

Service Innovation in the Workplace - How Does It Emerge?

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How does **service innovation** emerge and what are relevant antecedents? To answer this question, we briefly review the findings from key empirical studies. Furthermore, we provide new insights from our own research (Kriegl, Woratschek, & Raab, 2021a).

Employees at all levels are needed to develop, promote, discuss, modify, and implement new ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994). **Innovative work behavior** is expressed in the **intentional** creation, introduction, and application of new ideas (Janssen, 2000) and leads to service innovation.

Table 1 shows the antecedents of innovative work behavior according to the state of the literature prior to our study. So far, studies have mainly focused on **personality traits, leadership styles, and organizational climate**.

Considering the **logic of value co-creation** (Woratschek, 2020), innovative work behavior requires different types of **collaboration**. Collaboration has the power to drive service innovation in the workplace because everyone brings **unique knowledge, abilities, and skills** to the table. When people collaborate, new ideas emerge as unique perspectives intermingle. Many organizations have already recognized the importance of collaboration. The perhaps most well-known example is Apple, which brought together experts from different departments across the business to develop the revolutionary iPhone (Boutchard, 2021).

The aim of our pre-study on the **innovative work behavior of hospital employees** was therefore to identify relevant types of collaboration. The results are presented in table 2. The interviews show very clearly that innovative work behavior is positively influenced by **collaboration with customers, frontline employees, employees of other departments, and people outside the organization**.

If you want to know how decisive the influence of collaboration is in relation to other antecedents, such as proactive personality and innovation climate, please read Kriegl, Woratschek, and Raab (2021b). Details on the study can be found in our scientific publication Kriegl et al. (2021a).

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Author(s)	Research context	Approach	Antecedents
Scott and Bruce (1994)	US industrial company	Dyads of self and external assessment (n=172)	Problem-solving style, leader-member exchange, climate for innovation
Axtell et al. (2000)	Beverage manufacturer in England	Self-assessment (n=148)	Self-efficacy, support for innovation
Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant (2001)	University in the US	Dyads of self and external assessment (n=180)	Proactive personality
Yuan and Woodman (2010)	US companies from different industries (information technology, computer systems design, manufacturing)	Dyads of self and external assessment (n=238)	Leader-member exchange, support for innovation
Kao, Pai, Lin, and Zhong (2015)	Hair salons in Taiwan	Dyads of self and external assessment (n=269)	Self-efficacy, transformational leadership, climate for innovation
Shanker, Bhanugopan, van der Heijden, and Farrell (2017)	Listed Malaysian companies	Self-assessment (n=202)	Climate for innovation
Woods, Mustafa, Anderson, and Sayer (2018)	Financial company in the UK	Dyads of self and external assessment (n=146)	Openness to experience, conscientiousness
Nazir, Shafi, Asadullah, Qun, and Khadim (2020)	Pakistan companies from different industries (information technology, manufacturing, financial services, pharmaceuticals and healthcare)	Dyads of self and external assessment (n=397)	Paternalistic leadership, leader-member exchange
Khan et al. (2021)	Pakistan service companies	Self-assessment (n=689)	Servant leadership

Table 1: Literature Review on the Antecedents of Innovative Work Behavior

Collaboration	Definition	Anchor quote
External work collaboration	The degree to which the contacts with individuals or groups outside the organization are frequent and close	“In [city], there was a lot of contact with the technical subjects at the university in terms of innovative techniques and how to use those techniques for medical purposes.” (E4)
Cross-functional collaboration	The degree to which the cross-functional interactions are frequent and close	“As a multidisciplinary subject, we are constantly in exchange with other departments. And of course, new approaches are always emerging from these contacts.” (E4)
Frontline employee collaboration	The degree to which the interactions with frontline employees are frequent and close	“My work is made easier by the fact that I have an incredibly great team. They all work closely together and among them are creative minds who also come to me on their own initiative and make suggestions.” (E5)
Customer collaboration	The behavior of customers indicating active and responsible involvement in the governance and development of the organization	“Feedback is invaluable. Not everything patients ask for is really innovative. But you definitely have to listen to them and then decide what direction we could go.” (E10)

Table 2: Types of Collaboration.

To put it in a nutshell:

1. **Innovative work behavior** is expressed in the **intentional** creation, introduction and application of new ideas.
2. **Personal and organizational antecedents** in particular have been identified as conducive in previous studies.
3. The **logic of value co-creation** points out that the collaboration of different people has been neglected so far.
4. Service innovation is a **collaborative process**, so the knowledge and skills of other actors also play an important role.
5. Empirical findings show **four types of collaboration** conducive to innovative work behavior: **external work** collaboration, **cross-functional** collaboration, **frontline employee** collaboration, and **customer** collaboration.

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