A STUDY ON STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR AMONG EMPLOYEES

Vidyansh Chandra
3rd year BBA LLB Student, NMIMS School of Law
Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

ABSTRACT

This research is done to analyze the importance of appropriate strategies that promote and imbue the motivation for innovative work behavior in employees. Moreover, the study also establishes the need of stimulating innovative work behavior in employees for the benefit of the organization. The strategies of previous researchers' empirical studies regarding factors and the primary variables that affect the innovative work behavior of employees in an organization have been examined and compiled. This paper has identified and proposed a synergy between the major factors and strategies that are necessary for organizations to foster innovative work behavior among their employees. Future studies can refer this paper to get an understanding of the topic as a whole and thereby use it to further their own research. The study found out that innovative work behavior of employees is greatly affected by certain variables that include organizational climate, leaders in the organization and the HR policies and strategies that the organization adopts. The organization has to be able to foster an environment that supports and promotes the development and implementation of ideas and also motivates employees through group activities that promote one-ness within the organization. The paper further explores and thence cumulates vital factors that significantly impacts innovative work behavior of employees.

Keywords: Work Innovative Behavior, Employees, Organizational Growth.

INTRODUCTION

Innovative work behavior has been defined as the "recognition of problems and initiation and intentional introduction of new and useful ideas, as well as set of behaviors needed to develop, launch and implement ideas with an aim to enhance personal and/or business performance" (Farr and Ford, 1990[1]). In the past innovative work behavior had not been differentiated from creativity. Creativity refers merely to the discovery and generation of ideas whereas innovative work behavior refers to the recognition, adoption, and implementation of ideas.

The focus on the better treatment of employees and also focusing on their development has significantly increased in recent times due to increased awareness. Organizations now realize the importance of their employees and what they potentially bring for the company. Innovative work behavior refers to the innovativeness of employees towards problem solving and coming up and executing ideas that benefit the organization. (Smith and Tushman, 2005[2]) establish the importance of innovativeness in the technologically advanced and highly competitive world. Organizations that able to foster more employees with highly motivated innovative work behavior can be very well expected to grow faster than those enterprises that fail to promote innovative work behavior.

Numerous studies have examined various elements that affect innovative work behavior which include leaders, organizational environment, initiatives by organization to promote innovative work behavior, actually utilizing and implementing the ideas that employees come up with. These factors affect the employees and thereby induce them to be put in effort into promoting the innovative work behavior.

Moreover, research has proven that the Human Resource department of an organization also plays a vital role in setting up the foundation for innovative work behavior of employees. The HR department is responsible for the proper recruitment and training that is suitable for the organization and development of skills that promote innovative work behavior among employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has studied the existing data on practices used to promote innovative work behavior among employees of an organization. The research presented in this paper is both Exploratory and Descriptive in nature. Keeping in mind both the objectives and the hypothesis presented the researcher has examined secondary data available through various sources like Books, research work, journals, newspapers, internet, articles, different websites to determine the results of this paper.

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[1] Farr F, and Ford C. (1990) "Individual innovation", Innovation and Creativity at Work: Psychological and Organizational Strategies, Wiley, Chichester, p. 63-80.
[2] Smith, WK. and Tushman, M.L. (2005), "Managing strategic contradictions: a top management model for managing innovation streams", Organization Science, Volume 16 No. 5, pp. 522-536.

HYPOTHESIS

The paper presents two primary variables the first being Innovative Work Behavior among the employees and second being benefit to the organization. Therefore, the hypotheses framed are:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There exist no significant relationship between innovative work behavior and organizational growth.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There exists a significant relationship between Innovative Work Behavior among employees and organizational growth.

Through analysis of past studies based on numerous variables regarding this topic and through that the paper will try to determine whether the research being conducted follows the null hypothesis or the alternative hypothesis.

OBJECTIVES

1. To highlight the role of strategies to promote Innovative Work Behavior among the employees.
2. To highlight the need of stimulating innovative work behavior among employees.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Prieto & Santana (2014)[3]** in their paper titled "Managing innovative work behavior: the role of human resource practices" explore the role of human resource practices and strategies that can promote innovative work behavior among employees. The key finding of this research paper is that support of the management is extremely vital in encouraging innovative work behavior. The organization should support the ideas and initiatives of their employees. The paper states that incentives are also a key part of supporting innovative work behavior. The authors also state that HR practices that promote innovative work behavior include, enriched job design, involvement processes, proper staffing and training, etc.

2. **Shanker et al. (2017)[4]** through their research study "Organizational climate for innovation and organizational performance: The mediating effect of innovative work behavior" discuss the relationship between organizational climate for innovation and organizational performance. The authors through their extensive empirical research concluded that innovative work behavior (IWB) plays a vital mediating part between organizational climate for organizational performance and innovation. The paper states that organizational support towards the innovativeness of employees is extremely important and there should be support towards development of ideas and the implementation thereof, as well as, for the training for skills related to innovation, which may enhance and promote an individual's capabilities of stimulating innovative work behavior.

3. **Luksyte et al. (2017)[5]** in their research paper titled "Innovative work behavior and sex-based stereotypes: Examining sex differences in perceptions and evaluations of innovative work behavior" examine a very interesting niche of this area of study. Their study focuses on finding out how innovative work behavior is stereotypically associated with men more so than women. Men who come up with innovative ideas have been shown to receive more favorable evaluations that women who provide an innovative idea. This type of sex bias was unidentified and unexplored before this paper. The men are stereotypically considered to be more innovative than women and this is even reflective on their performance appraisals at work as the actions initiated by women went unrecognized or even ignored to a certain extent.

4. **Akram et al. (2020)[6]** in their paper "The impact of organizational justice on employee innovative work behavior: Mediating role of knowledge sharing" explore the effects of organizational justice on Innovative Work Behavior. The paper through its empirical survey found out that organizational justice has significant and positive impacts on Innovative Work Behavior. None of the employees shouldn't feel neglected and should be provided with special attention when they come up with an innovative idea for the benefit of the organization. The paper also divulges into the importance of knowledge sharing in an organization. The authors suggest that formal communication in the form of group discussions will help facilitate the spread of knowledge and thereby promote innovative work behavior.

[3]M. Prieto, I. and P. Pérez-Santana, M. (2014), "Managing innovative work behavior: the role of human resource practices", Personnel Review, Volume 43 No. 2, p. 184-208.

[4]Shanker, R., Bhanugopan, R., van der Heijden, B. I. J. M., & Farrell, M. (2017). "Organizational climate for innovation and organizational performance: The mediating effect of innovative work behavior." Journal of Vocational Behavior (JVB), 100, 67–77.

[5]Luksyte, A., Unsworth, K. L., & Avery, D. R. (2017). "Innovative work behavior and sex-based stereotypes: Examining sex differences in perceptions and evaluations of innovative work behavior." Journal of Organizational Behavior, 39(3), 292–305.

[6]Akram, T, Lei, S, Haider, MJ, & Hussain, ST (2020). "The impact of organizational justice on employee innovative work behavior: Mediating role of knowledge sharing." Journal of Innovation & Knowledge, 5(2), 117–129.

ANALYSIS

Various previous researches highlight the importance of strategies that promote innovative work behavior. The previous studies have been able to identify some of the main factors that influence the innovative work behavior of employees, some of them being HR strategies, leadership, work environment, organizational climate, and other factors as well.

Studies show that an organizations HR practices that are highly involved in nature have the ability enhancing and opportunity enhancing characteristics that influence employees' willingness towards innovative work behavior. For example, training and staffing both play in important role in promoting innovative work behavior as training complements and follows staffing by providing an opportunity to improve skills and abilities required for the job, by training employees in teamwork as well as creative work skills, by providing them practical examples on how to do things more efficiently, and by providing a confidence boost in coworkers' abilities the management is directly stimulating innovative work behavior in the employees'.[7]

Moreover, along with higher participation of employees, extensive and regular training also provides for a perfect platform for appreciation of the employees for cooperative behavior and less idiosyncratic mindset. Business design that is recognized as flexible, job and teamwork enrichment oriented generates and provides a sense of responsibility towards personal and organizational success, and the employees become likely to engage in pro-active problem solving further and the quest of improvement in areas beyond their already established limited set of skills and tasks. Similarly, practices such as open communications and participative decision making increase the level of interest and engagement at the workplace, feeling of support, and task completion; chance to collaborate on projects, thus promoting Innovative Behaviors at work. [8]

Both the coworkers and managements' support is essential since you may have placed individuals in the best place to show initiative and generate new ideas; however it is required that others in the organization also support the growth and implementation of the ideas. Innovation is not just confined to the individual behaviors, but to the unique application and implementation of ideas by the groups within the organization. HR practices that are high-involvement oriented in nature may affect conversations that exist between the managers and employees and also between employees in the implementation of these practices, and thereby it may generate a supportive work environment that encourages Innovative Work Behavior.

Another important factor that the management of an organization has to keep in mind is its gender neutrality. There should be no bias towards men or women. In this third decade of 21st century where women and men are performing on similar levels such bias and discrimination will hold back an organization as well as its employees' potential to grow. Previous studies have shown that Innovative Work Behavior is attributed more to men than women. Moreover, it was established that Innovative Work Behavior also affected performance appraisal of women more explosively than it affected men. This discrimination only prevents the growth of the organization as women will feel undervalued and unappreciated by the organization and thereby reduce their inclination to engage themselves in Innovative Work Behavior even more.[9]

"The more effective to develop collective rewards and recognition for group and organizational innovation or to spend energy identifying key ways in which the organization could make collective progress toward additional innovative activity that is celebrated organization-wide."[10] This feeling and willingness to work for the organization as a whole and not just for external benefits or rewards is greatly affected by the leaders in the organization. If the leader promotes and appreciates and ethically carries the work of the organization the employees will be inclined to follow his examples and thereby work for the organization as a whole. This in turn will foster an environment of greater Innovative Work Behavior.

It was also seen that the leader of the organization has to be pro-active and transformational. A dull and monotonous leader who does not appear interested in the work done by his or her employees only demotivates the employees, which leads to a dull work

[7]Ma Prieto, I and Pilar Pérez-Santana, M. (2014), "Managing innovative work behavior: the role of human resource practices", Personnel Review, Volume 43 No. 2, p. 184-208.

[8]Bos-Nehles, A., Renkema, M. and Janssen, M. (2017), "HRM and innovative work behaviour: a systematic literature review", Personnel Review, Vol. 46 No. 7, pp. 1228-1253.

[9]Luksyte, A, Unsworth, KL, & Avery, DR (2017). "Innovative work behavior and sex-based stereotypes: Examining sex differences in perceptions and evaluations of innovative work behavior". Journal of Organizational Behavior, 39(3), 292–305.

[10]Yidong, T, Xinxin, L (2013), "How Ethical Leadership Influence Employees' Innovative Work Behavior: A Perspective of Intrinsic Motivation." J Bus Ethics 116, 441–455

environment.[11] The leader has to be able to motivate the employees into putting in more work and beat their personal records and limitations; and forgo prioritizing personal-desires for the benefit and growth of the organization instead. Transformational leaders transform the employee's innate and inbuilt desire to work for themselves and their personal gain into a desire to work for the organizational growth.

CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of various prior studies, it has been established as indisputable that there exists a significant relationship between Innovative Work Behavior of the employees and organizational growth. More willingness and initiatives taken by employees in engaging in Innovative Work Behavior in an environment that supports this ideation and implementation will boost the productivity of the employees which in turn will benefit the organizational growth. An organization with more number of employees who engage in innovative work behavior and are provided with the opportunity to implement the same will move towards development faster than organizations wherein such innovativeness of the employees is not valued. Moreover, employees are more likely to stay at an organization that values their contributions which shows that even employee retention is affected in an organization which promotes Innovative Work Behavior.

Higher inclination towards engaging in Innovative Work Behavior of employees results in higher productivity and thereby growth of the enterprise. Moreover, organizations that have a management that supports the ideas of their employees and provides them the opportunities to develop and implement their ideas, in turn fosters a sense of belonging to the organization in the employees. Fostering a work and business environment wherein the coworkers and management support each other ensures the development and acceptance of the ideas and initiatives that employees put forward. The ability to foster, develop and thereby use the potential innovativeness of their employees through practices like high involvement modern HR activities and practices, but also in creating a business and work environment that is seen as caring and supportive, in which the employees can cumulatively and productively formulate and implement their ideas. A leader plays an important role in fostering such an environment. The employees should look up to the leader and aspire to be as motivated as them. The leader should also be able to motivate the employees to put the needs of the organization ahead of their personal wants for rewards and recognition.

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