

Fostering innovative work behavior: the role of organizational support and employee self-efficacy

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore the relationship between perceived organizational support, self-efficacy and innovative work behavior. Specifically, it investigates the direct and indirect effects of perceived organizational support on innovative work behavior through the mediating role of self-efficacy.

Design/methodology/approach – Employing a descriptive research methodology, data were collected via a survey from 304 employees working in the private sector in Kosovo. The theoretical model was assessed using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Findings – The study revealed that perceived organizational support directly enhances employees’ innovative work behaviors. Additionally, perceived organizational support boosts employee self-efficacy, which subsequently fosters innovative work behaviors. Lastly, perceived organizational support also has an indirect impact on innovative work behaviors through self-efficacy, highlighting both direct and indirect pathways.

Research limitations/implications – While this study offers valuable insights for organizations, suggesting the importance of supporting employees to foster innovative behavior in the workplace, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. These include the relatively small sample size and the approach to data collection.

Originality/value – By focusing on the specific direct and indirect effects of perceived organizational support on innovative work behavior, this study contributes new insights to the literature. It diverges from previous studies that predominantly examined perceived organizational support’s mediating or moderating role in the relationship between other variables and innovative work behavior.

Keywords Innovative work behavior, Perceived organizational support, Self-efficacy

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The intensifying competition, widespread globalization of companies and businesses, and constant environmental changes prompt companies to innovate and devise new strategies in the marketplace (Cingöz and Akdoğan, 2011). In this ever-changing world of organizations, innovation is key to their survival, growth, and success (Nazir *et al.*, 2019). Continuous innovation within the workplace stands as a critical performance determinant, fostering competitiveness and prosperity (Kör *et al.*, 2021). Organizations have prioritized cultivating innovative behavior among employees, recognizing its crucial role as a driver of organizational innovation (Amankwaa *et al.*, 2022). Innovative behavior refers to the process of renewal and reconsideration, serving as a gauge for the adaptability and flexibility required to ensure the ongoing operation of a business (Stenholm, 2011). Kleysen and Street (2001) characterize innovative behavior as any individual effort aimed at creating, introducing, or utilizing beneficial new ideas within an organization, regardless of the organizational level. These behaviors can take the form of exploring novel technologies, proposing new approaches to accomplish goals, adopting innovative work methodologies, and researching and acquiring resources to execute new concepts (Yuan and Woodman, 2010).

Over the past decade, extensive research has explored the antecedents of innovative behavior in the workplace, particularly focusing on the impact of leadership (e.g. Odoardi *et al.*, 2015; Li *et al.*, 2020) and other organizational factors such as motivation, commitment, and self-efficacy (Siregar *et al.*, 2019). When employees perceive leaders as more open to their



new ideas, technologies, and processes, they feel a heightened sense of appreciation and organizational concern, leading to an increase in their innovative behavior (Qi *et al.*, 2019). Thus, organizational support serves as a crucial foundation for fostering employee engagement in innovative behaviors. Organizational support refers to the collective beliefs held by employees within an organization regarding the degree to which the organization appreciates their contributions and prioritizes their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Employees, influenced by the reciprocity norm, would feel a sense of obligation towards the organization's welfare and be inclined to contribute towards its objectives due to this perceived organizational support. This indebtedness could be fulfilled through increased affective commitment and efforts to aid the organization (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001).

According to the theory of perceived organizational support (POS), employees operate within the norm of reciprocity, trading their diligence and allegiance to the organization for perceived support and the prospect of future benefits (Chen *et al.*, 2009). Despite the well-established link between POS and various positive organizational outcomes, the direct impact of POS on innovative work behavior remains underexplored. While Nazir *et al.* (2019) examined the mediating role of POS and affective commitment in the relationship between organizational justice and innovative behavior, they did not explore how organizational support itself can prompt employees to engage in innovative behavior. Moreover, the mediating role of affective commitment between POS and innovative behavior suggests that POS can have indirect effects on innovative behavior in addition to its direct effects. Similarly, Aslan (2019) found that POS acts as a mechanism linking inclusive leadership and innovative behavior. Other studies, such as Choi *et al.* (2021), have focused on the moderating role of POS in the relationship between leader-member exchange and self-efficacy, which subsequently affects innovative behavior in the workplace.

Given these gaps, there is a clear need for research that examines the direct influence of POS on innovative work behavior (IWB), rather than POS merely acting as a mediator or moderator in the relationship between other organizational variables and IWB. In the context of corporate communications, POS plays a crucial role in fostering an open and supportive communication environment. Effective corporate communication strategies depend on employees feeling valued and supported by their organization. This sense of support enhances their willingness to share innovative ideas and engage in creative problem-solving, both of which are essential for effective communication within the organization (Neves and Eisenberger, 2012). By understanding the direct influence of POS on IWB, this study provides valuable insights for corporate communication professionals seeking to cultivate a culture of innovation through enhanced employee support.

Additionally, there is a need to explore the potential indirect effects of POS on IWB. For instance, the role of self-efficacy as a potential mediator in this relationship has not been sufficiently investigated. Individuals consistently make decisions about which actions to pursue and how long to sustain them (Bandura, 1982), a process closely linked to their self-efficacy, defined as the belief in one's ability to perform specific tasks (Bandura, 1977). Alongside individuals' goals, self-efficacy emerges as a significant motivational predictor of performance across various fields (Heslin and Klehe, 2006). For individuals to engage in IWB, they require a dose of self-efficacy, as generating new ideas involves a trial-and-error process where many ideas may fail, potentially impacting confidence levels (Javed *et al.*, 2021).

This study aims to (1) examine the direct impact of POS on IWB and (2) explore the mediating role of self-efficacy, thereby investigating the indirect influence of POS on IWB. By bridging the gap between variables and providing empirical evidence, this study contributes to the theory and practice of IWB on an individual level. Firstly, it offers further evidence of organizational support's importance in fostering innovative behavior at work, beyond its role as a mediating variable as seen in most studies. Secondly, it advances understanding of how POS can motivate employees in innovative behaviors by enhancing their self-efficacy. Finally, it supports the idea of self-efficacy mediating employees' increased productivity at work.

2. Theoretical foundation and literature review

2.1 Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory (SET) is considered one of the most significant conceptual frameworks for interpreting behavior in the workplace (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). According to SET, when one party offers another a valuable and advantageous resource, it creates an obligation for the recipient to reciprocate with a similarly beneficial resource (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012). For example, employees exchange work for pay (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2002). Once a high-caliber exchange relationship is forged, both parties strive to share extensive information, offer financial and non-financial assistance, and mutually facilitate organizational growth (Choi *et al.*, 2021). From an alternate perspective, the theory describes a mutual exchange of favors where individuals tend to respond positively in their behavior when they hold positive perceptions (Yildiz *et al.*, 2017). When employees perceive that an employer has met its responsibilities in the employment relationship by providing suitable job resources, it generates a sense of psychological contract fulfillment. This, in turn, fosters favorable job outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Birtch *et al.*, 2016).

Shore *et al.* (2009) elucidate that the utilization of social exchange theory has primarily centered on the interactions individuals form with their manager, the organization, or both. Their key discovery highlights that stronger social exchanges correlate with increased employee contributions, manifesting as heightened commitment, reduced turnover intention, enhanced organizational citizenship behavior, and improved performance. In this context, the connection between perceived organizational support and innovative work behavior is grounded in social exchange theory, wherein employees receive support and reciprocate by actively participating in innovative tasks.

2.2 Perceived organizational support and innovative work behavior

While innovation is a broad and challenging topic, in academic literature, it is typically categorized based on the unit of analysis, such as the individual or organizational level (Yildiz *et al.*, 2017). This study aims to investigate innovative behavior at work from an individual level. Innovative work behavior (IWB) is perceived as a multi-dimensional behavior comprising four interconnected sets of actions: identifying problems, generating ideas, promoting ideas, and implementing ideas. The initial two stages involve creativity-driven actions, where individuals identify work-related issues and then generate innovative ideas within their own work environment. The final two stages encompass implementation-oriented actions, which include advocating for new ideas among potential supporters and actualizing ideas for application within the organization (Dorenbosch *et al.*, 2005). Nevertheless, the question is how much organizations motivate employees to engage in innovative work behaviors?

Undoubtedly, organizational support plays a pivotal role in motivating employees to perform at their best. The role of organizations is crucial in fostering innovative work behaviors (Chughtai and Khalid, 2022). When employees feel that their organization supports them, they tend to feel more committed and obligated to the organization as a whole (Pundt *et al.*, 2010). To exhibit innovative work behaviors, employees require robust perceptions of support from management and supervisors, which can be manifested through granting autonomy at work and ensuring resource availability (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2019). Employees derive greater meaning, autonomy, and self-determination from generating fresh ideas compared to merely persuading and executing existing ones (Afsar *et al.*, 2014). The study by Pundt *et al.* (2010) suggests that when organizations support their employees, it encourages innovative behavior. This reciprocal relationship benefits both employees and the organization by unlocking their creative potential. Similarly, Khalili (2016) argues that managers must offer sufficient support for innovation to positively influence employees' creativity and innovative abilities. Furthermore, Ekmekcioglu and Öner (2023) demonstrate that servant leadership,

which is recognized for fostering an environment where employees can enhance their skills and achieve their creative aspirations, enables employees to boost their creative output by gaining a deeper understanding of their skills, competencies, and abilities. This leads to a perception of strong organizational support among employees, which in turn, can encourage them to demonstrate increased levels of innovative work behavior. This set of studies imply that when employees perceive high levels of organizational support are more likely to reciprocate with innovative behaviors. Therefore, we propose the hypothesis:

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- H1. Perceived organizational support is positively associated with innovative work behavior.*

2.3 Perceived organizational support and self-efficacy

The theory of perceived organizational support by [Eisenberger et al. \(1986\)](#) has provided insights into the mechanisms by which organizational support induces employees to work towards organizational goals while increasing individual commitment. POS is a foundation upon which an exchange-based employment relationship revolves ([Young, 2012](#)). From a self-efficacy perspective, people tend to engage in actions that they believe are capable of accomplishing their desires and that they have confidence in carrying out ([Maddux, 2016](#)). High self-efficacy leads to better performance in activities and achievement of expectations. Supportive environments enhance self-efficacy, while unsupportive environments can weaken it, potentially leading to despair and depression ([Sulthorn, 2014](#)). Nevertheless, the relationship between perceived organizational support and self-efficacy is complex, with self-efficacy playing a mediating role in this relationship ([Caesens and Stinglhamber, 2014](#); [Musenze et al., 2021](#)). [Musenze et al. \(2021\)](#) pointed out that a supportive organizational atmosphere increases employees' confidence in their abilities, which affects their engagement and productivity at work. In addition, [Musenze et al. \(2022\)](#) believe that self-efficacy requires a POS to bring about a significant positive change in perceived work engagement. When employees experience greater support and appreciation from their organization, their self-confidence and trust in their abilities tend to increase ([Caesens and Stinglhamber, 2014](#)). Self-efficacy also moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and work-life balance, with employees with low self-efficacy seeking more support ([Thakur and Kumar, 2015](#)). In addition, perceived organizational support is associated with increased self-efficacy and higher job engagement ([Azim and Al-Halawani, 2020](#)). These findings highlight the importance of perceived organizational support in increasing self-efficacy and its positive effects. Therefore, we propose the second hypothesis:

- H2. Perceived organizational support is positively associated with self-efficacy.*

2.4 Self-efficacy and innovative work behavior

Organizations must have a well-defined and clear innovation strategy for their entire value chain to fully leverage the individual's contribution to organization-wide innovation ([Leong and Rasli, 2014](#)). The most typical innovative work behavior is idea generation, followed by idea promotion and idea implementation ([Hsiao et al., 2011](#)). Self-efficacy is fundamental to experiencing vitality and work motivation and also serves as a prerequisite for commitment ([Uppathampracha and Liu, 2022](#)). Perceived self-efficacy significantly influences behavior, thoughts, and emotions, contributing to performance outcomes ([Bandura, 1984](#)). Studies show that the higher the self-efficacy of employees, the greater their engagement at work ([Hameli and Ordun, 2022](#)).

Research consistently shows that self-efficacy plays a critical role in promoting innovative work behaviors ([Harun et al., 2022](#); [Uppathampracha and Liu, 2022](#); [Siregar et al., 2022](#)). This is particularly evident in the telecommunications industry, where self-efficacy directly influences employee collaboration and effort, leading to greater creativity and innovation ([Harun et al., 2022](#)). The mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between ethical

leadership and innovative work behavior has also been highlighted, with work engagement reinforcing this relationship (Uppathampracha and Liu, 2022). Innovative thinking is more likely among employees who have confidence in their abilities and are engaged in the creative process (Siregar *et al.*, 2022). Employees with high self-efficacy demonstrate high levels of innovative behavior at work (Purnama *et al.*, 2022). Finally, the role of self-efficacy in the relationship between creative and equitable climate and innovative work behavior has been proposed, suggesting that self-efficacy is a key factor in fostering an organizational environment conducive to innovation (Purnama *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, we propose the third hypothesis:

H3. Self-efficacy is positively associated with innovative work behavior.

Reciprocal exchange between organization and employees, as described in organizational exchange theory, is significant in explaining employees' innovative behavior and can thus help organizations to harness employees' innovative power (Pundt *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, self-efficacy will promote this relationship as the upper literature suggests that self-efficacy plays an important mediating role in the relationship between organizational variables in improving positive outcomes. Considering that POS has a significant influence on self-efficacy and that self-efficacy has a significant influence on IWB, we expect that self-efficacy will also mediate the relationship between POS and IWB (Figure 1). Therefore, we propose the last hypothesis:

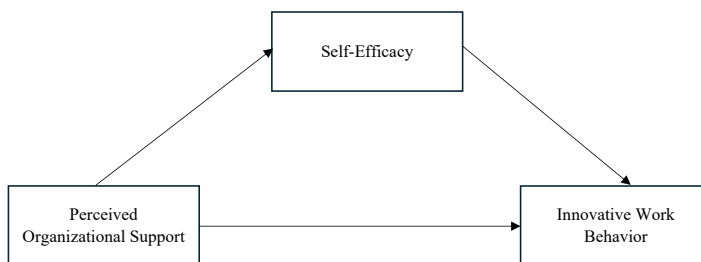
H4. Self-efficacy mediates the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and innovative work behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and data collection

This study targeted individuals aged 18 and above employed in the private sector in Kosovo. Data were gathered through a survey utilizing convenience sampling method, with the survey link distributed across various social media platforms. This approach aimed to reach a diverse audience and encourage broad participation in the research endeavor. Precautions were implemented to mitigate potential common method variance. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement and given procedural instructions on the survey's introductory page. Responses were solicited solely in the form of opinions on the topic, with participants having the autonomy to discontinue their participation at any juncture during the survey.

To address concerns regarding external validity, the sample's demographic characteristics were thoroughly examined. The final sample consisted of 304 individuals, with detailed characteristics provided in Table 1. Following data collection, a Harman's one-factor test was administered, revealing that the total explained variance fell below 50%. This result suggests



Source(s): Authors' own work

Figure 1. Research model

Table 1. Sample data ($n = 304$)

Variable	Category	<i>F</i>	%
Gender	Male	154	50.70
	Female	150	49.30
Age	Up to 20	25	8.20
	21–25	157	51.60
	26–30	59	19.40
	30–35	22	7.20
	35+	41	13.50
Education	High School	43	14.20
	Bachelor	152	50.00
	Graduate	109	35.90
Tenure	Less than 12 months	26	8.60
	1–2 years	17	5.60
	3–5 years	81	26.60
	6–10 years	107	35.20
	10 years +	73	24.00
Income	Up to €300	47	15.50
	€301–€600	168	53.30
	€601–€900	55	18.10
	€901–€1,200	17	5.60
	€1,200+	17	5.60

Source(s): Authors' own work

that common method variance was not a significant concern. Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis model fit indices indicated a satisfactory fit between the data and the model, further validating the collected data.

3.2 Measures

Perceived Organizational Support (POS): POS was evaluated using the nine-item scale developed by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986). The scale demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.944$.

Self-Efficacy (SE): Self-efficacy was assessed using eight items from the scale developed by Chen *et al.* (2009). The scale exhibited strong reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.923$.

Innovative Work Behavior (IWB): IWB was evaluated using ten items from the scale developed by Dorenbosch *et al.* (2005). This scale specifically focused on creativity-oriented work behavior. The scale demonstrated good reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.909$.

All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree for the first two constructs, and from 1 = to a very little extent to 5 = to a very large extent for the last construct.

4. Results

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS v.27 and Amos v.23. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are presented in Table 2. Not a single item was deleted from the model, as all items exhibited acceptable standardized weights, with all *t*-values significant at $p < 0.01$. Composite reliability (CR) values exceeded 0.90 for all three constructs. Similarly, average variance extracted (AVE) values surpassed 0.50, indicating convergent validity among the three constructs. Moreover, the three maximum shared variances (MSV) were lower than their corresponding AVEs, suggesting discriminant validity among the constructs.

Table 2. Measurement item properties

Constructs	Std. load	t-value	CR	AVE	MSV
<i>Perceived Organizational Support</i>			0.95	0.66	0.40
The organization values my contribution to its well-being	0.79	14.80**			
The organization strongly considers my goals and values	0.86	16.33**			
Help is available from the organization when I have a problem	0.84	15.82**			
The organization really cares about my well-being	0.86	16.12**			
The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor	0.80	14.85**			
The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work	0.84	15.84**			
The organization cares about my opinions	0.76	14.09**			
The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work	0.78	14.43**			
The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible	0.76	Fixed			
<i>Self-Efficacy</i>			0.92	0.60	0.38
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself	0.75	14.06**			
When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them	0.86	16.70**			
In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me	0.78	14.61**			
I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind	0.80	15.17**			
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges	0.79	14.84**			
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks	0.74	13.83**			
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well	0.69	12.74**			
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well	0.78	Fixed			
<i>Innovative Work Behavior</i>			0.91	0.50	0.40
To what extent . . .					
actively think along concerning improvements in the work of direct colleagues?	0.63	10.84**			
generate ideas to improve or renew services your department provides?	0.71	12.26**			
generate ideas on how to optimize knowledge and skills within your department?	0.75	12.99**			
generate new solutions to old problems?	0.68	11.62**			
discuss matters with direct colleagues concerning your/their work?	0.60	10.26**			
suggest new ways of communicating within your department?	0.69	11.82**			
generate ideas concerning the distribution of tasks and work activities within your department?	0.78	13.59**			
actively engage in the thinking on which knowledge and skills are required within your department?	0.77	13.28**			
try to detect impediments to collaboration and coordination?	0.74	12.73**			
actively engage in gathering information to identify deviations within your department?	0.74	Fixed			
Note(s): ** $p < 0.01$					
Source(s): Authors' own work					

Furthermore, the model fit indices, including $\chi^2 = 2.56$, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.91, NFI = 0.86, SRMR = 0.05, and RMSEA = 0.07, demonstrated a favorable fit between the data and the theoretical model. Building upon the CFA results, correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between the variables and demographics, with a summary of the findings presented in [Table 3](#).

[Table 4](#) presents the results of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) conducted with 10,000 bootstrap samples. The findings indicate that perceived organizational support has a

Table 3. Correlations between latent variables and demographics

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. POS	1									
2. SE	0.53**	1								
3. IWB	0.59**	0.58**	1							
4. Gender	0.06	0.08	0.02	1						
5. Age	−0.10	−0.04	−0.01	−0.23**	1					
6. Education	0.12*	0.03	0.19*	0.11	0.16**	1				
7. Employment	−0.12*	−0.16**	−0.17**	−0.05	−0.10	−0.10	1			
8. Sector	0.13*	0.04	0.11	−0.03	−0.09	−0.02	−0.06	1		
9. Tenure	0.01	0.00	0.07	−0.31**	0.56**	0.07	−0.16**	−0.05	1	
10. Income	0.09	−0.07	−0.00	−0.26**	0.39**	0.18**	−0.18**	0.07	0.36**	1

Note(s): ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 4. Results of SEM

Hypothesis	Std. estimate	Lower bound	Upper bound	<i>p</i>
POS → IWB	0.42	0.29	0.55	0.01
POS → SE	0.57	0.47	0.65	0.01
SE → IWB	0.34	0.24	0.50	0.01
POS → SE → IWB	0.18	0.11	0.25	0.01

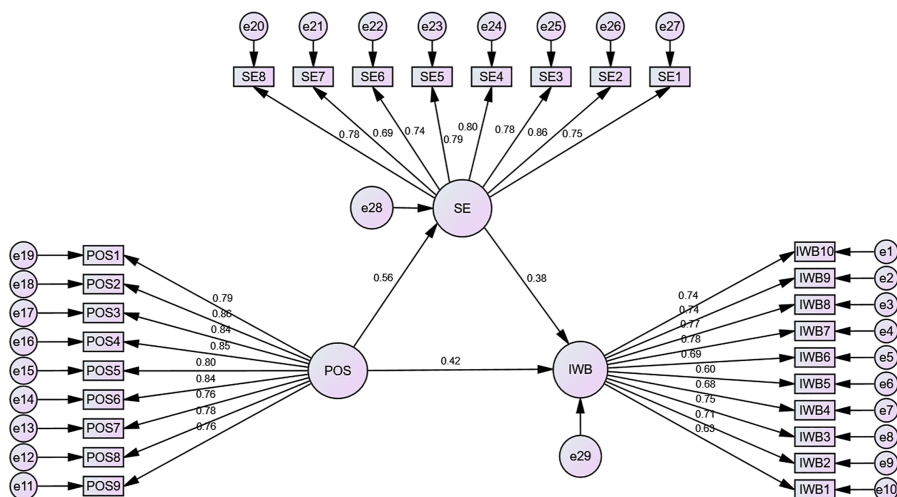
Note(s): POS = Perceived organizational support, SE = Self-efficacy, IWB = Innovative work behavior
Source(s): Authors' own work

significant direct impact on innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.42, p < 0.01$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.57, p < 0.01$). Moreover, self-efficacy significantly influences innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.01$). Additionally, self-efficacy mediates the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.01$). Figure 2 visually represents the direct relationships among the constructs.

5. Discussion

This study seeks to contribute to existing knowledge on innovative workplace behaviors by examining the direct and indirect relationship between perceived organizational support and innovative work behaviors. Although several studies have examined the mediating or moderating role of POS on the relationship between organizational variables and IWB, no single study has focused on the direct relationship between POS and IWB. Moreover, this study extends these current studies by examining the mediating role of self-efficacy on the relationship between POS and IWB. Furthermore, apart from a few studies, there is limited empirical evidence in the context of Kosovo on IWB.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of POS in creating a supportive communication environment within organizations. The enhanced willingness of employees to share innovative ideas and engage in creative problem-solving, driven by POS, is indicative of



Source(s): Authors' own work

Figure 2. AMOS diagram of the hypothesized relationships

the integral role of effective communication strategies in fostering a culture of innovation. These insights provide a nuanced understanding of how corporate communication professionals can leverage organizational support to cultivate an environment that encourages innovative behaviors.

The results of this study revealed a significant direct relationship between POS and IWB, confirming hypothesis H1. This finding is consistent with the theoretical assertions of social exchange theory (SET), which suggests that employees reciprocate the support they receive from their organization through positive behaviors, including innovation (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2002). The significant direct effect of POS on IWB corroborates previous findings by Pundt *et al.* (2010) and Sulaiman *et al.* (2019), who also found that organizational support fosters innovative behavior. This alignment with existing literature reinforces the validity of POS as a critical antecedent of IWB.

The direct impact of POS on IWB, as observed in this study, fills a gap in the literature. While previous research, such as that by Nazir *et al.* (2019), has examined POS primarily as a mediator or moderator, this study provides empirical evidence of its direct effect. This distinction is important because it underscores the independent influence of organizational support on innovative behaviors, separate from its interactions with other variables. This finding suggests that organizations should prioritize POS not only to influence other positive organizational outcomes but also to directly enhance innovation at the workplace.

Furthermore, the study found a significant relationship between POS and self-efficacy (hypothesis H2). This result supports the findings of Musenze *et al.* (2021) and Caesens and Stinglhamber (2014), who demonstrated that supportive organizational environments enhance employees' self-efficacy. According to the theory of perceived organizational support by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986), when employees feel valued and supported, their confidence in their abilities increases. This study extends this understanding by highlighting the pivotal role of self-efficacy in translating organizational support into innovative behaviors.

The significant direct effect of self-efficacy on IWB (hypothesis H3) aligns with the findings of Harun *et al.* (2022) and Uppathampracha and Liu (2022), who emphasized the critical role of self-efficacy in promoting innovative work behaviors. The positive relationship between self-efficacy and IWB found in this study suggests that employees who believe in their capabilities are more likely to engage in innovation, which involves risk-taking and the implementation of new ideas. This finding supports Bandura's (1984) assertion that self-efficacy influences behavior, thoughts, and emotions, contributing to performance outcomes. Bandura's (1982) work on self-efficacy provides a foundational understanding of how beliefs in one's capabilities influence actions. The current study extends this theory by demonstrating that self-efficacy is crucial for innovation in the workplace. Employees with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in the trial-and-error processes necessary for generating new ideas and implementing them, as supported by Javed *et al.* (2021).

Lastly, the study also confirmed the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between POS and IWB (hypothesis H4). The mediating role of self-efficacy found in this study is particularly noteworthy. It suggests that POS enhances self-efficacy, which in turn promotes IWB. Previous studies, such as those by Uppathampracha and Liu (2022), have indicated that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between various organizational variables and positive outcomes. The current study builds on this literature by showing that self-efficacy not only directly influences IWB but also serves as a significant link between POS and IWB. This mediation effect aligns with the findings of Musenze *et al.* (2021), who noted that supportive environments boost employees' confidence in their abilities. The current study adds to this understanding by providing empirical evidence that self-efficacy serves also as a bridge between organizational support and innovative behavior. This highlights the dual importance of providing support and fostering self-belief among employees to drive innovation.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study used perceived organizational theory and social exchange theory as frameworks to analyze the relationship between the three variables. The results of this study showed that POS has a direct positive impact on IWB. These findings corroborate previous research (Pundt *et al.*, 2010; Sulaiman *et al.*, 2019). In other words, when employees perceive that their organization values them and their well-being, they are more likely to engage in innovative work behavior such as identifying problems and generating ideas. This aligns with social exchange theory, which posits that when employees receive support from their organization, they feel an obligation to reciprocate through positive behaviors, including innovation.

Additionally, the study found that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between POS and IWB. This highlights the importance of self-efficacy as a psychological mechanism through which organizational support translates into innovative behaviors. Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's own abilities to accomplish tasks, enhances employees' confidence to engage in innovation, which often involves taking risks and trying new approaches. The mediating role of self-efficacy is significant as it suggests that POS not only directly influences IWB but also enhances employees' self-belief, which in turn fosters innovative behavior. This finding extends the current understanding of the role of self-efficacy in the innovation process and supports Bandura's (1982) assertion that self-efficacy is a key driver of behavior and performance.

Furthermore, the results contribute to the theoretical development of perceived organizational support theory by demonstrating that POS is a critical antecedent of innovative behavior. This reinforces the idea that organizations need to focus on creating supportive environments to promote innovation. The study also adds to the literature on the psychological underpinnings of innovation by emphasizing the importance of self-efficacy.

5.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for managers seeking to enhance innovative work behavior within their organizations.

First, managers should prioritize creating a supportive organizational climate. This includes recognizing and appreciating employees' contributions, providing necessary resources, and showing genuine concern for their well-being. By fostering a sense of support, managers can encourage employees to engage more actively in innovative behaviors. This can be achieved through regular feedback, recognition programs, and ensuring that employees feel their efforts are valued. Research by Pundt *et al.* (2010) and Eisenberger *et al.* (1986) supports the notion that perceived organizational support leads to positive organizational outcomes, including innovation.

Second, organizations should focus on developing employees' self-efficacy. Training programs aimed at skill enhancement, providing opportunities for professional development, and creating a culture that encourages risk-taking and experimentation can help boost self-efficacy. When employees believe in their abilities to perform tasks and overcome challenges, they are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors. Bandura (1982) emphasized that self-efficacy is crucial for motivating individuals to engage in challenging tasks, which is supported by the findings of Harun *et al.* (2022) and Uppathampachra and Liu (2022) regarding its role in fostering innovation.

Third, managers should consider the role of leadership in fostering innovation. Leaders who demonstrate openness to new ideas, provide autonomy, and encourage creative problem-solving can significantly impact employees' innovative behaviors. Inclusive leadership, where leaders actively seek and consider employees' input, can enhance POS and self-efficacy, thereby promoting innovation. Studies by Khalili (2016) and Ekmekcioglu and Öner (2023) highlight the importance of supportive leadership in enhancing employees' creative and innovative capacities.

Moreover, organizations should implement policies and practices that reinforce the link between support and innovation. For example, creating innovation teams or task forces, providing time and space for brainstorming and creative thinking, and establishing clear channels for idea sharing can institutionalize the support for innovation. Performance appraisal systems should also be designed to reward innovative behaviors, thereby reinforcing the importance of innovation within the organizational culture. Research by [Chughtai and Khalid \(2022\)](#) and [Afsar et al. \(2014\)](#) suggests that organizational structures and practices that support innovation can significantly enhance employees' innovative behaviors.

Finally, given the study's context in Kosovo, managers in similar emerging economies should take into account the unique cultural and economic factors that may influence POS and IWB. Tailoring support mechanisms to fit the local context can enhance their effectiveness. For instance, in environments where job security is a major concern, providing stability and assurance can significantly enhance POS and encourage innovative behaviors.

5.3 Limitations

Despite the significant findings, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged and addressed in future research.

First, the use of convenience sampling and the dissemination of the survey via social media platforms introduce potential limitations regarding sample representativeness. While the study aimed to ensure demographic diversity, the sample may not fully represent the entire population of private sector employees in Kosovo. Future research could benefit from employing probabilistic sampling methods and alternative data collection techniques to enhance the representativeness and generalizability of the findings.

Second, the cross-sectional design of this study limits the ability to draw causal inferences. To establish causality between perceived organizational support, self-efficacy, and innovative work behavior, longitudinal studies are needed. Such studies would allow for the examination of changes over time and provide more robust evidence of causal relationships.

Third, this study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias and common method variance. To mitigate these issues, future research should consider using multiple data sources, including supervisor and peer evaluations, to validate the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Additionally, future research could explore other potential mediators and moderators in the relationship between POS and IWB. For instance, examining the roles of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and leadership styles could offer a more holistic view of the factors influencing innovative behaviors. Comparative studies across different cultural and organizational contexts could also enhance the generalizability of the findings, providing valuable insights into how these dynamics operate in diverse settings.

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