

BRIDGING LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION: MAPPING THE EVIDENCE ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR

MENJEMBATANI KEPEMIMPINAN DAN INOVASI: MEMETAKAN BUKTI TENTANG KEPEMIMPINAN TRANSFORMASIONAL DAN PERILAKU KERJA INOVATIF

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review synthesizes empirical evidence on the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior (IWB) across organizational contexts. Analyzing 11 high-quality studies from Scopus Q1 and Q2 journals (2018–2023), we identified three key findings: First, transformational leadership consistently enhances IWB through psychological empowerment, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Second, the strength of this relationship depends on mediators (trust, knowledge sharing) and moderators (work environment, cultural context). Third, measurement approaches for IWB vary significantly across sectors, with most studies employing quantitative methods such as the Innovation Behavior Inventory. The review reveals important geographical patterns, with substantial contributions from Asian researchers. We highlight critical gaps in current research, including inconsistent operationalization of IWB and insufficient attention to sector-specific dynamics. Our findings suggest that organizations can foster innovation by developing transformational leaders while creating supportive environments. Future research should focus on developing cross-cultural IWB measures and examining underrepresented sectors. This study contributes to leadership and innovation literature by providing a comprehensive, evidence-based framework for understanding how transformational leadership drives workplace innovation.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Innovative work behavior, Systematic review, Organizational innovation, Leadership effectiveness

ABSTRAK

Tinjauan literatur sistematis ini mensintesis bukti empiris tentang hubungan antara kepemimpinan transformasional dan perilaku kerja inovatif (IWB) dalam berbagai konteks organisasi. Dengan menganalisis 11 studi berkualitas tinggi dari jurnal Scopus Q1 dan Q2 (2018–2023), kami mengidentifikasi tiga temuan utama: Pertama, kepemimpinan transformasional secara konsisten meningkatkan IWB melalui pemberdayaan psikologis, stimulasi intelektual, dan perhatian individual. Kedua, kekuatan hubungan ini bergantung pada mediator (kepercayaan, berbagi pengetahuan) dan moderator (lingkungan kerja, konteks budaya). Ketiga, pendekatan pengukuran untuk IWB sangat bervariasi antar sektor, dengan sebagian besar studi menggunakan metode kuantitatif seperti Innovation Behavior Inventory. Tinjauan ini juga mengungkap pola geografis penting, dengan kontribusi substansial dari peneliti Asia. Kami menyoroti kesenjangan kritis dalam penelitian saat ini, termasuk operasionalisasi IWB yang tidak konsisten dan kurangnya perhatian terhadap dinamika sektor tertentu. Temuan kami menunjukkan bahwa organisasi dapat mendorong inovasi dengan mengembangkan pemimpin transformasional sekaligus menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung. Penelitian di masa depan sebaiknya difokuskan pada pengembangan alat ukur IWB lintas budaya dan eksplorasi sektor-sektor yang masih kurang terwakili. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi pada literatur kepemimpinan dan inovasi dengan menawarkan kerangka kerja berbasis bukti yang komprehensif untuk memahami bagaimana kepemimpinan transformasional mendorong inovasi di tempat kerja.

Kata kunci: Kepemimpinan transformasional, Perilaku kerja inovatif, Tinjauan sistematis, Inovasi organisasi, Efektivitas kepemimpinan

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) is a critical element in enhancing organizational competitiveness by encouraging the emergence of new ideas, creativity, and employee initiative in facing complex market dynamics. An empirical study by Alobeidli et al. (2024) emphasized that in a global business climate full of competition, IWB plays a key role in driving innovation that supports the sustainability and competitive advantage of organizations. By integrating IWB into organizational strategy, companies can proactively identify new opportunities, optimize internal processes, and adapt quickly to changes in the external environment. In line with these findings, a systematic review conducted by AlEssa & Durugbo (2021) showed that developing IWB not only increases employees' innovative capacity but also strengthens the organization's strategic position in achieving sustainable growth and performance.

Furthermore, IWB serves as an important mediator connecting various organizational concepts such as innovation culture, visionary leadership, and organizational support, which together contribute to increased operational effectiveness and competitive advantage. Research by Wojtczuk-Turek & Turek (2016) revealed that the existence of a supportive socio-organizational climate significantly influences employee innovative behaviour through the mediation of factors such as employee–organizational value fit and organizational citizenship behaviour. Thus, enhancing and measuring IWB holistically becomes a fundamental strategy for organizations seeking to not only survive but also excel in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing business environment.

Empirical research has confirmed that transformational leadership (TL) has a significant direct influence on employees' IWB. Several studies have suggested that the inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation aspects of TL enhance creativity and generate innovative ideas at the individual level. For example, Reuvers et al. (2008) highlighted that transformational leadership drives IWB through gender roles and group dynamics. Thalia & Harsanti's (2023) study showed that TL has a positive impact on IWB, especially on millennial employees, through an individualized consideration approach. In addition, Coun et al. (2021) and Khan et al. (2020) emphasized that TL not only plays a role in directly increasing IWB but also creates a climate of innovation through the creation of a supportive organizational culture, which strengthens creative interaction patterns and workflows within a company.

On the other hand, efforts to measure IWB have resulted in a variety of measurement methods applied in various research contexts. Lukeš & Stephan (2017) developed instruments such as the IBI and ISI designed to capture the micro components underlying innovative behavior in organizational settings. In addition, Afsar et al. (2014) and Afsar & Umrani (2019) used quantitative models that integrated mediating variables such as psychological empowerment to construct a more comprehensive measurement of IWB. Research by Charli et al. (2023) also showed that the work environment can modify the effects of TL on IWB, thus requiring the application of measurement methodologies that are responsive to differences in industry contexts and organizational cultures. The synergy between quantitative measurements and qualitative approaches is believed to be able to produce a deeper understanding of the dynamics of IWB and the role of TL in various organizational settings.

The relationship between TL and IWB has been the focus of attention in various empirical studies over the past two decades. Although most studies have shown that TL has the potential to promote innovative work behavior, the reported results tend to vary and have not yet produced a strong theoretical consensus. Some studies found a significant positive effect, while others reported weak or inconsistent relationships, which differences may be influenced by context, methods, and moderator variables used. This variability in findings raises the need to conduct a systematic review of the existing literature to identify common patterns, research gaps, and conceptual mechanisms linking TL to IWB. Therefore, this study was conducted in a systematic literature review (SLR) format with two main research questions:

RQ1: How is the direct influence of transformational leadership on innovative work behavior explained in various studies?

RQ2: What methods are used to measure IWB in various study contexts?

The purpose of this study is to map the influence of TL on IWB systematically and to identify and categorize the IWB measurement approaches used in the international literature. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions through the synthesis of current literature while supporting organizational practitioners in designing more effective and contextual leadership strategies in an effort to encourage employee innovation.

2. METHODS

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with reference to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. This approach was chosen to ensure transparency and replication in the process of identifying, selecting, and synthesizing literature relevant to the topic of TL and IWB. The purpose of this approach is to summarize the latest empirical evidence that has been published in internationally reputable journals and identify patterns, relationships, and gaps in previous literature to support the development of theoretical frameworks and future managerial practices.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were strictly applied to ensure the quality and relevance of the sources included in this review. The articles considered were quantitative studies published in reputable journals indexed by Scopus in quartiles 1 and 2 between the publication years 2015–2024. In addition, only articles written in English that explicitly examined the relationship between TL and IWB were included. Studies that were conceptual in nature, not available in full-text, not journal articles (e.g., proceedings or book chapters), or not topically relevant were excluded from the analysis.

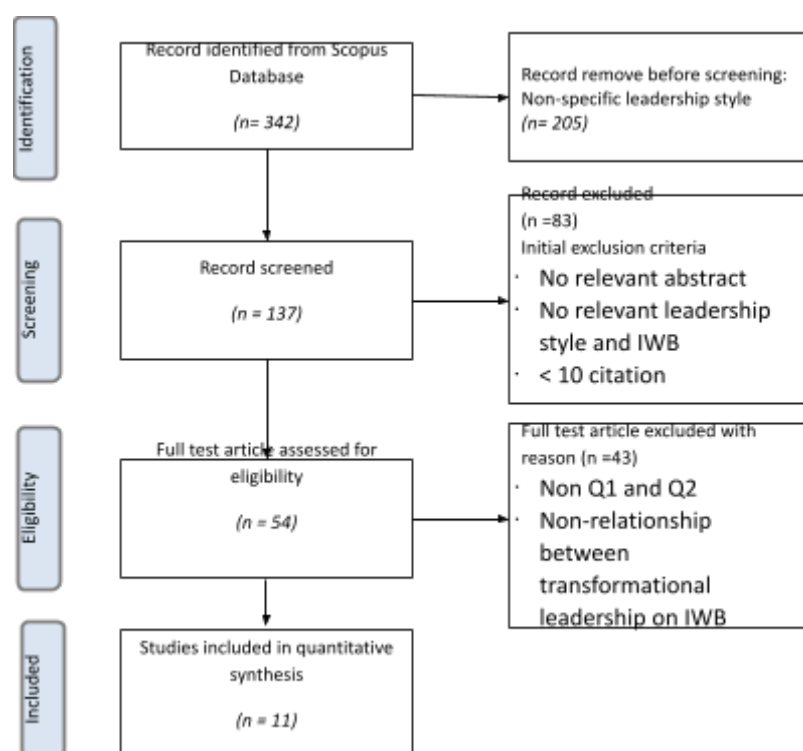


Figure 1. PRISMA Protocol

The main data source in this study is the Scopus database because it is the main indexing platform with strict journal selection standards and broad multidisciplinary coverage. The search strategy was carried out systematically using a combination of the keywords "transformational leadership" and "innovative work behavior" in the title, abstract, and keywords of the article. The selection process began with an initial screening of the title and abstract to assess initial relevance,

then continued with a full-text review of articles that met the initial requirements. After the final selection, a data extraction process was carried out, which included important information such as the year of publication, organizational context, research methods, main findings, and theoretical contributions. The extracted data were then analyzed descriptively and thematically to identify trends, relationships, and gaps in existing research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Results

Figure 2 shows the trend of publications of articles discussing the relationship between TL and IWB during the period 2018 to 2023. This data shows the fluctuation of the number of publications from year to year. In 2018 and 2019, there were two articles published each. However, there was a significant decrease in 2020 and 2021, where only 1 article was published each year. This trend increased again in 2022 with two articles and reached a peak in 2023 with three articles published. The increase in the number of publications in the last two years indicates the growing academic attention to the topic of TL and IWB, along with the need for organizations to drive post-pandemic innovation.

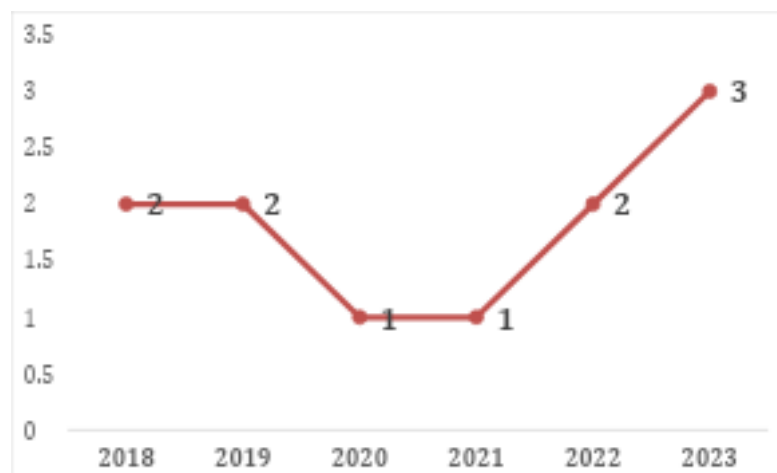


Figure 2. Article Publication per Year

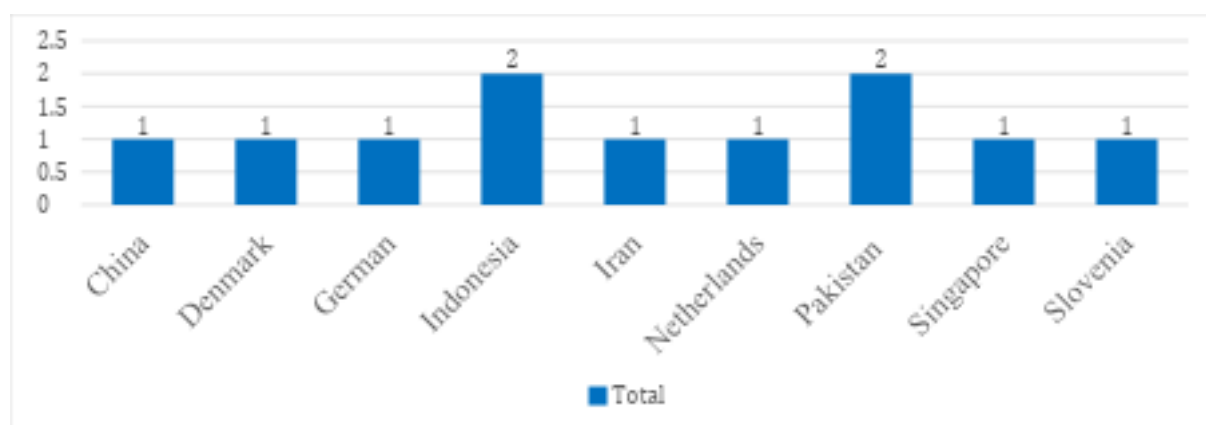


Figure 3. Geographical Distribution

Figure 3 illustrates the geographical distribution of the articles analyzed in this study. There is a diversity of countries of origin of the studies, with Indonesia, Pakistan, and Singapore each contributing two publications, indicating a high level of interest from the Asian region in studying the relationship between TL and IWB. Other countries such as China, Denmark, Germany, Iran, the Netherlands, and Slovenia each contributed one publication. This distribution reflects that the study of transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour is not limited to one particular region but is starting to receive global attention, especially in developing countries and transition economies that are seeking to improve workforce innovation capabilities through a more visionary leadership approach.

Table 1. Distribution of Publishers (n: 11)

No	Publisher	Number of Articles	Quartile
1	Elsevier B.V.	1	1
2	Emerald Group Holdings Ltd.	1	1
3	Faculty of Engineering, University of Indonesia	1	1
4	Growing Science	1	2
5	John Wiley and Sons, Inc	2	2
6	Life Science Publishing Co. Ltd	1	1
7	MDPI	1	1
8	Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)	1	1
9	SAGE Publications Inc.	1	1
10	Taylor and Francis Inc.	1	2

Table 1 presents the distribution of articles based on the name of the publisher that published articles related to the relationship between TL and IWB. There are a total of 11 articles spread across 10 different publishers. The publisher, John Wiley and Sons Inc. and Taylor and Francis Inc. are the most dominant, each publishing two articles, with a relatively high Scopus quartile (Q2). Other publishers such as Elsevier BV, Emerald Group Holdings Ltd., Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Indonesia, MDPI, SAGE Publications Inc., and Life Science Publishing Co. Ltd. each published 1 article with a distribution of quartile Q1. Meanwhile, Growing Science emerged as the only publisher with two articles included in the Q2 category. These findings indicate that research on TL and IWB has gained recognition from highly reputable publishers, which strengthens the credibility and quality of scientific work in this field. In addition, the existence of local institutions such as Universitas Indonesia shows the academic contribution of developing countries in raising the issue of leadership and work innovation to the global realm.

Table 2. Articles with the Highest Citations

No	Authors	Title	Cited by
1	Li et al. (2019)	Influence of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior in sustainable organizations: Test of mediation and moderation processes	130
2	Afsar and Masood (2018)	Transformational Leadership, Creative Self-Efficacy, Trust in Supervisor, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Innovative Work Behavior of Nurses	124
3	Grošelj et al. (2020)	Authentic and transformational leadership and innovative work behavior: the moderating role of psychological empowerment	92

No	Authors	Title	Cited by
4	Rafique et al. (2022)	Investigating the impact of pandemic job stress and transformational leadership on innovative work behavior: The mediating and moderating role of knowledge sharing	45
5	Messmann et al. (2022)	The role of basic psychological needs satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior	39
6	Günzel-Jensen et al. (2018)	A Two-Pronged Approach? Combined Leadership Styles and Innovative Behavior	35
7	Karimi et al. (2023)	The Role of Transformational Leadership in Developing Innovative Work Behaviors: The Mediating Role of Employees' Psychological Capital	34
8	Purwanto et al. (2023)	Investigating the role of digital transformation and human resource management on the performance of the universities	33
9	Tan et al. (2021)	Innovative work behavior in Singapore evoked by transformational leaders through innovation support and readiness	29
10	Bracht et al. (2023)	Innovation across cultures: Connecting leadership, identification, and creative behavior in organizations	24
11	Santoso et al. (2019)	The role of digital literacy in supporting performance through innovative work behavior: The case of Indonesia's telecommunications industry	23

Table 2 details the eleven selected articles reviewed in this systematic study, which discuss the relationship between TL and IWB. The most cited article is the study by Li et al. (2019), with 130 citations, showing the influence of transformational leadership on employee innovative behaviour in sustainable organizations through mediation and moderation tests. Followed by Afsar and Masood (2018) with 124 citations, which highlights the role of self-efficacy and trust in the supervisor. Other articles such as Grošelj et al. (2020), Rafique et al. (2022), and Messmann et al. (2022) enrich the study by highlighting psychological aspects such as psychological empowerment, job stress, and need satisfaction. The majority of articles were published in the last three years (2021–2023), indicating the increasing academic attention to this topic in contemporary times. The diversity of geographical backgrounds and methodological approaches of each article enhances the depth of this systematic analysis. In addition, the existence of articles from Indonesian researchers (Purwanto et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2019) confirms the contribution of national academics to the global discourse on leadership and innovation.

3.2. Discussion

RQ1: How is the direct influence of transformational leadership on innovative work behavior explained in various studies?

Most of the empirical studies in this systematic review indicate that TL has a significant positive effect on employees' IWB. Studies by Li et al. (2019) and Afsar & Masood (2018) revealed that TL promotes IWB through key dimensions such as inspirational motivation, which motivates employees to think creatively, and intellectual stimulation, which encourages them to challenge the status quo and develop innovative solutions. This finding is supported by research by Thalia & Harsanti (2023), which emphasizes the role of individualized consideration in enhancing IWB, especially in the millennial generation. However, some studies also report variability in the strength of this relationship, such as research by Reuvers et al. (2008), which found that gender and group dynamics can influence the extent to which TL impacts IWB. This suggests that although TL is generally effective in promoting innovation, organizational context and individual characteristics also play an important role.

In addition to the direct effect, the literature also identifies various mediating and moderating variables that clarify the mechanism of the relationship between TL and IWB. For example, Grošelj et al. (2020) found that psychological empowerment serves as a critical mediator, where TL increases employees' sense of psychological empowerment, which in turn drives innovative behavior. Similarly, Messmann et al. (2022) revealed that basic psychological needs satisfaction

mediates the relationship between TL and IWB. On the other hand, moderating variables such as knowledge sharing (Rafique et al., 2022) and work environment (Charli et al., 2023) can strengthen or weaken this relationship depending on organizational conditions. These findings confirm that the relationship between TL and IWB is not simple but rather influenced by a complex set of psychological and contextual factors. These findings confirm that the effectiveness of TL in driving IWB is highly dependent on the organizational context and employee characteristics.

Table 3. Article Review Results (n = 11)

No	Authors	Title	Mediation	Moderation	Research Design	IWB Dimensions	Results	Context
1	Bracht et al. (2023)	Innovation across cultures: Connecting leadership, identification, and creative behavior in organizations	Social identification, identification with leaders	n/a	Quantitative	Idea generation, Idea promotion, idea realization	TL has a positive effect on IWB	Cross-cultural
2	Tan et al. (2021)	Innovative work behavior in Singapore evoked by transformational leaders through innovation support and readiness	Perceived support for innovation, individual innovation readiness	n/a	Quantitative	Idea generation, Idea promotion, idea realization	- TL has a positive effect on IWB - individual innovation readiness mediates TL towards IWB	Manufacturing Industry
3	Grošelj et al. (2020)	Authentic and transformational leadership and innovative work behavior: the moderating role of psychological empowerment	n/a	Psychological empowerment	Quantitative and qualitative (Mixed Methods)	Opportunity Exploration, Idea generation, Idea promotion, idea realization	Psychology empowerment moderates the influence of TL and authentic leadership on IWB	Manufacturing Industry
4	Messman et al. (2022)	The role of basic psychological needs satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership and	Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction (BPNS): Perceived Autonomy	n/a	Quantitative	not mentioned	Transformational leadership positively influences IWB through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs.	Education Sector

No	Authors	Title	Mediation	Moderation	Research Design	IWB Dimensions	Results	Context
		innovative work behavior	(PA): Perceived Competence (PC): Perceived Relatedness (PR)					
5	Santoso et al. (2019)	The role of digital literacy in supporting performance through innovative work behavior: The case of Indonesia's telecommunications industry	n/a	n/a	Quantitative	Opportunity Exploration, Idea generation, Idea promotion, idea realization	- TL positively influences innovative work behavior. - Innovative work behavior is significantly related to employee performance	Private services sectors
6	Afsar and Masood (2018)	Transformational Leadership, Creative Self-Efficacy, Trust in Supervisor, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Innovative Work Behavior of Nurses	Creative self-efficacy	n/a	Quantitative	Opportunity Exploration, Idea generation, Idea promotion, idea realization	- A significant positive relationship between TL and innovative work behaviour.	Private services sectors
7	Rafique et al. (2022)	Investigating the impact of pandemic job stress and transformational leadership on innovative work behavior: The mediating and moderating role of knowledge sharing	Knowledge sharing	n/a	Quantitative	not mentioned	- TL and knowledge sharing also positively influence IWB - Knowledge sharing partly mediates the relationship between TL and IWB.	Education Sector

No	Authors	Title	Mediation	Moderation	Research Design	IWB Dimensions	Results	Context
8	Li et al. (2019)	Influence of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior in sustainable organizations: Test of mediation and moderation processes	Trust in Leaders, Work Engagement	Empowerment	Quantitative	not mentioned	- Significantly increase innovative work behavior through trust, empowerment, and work engagement. - Empowerment moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior, enhancing its effect.	Multinational Organization
9	Karimi et al. (2023)	The Role of Transformational Leadership in Developing Innovative Work Behaviors: The Mediating Role of Employees' Psychological Capital	Psychological Capital	n/a	Quantitative	not mentioned	- Transformational leadership positively influences employees' innovative work behavior directly. - Hope and self-efficacy were identified as partial mediators in the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior. - This study highlights the importance of managing contextual and psychological resources to enhance innovative work behavior.	Manufacturing Industry
10	Purwanto et al. (2023)	Investigating the role of digital transformation and human resource management on the performance of the universities	n/a	n/a	Quantitative	not mentioned	TL significantly increase innovative work behavior	Education Sector
11	Günzel-Jensen et al. (2018)	A Two-Pronged Approach? Combined Leadership Styles and Innovative Behavior	n/a	Empowering Leadership	Quantitative	Idea generation, Idea	The interaction between empowering and transformational leadership positively moderates innovative behavior.	Private services sectors

No	Authors	Title	Mediation	Moderation	Research Design	IWB Dimensions	Results	Context
						promotion, idea realization		

Recent research findings have also begun to reveal the complexity of the relationship between TL and IWB through a multi-level analysis approach. A study by Karimi et al. (2023) showed that the effect of TL on IWB occurs not only at the individual level but also at the team level, where group dynamics and organizational culture act as amplifiers or filters for leadership influence. Coun et al.'s (2021) research during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that crises could actually strengthen the TL-IWB relationship when leaders are able to create a clear sense of purpose, even in less-than-ideal working conditions. These findings broaden our understanding that the TL-IWB relationship is dynamic and contextual, influenced by macro factors such as crises and micro factors such as team characteristics. The development of research towards multi-level and longitudinal modelling opens up new opportunities to understand how TL can be optimized in various complex organizational scenarios while challenging researchers to develop a more holistic framework for analyzing leadership and innovation phenomena.

RQ2: What methods are used to measure IWB in various study contexts?

The measurement of IWB in the reviewed literature was conducted using various instruments and approaches, depending on the context and purpose of the study. One of the widely used instruments is the Innovation Behavior Inventory (IBI) and the Innovation Support Inventory (ISI) developed by Lukeš & Stephan (2017), which are designed to capture micro components of IWB such as idea generation, promotion, and realization. Quantitative approaches are predominantly used, such as in the study by Afsar et al. (2014), who measured IWB through a Likert scale and integrated mediating variables such as psychological empowerment to gain a more holistic understanding. In addition, some studies combined qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or case studies, to explore the dynamics of IWB in specific settings, for example, in the creative industries or the public sector.

Comparison of IWB measurement methods across organizational contexts reveals significant differences in approach and emphasis. For example, in the business and manufacturing sector, studies such as Afsar & Umrani (2019) focused more on measuring the impact of IWB on organizational performance, while in the education sector, Purwanto et al. (2023) adapted the instrument to assess collaboration and institutional support in fostering innovation. A cross-cultural study by Bracht et al. (2023) also highlighted the importance of considering social factors and organizational identity in measuring IWB. This diversity suggests that there is no universal instrument for measuring IWB, and the choice of method must consider the unique characteristics of the population and research context. Thus, future research needs to continue to develop and validate instruments that are adaptive to various organizational settings.

In addition to the instruments mentioned above, some recent studies have begun to develop hybrid approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative methods to overcome the limitations of IWB measurement. For example, a study by Santoso et al. (2019) in the Indonesian telecommunications industry used a quantitative survey complemented by narrative analysis to understand the role of digital literacy in mediating the relationship between TL and IWB. This approach allows researchers to not only measure the frequency of innovative behaviour but also understand the motivations and challenges faced by employees in the innovation process. In addition, technological advances such as big data analysis and machine learning are beginning to be adopted to track IWB patterns in real time through digital collaboration platforms (Purwanto et al., 2023). These methodological innovations offer opportunities to improve the ecological validity of IWB measurement while challenging researchers to consider ethical and privacy aspects in data collection. These findings underscore the need for continuous evolution in IWB measurement methodologies to remain relevant to the dynamics of the increasingly complex and digitalized modern workplace.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic review makes a significant contribution to the development of leadership and innovation theory by strengthening the empirical evidence that TL is a key driver of IWB. The findings enrich the understanding of the mechanisms underlying the TL-IWB relationship, particularly through the identification of mediating variables such as psychological empowerment and knowledge sharing, as well as moderating variables such as work environment and cultural context. Furthermore, the study confirms that the effectiveness of TL in driving innovation is highly dependent on the alignment between leadership style and employee characteristics and organizational context. In terms of measurement, the review highlights the need for an adaptive and contextual approach, given the complexity and diversity of IWB dimensions across sectors.

Based on RQ1, TL consistently shows a positive influence on IWB, although with variations in the strength of the relationship influenced by mediating and moderating factors. Meanwhile, the findings from RQ2 revealed that measuring IWB requires context-specific instruments, ranging from standard quantitative scales to hybrid approaches that combine qualitative methods. Overall, the relationship between TL and IWB is dynamic and multidimensional, requiring an in-depth understanding of the interactions between individuals, teams, and the organizational environment. For further research, recommendations include the development of a more integrated yet flexible IWB measurement standard, leadership style on IWB (Jadmiko et al., 2025), as well as exploring the implementation of TL in underrepresented sectors, such as non-profit organizations or the creative industry. Thus, these findings provide not only a solid theoretical foundation but also practical guidance for organizations seeking to build a culture of innovation through transformational leadership.

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