadership (Wang et al., 2022) and servant leadership (Newman et al., 2018) are also important leadership styles for employee innovative behavior. Hence, all these studies facilitate our understanding of leadership contribution towards employee innovative behavior that enhances employee performance.

### **5.2 Human Resource Management Practices and Stimulating Innovative Behavior**

Organizations that use human resource management to try and boost organizational employees' commitment and, consequently, achieve desired work behaviors and outcomes (Revuelto-Taboada et al., 2021) Groups of HR practices known as high performance, high engagement, or high commitment are linked to several metrics, including productivity as well as financial results (Patel et al., 2013). According to Wen et al. (2021), employees can effectively develop their skills and be encouraged to explore more creative behaviors due to flexible human resource management.

A collection of human resource management techniques known as high-performance work systems, help firms achieve competitive advantage, but firms are only awarded competitive advantage for implementing high-performance work systems when they produce a demonstrable and valuable group of workers with innovative behavior (Elidemir et al., 2020). Training, which is one element of a high-performance work system (HPWS), according to Chowhan (2016), fosters employee distinct tacit and unique human capital, this subsequently cultivates potential creative abilities, and employee staffing practices help to choose the most suitable employees for firms. Training makes it possible to be aware of the fundamental knowledge required to do a specific task (Batmomolin, Supriatna, et al., 2022) and develop this knowledge and abilities, which can improve and alter performance. Therefore, SMEs must make training investments in managers' and staff's innovative behavior if they are to maintain their competitive advantage (Fatoki, 2021). Jebali, (2020) emphasizes the significance of HR interventions such as open communication, training programs, recognition of entrepreneurial behavior through incentives, and promotions in fostering innovation within SMEs. The alignment of personal qualities with organizational values during the hiring process is pivotal, as advocated by Kabasheva et al. (2015). Additionally, the strategic influence of HRM and the expertise of HR professionals significantly determine the role they play within an organization (Revuelto-Taboada et al., 2021).

Contrary to some beliefs, Sanders et al. (2018) indicate that performance-based rewards, although considered an HR practice, may not directly correlate with stimulating innovative behaviors. Rather, it is the employees' perception of these practices that holds greater significance. For instance, the Afsar & Umrani (2020) study reveals that employee perceptions of the quality of performance appraisals positively influence innovative behaviors. Additionally, organizational justice, as defined by Macklin et al. (2015), holds significant sway over employees' motivation to display innovative behavior. Employee motivation tends to increase when they believe that various organizational processes, including evaluation protocols, decision-making for promotions, compensation, and general equity in organizational decisions, are fair (Fadul, 2021).

### **5.3 Supervision and Stimulating Innovative Behavior**

Receiving developing response refers to the important and helpful information that a supervisor provides to their staff during the course of their task to help staff members set better goals for themselves and increase innovative behavior (Li Z. et al., 2021). Giving compliments, assigning difficult tasks, and raising duties are some ways to provide feedback to a supervisor. Employees can learn important information from this feedback regarding issues about their performance, how to advance in their careers, how to finish tasks, and whether they are acting either favorably or unfavorably at work. (Battistelli et al., 2013). The results indicate that companies should promote input from peers and supervisors in addition to depending on one source of feedback to foster innovative behavior (Eva et al., 2019).

On the other hand, if a supervisor does not behave appropriately, it negatively affects employee innovative behavior (Tian et al., 2020). For example, abusive supervision is a widespread worldwide issue that has become more common in work environments (Li Y. et al., 2016). It explains how employees feel their supervisors act hostilely toward them both vocally and nonverbally, with the exception of when they are physically present. (Tepper et al., 2007).

Another important component is "internal market orientation," which is defined as a company's capacity to promote cordial relationships between managers, supervisors, and employees, fostering an atmosphere in which workers feel empowered and well-supported in their work activities (Lee & Yoo, 2021). Employees

feel empowered to act in the organization's best interests in this setting.

Furthermore, the belief held by staff members that they possess excessive qualifications for a particular role might have a notable effect on their conduct and output (Lou & Ye, 2019). Over qualification can paradoxically result in increased task completion efficiency if it is managed well through supervisors' trust. This is because it allows individuals more time for introspection, identifying knowledge gaps, and coming up with fresh concepts, all of which promote more creative behavior. (Sun & Qiu, 2022).

#### **5.4 Contextual Factors in Organizational Innovation**

Absolutely, contextual and relational factors play a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of organizational innovation. They exert a profound influence on the mechanisms that drive innovation within successful enterprises (Haseeb Riaz et al., 2018). (Zhou J. et al., 2018) investigation delved into pivotal contextual performance factors fostering employee-driven innovation, emphasizing cross-functional collaboration, remuneration strategies, and an organization's innovation orientation. Notably, when employees effectively communicate the innovation strategy, their responses align correspondingly. The organizational innovation climate, encompassing advocacy, training, communication, and cooperation, directly shapes employees' innovative behaviors, capabilities, and performance (Santhanam et al., 1982).

Moreover, Verrollot (2017) highlighted crucial success factors for innovation, emphasizing the necessity for an innovative strategy and the establishment of innovative policies, including the promotion and dissemination of creative ideas within the organizational framework. Employee motivation emerges as a pivotal factor for SME success through innovation, resonating with the self-determination theory and personal motivation framework. This theoretical perspective posits that once fundamental needs for autonomy, communication, and information are met, individuals exhibit self-sufficiency in decision-making and independent thinking (Li et al., 2021; Deci, , & Ryan, 1985). Notably, setting achievement-oriented goals within firms encourages employees to engage in challenging tasks, fostering creativity in environments where risks and the potential for failure exist (Gao & Han, 2022).

Cultural elements significantly impact organizational creativity and performance. It is clear that culture and values have an impact on how long an organization lasts, underscoring the necessity of fostering strong work ethics in all generations (Sadaf, Ishaq, & Sanaullah, 2025). Fostering an innovative culture amplifies an organization's capability to develop novel products, explore untapped markets, and retain clientele. An innovative culture stimulates employees to experiment with novel methodologies (Senbeto et al., 2022). A conducive environment for workplace innovation within SMEs necessitates a culture promoting learning, communication, and information analysis to align with organizational objectives (Khan et al., 2020; Fatoki, 2021). Management's role in cultivating an atmosphere conducive to new ideas is pivotal for product and service enhancement.

Leadership emerges as a critical factor in nurturing an innovative environment that encourages learning, motivates staff to generate and apply new ideas creatively, and utilizes industry knowledge and experiences (Bibi et al., 2020). Empowering innovative employees in less restrictive work environments becomes essential to facilitate unconventional problem-solving (A. Bibi & Afsar, 2018).

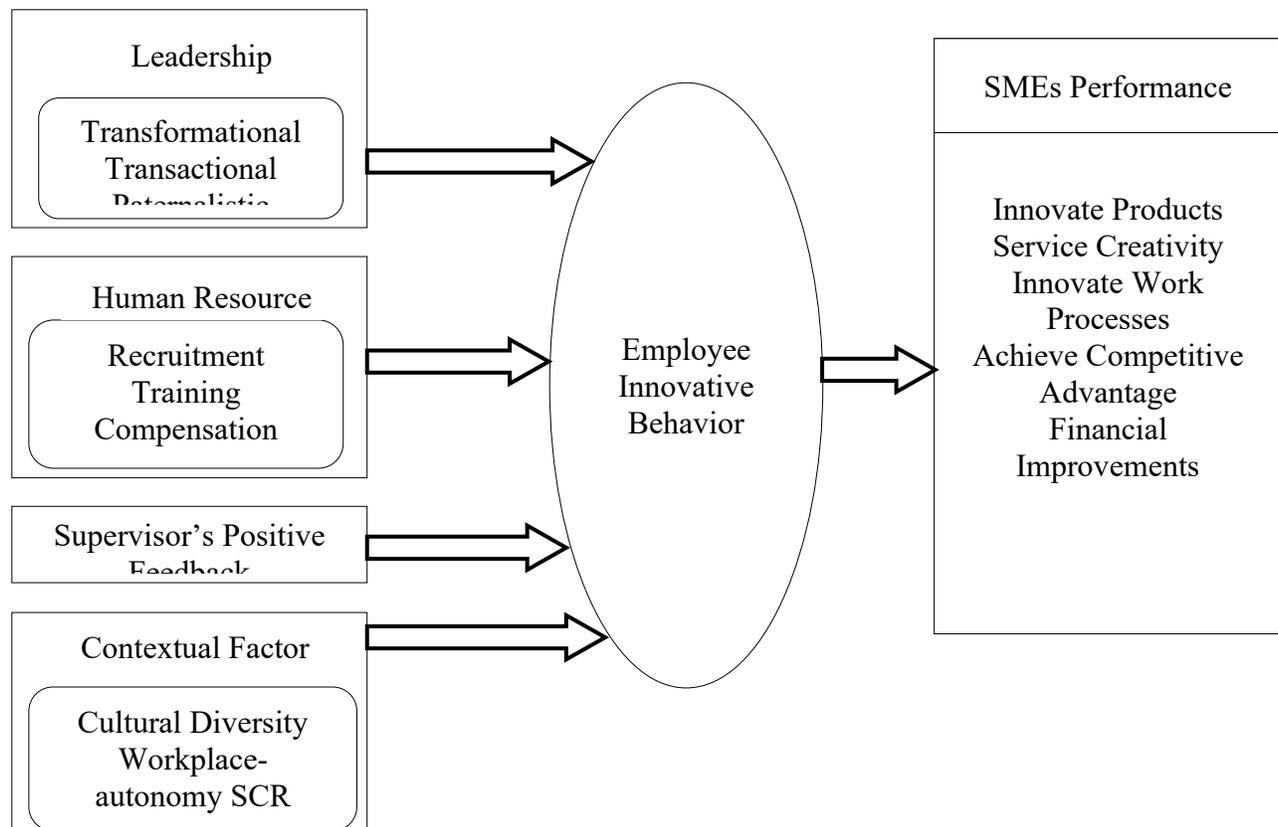
Diversity in organizational culture contributes significantly to creativity by fostering an inclusive environment. Managing diversity cultivates a culture that supports inclusivity and fosters idea dissemination, enhancing overall workforce productivity (Omoyele, Olabisi, 2020; Batmomolin, Sadikin, et al., 2022). Interactions and idea-sharing profoundly influence employee motivation and creativity by influencing their emotional states. Customer interactions serve as a wellspring of creative ideas, facilitating knowledge exchange and comprehension of customer needs, culminating in innovative solutions (Schaarschmidt et al., 2015; Cui et al., 2022). Active customer involvement in problem-solving expands the horizon of solutions, incorporating external knowledge (Sarfraz et al., 2023). Individual motivations and problem recognition form the bedrock of innovative behavior (Kruft & Kock, 2021).

Figure 4 illustrates the thematic synthesis of findings from the reviewed literature, highlighting the interrelationship between talent management, transformational leadership, and SME performance through the mediating role of employee innovative behavior. This framework not only consolidates the fragmented insights from existing studies but also points out critical research gaps. Specifically, few studies have empirically tested the mediating role of innovative behavior within the SME context in developing economies like Pakistan.

Utilizing rigorous inclusion criteria, relevant studies were meticulously extracted and synthesized to identify recurring themes and patterns. Through iterative rounds of analysis and synthesis, a preliminary framework began to crystallize, capturing the multifaceted dynamics at play within the SME context. The framework contribute and aims to assist academics and decision makers in better understanding innovative work behavior and the factors that drive this behavior by capturing management principles and contributions from previous studies. Fig. 5 shows that a framework comprising four pivotal contributing factors has emerged: leadership, human resource management (HRM), supervisor feedback, and contextual factors. This framework acts as a foundational platform for furthering innovative work behavior scholarship and practice.

The framework represents a substantial participation to the existing literature on SMEs performance. This framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex interactions between many elements influencing the results of SMEs by methodically combining disparate lines of theory and research.

**Figure 5: Framework**



Findings as specified in the framework indicate a predominant focus within studies on employee innovative behavior towards leadership styles, such as transformational, authentic, and digital leadership, which scholars might examine utilizing various industry sectors and geographic areas. Beyond leadership, our study underscores the multifaceted nature of factors influencing innovative behaviors and organizational performance. Human resource management, supervisory behavior, and cultural influences emerge as critical components. Moreover, we've expanded the contextual drivers to include societal perceptions and

endorsements of innovation, affirming their substantial impact on innovation outputs. These factors will contribute to SMEs being pivotal in cultivating and augmenting such behaviors, consequently impacting organizational performance in terms of financial improvement, creative services, and innovative products and processes.

Nonetheless, there are still specific limitations to systematic reviews, like the challenge of combining data from several fields, inadequate book representation, and an overwhelming volume of information to review (Pittaway et al. 2004). Furthermore future researchers in order to achieve more thorough results can broaden the scope by considering more recent publications and study year.

## **6. Implications**

To best of knowledge, current study provides a clear and methodical overview of previous research, which is followed by a synthesis of the SME field that maps previous studies on the topic and highlights key ideas and conclusions. Based on this study, significant implications can be drawn for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. To the best of our knowledge, this study provides an objective and methodical analysis of previous studies, which is followed by a synthesis on the topic of SMEs that summarizes key ideas and research findings. Previous research has primarily focused on larger firms; however, the recent shift in focus towards SMEs highlights the significance of the insights obtained from this study, making it an essential resource for future research in this area. It is noteworthy because it represents a thorough and objective examination of earlier research, resulting in a synthesized summary that condenses vital information and research findings about SMEs.

For managers, this review highlights the importance of fostering employee innovative behavior as a strategic tool to enhance SME performance. Managers are encouraged to create supportive work environments, implement flexible leadership practices, and invest in talent development initiatives that can stimulate innovation at the employee level thereby strengthening organizational adaptability and competitiveness.

## **7. Conclusion**

The comprehension of the complex interactions between employee creativity and these important domains is greatly enhanced by this study. By using the systematic review approach that this paper employs, a comprehensive investigation has revealed four major categories that are crucial for managerial understanding and possible research contributions. These domains capture recurring themes in the field of innovative work behavior in modern academics. These topic clusters center on supervisor feedback, HR practices, leadership, and contextual elements. Managers of SMEs and business professionals who handle innovation issues will find that a sophisticated understanding of innovative behaviors and the supporting elements inside them is well-positioned to assist. These insights enable them to better coordinate innovation projects, capitalize on their strengths, and mitigate their flaws. These proactive participants are essential resources that support organizational innovation because they generate, support, develop, and implement ideas. In today's fast-paced corporate environment, it is critical to acknowledge creativity as the foundation of effective innovation (Lee & Yoo, 2021). As a result, performance optimization is made possible by the addition of creative goods and procedures, where workers who demonstrate creative behavior take calculated risks and improve the performance of the business.

To fully understand the influence of the factors found in this research in enhancing employee innovative behavior, future researcher can perform more thorough research. Comprehensive study can be conducted to determine if these factors directly influence innovative behavior or if they serve as moderators and mediators.

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