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Analyzing The Role Of Employee Self-Discipline In Fostering Innovative Behavior With An Emphasis On Environmental Contexts And Socio-Cultural Changes In The Organization

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive world, employee innovation is considered a key competitive advantage for organizations. However, the emergence of employees' innovative behavior does not solely depend on individual abilities, but is also influenced by intrapersonal factors such as self-discipline, as well as environmental contexts and socio-cultural changes within the organization. This study aimed to examine the role of self-discipline in fostering innovative behavior, emphasizing organizational environmental contexts and socio-cultural changes. The present research is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection. The statistical population consisted of employees of service organizations in Tabriz in 2025, from which 384 individuals were selected using stratified random sampling based on Cochran's formula. Data were collected using three standardized questionnaires—self-discipline, environmental context, and innovative behavior. The validity of the instruments was confirmed through expert opinions and confirmatory factor analysis, and their reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha coefficients (0.81, 0.78, and 0.84, respectively). Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS software. The results indicated that employees' self-discipline has a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior, and this relationship is strengthened in organizations with supportive environmental contexts and favorable socio-cultural changes. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that developing self-discipline skills along with improving environmental conditions and addressing organizational socio-cultural transformations play a crucial role in enhancing employee innovation.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In today's world, innovation is recognized as the driving force behind organizational development and survival in competitive environments, and fostering employees' innovative behaviors requires attention to both individual characteristics and environmental contexts. One of the key individual factors is self-discipline, defined as the ability to regulate one's behavior, emotions, and internal motivations, which plays a crucial role in channeling personal energy toward creative activities. Alongside this, organizational culture, supportive structures, and socio-cultural changes also directly and indirectly influence innovative behavior, and organizations that remain sensitive to these dynamics are better equipped to sustain and enhance innovation. The city of Tabriz, with its rich history of industrial innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, provides a unique context for examining this interaction—where a work culture blending traditional values with modern approaches creates both opportunities and challenges for innovation. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the question: "What role does employees' self-discipline play in shaping innovative behavior, and to what extent is this relationship influenced by environmental contexts and socio-cultural changes?" The study is based on the premise that self-discipline has a positive and significant effect on innovation, and that this relationship is moderated by environmental and socio-cultural factors.

Methodology

This study is applied in terms of its objective and employs a descriptive-survey method for data collection. The statistical population consisted of all employees of service organizations in the city of Tabriz in the year 2025 (approximately 6,500 individuals). Using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level, the sample size was determined to be 384 participants, who were selected through stratified random sampling proportional to population size. Data were collected using three standardized questionnaires: the Self-Discipline Questionnaire (20 items), the Environmental Context Questionnaire (15 items), and the Innovative Behavior Questionnaire (12 items). The face and content validity of the instruments were confirmed through expert review by five faculty members, while construct validity was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in AMOS, with model fit indices meeting acceptable thresholds (CFI > 0.90, RMSEA < 0.08). The reliability of the instruments was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients of 0.81, 0.78, and 0.84 for self-discipline, environmental context, and innovative behavior, respectively. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to summarize the sample and research variables, and structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS version 26 was employed to test the hypotheses. Model fit indices, including χ^2/df , GFI, CFI, and RMSEA, were reported accordingly.

Results And Discussion

The findings showed that the collected data were analyzed at both descriptive and inferential levels. In the descriptive section, the demographic composition of the sample included 55.7% male and 44.3% female participants, with the largest age group falling within the 30–40 year range (50%), indicating diversity and balance in gender and age among respondents. The mean score for innovative behavior (3.89 out of 5) was higher than that of self-discipline (3.82) and environmental context (3.75). The Cronbach's alpha values for all three variables exceeded 0.7, confirming acceptable reliability of the instruments. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated that the model fit indices for the measurement model were within acceptable ranges (CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.065, χ^2/df = 2.54), demonstrating that the conceptual model aligned well with the data. Furthermore, the structural model test revealed that the direct effects of self-discipline on innovative behavior (path coefficient = 0.47, t = 5.62), environmental context (coefficient = 0.36, t = 4.28), and socio-cultural changes (coefficient = 0.29, t = 3.95) were all positive and statistically significant, thereby confirming the research hypotheses. Overall, the findings indicated that individual, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions synergistically shape employees' innovative behavior. The study concludes that employees' self-discipline, as an intrinsic personal trait, significantly enhances their ability to generate innovative ideas and plays a vital role in fostering innovation. Supportive work environments, by providing opportunities for learning, dialogue, and psychological support, amplify the effect of self-discipline and create the necessary conditions for employees' creativity to flourish. Moreover, organizational socio-cultural changes and managerial acceptance of these changes contribute to institutionalizing an innovation-oriented culture and enhancing employees' innovative behavior. The good fit of the conceptual model in the SEM analysis and the high reliability of the instruments validate the findings and support the generalizability of the model to similar contexts. Therefore, organizations are advised to simultaneously focus on developing individual skills, improving environmental conditions, and managing socio-cultural transformations. From a practical perspective, it is recommended to implement training programs to strengthen employees' self-discipline, along with reforming organizational structures and promoting a culture of innovation, in order to maximize employees' innovative potential. By presenting a comprehensive model that integrates individual, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions, this study offers a valuable guide for designing managerial strategies to enhance organizational innovation and serves as an inspiration for future research in related fields.