

Personality, Collaboration, or Climate: What Most Fosters Innovative Work Behavior? – Empirical Findings in German Hospitals

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Research by McKinsey showed that 94% of executives believe that **people, organizational culture, and climate** are the most important **drivers of service innovation** (Barsh, Capozzi, & Davidson, 2008).

The purpose of a large-scale survey of **hospital employees** was to examine the influence of differences in proactive personality, collaboration, and innovation climate on **employees' innovative work behavior** (Kriegl 2023). The main purpose of the study is to find out **what most fosters innovative work behavior** and thus service innovation. Below is a brief description of the antecedents included in our research model. For more details on the study, see Kriegl, Woratschek, and Raab (2021a) and Kriegl (2023).

Antecedents of Innovative Behavior

1. Proactive Personality

Proactive individuals can free themselves from circumstantial pressures, identify opportunities, **take initiatives**, and thus influence the environment to create meaningful change (Crant, 1995). Several researchers have examined several potential outcomes of proactive personality in the work context. For example, Kim, Hon, and Crant (2009) showed that proactive personality is positively associated with the development of valuable new ideas.

2. Collaboration

Collaboration includes working with customers, frontline employees, employees of other departments, and people outside the organization (Kriegl, Woratschek, & Raab, 2021b). Collaboration enables employees to draw on relevant resources from a **network of people with different knowledge and problem-solving approaches** when developing and implementing ideas.

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3. Innovation Climate

Innovation climate refers to an organizational climate that is **open to change and supportive of new ideas** (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Previous studies have consistently shown that such a work environment encourages employees to engage in innovative activities (e.g., Shanker, Bhanugopan, van der Heijden, & Farrell, 2017).

Results

The results confirm the relevant influence of proactive personality and innovation climate on innovative work behavior from previous studies. Moreover, the study introduced **collaboration** as a **significant and meaningful** antecedent condition. Indeed, collaboration is **much more influential** than innovation climate.

What do we learn from this? By focusing on **getting the most out of collaboration** with customers, frontline employees, employees of other departments and people outside the organization, managers can get greater value from existing resources without launching a large-scale change management program. Existing networks of employees should be analyzed, such as the frequency and extent of interactions. This information can help **create an effective network for collaboration**.

To put it in a nutshell:

1. Proactive people **actively** seek to bring about change in their environment.
2. **Collaborative employees** can draw on relevant resources from a network of people.
3. Innovation climate is an **atmosphere** in the organization that fosters service innovation.
4. Proactive personality, collaboration, and innovation climate have a **significant positive impact** on employees' innovative work behavior.
5. Collaboration plays a much **greater role** than innovation climate.
6. Before embarking on major projects to change organizational culture and climate, managers should **explore the potential of collaboration**.

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