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Research Article

Nexus between Organizational Justice and Innovative Work Behavior: The mediating role of Knowledge Sharing *1Gohar Nadeem | ²Qamar Afaq Qureshi

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1 | INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT

This research paper has assessed the nexus between organizational justice and innovative work behavior. Also mediating role of knowledge sharing was assessed. Three facets model of OJ has been extensively researched in the last couple of decades. However, spatial and temporal justice has been incorporated in the current paper. Thus, SJ, TJ, Interactional, Procedural and Distributive justice were conceptualized as facets of OJ and their impact on IWB was assessed. Academicians were inquired whether or not perceptions relating to fairness affect their IWB's level at workplace. Furthermore, mediating effect of KS between OJ and IWB was also assessed. A strong positive association was found among the research variables. Predictor significantly affect criterion variable and composite as well as component level assessment of OJ revealed KS as partial mediator between IV and DV.

KEYWORDS

Organizational Justice, Knowledge Sharing, Innovative Work Behavior, Academicians, Public Sector Universities (HEIs)

In the current era of intense competition, managers must possess diverse qualities to enhance performance and sustain the success of their organizations. One crucial factor is innovative work behavior, characterized as the purposeful generation, formulation, and application of novel ideas within a work role, group, or firm. This proactive approach aims to improve the performance of an individual, group, or entire organization, underlining its significant contribution to overall success (West & Farr, 1989).

According to Randeree (2008), organizational justice (OJ) revolves around ensuring the equitable treatment of employees. Coined by Greenberg in 1987, the term exemplifies perceptions and reactions of individuals to the fairness they experience within the firm. Justice, in this context, pertains to actions or decisions that align with moral and ethical principles and can be intertwined with aspects such as law, ethics, and religion. Within organizational settings, fairness or justice encompasses issues related to perceptions of equitable compensation, promotion opportunities and fairness in selection process (Tabibnia et al., 2008). Conversely, instances of injustice stand in stark contrast to the scenarios mentioned above.



OJ plays a crucial role in shaping the innovative work behavior of employees. Moreover, the knowledge indispensable for innovating products, services, and business policies is equally significant. Hence, it is justifiable to assert that innovation is linked to knowledge and its dissemination within organizations. Numerous studies on knowledge management and organizations have affirmed that employees' sharing of knowledge enhances organizational performance by enhancing innovation capability (Yesil & Dereli, 2013; Liao et al., 2007; Liu & Phillips, 2011). It is widely recognized that knowledge may hinder firm's survival (Lin, 2007). It advocates the argument that, OJ and KS significantly boosts the likelihood of fostering innovative behavior and motivates employees to engage in innovative workforce. Consequently, it is crucial for a firm that how it inspires and maintains innovative behaviors amongst employees. Taking the social exchange theory into account, the present study aims to explore the impact of organizational justice on the innovative behavior of academicians in public sector universities within the KP Province, Pakistan".

The pivotal role of innovativeness which it plays in the teaching-learning environment at HEIs is widely acknowledged by the masses in general and achieving this goal relies heavily on the commitment and motivation of academic staff. The motivation levels of academicians are influenced by various factors, including organizational justice and knowledge sharing. Consequently, this research aims to deepen our understanding of IWB by scrutinizing the influence of OJ and knowledge sharing on it. Additionally, the study explores the mediating role of KS in the relationship between organizational justice and innovative work behavior. This research contributes to both theoretical and practical aspects of literature. Theoretically, it pioneers the inclusion of two novel facets of OJ (i.e., spatial & temporal justice) into the model. Furthermore, it explores the collective impact of these five dimensions of organizational justice on the innovative work behavior of academicians in public sector Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in KP. In addition, it conducts a mediation analysis, elucidating how knowledge sharing acts as a mediator between OJ and IWB. Lastly, the research provides suggestions for policy makers and suggests avenues for upcoming researchers.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR

In the contemporary business landscape, it is imperative for management to possess the capacity to explore novel approaches, foster innovation, and enhance existing processes. In this context, the significance of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) becomes increasingly pronounced, a subject that has been extensively examined in numerous studies. Scholars like Van de Ven (1986) and Janssen (2000) emphasize that "this capability of employees is of utmost significance; not only within the realm of academic literature on innovation but also in areas such as corporate entrepreneurship (Sharma & Chrisman, 1999) and TQM" (McLoughlin & Harris, 1997). Furthermore, Jeroen et al., (2008) highlight that IWB not only involves exploring opportunities and generating new ideas, but it can also encompass behaviors aimed at implementing change, applying new knowledge, or enhancing processes to improve performance at individual level or at group level. In general, it is clear that "IWB is perceived to cover a wide range of behaviors related to idea generation, garnering support for those ideas, and assisting in their implementation" (Scott & Bruce, 1998; Janssen, 2000).

2.2 | ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

The roots of Organizational Justice (OJ) can be traced back to moral philosophy, originating from the works of philosophers like Plato and Aristotle and progressing through the contributions of notable thinkers such as Hegel, Hume, Locke, and Hobbes (Greenberg & Bies, 1992; Colquitt et al., 2005; Jost & Kay, 2010). Initially centered on normative writings that addressed what societies should do and how individuals should treat each other, this body of work has transitioned into the realm of social science, exploring how people form judgments about these norms and respond to perceived violations. Eventually, it turned out to how individuals perceive situations as fair or just. Organizational Justice has garnered significant attention as an explanatory mechanism for critical organizational outcomes within the management literature (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Colquitt, 2001).

Broadly, how employees perceive the fairness embedded in the organization's procedures, practices, and processes is anticipated to impact their behavior and outcomes in the workplace. Given that a substantial portion of organizational activities revolves around the allocation and distribution of resources, the study of justice naturally evolved to encompass the outcomes individuals receive. This fundamental concept can be framed within the context of social exchange (Masterson et al., 2000). In essence, when individuals perceive equitable treatment from the Org., they are more likely to feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate by actively contributing to the realization of the firm's goals (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Lavelle et al., 2007).

Organizational justice, being a multifaceted concept, encompasses a wide range of aspects, including the payment system and the way individuals are treated by their superiors. Scholars in the field of OB have identified three primary types of organizational justice: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Colquitt et al., 2005). Prior to 1975, the focus of OJ primarily centered on distributive justice. Traditionally, Adams (1965), through his equity theory, laid the foundation for much of the research on distributive justice (Bernerth et al., 2006). However, Thibaut& Walker (1975) extended research on OJ beyond equity theory. They put forth the concept of procedural justice and asserted that individuals not only assess justice in relation to the distribution of rewards but also consider processes that yield such results. As per Cropanzano et al., (2001), individuals, in addition to the economic significance of outcomes, also take into account their socio-emotional value. This emphasizes the quality of interpersonal relationships, encompassing elements of status and dignity. The concept of interactional justice, introduced by Bies & Moag (1986), pertains to the manner in which an employee is treated concerning the provision of clarifications for decisions and the communication of facts and figures with sympathy and respect. Countless works in industrial and organizational psychology have delved into organizational justice and its associated outcomes. To maintain employee satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty, an organization must exhibit fairness in its all three forms of justice systems. Scholars claim that personnel gauge justice not only in terms of distribution system, interpersonal interactions and outcomes but also with respect to time and space. Two novel dimensions have emerged in the realm of organizational justice: spatial justice, encompassing perceptions related to access and physical distance to resources at workplace, and temporal justice, focusing on the equitable distribution of time.

Extensive research on organizational justice has been conducted in developed countries, but there is a noticeable dearth of literature in Pakistan regarding organizational justice, particularly in the comprehensive exploration of all five dimensions: DJ, PJ, IJ, SJ and TJ. This study addresses this gap by investigating traditional aspects of OJ alongside two new elements that consider factors such as time and space, by assessing their impact on IWB among academicians in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in KP, Pakistan. The research aims to determine whether the integration of both traditional and new facets of organizational justice collectively yields a positive impact on academicians' IWB.

2.3 | KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Knowledge encompasses information processed by individuals, which consists of ideas, facts, expertise, and judgments pertinent to performance of an individual employee, team, or organization (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002; Alavi & Leidner, 2001). It involves providing task-related information and know-how to assist others, fostering collaboration for problem-solving, generating new ideas, or implementing policies and procedures. This exchange of knowledge can take place through face-to-face communications by collaborating with experts or through documentation for the benefit of others (Pulakos et al., 2003; Cummings, 2004). It's crucial to acknowledge that workers may choose to share or withhold knowledge for a variety of motives. For instance, studies indicate that individuals may engage in knowledge sharing due to altruistic motives, deriving satisfaction from helping others, or as a form of reciprocation (Kankanhalli et al., 2005). The ability of a company to transform and leverage knowledge significantly influences its organizational innovation. According to Davenport and Prusak (1998), knowledge is inherently personal, and effective knowledge management within firms relies on employees' willingness to collaborate and contribute their knowledge. Knowledge donation seeks to convert personal knowledge into firm level knowledge over time to increase the knowledge reservoir of the company. Fostering a culture within a firm, where employees contribute knowledge within groups and companies enhances the likelihood of generating fresh ideas and identifying new business opportunities, thereby facilitating innovation activities (Darroch & McNaughton, 2002). Vis-a-vis, knowledge collection involves procedure for acquiring knowledge both from internal as well as external sources. The internalization and socialization of knowledge are integral components of the knowledge collection process. Hansen (1999) proposed that effective knowledge collection is a critical factor in successfully completing projects specifically in large projects. The enhanced absorptive capacity resulting from the generation of



new ideas and improvements to firm's products can positively impact innovative performance (Jantunen, 2005). Raykov (2014) asserted that IWB serves as a decisive factor for the survival and competitiveness of organizations in the global economy. Intrinsic motivation propels employee-driven innovative work behavior, rooted in personal motivations (Shih & Sustanto, 2011). As a result, it is expected that organizational justice, when present, may integrate into this motivational framework, exerting an influence on IWB (Pieterse et al., 2009). It can be contended that organizational justice acts as a significant motivational factor, guiding employees to exhibit specific behaviors or refrain from them (Kerwin et al., 2015). Numerous studies have explored the impact of organizational justice on innovative work behavior (Silva & Caetano, 2014; Dundar & Tabancali, 2012).

Prior research indicates that knowledge sharing has emerged as one of the vital factor shaping innovative work behavior alongside organizational justice (Lu et al., 2012; Kuo et al., 2014). Knowledge sharing encompasses the processes facilitating the flow of knowledge between a source and a recipient (Cummings, 2003). An increasing number of researchers are exploring knowledge sharing due to its established link with innovation. Both knowledge donation and knowledge collection are integral concepts within knowledge sharing that impact the innovation capabilities of organizations (Zhi-hong et al., 2008). It is a fundamental avenue through which employees may engage in innovation and eventually provide the firm an edge over its competitors (Wang & Noe, 2010). The role of knowledge sharing in facilitating knowledge transfer and organizational innovation is crucial. Similarly, various researchers highlight the significance of effective knowledge management for organizational innovation (Lin, 2007). Zhi-hong et al., (2008) claimed innovative capabilities within the firm are +vely influenced by knowledge sharing within companies. Knowledge collection as well as donation as components of knowledge sharing had direct causal relationship with capabilities related to innovation (Lin, 2007; Greenberg, 1987). Kamasak and Bulutlar (2009) identified the impact of sharing of knowledge on various kinds of innovations.

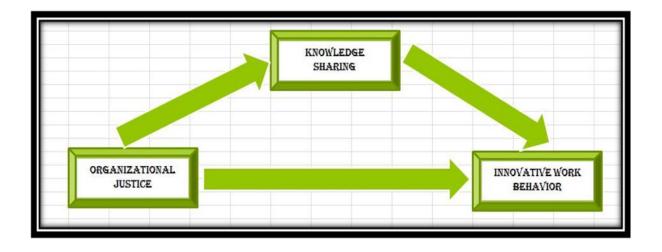


Figure 1: Theoretical Frameworks

2.4 | HYPOTHESES

H₁: Organizational justice and knowledge sharing are significantly associated with innovative work behavior.

H₂: Significant causal relation exists between predictor and criterion variable.

H₃: Connection between Organizational Justice and Innovative Work Behavior is significantly mediated by Knowledge sharing.

H_{3a}: Association between Distributive Justice and IWB is significantly mediated by KS.

H_{3b}: Link between Procedural Justice and IWB is significantly mediated by KS.

H_{3c}: Relationship between Interactional Justice and IWB is significantly mediated by KS.

H_{3d}: Temporal Justice and IWB are mediated by KS.

H_{3e}: Spatial Justice and IWB are mediated by KS.



3 | RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research's methodology can be properly understood with the help of the figure presented below.

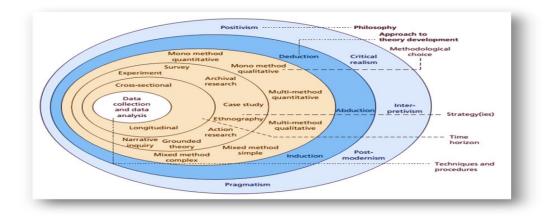


Figure 2: Research Onion (Source: Saunders et al 2016)

Considering the research onion presented above one can easily understand that its outer layer contains philosophy of the research and the central layer consists of data collection and data analysis. The current study used "positivism" as its research philosophy. Approach to theory development was "deductive" where theory is tested and conclusions are extracted from results. Strategy was based on "survey" where academicians were contacted at a "single point-in-time" (i.e., Cross sectional) through "questionnaire". Interactional, distributive and procedural components of OJ were measured through the scale of Al-Zu'bi (2010), whereas Usmani and Jamal's (2013) questionnaire was used to assess Spatial and Temporal Justice. Respondents were asked to share their opinion regarding Knowledge Sharing via scale of Lin (2007). Likewise IWB was assessed from the questionnaire of Janssen (2000). Academicians employed in public sector universities of KP (Pakistan) formed the population for the current study. Respondents were selected by using Snowball Sampling Technique (a non-probability technique) to fill the questionnaire and the number of useable surveys was 413. The current study used SPSS – 25 embedded with Process Macro developed by Hayes (2013) to calculate Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, run a linear regression and to assess mediation effect of KS.

4 | EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

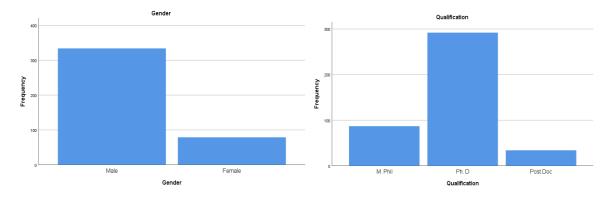


Figure 3: Bar Graph Gender and Qualification



Descriptive analysis reveals that out of 413 respondents 334 were male and 79 were female whereas on the basis of qualification, academicians were categorized as 87 having M. Phil degree, 292 have Ph. D and 34 have Post Doc. Data normality was assessed through skewness and kurtosis and as per Park, (2015) values of these tests were in the required range of +3 to -3.Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed and the results revealed the KMO values for OJ, KS and IWB as .973; .833 and .940 respectively. These values are near to 1 which indicates that data are suitable for factor analysis (Field, 2013). Cronbach's alpha values for DJ, PJ, IJ, TJ, SJ, KS and IWB were found to be .756; .890; .929; .914; .890; .869 and .923 respectively. These values are greater than the required threshold of .7 and indicate reliability of the instruments (Hair et al., 2007).

Table 1

Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Path	r	p – value	n	Remarks	
H ₁	OJ == IWB	.823	.000	413	Accepted	
	KS == IWB	.866	.000	413		

The above mentioned table contains results of PMCC.823 for OJ and IWB and PMCC's value between KS and IWB is .866; both the results are "very strong positive" as per Saunders et al., (2016). Furthermore, p –value is .000 in both of the cases which indicates that the sample results can be generalized on population. Therefore, H_1 is substantiated i.e., OJ and KS are concomitant with IWB.

	R2 = .677, F = 863.127, b = .823, Sig = .000					
Justice					Innovative Work Behavior	
Justice					Denavior	

Figure 4: Path coefficients graphical presentation

The figure presented above shows the results of regression analysis. R square value depicts 67.7% change in criterion variable is due to predictor variable. F statistic shows the model's significance indicating that IWB is significantly predicted by OJ. Beta value of .823 is a measure of the strength / direction among the link between predictor and criterion variable. Sig. has a value of 0.000 which indicates that IWB is significantly predicted by OJ. So, H₂ has been substantiated.

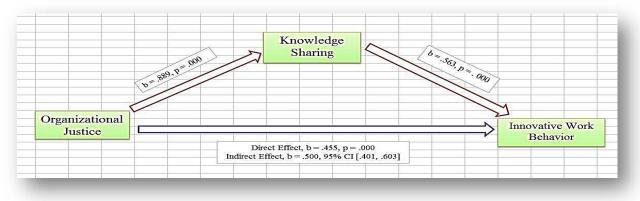


Figure 5: Mediation Results

Following the model of Hayes (2013), the mediation (i.e., model 4) is being verified by the use of process macro file. Figure shown above indicates the direct effect with beta value of .455 (p=.000); IV and M have b = .899 which is significant; M and DV have b = .563 (Significant) and indirect effect had b - value of .500 with 95% CI [.401, .603]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between OJ and IWB, thereby accepting H₃.

Table 2

Direct Effects

Hypotheses	Direct effect IV ➔ DV	IV → M	M→DV	Indirect effect IV → M→DV	LLCI-ULCI
H _{3a}	.098	.422	.806	.340	[.244; .433]
H _{3b}	.270	.634	.683	.433	[.341; .525]
H _{3c}	.207	.637	.720	.459	[.364; .548]
H _{3d}	.474	.803	.475	.381	[.297; .469]
H _{3e}	.299	.676	.671	.454	[.365; .543]

First row of the table shown above indicates the direct effect with beta value of .098 (p=.001); IV and M have b = .422 which is significant; M and DV have b = .806 (Significant) and indirect effect had b - value of .340 with LLCI –ULCI [.244, .433]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between distributive justice and IWB, thereby accepting H_{3a} . Second row of the table shown above indicates the direct effect with beta value of .270 (p=.000); IV and M have b = .634 which is significant; M and DV have b = .683 (Significant) and indirect effect had b - value of .433 with LLCI –ULCI [.341, .525]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between procedural justice and IWB, thereby accepting H_{3b} .

Third row of the table shown above indicates the direct effect with beta value of .207 (p=.000); IV and M have b = .637 which is significant; M and DV have b = .720 (Significant) and indirect effect had b - value of .459 with LLCI –ULCI [.364, .548]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between interactional justice and IWB, thereby accepting H_{3c}. Fourth row of the table shown above indicates the direct effect with beta value of .474 (p=.000); IV and M have b = .803 which is significant; M and DV have b = .475 (Significant) and indirect effect had b - value of .381 with LLCI –ULCI [.297, .469]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between temporal justice and IWB, thereby accepting H_{3d}. Fifth row of the table shown above indicates the direct effect with beta value of .299 (p=.000); IV and M have b = .676 which is significant; M and DV have b = .671 (Significant) and indirect effect with LLCI –ULCI [.365, .543]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between the avalue of .454 with LLCI –ULCI [.365, .543]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between the provide the shown above indicates the direct effect with beta value of .454 with LLCI –ULCI [.365, .543]. Thus findings confirm that KS serves as a partial mediator between spatial justice and IWB, thereby accepting H_{3e}.

5 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Today's competitive environment has forced the organizations to innovate what they offer either goods or services. Because this is the only way of survival and through this they can get users' loyalty and commitment. This innovation in turn depends on several factors including the concept of fairness at the firm level and sharing of knowledge amongst employees. The paper on hand has evaluated the nexus between OJ and IWB along with mediating role of KS amongst the academicians employed at public sector HEIs of KP, Pakistan. In the educational setting, teachers must exhibit a heightened level of innovation due to the diverse range of intellectual capacities among students, influenced by their prior educational experiences and family backgrounds. Universities, designed to promote research-driven activities and share discoveries with stakeholders, rely heavily on the innovative work behavior (IWB) by academics to successfully achieve the aforementioned goals. The first hypothesis of the study was related to correlation among research variables. The associations of Independent Variable, Mediator and Dependent Variable have been statistically evaluated which resulted in the acceptance of H₁. The research's findings are in line with the work carried out by Lin, (2007); Pan et al., (2018); Akram et al., (2016) and Akram et al., (2020).



The quantitative assessment of the causal relationship between the research variables validated the assumption, revealing a substantial impact of organizational justice on innovative work behavior. Consequently, H_2 was affirmed. Results align with previous studies by Pan et al., (2018), Akram et al., (2016, 2020), Kurniawan & Ulfah (2021), Ranjit (2021) and Fadul (2021).

The outcomes of the current study validate the third assumption and as a result H_3 was accepted (Partial Mediation was found). This finding is congruent with the research of Akram et al., (2020). Four out of five sub – hypotheses were found to be partial mediator and results are the replication of the study conducted by Park (2015), and Akram et al., (2020) however fifth sub – hypothesis has findings opposite to that of Akram et al., (2020). Psychological safety at workplace and trust on the management largely depends on fair treatment within a firm. Trust on co-workers, ultimate superiors and the company as a whole rests on the perception of employees regarding fair treatment. Exploring innovative approaches, sharing ideas and exhibiting risk taking behavior are the prominent results of psychological safety and trust. When employees sense that their ideas and contributions are genuinely valued, leading to a belief that they are treated fairly, they are more likely to actively engage in IWB. The results of this study offer robust evidence confirming significant, positive correlations among these variables (with correlation coefficients of .823 and .866 for OJ – IWB and KS – IWB, respectively, and p-values = .000). These findings enhance our comprehension of the intricate interrelationships and mutual impact these variables have on one another.

The findings indicated a notable impact of organizational justice (OJ) on innovative work behavior (IWB), with an explained variance (r^2) of 67.7%. This suggests that elevated levels of perceived organizational justice correspond to heightened participation in innovative work behavior. This discovery underscores the pivotal influence of perceptions of justice within the organization, highlighting how these perceptions significantly shape employees' tendency to exhibit innovative work behaviors. The investigation into the mediating function of KS in the connection between OJ and IWB produced compelling outcomes. The analysis revealed that the link between OJ and IWB is, partially mediated by KS which indicates that KS serves as a mechanism by which OJ influences IWB. Perceptions of justice induce employees to engage in knowledge sharing, subsequently augmenting their innovative work behavior. These findings underscore the importance of fostering knowledge – sharing practices within companies as a strategy to promote innovative outcomes. Moreover, the detailed analysis of organizational justice at the component level unveiled that the connections between D; PJ; IJ; TJ and SJ with innovative work behavior were all partially mediated by knowledge sharing (KS). These results imply that employees' perceptions of various dimensions of justice impact their likelihood to participate in innovative work behavior through the intermediary role of knowledge sharing. The study underscores the importance of cultivating a culture that encourages and amplifies knowledge sharing practices, as this can markedly elevate employees' engagement in innovative work behavior.

6 | RECOMMENDATIONS

To fortify employees' perceptions of justice across various dimensions, organizations can implement several strategies. Firstly, perception of interactional justice might be boosted by fostering respectful and supportive relationships among organizational members; secondly, distributive justice related perceptions might be enhanced when distribution of resources and availability of opportunities are available to all the employees regardless of their rank and tenure at the firm; thirdly, establishing transparent and participative decision-making processes is instrumental in elevating employees' perception of procedural justice. Additionally, perceptions concerning temporal justice may be stimulated by providing greater autonomy over time; lastly, fostering an organizational culture that underscores the significance of fairness and justice across all levels, including spatial justice is a key to promoting a comprehensive and inclusive sense of justice within the firm. Create avenues for seamless knowledge sharing among academicians by implementing platforms and tools like intranet portals, collaborative software, and online communities. Establish a culture that values and promotes knowledge sharing by acknowledging and rewarding teachers who actively participate in such activities. Bolster employees' knowledge-sharing skills through training and workshops, underscoring the significance and advantages of sharing knowledge for the success of company as well as at an individual level. Cultivate a work environment that is collaborative and supportive, fostering open communication and the exchange of knowledge among academicians. These are some of the recommendations if implemented may facilitate the innovative work behavior at a workplace. It would not only be helpful in the survival and growth of the firm but will eventually leads to prosperity and internal satisfaction of the employees.

7 | FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

To advance our understanding of the dynamics within organizations, several avenues for further research are proposed. Firstly, there is a need for in-depth exploration into how contextual factors, specifically leadership style and organizational culture, influence the intricate relationships among organizational justice, knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior. Secondly, investigating the enduring impacts of OJ and KS on IWB in the long – run is crucial for comprehensive insights. Additionally, it is essential to delve into the personality traits and IQ level in identifying and comprehending the nuanced connections between research variables. Lastly, to enhance the applicability and relevance of the findings, cross-cultural studies should be evaluate generalizability of the identified relationships across diverse cultural contexts and settings. These research avenues collectively contribute to a more holistic understanding of the multifaceted dynamics influencing organizational behavior and outcomes.

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