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Innovative Work Behavior as an Organizational Ecosystem: A Systematic Literature Review from Structural Origins to the Digital Era (1969–2026)

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to map the development of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) research and identify the dominant themes and conceptual frameworks that explain the formation of IWB in modern organizations. Using a Systematic Literature Review based on the PRISMA 2020 framework, this study analyzed 61 articles published between 1969 and 2026. The findings show that IWB literature has evolved from early discussions of organizational structure and role innovation toward individual innovative behavior, leadership, organizational support, human resource practices, psychological mechanisms, and digital work contexts. The synthesis indicates that IWB is shaped by the interaction of individual, social, organizational, psychological, and digital factors. This study contributes by proposing an ecosystem perspective that positions IWB as a multidimensional organizational behavior supporting innovation and adaptability.

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INTRODUCTION

Innovative work behavior (IWB) has become one of the most studied constructs in organizational behavior because modern organizations depend on employees' capacity to generate, promote, and implement new ideas. In dynamic and digitally transformed work environments, innovation is not confined to formal research and development activities but also emerges from employees' daily efforts to solve problems, improve processes, and adapt to change (Scott & Bruce, 1994; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010).

Early scholarship on innovation concentrated on organizational structure and management systems. Freeman (1969) and Hull and Hage (1982) emphasized that flexible, organic structures are more supportive of innovation than rigid, mechanistic ones. The focus later shifted to individual behavior through the concept of role innovation (West, 1987a), and subsequently expanded to include organizational creativity as a multilevel phenomenon (Woodman et al., 1993; Scott & Bruce, 1994). After 2010, IWB research became more measurement-oriented and integrative, linking the construct to leadership, human resource management (HRM), psychological mechanisms, organizational climate, and, most recently, digitalization.

Despite this growth, three significant gaps remain unaddressed in the extant literature. First, most prior reviews—including AlEssa and Durugbo (2022) and Salam and Senin (2022)—have focused primarily on mapping antecedents and dimensions without developing a coherent theoretical framework that explains how these antecedents interact across levels. Second, the rapid expansion of IWB research into digital work contexts, fintech, and public organizations between 2024 and 2026 has not yet been systematically synthesized. Third, inconsistent findings across studies—particularly regarding the roles of workload, gender, and contextual moderators—have not been critically examined to identify boundary conditions. The present study addresses these gaps by adopting an ecosystem perspective grounded in socio-technical systems theory (Trist & Bamforth, 1951), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), viewing IWB as the product of dynamic interactions among individual, social, organizational, and digital factors.

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on the PRISMA 2020 framework (Page et al., 2021) to analyze 61 articles published between 1969 and 2026. The review maps the development and dominant themes of IWB research and proposes a set of testable ecosystem propositions as a conceptual contribution. Two research questions guide the study:

RQ1: How has IWB research evolved from its structural and role-theoretical origins to the digital and multilevel era?

RQ2: What thematic clusters and ecosystem propositions explain the formation of IWB in modern organizations?

The main contribution of this study is threefold: (1) it identifies six developmental eras and six thematic clusters in IWB research; (2) it proposes an ecosystem model grounded in established theory; and (3) it derives six testable propositions to guide future multilevel and longitudinal research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Innovative Work Behavior

IWB is generally understood as a set of discretionary behaviors through which employees intentionally introduce, promote, and implement new ideas within their work roles, teams, or organizations (Scott & Bruce, 1994). The construct differs from creativity because it extends beyond idea generation to include the social and practical processes through which ideas are legitimized, supported, and applied. De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) operationalized IWB across four dimensions: (1) idea exploration—identifying opportunities, problems, or areas for improvement; (2) idea generation—producing novel and useful ideas; (3) idea championing—gaining support from supervisors and stakeholders; and (4) idea implementation—transforming ideas into procedures, products, or services.

Theoretical Frameworks

Three theoretical traditions anchor this review. Socio-technical systems theory (Trist & Bamforth, 1951) holds that organizational outcomes emerge from the interaction between social (human, relational) and technical (structural, tool-based) subsystems. In the context of IWB, this means that neither individual creativity alone nor organizational structure alone is sufficient; innovative behavior arises from their joint configuration. This framing is particularly relevant for understanding how digital transformation reshapes IWB by introducing new technical affordances that interact with existing social dynamics.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) explains how perceived organizational support (POS), leader-member exchange (LMX), and trust motivate employees to engage in behaviors—such as IWB—that exceed their formal job requirements. When employees perceive that their organization invests in them through HRM practices, fair processes, and managerial support, they reciprocate through heightened innovative effort. Consistent with this logic, Agarwal (2014), Choi et al. (2021), and Zhou et al. (2026) found that POS and LMX reliably predict IWB through work engagement and self-efficacy.

Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as drivers of adaptive behavior. In IWB research, SDT explains why autonomy, meaningfulness of work, and development-oriented HRM practices stimulate employees to explore and implement ideas voluntarily. Saether (2019), Thneibat (2026), and Bammens (2016) each demonstrated that autonomous motivation mediates between contextual conditions and innovative behavior, consistent with SDT's basic psychological needs framework.

The Ecosystem Perspective on IWB

The reviewed literature collectively suggests that IWB should not be interpreted as a purely individual behavior. It emerges from an ecosystem in which individual capacity, leadership support, social relations, HRM practices, organizational climate, and digital context interact in a mutually reinforcing manner. The concept of a behavioral ecosystem draws on work in organizational ecology (Hannan & Freeman, 1977) and complex adaptive systems theory

(Holland, 1992), which treat organizations as dynamic environments in which multiple factors co-evolve to produce emergent outcomes. Applied to IWB, this perspective holds that the same individual with high self-efficacy may or may not engage in innovative behavior depending on whether the surrounding ecosystem—leadership climate, psychological safety, HRM practices, and digital tools—is aligned to support innovation. This review operationalizes the ecosystem as consisting of four interacting layers: individual psychological resources, social and relational factors, organizational support systems, and digital contextual factors.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a hybrid systematic-descriptive bibliometric review design following Tranfield et al. (2003), Snyder (2019), and the PRISMA 2020 guideline (Page et al., 2021). The systematic review component enabled transparent, replicable synthesis based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The descriptive bibliometric component supported the mapping of publication eras, research methods, and thematic clusters.

Article Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted in May 2026 across nine academic databases and platforms: Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library, and Google Scholar. Search terms were applied to article titles, abstracts, and keywords using the following Boolean string:

("innovative work behavior" OR "innovative work behaviour" OR "employee innovative behavior" OR "employee innovation" OR "innovative employee behavior" OR "role innovation") AND (organization OR workplace OR employee OR workforce)

The string was applied consistently across all nine databases using each platform's native Boolean search interface. Minor adaptations to field codes (e.g., TITLE-ABS-KEY in Scopus versus Topic in Web of Science) were made to align with database-specific syntax while maintaining equivalent conceptual coverage. The publication period was restricted to 1969–2026 to capture the full historical evolution of IWB research. All identified records were exported to Mendeley for deduplication before screening.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 1 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied at the screening and eligibility stages.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles discuss IWB, role innovation, innovative behavior, organizational creativity, or employee innovation at work.	Articles unrelated to innovative behavior in workplace or organizational contexts.
Articles located in management, organizational behavior, HRM,	Articles outside organizational or work contexts.

education, public sector, technology, or digital organization contexts.	
Articles provide author, year, title, journal/source, method, and main conclusion.	Articles without sufficient methodological information.
Articles published between 1969 and 2026.	Articles outside the review period.
Empirical articles, conceptual papers, scale development studies, systematic reviews, bibliometric analyses, and mixed-method studies.	Opinion pieces, editorials, book chapters without clear methodology, and non-peer-reviewed sources.

Article Selection Procedure and Inter-Rater Reliability

Article selection followed four PRISMA 2020 stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. During identification, records were collected from the nine databases and supplemented by backward citation searching of reference lists from the most recent and influential SLRs on IWB (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2022; Salam & Senin, 2022; Srirahayu et al., 2023). Backward citation searching proceeded by manually reviewing the reference lists of these anchor SLRs and retrieving any cited article that met the topical inclusion criteria but had not yet appeared in the database search results.

Screening was conducted independently by two reviewers based on titles, abstracts, and keywords. Disagreements were resolved through discussion; cases that remained unresolved after discussion were adjudicated by a third reviewer. Inter-rater agreement for the screening stage was calculated using Cohen's Kappa ($\kappa = .84$, $p < .001$), indicating strong agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). At the eligibility stage, full-text articles were assessed against all inclusion criteria. Articles lacking methodological clarity, organizational relevance, or adequate reporting of main variables were excluded. The final selection comprised 61 articles.

Article Quality Assessment

Each article that met inclusion criteria was evaluated using a quality assessment checklist adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) and systematic review standards in management research. Five criteria were assessed, each scored 1 (fulfilled) or 0 (not fulfilled): (K1) clarity of research objective, (K2) clarity of method, (K3) clarity of sample or research object, (K4) verifiability of research findings, and (K5) relevance to IWB. The maximum score was 5; a minimum threshold of 4 was required for inclusion in the synthesis.

To operationalize each criterion rigorously, the following rubric was applied: K1 required a clearly stated research question or objective; K2 required identification of research design and data collection procedure; K3 required specification of the sample or research context; K4 required presentation of findings in a form that allows independent verification (statistical results, structured qualitative evidence, or transparent synthesis); and K5 required that

IWB or a directly related construct be a central dependent, independent, or mediating variable. Table 2 summarizes the quality assessment results.

Table 2. Summary of Article Quality Assessment Results

Quality Category	Score	Number of Articles	Percentage	Notes
Excellent	5	42	68.85%	Fully met all five quality criteria
Good	4	19	31.15%	Met four criteria; minor limitation in one area
Moderate	3	0	0.00%	Would have required exclusion from synthesis
Poor	≤2	0	0.00%	Excluded from review

All 61 articles met the minimum quality standard, with 42 rated excellent and 19 rated good. No article fell below the inclusion threshold. It is acknowledged that the high rate of eligible articles may partly reflect the targeted nature of the search strategy, which drew from high-quality peer-reviewed databases and established IWB reference lists. The CASP rubric was applied to ensure that quality assessment served as a substantive, not merely formal, filter.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through thematic synthesis supported by descriptive bibliometric mapping. Each article was classified by development era, method, thematic focus, main variables, research context, and conceptual contribution. Thematic synthesis involved reading, comparing, and clustering the main findings of each article into coherent themes through an iterative process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The resulting thematic clusters were then cross-validated against the bibliometric distribution of articles across eras and methods to ensure conceptual coherence. The synthesis findings were used to construct the ecosystem model and derive the six propositions presented in Section 5.

RESEARCH RESULT

Article Selection Results

The initial search identified 1,985 records: 1,842 from the nine academic databases and 143 from backward citation searching. After duplicate removal, 1,673 records remained for screening. During screening, 1,594 records were excluded because they were unrelated to IWB, role innovation, organizational creativity, or innovative behavior in work settings. Full-text eligibility assessment was conducted on 79 articles, of which 18 were excluded because they

were outside organizational contexts, used unclear methods, did not directly address IWB, could not be classified thematically, or were unavailable in full text. The final selection comprised 61 articles meeting all inclusion and quality criteria.

Distribution of Articles by Development Era

Table 3 presents the distribution of the 61 articles across six development eras, answering RQ1 in terms of publication patterns. The largest concentration appears in the Consolidation and Review Era (2021–2023, n = 18), followed by the Integration Era (2016–2020, n = 14). The Digital and Multilevel Era (2024–2026) contributes 10 articles, representing the fastest-growing segment proportionally given its compressed timeframe.

Table 3. Article Distribution by Development Era

Development Era	Period	No. of Articles	Percentage	Dominant Theme
Early Era	1960–1989	6	9.8%	Organizational structure & role innovation
Conceptualization Era	1990–2005	6	9.8%	Individual creativity & innovative behavior constructs
Development Era	2006–2015	7	11.5%	Measurement, social exchange, leadership
Integration Era	2016–2020	14	23.0%	Multilevel antecedents, HRM, engagement
Consolidation & Review Era	2021–2023	18	29.5%	Cross-sector SLR, voice, climate, psychometric validation
Digital & Multilevel Era	2024–2026	10	16.4%	Digital context, fintech, ICT, business model innovation

Thematic Synthesis: Six Clusters of IWB Research

To address RQ2, the 61 articles were synthesized into six thematic clusters through an iterative coding process. Table 4 presents these clusters, the number of articles in each, key variables, consistent findings, and areas of inconsistency or identified boundary conditions. This cluster-level synthesis moves beyond

article-by-article description to identify patterns, tensions, and moderating conditions in the IWB literature.

Table 4. Thematic Clusters in IWB Research: Consistent and Inconsistent Findings

Thematic Cluster	n	Key Variables	Consistent Findings	Inconsistent / Boundary Findings
Leadership & IWB	18	Transformational, servant, LMX, supervisor support	All leadership styles positively relate to IWB through motivation and psychological safety	Effect size varies by innovation climate and task complexity (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Kim, 2022)
Psychological Mechanisms	15	Work engagement, self-efficacy, psychological safety, PsyCap	Engagement consistently mediates between antecedents and IWB	Workload shows inverted-U effect; moderate pressure facilitates, high pressure suppresses IWB (Montani et al., 2020)
Organizational Support & HRM	12	POS, HRM practices, organizational justice, commitment HRM	High-commitment HRM and POS reliably predict IWB	Gender moderates POS–IWB relationship; effect stronger for females in some contexts (Al-Taie & Khattak, 2024)
Organizational Climate & Culture	9	Innovation climate, organizational culture, autonomy, voice	Innovative climate and autonomy positively and consistently relate to IWB	The effect of voice depends on type: constructive voice enhances IWB; defensive voice shows

				weaker effect (Botha & Steyn, 2022)
Individual & Personality Factors	8	Proactive personality, openness, PsyCap, cultural intelligence	Proactive personality and openness positively predict IWB	Personality effects are moderated by tenure; newcomers show weaker personality–IWB links (Woods et al., 2017)
Digital & Contextual Factors	10	ICT adoption, fintech, socialization, business model innovation, hybrid work	IWB is positively associated with digital enablement and tech proficiency	Limited longitudinal evidence; most findings cross-sectional. Context-specificity (fintech vs. public sector) limits generalizability

The thematic synthesis reveals several important patterns. First, the Leadership and IWB cluster (n = 18) is the most extensively studied, with transformational and servant leadership emerging as the most consistent predictors. However, the magnitude of the leadership–IWB relationship varies substantially depending on innovation climate and task complexity, suggesting that leadership operates as an enabler rather than a direct driver of IWB. Second, psychological mechanisms—particularly work engagement and self-efficacy—function as the primary pathways through which distal antecedents such as leadership and HRM translate into IWB, consistent with social cognitive theory. Third, the workload–IWB relationship is notably non-linear: Montani et al. (2020) documented an inverted-U pattern where moderate workload facilitates and high workload suppresses IWB, a finding not yet replicated in other contexts. Fourth, gender emerges as an underexplored moderator; Al-Taie and Khattak (2024) found that the POS–IWB effect is stronger for female employees, yet this finding lacks cross-cultural replication. Fifth, the digital cluster reveals that IWB in ICT, fintech, and hybrid work contexts shares the same underlying psychological mechanisms as traditional settings but is amplified or constrained by employees' digital efficacy and organizational digital infrastructure.

Methodological Profile of the Reviewed Articles

Quantitative survey designs dominate the literature, with structural equation modeling (SEM) and partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) used in approximately 60% of the empirical articles. Longitudinal designs are rare (Kim, 2022; Montani et al., 2020), and qualitative or mixed-method studies represent fewer than 15% of the sample (Miller, 2020; Essen et al., 2022; Parnitvitidkun et al., 2024; Kabasheva et al., 2015). This methodological profile indicates a field oriented toward hypothesis testing and mediation-moderation modeling, with limited depth in process-level understanding of how IWB unfolds in daily organizational practice.

DISCUSSION

Answering RQ1: The Evolution of IWB Research

The findings document a clear evolutionary arc in IWB research across six eras. In the Early Era (1969–1989), attention centered on organizational structure (Freeman, 1969; Hull & Hage, 1982) and the introduction of role innovation as an individual-level construct (West, 1987a, 1987b). The Conceptualization Era (1990–2005) produced the foundational multidimensional models of IWB (Woodman et al., 1993; Scott & Bruce, 1994) and early empirical evidence linking IWB to climate, self-efficacy, and job design.

The Development Era (2006–2015) was characterized by instrument refinement and the empirical examination of social exchange mechanisms. De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) and Messmann and Mulder (2012) produced the measurement tools that enabled subsequent large-scale empirical work. The Integration Era (2016–2020) saw a significant broadening of the antecedent space, with studies systematically linking IWB to multiple leadership styles, work engagement, psychological capital, and organizational justice in cross-sector samples.

The Consolidation and Review Era (2021–2023) is marked by the emergence of SLRs and bibliometric studies as a genre, reflecting the field's maturity and the need to synthesize its accumulated knowledge. The Digital and Multilevel Era (2024–2026) represents the newest frontier, extending IWB scholarship into fintech (Alsudays, 2026), ICT professional contexts (Parnitvitidkun et al., 2024), business model innovation (Hock-Doepgen et al., 2024), and the public sector under conditions of digital transformation (Oh & Sabharwal, 2025). Across these eras, the overall trajectory is one of increasing complexity, multi-level specificity, and contextual sensitivity.

Answering RQ2: The IWB Ecosystem and Its Propositions

The thematic synthesis supports the conceptualization of IWB as an ecosystem phenomenon rather than a product of isolated antecedents. Figure 1 presents the IWB ecosystem model, which organizes four interacting layers—individual psychological resources, social and relational factors, organizational support systems, and digital contextual factors—around a central innovation outcomes core. The model is grounded in the theoretical integration of socio-technical systems theory (which accounts for the digital layer), social exchange theory (which accounts for the organizational support and relational layers), and self-determination theory (which accounts for the psychological resource layer).

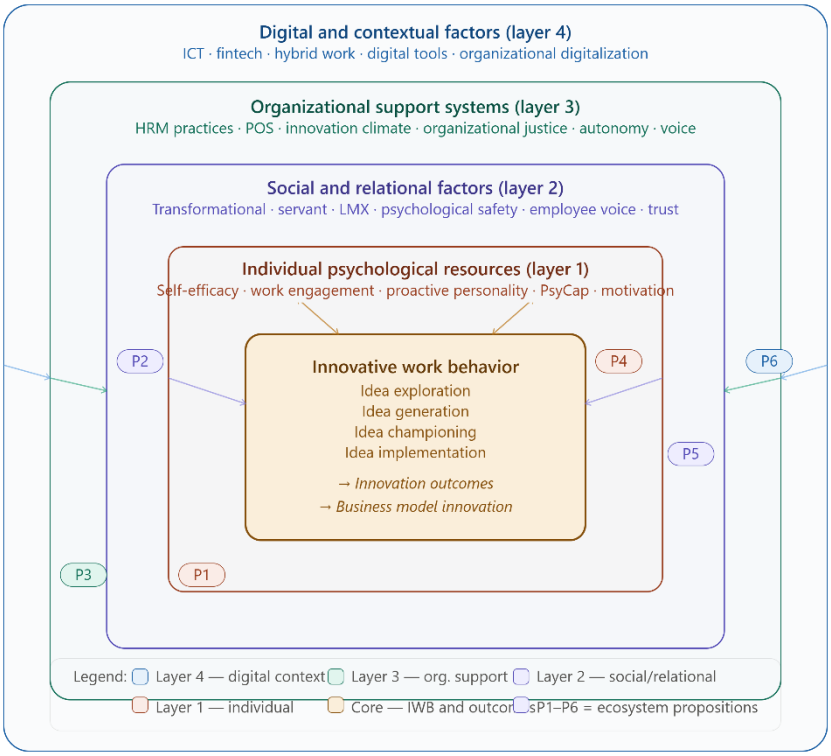

Figure 1. The IWB Ecosystem: Interacting Layers and Propositions

To provide a theoretically grounded and empirically testable extension of the ecosystem model, six propositions are derived from the thematic synthesis. These propositions specify the mechanisms and boundary conditions through which the ecosystem operates, addressing the limitation of prior IWB models that treated antecedents as independent additive predictors rather than interacting ecosystem components. Table 5 presents the propositions with their supporting evidence.

Table 5. Ecosystem Propositions for IWB Research

Prop.	Statement	Supporting Evidence
P1	Individual psychological resources (self-efficacy, PsyCap, proactive personality) positively predict IWB; these effects are amplified when organizational support is high.	Choi et al. (2021); Ullah et al. (2023); Afsar et al. (2020)
P2	Transformational and servant leadership promote IWB indirectly through psychological safety and work engagement; effect strength is moderated by innovation climate.	Afsar & Umrani (2019); Xiao et al. (2025); Lin (2023)
P3	High-commitment HRM practices create conditions for IWB by signaling organizational investment and enabling skill development and experimentation.	Dorenbosch et al. (2005); Thneibat (2026); Al-Taie & Khattak (2024)

P4	The relationship between workload and IWB follows an inverted-U pattern, mediated by work engagement; moderate workload is most conducive to innovation.	Montani et al. (2020); Zhu et al. (2023)
P5	Constructive employee voice mediates the relationship between psychological safety and IWB; defensive or destructive voice does not carry this effect.	Botha & Steyn (2022); Lin (2023)
P6	Digital contextual factors (ICT adoption, digital tools, fintech environment) positively moderate the individual capacity–IWB relationship, especially when accompanied by digital learning support.	Parnitvitidkun et al. (2024); Hock-Doepgen et al. (2024); Alsudays (2026)

Inconsistent Findings and Boundary Conditions

A key contribution of this review is its systematic attention to findings that do not align with the dominant positive narrative about IWB antecedents. Three areas of meaningful inconsistency are identified. First, the workload–IWB relationship is not uniformly positive. Montani et al. (2020) provide robust evidence for an inverted-U pattern in which moderate workload stimulates engagement and creativity while high workload depletes psychological resources and suppresses IWB. This finding has not yet been replicated in digital or public sector contexts, where workload configurations may differ substantially.

Second, employee voice is not uniformly beneficial for IWB. Botha and Steyn (2022) demonstrated that constructive voice—defined as upward communication aimed at improving organizational functioning—significantly predicts IWB, while defensive voice (self-protective communication) shows no significant effect. This finding implies that organizational interventions to 'increase voice' may be ineffective unless they specifically cultivate the psychological safety that enables constructive rather than defensive voice.

Third, the role of gender as a moderator remains poorly understood. Al-Taie and Khattak (2024) found that POS predicts IWB more strongly for female employees, potentially because women face greater structural barriers that organizational support specifically helps to overcome. However, this interpretation is speculative without cross-cultural replication, and its generalizability to contexts outside the Gulf region is unknown. These inconsistencies highlight the need for targeted future research that tests specific boundary conditions rather than continuing to accumulate broad main-effect findings.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this review makes three contributions. First, it introduces a formally specified ecosystem model with testable propositions, moving beyond the antecedent-listing approach that characterizes most prior SLRs on IWB. Second, it demonstrates that socio-technical systems theory provides an underutilized but highly appropriate lens for understanding IWB in digitally

transformed organizations. Third, it highlights the interactive—rather than additive—nature of IWB antecedents, consistent with complex adaptive systems thinking.

Practically, the ecosystem perspective suggests that organizations seeking to strengthen IWB must attend to all four ecosystem layers simultaneously. Leadership development programs that increase transformational and servant leadership behaviors are necessary but insufficient unless accompanied by HRM practices that signal organizational investment, climates that provide psychological safety, and digital tools that lower the cost of experimentation. Organizations should also design structured voice mechanisms—such as innovation suggestion systems, cross-functional idea labs, and psychological safety training—to ensure that employee voice takes a constructive form that translates into implemented innovation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This systematic literature review synthesized 61 articles on innovative work behavior published between 1969 and 2026. The review documented six developmental eras, identified six thematic clusters, and proposed an ecosystem model with six testable propositions. The central conclusion is that IWB is not a product of isolated antecedents but an emergent outcome of the dynamic interaction among individual psychological resources, relational and social factors, organizational support systems, and digital contextual enablers. This ecosystem perspective, grounded in socio-technical systems theory, social exchange theory, and self-determination theory, provides a more complete and actionable account of IWB than prior models that treat antecedents as independent predictors.

For organizations, the practical implication is clear: building a culture of innovation requires integrated ecosystems, not isolated interventions. Supportive leadership, psychological safety, commitment-oriented HRM, constructive voice channels, and digital learning infrastructure must be aligned if employees are to move from idea generation to implementation. For researchers, the ecosystem propositions derived in this review provide a structured agenda for multilevel and longitudinal inquiry in the next phase of IWB scholarship.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Limitations

This review has four principal limitations. First, although nine major databases were searched, the reliance on English-language peer-reviewed sources may have excluded relevant studies published in other languages or in grey literature. Second, the analysis is primarily thematic and descriptive; no statistical meta-analysis was conducted, and effect-size estimates are therefore not provided. Third, the quality assessment, while operationalized through a structured rubric, involved subjective judgment, and the possibility of confirmation bias in coding cannot be entirely excluded despite the inter-rater agreement procedure. Fourth, the bibliometric component of the analysis

remained descriptive; a fully quantitative co-citation or keyword co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer or Bibliometrix was beyond the scope of the present study and should be pursued in future work.

Future Research Directions

Based on the thematic synthesis and the identified gaps, five specific future research directions are proposed:

- Longitudinal and experience-sampling designs. Future research should employ longitudinal panel designs and experience-sampling methodology (ESM) to capture the within-person, day-level dynamics of IWB—particularly how psychological safety and engagement fluctuate over time and how these fluctuations predict idea championing and implementation behavior.
- Testing the inverted-U workload–IWB relationship. The inverted-U pattern documented by Montani et al. (2020) requires replication in digital work contexts, remote and hybrid settings, and public sector organizations, where workload configurations and cognitive demands differ meaningfully from the private-sector contexts in which it was originally observed.
- Gender, diversity, and boundary conditions of support. Research should systematically examine how gender, cultural background, and organizational tenure moderate the relationships between organizational support, POS, and IWB across different national and sector contexts, building on the initial evidence from Al-Taie and Khattak (2024).
- IWB in digital transformation contexts. As organizations undergo rapid digital transformation, future research should investigate how artificial intelligence tools, automation, and hybrid work arrangements reshape the opportunities and constraints for IWB—particularly through the lens of digital self-efficacy and technology-mediated psychological safety.
- Cross-cultural and multi-country comparative studies. The existing IWB literature is heavily weighted toward single-country studies, many from East Asia and the Gulf region. Comparative studies across institutional environments with different innovation cultures, labor market structures, and HRM systems are needed to establish the cross-cultural generalizability of the ecosystem propositions.

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