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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

# PROPOSING A MODEL FOR FACTORS AFFECTING INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR*

## YENİLİKÇİ İŞ DAVRANIŞINI ETKİLEYEN FAKTÖRLERE YÖNELİK BİR MODEL ÖNERİSİ

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**Abstract**

Innovative work behaviour has emerged as a key concept amid growing competition and the swift advancement of technology, along with the factors and models that impact innovative work behaviour, remain a compelling area of research. Based on studies showing that innovative work behaviour has a positive impact on the performance of academics, this study aims to analyse the effects of individual absorptive capacity, employee work engagement, networking, and social media use on the innovative work behaviour of academics. To identify the factors affecting innovative work behaviour of academics, this study proposes a model integrating individual

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concepts such as individual absorptive capacity, work engagement, networking, and social media usage within the framework of social exchange theory and the theory of exploration and exploitation.

**Keywords:** Individual absorptive capacity, Work engagement, Networking, Social media usage, Social exchange theory (SET), Theory of exploration and exploitation, Networking theory, Innovative work behaviour (IWB)

**Öz**

Yenilikçi iş davranışı, rekabetin artması, teknolojinin değişiminin hızlanmasıyla birlikte dikkat çeken bir kavram olmuştur ve yenilikçi iş davranışını etkileyen faktörler ve modeller hala ilgi çeken bir araştırma alanıdır. Yenilikçi iş davranışının, akademisyenlerin performansını olumlu yönde etkilediğine dair yapılmış çalışmalardan yola çıkarak, bu çalışma akademisyenlerin bireysel özümseme kapasitesi, işe angaje olma, ağ oluşturma ve sosyal medya kullanımının yenilikçi iş davranışı üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada akademisyenlerin yenilikçi iş davranışını etkileyen faktörleri belirlemek için sosyal değişim teorisi ile yenilikleri keşfetme ve mevcudu geliştirme teorisi kapsamında bireysel özümseme kapasitesi, işe angaje olma, ağ oluşturma ve sosyal medya kullanımı gibi bireysel kavramları entegre eden bir model önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bireysel özümseme kapasitesi, İşe angaje olma, Ağ oluşturma, Sosyal medya kullanımı, Sosyal değişim teorisi, Yenilikleri keşfetme ve mevcudu geliştirme teorisi, Networking teorisi, Yenilikçi iş davranışı

## 1. Introduction

Due to its significant positive implications, the adoption of innovative approaches by employees in their work is increasingly regarded as a desirable outcome by contemporary organisations. Demirel & Seçkin (2008) argue that for organisations to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, mere profitability and numerical growth are insufficient; instead, innovative work behaviour has become indispensable for all organisations. In a rapidly changing and uncertain global environment, businesses must consistently be innovative to maintain competitiveness (Ghosh et al., 2019). Innovation is not solely driven by technology or financial resources. Still, it is significantly contingent upon aligning human capital, the most valuable asset of organisations with innovation processes and transforming these processes into sustainable behaviours (Simatupang et al., 2022).

An increasing amount of research has highlighted the significance of innovative work behaviour, yet the factors and models that drive this behaviour remain an ongoing scholarly interest (Inrawan et al., 2022). Kogut & Zander (1992) highlight that organisations manage their sustainable innovation strategy by developing value-added knowledge and effectively leveraging it within their domains. Therefore, identifying the factors that enable employees to generate and sustain innovative work behaviour is critical. Innovative work behaviour has been demonstrated to have a significant positive impact on job performance. In their comprehensive study on academics, Nasir et al. (2020) identified a positive relationship between innovative work behavior and employee performance. Similarly, Jia et al. (2022), in their research within the higher education sector, revealed that ethical leadership and employee engagement are key factors that positively influence innovative work behaviour.

This study will be based on Social Exchange Theory, the Theory of Exploration and Exploitation and Networking Theory. Regarding Social Exchange Theory, the focus will be on individual factors as they will be used to explain academicians' innovative work behaviour (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the existing literature, Social Exchange Theory has been used to describe work engagement, social media usage, and networking concepts factors affecting innovative work behaviour (IWB) (Zandberg & Morales, 2019; Ince, Imamoglu, & Turkcan, 2022). On the other hand, the Theory of Exploration and Exploitation has been used to explain individual absorptive capacity on innovative work behaviour (Bledow et al., 2009). Networking theory explains why individuals needs to build their network (Zandberg & Morales, 2019).

This article is organised as follows: the second section is a literature review of individual factors individual absorptive capacity, work engagement, social media usage, and networking. In the third section of the paper designing the conceptual framework will be explained with Social Exchange Theory, the Theory of Exploration and Exploitation and Networking Theory. Finally, the fourth section is dedicated for discussion and final notes for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Individual Absorptive capacity

Absorptive capacity is defined as a firm's collective ability to acquire prior knowledge, recognise its value, assimilate it, and apply it for commercial purposes (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). Absorptive capacity has typically been viewed in the literature as an organizational-level phenomenon. However, Cohen and Levinthal emphasised that an organisation's absorptive capacity depends on its employees. Recognising individuals as the foundation for organisational learning and development from their environments has driven the need to examine absorptive capacity at the individual level (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Enkel et al., 2017; Schweisfurth & Raasch, 2018). Few studies have explored this concept at the individual level to investigate its micro-foundations (Sjodin, Frishammar, & Thorgren, 2019). Individual absorptive capacity refers to a person's ability to identify, absorb, and utilise new external knowledge for commercial purposes to achieve significant results (Seo, Chae, & Lee, 2015; Tian & Soo, 2018).

A detailed examination of individual absorptive capacity is crucial, as the actions of individuals contribute to organisational outcomes within the framework of micro-foundation theories (Lowik, Kraaijenbrink, & Groen, 2016). Individuals with high absorptive capacity are more likely to drive innovation, as they can effectively utilise external knowledge and share it within their organisations and teams (Schweisfurth & Raasch, 2018).

### 2.2. Work Engagement

Work engagement is one of the key concepts introduced to management literature by positive organisational behaviour. Kahn (1990), who laid the foundation for the concept of engagement, defines it as "the harnessing of organisation members' physical, cognitive, and emotional energies into their work." Similarly, it is described as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Employees are the vital assets of an organisation, including them in a healthy working environment and maintaining their well-being is essential for the organisation's sustainability. Based on social exchange theory, we can argue that an employee's commitment to their job is a key factor in enhancing the performance of individuals who contribute to organisational sustainability (Kim & Park, 2017). By aligning employees' individual goals with the organisation's vision, we can increase the productivity of both the employees and the organisation (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Employees who are engaged are valuable assets to an organisation because their high level of commitment propels the organisation toward success (Bakker et al., 2008). Therefore, these individuals are fully integrated into their work, have high levels of energy, and channel that energy into creativity and organisational commitment (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). One expected outcome of work engagement is innovative work behaviour. A limited number of studies investigating this relationship have found that employees who are engaged exhibit maximum levels of performance, are passionately committed to their work, and demonstrate innovative behaviour (Wang et al., 2017; Rao, 2017). Amalina & Pusparini's (2023) study also found that engagement positively impacts innovative work behaviour.

### 2.3. Social Media Usage

In the contemporary age of information and technology, social media has gained a critical position as a producer, provider, and disseminator of information with the advancement of global communication. Social media platforms offered through the internet have become global applications that allow people to simply share text, images, audio, and video files. Due to the increased presence of mobile devices in daily life and their growing use in the workplace, social media usage is believed to influence individuals' innovative behaviours. Social media applications are becoming increasingly valuable platforms in professional life for personal communication and knowledge sharing. This is because routine life activities, which directly impact employees' behaviour, are integrated with social media; employees utilise social media for both professional and personal reasons (Song et al., 2019). Due to the result of these developments, employee behaviour has evolved into a more complex structure influenced by various antecedents. Recently, the literature has begun to examine how social media usage might affect employees' job performance, particularly their innovative work behaviour. The availability of applications designed for social media or instant messaging and their impact on innovative behaviour are among the topics expected to be researched.

Ince, Imamoglu, and Turkcan (2022) conducted a study observing how social media usage has a moderating effect on the relationship between individual absorptive capacity and creativity. The

findings of the study supported that social media usage plays a moderating role in this relationship, and this new finding supports social exchange theory; as social exchange relationships create positive attitudes towards work among employees. Recent studies have shown that academics are more willing to share information via social media, which enables interaction between other academics, students, and society (Chugh, Grose, & Macht, 2021). Academics who demonstrate innovative work behaviour use social media for innovative projects, research, and educational methods.

### 2.4. Networking

Universities have long been called upon to be more creative and entrepreneurial. The ability to cultivate innovative students is closely linked to academic and administrative staff innovation, and a shift from bureaucratic organisational structures – typical of the public sector – to more dynamic and innovative management structures is expected. Therefore, this research aims to examine whether the increasing networking behaviour of universities is associated with more innovative work behaviours.

Research suggests that establishing collaborations with individuals from external stakeholders creates opportunities for the sharing of job-related knowledge, which often leads to increased innovative work behaviours (Kamasak & Bulutlar, 2010). Specifically, when employees engage with individuals outside their immediate workgroup or organization, they may encounter new ideas and information that are unfamiliar, potentially leading to innovation (Demircioglu Hameduddin, & Knox, 2023). Building and participating in networks where job-related knowledge is shared is expected to affect employees' innovative work behaviour directly. Studies in this area support this view, indicating that networking with various stakeholders provides access to a broader range of external ideas compared to internal idea-generation processes, which can lead to the creation of more complex innovations (Torugsa & Arundel, 2016). In their study, Zandber & Morales (2019) found a clear relationship between public sector managers' participation in inter-organizational networks and increased innovative behaviour. Thus, a network of various stakeholders provides a broader knowledge base and helps generate higher-quality ideas (Demircioglu, Hameduddin, & Knox, 2023).

### 2.5. Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB)

Due to the increase in competition and the accelerated pace of technological change in organisations, innovative work behaviour has become a prominent concept and there are many definitions for this concept.

In the most general meaning, West & Farr (1989) defined innovative work behaviour as all individual efforts made to develop and implement an innovation in any organisation. These individual efforts can include the use of new methods and technologies, the utilisation of new resources, and the determination of new strategies. Similarly, Scott and Bruce (1994) define innovative work behaviour as identifying problems in organisations, developing appropriate strategies for them, and implementing

ideas. Den Jong & Den Hartog (2010) described innovative work behaviour as individual behaviours aimed at generating a new and useful idea, process, or product and consciously implementing it.

Since West & Farr (1989) initiated the study of innovation-related behaviours at the individual level, scientific research in this area has been on the rise. Following their call, many authors have contributed to the examination of the field of individual innovative work behaviour, and numerous studies have been published. The studies conducted agree that individual innovativeness contributes to the success of an organisation. In a fast-changing environment, employees' innovative work behaviour is considered a key component among different types and levels of innovation, as it is individuals who generate ideas (Masood & Afsar, 2017), and especially in the last three years, there has been a significant increase in innovative work behaviour research. This may be due to the COVID-19 crisis, which has forced all sectors to focus more on innovation. As a result, developing and maintaining innovative work behaviour among employees has become a significant challenge for organisations (Al Wali et al., 2022). Ramamoorthy et al. (2005) argue that organisations must invest in their employees to foster innovation, which involves introducing and transforming techniques, processes, and operations. Janssen (2000) supports this assertion by emphasising that if organisations want to sustain a steady stream of innovation and achieve their goals, they must ensure their employees to possess the necessary skills to be innovative.

## 3. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

### 3.1. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory, based on social science disciplines such as management, psychology, and anthropology, is a widely accepted conceptual framework for understanding employee behaviour in the workplace and is commonly used in organisational studies (Cropanzano et al., 2016). It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding why employees are more or less engaged in their work and organisations. According to this theory, social exchanges refer to the relationships between two or more parties, for example, the relationship between employees and their organisations, and involve unspecified obligations between the parties through the exchange of resources (a series of interdependent interactions) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

If an organisational actor (the organisation, a manager, or a colleague) provides positive actions, employees are likely to reciprocate with positive responses through a high-quality social exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano et al., 2016). For instance, when individuals are motivated by their organisations through economic and emotional resources, they feel obligated to reciprocate and repay the organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In other words, employees will want to respond by developing positive work attitudes and voluntarily cooperating with their organisation (engaging in work, sharing knowledge between teams, and exhibiting innovative work behaviours) (Biswas, Varma, & Ramaswami, 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2016).

In summary, this theory suggests that social exchange provides benefits to individuals, encouraging them to sustain the exchange due to the rewards they gain (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). Blau (1964) also noted that the action of one party in a social exchange is contingent on the rewarding response of the other party involved in the relationship. Academics who are satisfied with their institutions and work in a positive organisational environment tend to display more innovative work behaviours. It is believed that the mutual social exchange mechanism functions more effectively when each party involved in the exchange views and assesses their interactions positively. (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007; Flint Haley, & McNally, 2013). In our study, social exchange theory can be used to support the relationships between innovative work behaviour, work engagement and social media usage.

### 3.1.1. Work Engagement and Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) suggests a theoretical framework to understand why employees' level of engagement with their work and organisation increases or decreases. According to SET, relationships develop over time into trust, loyalty, and mutual commitment as long as both parties follow specific "rules" of exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). These rules typically center around reciprocity or compensation, where one party's actions trigger a matching response from the other. For instance, when employees receive economic and socioemotional resources from their organisation, they feel a sense of duty to give back by making positive contributions to the organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

SET suggests that obligations arise from a series of interactions between parties engaged in reciprocal interdependence. This is consistent with Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement, employees feel compelled to bring more of themselves into their role performances as a way of repaying the resources they receive from the organisation.

In this context, Kim & Park (2017), in their study based on social exchange theory, suggest that employee engagement plays a significant role in ensuring organisational sustainability and enhancing individual performance. Employee engagement is emphasised as a critical component for promoting organisational performance improvement, which is essential for long-term sustainability.

Hypothesis 1: Work engagement of academic staff has a significant and positive effect on innovative work behaviour.

The principles of SET support the relationship between employee engagement and innovative work behaviours. The resources and support organisations provide encourage employees to reciprocate by becoming more engaged and exhibiting innovative work behaviours. Through this mutual benefit and commitment process, individuals are more likely to act proactively and innovatively in the workplace.

### 3.1.2. Social Media Usage and Social Exchange Theory

Considering the benefits of Social Exchange Theory (SET), social media can be seen as a platform that enhances social exchange for individuals. When we evaluate social media usage in terms of individuals' motivation, it can also be analysed through the lens of SET. Similarly, Surma (2016) evaluated Facebook in this theoretical context.

Social media serves as a platform for social exchange, fostering relationships that allow individuals valuable connections. These connections can positively impact attitudes and behaviours, leading to greater productivity and engagement (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). These arguments emphasise the potential role of social media usage in strengthening the link between creativity and job performance, as suggested by Social Exchange Theory (SET). A recent study by The moderating role of social media use in the relationship between individual absorptive capacity (ACAP) and creativity was examined by Ince, Imamoglu, & Turkcan (2022) within the context of Social Exchange Theory (SET).

In this regard, social media serves as a platform that enables employees to engage, access knowledge resources, relax, collaborate, and foster new ideas (Weinberger et al., 2018). Therefore, social media usage can be a beneficial factor for R&D employees.

Hypothesis 2: Social media usage by academic staff significantly and positively affects innovative work behaviour.

### 3.2. Theory of Exploration-Exploitation

The theory of exploration and exploitation represents a broadly adopted and highly pertinent framework for distinguishing between different learning activities and innovation results (Gupta et al., 2006). Individual innovative behaviour affects organisational innovation outcomes (Simatupang et al. 2022). Thus, developing and maintaining employees' innovative behaviour has become a significant challenge for organisations (Al Wali et al., 2022). According to this theory, individual exploration and exploitation behaviours influence organisational innovation outcomes.

Park & Kim (2022) defined individual exploitation as "improving existing knowledge and ideas and extracting value by relying on previous knowledge." Exploitation involves minor adjustments in products, ideas, knowledge, etc.; it does not make significant changes, but it helps generate value by utilising existing competencies (Voss, Sirdeshmukh, & Voss 2008). Exploitation focuses on activities such as refinement, minimising variation, improving efficiency, production, and selection processes (Bledow et al., 2009; Lavie, Stettner, & Tushman 2010; March, 1991).

In contrast, Park and Kim (2022) defined individual exploration as "looking for a new idea based on new knowledge, which has not been used". Exploration involves activities that lead to the development of new products, ideas, knowledge, etc. that significantly differ from those currently in place. This activity is characterised by search, discovery and experimentation (Strobl et al., 2018).

Exploration is associated with creating diversity, new knowledge development, and assembling competencies for continuing success (March 1991). Exploration can be viewed as the intention of individuals aimed at developing innovations and advanced learning (Lee & Meyer-Doyle, 2017). Exploitation allows the organisation to embrace resources more efficiently (Benner and Tushman 2003), which will lead to productivity. Therefore, innovation development can happen. Both activities are crucial for achieving innovation success (Bledow et al., 2009 ). However, organisations must encourage individuals to engage in their jobs and develop original ideas. According to March (1991), the survival and prosperity of an organisation depend largely on its ability to discover innovations and improve existing ones.

### 3.2.1. Individual Absorptive Capacity and Theory of Exploration-Exploitation

Enhancing the existing knowledge base fosters individual absorptive capacity, laying the groundwork for innovative and valuable concepts (Ince, Imamoglu, & Turkcan 2022). This capacity enables individuals to uncover new ideas by integrating diverse information and perspectives, thereby boosting their creativity (Tiwana & McLean, 2005). Based on these studies, Individuals who possess a high level of absorptive capacity are more inclined to be innovative. Universities, in particular, can absorb knowledge through organisational members, such as academics. According to March's model (1991), organisational knowledge is produced through the learning processes of its members. The theory of exploration and exploitation can be helpful in understanding individuals' capacity to absorb external knowledge, as it incorporates past successes as a factor that affects the likelihood of generating new ideas (Gong et al., 2013).

Hypothesis 3: The individual absorptive capacity of academics significantly and positively affects innovative work behaviour.

### 3.3. Networking Theory

"Networking" is related to the concept of a "network," but it is distinct from it; the term has become popular for describing contemporary organisations, both large and small. As the notion that firms should not have rigid boundaries has gained importance, the concept of networking has gained significance (Nohria, 1992). Networking happens when individuals engage in it; it does not become an existing objective without individuals; it exists only to the extent that the individual understands and uses it (Chell & Baines, 2000). Granovetter (1985) addressed the role of personal relationships, categorising them into "strong ties" and "weak ties." Strong ties refer to close, trusting relationships with family and friends. However, since these people are likely to share similar contacts, interests and information, relying solely on strong relationships can be a disadvantage in generating new information, gaining fresh perspectives, and identifying opportunities for business growth.

On the other hand, weak ties are characterised by low-frequency and short-duration interactions. According to Granovetter (1985), the strength of weak ties lies in their ability to allow individuals to

reach beyond their immediate social circles to access a broader and more diverse range of information, advice, and assistance. Therefore, weak ties can be viewed as a key component for individuals who exhibit innovative work behaviour in obtaining information and advice from external sources.

Networking Theory is based on the assumption that personal gain motivates individuals' behaviour. Studies have shown that networking can predict career success and salary growth (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Wolff & Moser, 2009). However, networking is not the only means of advancing one's career. It can be assumed that individuals motivated by career goals will be more likely to engage in innovation to the extent that innovative behaviour is seen as an instrument in advancing their career aspirations. Empirical research indicates that networking, by enhancing access to knowledge and resources, can help explain the connection between networking activities and innovative work behaviours (IWBs) (Zandberg & Morales, 2019).

Hypothesis 4: Networking with individuals outside the organisation significantly and positively affects innovative work behaviour.

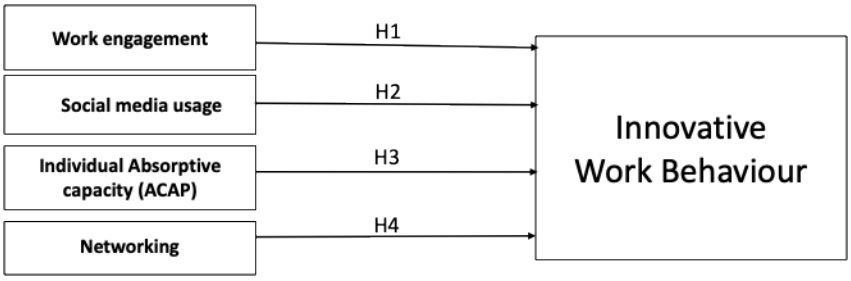



**Figure 1.** Proposed Conceptual Model

## 4. Discussion

In general, it is assumed that organisations that structure themselves in a way that encourages employees to adopt and develop innovations will achieve a higher competitive advantage. The importance of analysing the factors influencing employees' innovative work behaviour has increased in recent years. The literature shows that much of the research has focused on the outcomes (successors) of innovative work behaviour, while less attention has been given to the ones investigating its antecedents (Inrawan et al., 2022; Yuksel et al., 2023; Simatupang et al., 2022). The most important source of organisational innovation is people, and this study aims to identify the factors that influence individuals' innovative work behaviour. We were motivated to research the innovative work behaviour that stems from individuals' efforts and to propose an integrated, comprehensive model, specifically by identifying the antecedent factors of this behaviour among academics and ensuring its sustainability. The model is rooted in social exchange theory (SET),

Theory of exploration and exploitation and Networking Theory. Our model is based on well-established theoretical frameworks. These theories have a solid foundation in the literature and are widely recognised as essential models for understanding factors affecting innovative work behaviour. Integrating these theories into the proposed model provides a comprehensive approach to studying factors affecting innovative work behaviour.

Social exchange theory is an essential framework for understanding employee engagement and social media usage dynamics as factors influencing innovative work behaviour. The theory highlights the reciprocal nature of relationships within organisations, where resources and support lead to employee engagement, which in turn contributes to innovative work behaviour. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial for organisations that aim to foster environments where employees are motivated and equipped to develop and implement new ideas.

The theory of exploration and exploitation provides a framework for understanding how absorptive capacity can influence innovation. Both exploration and exploitation are essential for fostering innovation. Academics with high absorptive capacity are more inclined to engage in exploratory and exploitative activities, which enhances their ability to contribute to organisational innovation and supports the development of IWB. This balance between exploration and exploitation ultimately helps institutions drive innovation and sustain long-term success.

Networking Theory highlights the importance of forming professional relationships that extend beyond immediate social circles to foster innovation. The broader and more varied the network, the greater the potential for individuals to generate and implement new ideas, thereby enhancing their IWB.

The proposed model has useful implications for practitioners and regulatory bodies. The factors considered in the model help organisations assess their personnel's innovative work behaviour and develop suitable strategies for successful R&D implementation. Regulatory bodies can benefit from the proposed model by reviewing institutional and regulatory factors that may delay or hinder individuals' innovative work behaviour.

Consequently, we emphasise the importance of conducting rigorous, well-designed studies to test the various relationships presented in this paper empirically. The proposed model and the propositions in this paper lay the ground for understanding the context of individual factors affecting innovative work behaviour for future studies. Propositions are foundations in the process of research and analysis. They provide essential guidance to researchers for future research while they formulate hypotheses, design experiments or studies, and reach conclusions based on empirical evidence. These propositions start critical examination and evaluation to discover their validity and relatedness in understanding and explaining diverse individual factors affecting innovative work behaviour in organisations as a social phenomenon. Future studies can be conducted in the public or private sector in different countries. The insights gained from this proposed research will yield

valuable knowledge that can inform the design and implementation of innovative work behaviour, ultimately benefiting both individuals and organisations.

## 5. Limitations and Conclusions

Despite the valuable insights this study provides, it has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the proposed model is based on theoretical assumptions from Social Exchange Theory (SET), Theory of Exploration and Exploitation, and Networking Theory; although these theories are well established, they also need to be empirically validated in diverse contexts. This lack of empirical testing within the scope of the current research limits our ability to draw definitive conclusions about the relationships presented. Future studies should focus on conducting empirical investigations to test the proposed relationships in different organisational environments.

Second, the model explicitly targets factors influencing innovative work behaviour (IWB) among academics, which limits findings' generalizability to other industries or professions. Future studies might extend this model to examine the factors affecting IWB in different settings, such as private sector companies or public institutions, across various countries and cultural contexts. This broader perspective would help verify the proposed model's applicability and robustness beyond academic environments.

Third, the study emphasises individual-level factors without fully accounting for broader organisational, cultural, or regulatory influences. These environmental factors may also be crucial in shaping innovative work behaviour. Future studies could broaden the model by incorporating these contextual variables, investigating a more universal understanding of the factors that influence IWB in organisational settings.

In conclusion, the proposed integrated model contributes to understanding actors affecting innovative work behaviour by drawing on established theoretical frameworks SET, Exploration-Exploitation Theory, and Networking Theory. The model provides a comprehensive view of individual-level drivers of innovation by emphasising employee engagement, absorptive capacity, and networking activities. Practitioners and regulatory bodies can use these insights to design better policies and strategies that foster innovative work behaviour, ultimately boosting the organisation's innovation capacity and long-term success. Future research should build upon these findings to empirically validate the proposed relationships and consider additional contextual dynamics that may affect innovative work behaviour across different settings.

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