

**INFLUENCE OF INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR OVER LEADER-MEMBER  
EXCHANGE AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT ACROSS THE  
MANUFACTURING SECTOR**

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**Abstract:**

Historically, manufacturing sector has been the backbone for all the developed and developing economies. It is one of the most rapidly growing sectors in India. With the launch of programs like 'Make in India', 'SAMARTH Udyog Bharat 4.0' to promote the growth of the manufacturing sector, it is safe to say that innovation has taken the center stage. In the current circumstances business organizations are taking every step to foster innovative behavior among their employees. While some have had a positive influence, others have hampered employees' innovative behavior. The authors of the present study have attempted to investigate the antecedents of innovative work behavior. The paper delineates the relationships between leader-member exchange, affective commitment and innovative work behavior. The framework proposed by the authors helps unwrap the underlying mechanisms through which leadership directly or indirectly influences employees' innovative work behavior. A questionnaire survey was utilized to collect data from employees working in manufacturing companies in India. Analysis of the data collected from 80 samples revealed that affective commitment mediated the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. The framework proposed can be utilized by the businesses in designing and executing interventions that nurture innovative behavior among their employees.

Keywords: Leader-Member Exchange; Affective Commitment; Innovative Work Behavior; Manufacturing Sector; Social Exchange Theory

**Introduction:**

The Indian manufacturing sector has undergone significant changes over the last few decades. With the introduction of various government policies and programs, India is now recognized as a manufacturing hub, globally. This has resulted in a paradigm shift in the role played by the

manufacturing sector. In this period of transformation for the manufacturing sector from the advent of new technologies to industry 4.0, the sector has witnessed the emergence of a competitive environment. All of this demands the sector to not just respond to the needs of the business as and when they arise, but to stay ahead, predict future trends, formulate novel ideas and implement the ideas for feasible solutions. In these critical times, the concept of 'Innovation' has hogged the limelight. Organizational innovation is regarded as one of the catalysts for sustainable competitive advantage for an enterprise. Thus delving into understanding the elements that foster innovative behaviour among employees is an important topic for research to help organizations design and implement interventions. Therefore, studying the antecedents of innovative behaviour is crucial (Scott and Bruce, 1994).

Innovative work behaviour (hereafter referred to as IBW) revolves around coming up with better ways of executing tasks at work through an amalgamation of new processes, products, services and ideas that are one of a kind and valuable to the organization (Madjar et al., 2002). In the recent past, various researchers have proposed various antecedents of innovative work behavior including job design, organizational resources and job characteristics (Shalley et al., 2004), innovation culture, social exchange relationships, tie strength, organizational support (Nazir et al., 2018), individual attributes and psychological climate for innovation (Scott and Bruce, 1994) and trust, connectivity, performance expectations and image creation (Yuan and Woodman, 2010). Recent studies in this area have highlighted the role played by effective leadership in nurturing innovative work behavior among employees (De Jong & Hartog, 2007, Scott & Bruce et al., 1994, Javed et al., Yindong & Xinxin, 2013). Some authors particularly point to one specific facet of leadership which is, leader-member exchange (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009, De Jong & Hartog, 2007, Scott & Bruce, 1994). Leader-Member Exchange (hereafter referred to as LMX) refers to the exchanges or interactions that happen between a supervisor (leader) and their subordinates (Graen & Scandura, 1987).

Affective commitment and IWB have also been under study for quite some time now. Affective commitment refers to an employee's propensity to develop emotional attachment or involvement with the organization where they work. Researches have shown that people with affective commitment tend to display higher degrees of engagement in their respective organizations, they identify closely with their company, they equate the company's success to their own success and they tend to believe that there is fair degree of alignment between their personal goals and their company's vision. Sometimes, they even feel that the organization is committed to them (Shore and Tetrick, 1991). Stronger the commitment towards the

organization, more dedicated and loyal, the employees are, towards the organization (Rhoades et al.,2001).

Studies have also shown that such employees are always ready to go the extra mile for the achievement of the organization's vision. Subsequent studies also provide conclusive evidence to believe that such employees try to come up with creative solutions to work-based problems which ultimately translates to the employees exhibiting innovative workplace behaviour.

Extant studies have explored the relationship between LMX and IWB using various mediating mechanisms (Carmeli et al., 2010; Javed et al., 2017; Randel et al., 2017). However, it is imperative to note that effective leaders can empower their employees' to think rationally, which in turn would allow them to think creatively which transfers a greater vision towards their firms because of which employees will be creative in achieving the goals of the organization (Nazir et al., 2018).

Keeping all the above in consideration, in the present study, the authors intend to utilize the Social Exchange Theory, developed by Blau in 1964, to investigate LMX, affective commitment and IWB. According to social exchange theory leaders and subordinates create positive relationships in the workplace which would ultimately create a work environment of mutual trust and understanding. And under these circumstances employees perceive themselves to be supported and encouraged and in turn are likely to repay their organization by putting in extra efforts for the benefit of the organization in the form of affective commitment and innovative work behaviour. The entire study is divided into six segments. The first section highlights the key reasons that were important for the development of the present study. The second section reviews the current body of literature that reveals what is and what is not known leader-member exchange, affective commitment and their influence on innovative work behaviour, this section also highlights the potential scope of the study. The third section elaborates on the variables of the study, data and the tools used for analysis and interpretation. The forth portion of the study presents the results and discussion thereof. The fifth section delineates the limitations of the study in hand. The sixth segment presents the conclusion, managerial implication and implications for future research on the current topic.

#### **Literature Review and Development of Hypothesis:**

The researcher, in this section, aim to discern, evaluate and survey books, journals, scholarly articles, previous investigations and, several other resources relevant to the area of study for the purpose of elucidating how knowledge has transcended in the chosen field of research, to accentuate what has already been done, what is new and what the current state of

thought is, on the subject. This literature review aims to explore how perceived LMX and affective commitment influence employees' IWB.

*Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behaviour:*

Various authors have attempted to define innovative work behaviour. However, the most popular among them have defined it to be a process rather than a behaviour that progresses through different stages. Kanter (1988), Scott & Bruce (1994) and Janssen (2000) cited three stages: idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization. Klysen & Street (2001), recognizing the ambiguity in the previously recognized stages of innovation process, categorized behaviours associated with individual innovation into five main dimensions: opportunity exploration, generativity, formative investigation, championing and application. In the first stage, employees look for opportunities to innovate. In the second stage, they generate ideas using the available information. In the third stage, they experiment with the ideas and solutions. In the fourth stage, they persuade and influence others for the adoption of their idea. Finally, the employees implement their idea.

Researcher has attempted to study possible drivers of IWB. Nasifoglu Elidemir et al. (2020) noted that High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) has a direct effect on employees' innovative behaviour. Muchiri et al. (2020) in their research deduced that employees' perception of fairness to an extent influences IWB. Korzilius et al. (2017) cite cultural competences as a driver for IWB. Their findings provide conclusive evidence that multiculturalism has an influence on IWB and this relationship is mediated by cultural intelligence. Among several other possible drivers of IWB, leadership has been identified as one of the most significant elements. Authors have also attempted to study the influence different styles of leadership have on IWB. Rao et al. (2019) identified that there was an indirect relationship between empowering leadership and IWB. Wang et al. (2021) in their study concluded that inclusive leadership positively influences IWB. Khan et al. (2020) in their attempt to study the effect of different leadership styles on IWB emphasized that transactional and transformational leadership styles had a significant effect on IWB, they also noted that laissez-faire style of leadership had no effect on IWB. Among several other styles of leadership, the most studied about facet of leadership (in relation with IWB) is LMX. The reason for this, according to Schermuly et al. (2013), is that though the other styles of leadership; transformational, transactional and empowering, may be effective in idea generation, it is LMX that improves the chances of idea implementation. Liden & Maslyn (1998) have identified four dimensions of LMX: (i) Perceived Contribution – the amount, direction and quality of work that is perceived to be put in by an individual towards the achievement of common goals of the

dyad. (ii) Loyalty – the extent to which the two members of the dyad are loyal to each other. (iii) Mutual Affect – the mutual liking the members of the dyad have for each other because of interpersonal reasons. (iv) Professional Respect – perception of the extent to which each member of the dyad has built a reputation both within and outside the organization.

As stated earlier, LMX is considered to have an upper hand in influencing IWB. The reasons are manifold. According to De Jong & Hartog (2007) IWB is time consuming as idea application and evaluation require consistent effort, and to take this up, members need the constant support of their leaders for which high quality relationship is crucial. IWB is also extremely uncertain as the risk of failure of an idea after implementation is high which makes the need for high quality relationship with the leader all the more important. More importantly, people, in the initial stages, are resistant to change, therefore the role of a leader is crucial in convincing and motivating the members to engage in innovative thinking process.

Considering the importance of IWB, various researchers have tried to investigate if LMX has a positive influence on IWB. A meta-analytic review by Carnevale et al., (2017) revealed that LMX shared a positive relationship with IWB. Sanders et al., (2010) conducted a survey among 272 employees working in Dutch and German technical organizations, the findings revealed that LMX positively influenced IWB. It was also revealed that this relationship was mediated by HR practices. Scott & Bruce (1994) in their study to examine the determinants of IWB found out that while team-member exchange had no influence on IWB, LMX influenced IWB positively. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed.

***Hypothesis 1:** There exists a significant relationship between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behaviour.*

***Hypothesis 2:** There exists a significant influence of Leader-Member Exchange on Innovative Work Behaviour.*

*Affective Commitment and Innovative Work Behaviour:*

Organizations particularly depend upon their human resources for sustainable competitive advantage. And Human Resource Management (HRM) is considered as one of the antecedents of behavioural outcomes, Camelo-Ordaz et al. (2011) studied the influence of HRM on knowledge sharing and innovation in R&D departments of innovative companies in Spain. They also attempted to study the mediating role of affective commitment. The findings revealed that there was no direct influence of HRM practices on knowledge sharing. However, positive relation was observed when it was mediated by affective commitment. Commitment as defined by Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), in broad terms, refers to the drive to stay in a

relationship and work at it. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, as defined by Porter & Steers (1982) refers to extent of an individual's identification and involvement with their organization. It has been widely recognized that there are three types of organizational commitment – continuance commitment, normative commitment and affective commitment. Continuance commitment according to Becker (1960) refers to the increasing sunk costs of continued organizational membership. According to Somers (1993) it is believed to stem from the accrued benefits of organizational membership in comparison to the perceived costs of leaving the organization. According to Meyer & Allen (1991), normative commitment stems from feeling obliged to the organization and affective commitment refers to an employee's propensity to develop emotional attachment with the organization where they work. Shore and Tetrick (1991) have stated that people with affective commitment tend to display higher degrees of engagement in their respective, they identify closely with their company, they equate the company's success to their own success and tend to believe that there is a fair degree of alignment between their personal goals and their company's vision. Sometimes they even feel that the organization is committed to them. According to Rhoades et al. (2001), stronger the commitment towards the organization, more dedicated and loyal, the employees are towards the organization. Studies have also shown that such employees are always ready to go the extra mile for the achievement of the organization's vision. Subsequent studies also provide conclusive evidence to believe that such employees try to come up with creative solutions to work-based problems which ultimately translates to the employees exhibiting innovative workplace behaviour. Hassan (2010) in his study found conclusive evidence that affective commitment is positively related to IWB. According to Odoardi et al. (2019), the results of a research conducted 343 employees working in 34 different teams in Italian companies proved that affective commitment was positively related to IWB, however the relationship was significantly stronger when team members shared the perception that their leaders displayed participative behaviours. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed.

***Hypothesis 3:*** *There exists a significant relationship between Affective Commitment and Innovative Work Behaviour.*

***Hypothesis 4:*** *There exists a significant influence of Affective Commitment on Innovative Work Behaviour.*

*Affective Commitment as a mediator between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behaviour:*

Over the years several researches have been undertaken to understand the antecedents of affective commitment. Mowday et al. (1982) stated that the antecedents of affective commitment can be classified into four broad categories: (i) Personal characteristics (ii) Structural characteristics (iii) Job related characteristics (iv) Work experiences. Currivan (1999) and Luna-Arocas & Camps (2008) cited that several other factors like job design, job autonomy and job enrichment are certain factors that share a positive relationship with affective commitment. LMX has been identified as an antecedent to affective commitment. According to Sin et al. (2009), LMX theory posits that strong relationship between leaders and members has a positive influence on members' affective commitment to the organization among several other positive work outcomes. Casimir et al. (2014) in their study conducted 428 full-time employees in China found out that LMX and Perceived Organizational Support have synergistic effect on affective commitment. The results of their study provided evidence that a low quality LMX will result in an unpleasant work experience for an individual employee which would prevent him from forming an emotional attachment to the organization. Jing-zhou & Wen-xia attempted to investigate the relationship between LMX and affective commitment, and the findings suggest that this relationship is mediated by perceived organizational support. Levinson (1965) proposed the concept of 'Reciprocation' which suggests that employees consider their leader's action as a representation of the organization in general. There this itself is crucial in motivating an individual to stay committed to the organization.

As already emphasized highly committed employees are more likely to take risks in terms of engaging in creative thinking and implementing innovative ideas in comparison to employees who display low levels of affective commitment. Brimhall (2019) proposed that employees who show high levels of affective commitment are more likely to increase perceptions of innovation because they are more likely to share ideas and increase social interaction with organizational members. In the current circumstances, with the COVID-19 pandemic upending every aspect of life from the way we live to the way we work; business enterprises are increasingly looking for ways to boost IWB which in turn would foster an ecosystem of innovation. Because for business organizations to not just survive, but thrive in the market, they should be agile and be efficient in managing change. For this, IWB is a pre-requisite. And as research suggests, employees displaying higher levels of affective commitment are more likely to show IWB to help boost organizational performance which would ultimately contribute to help the organization achieve sustainable competitive

advantage. Though there is a significant lack of empirical research on the role of affective commitment in mediating the relationship between LMX and Innovative behaviour, there are certain empirical studies that suggest this model. Nazir et al. (2018) investigated the influence of social exchange relationships on affective commitment and employee innovative behaviour on 325 nurses working in public sector hospitals in China through a questionnaire survey. The study examined and verified the mediating role of affective commitment between leader-member exchange and employee innovative behaviour. As proposed by the social exchange theory, when employees are able to bond well with their superiors, when they receive constructive feedback from their leaders, they are more likely to put in substantial effort for the benefit of the organization in reciprocation of the bond they share with their leaders. This ultimately would encourage them to engage in IWB. This was proved by Bak (2020) who studied the relationship between supervisor feedback and employees' innovative work behaviour. The researcher also aimed at studying the moderating role played by trust in supervisor and affective in the relationship mentioned above. Data was collected from public servants employed in the local governments in South Korea. The findings of the study revealed that there was a positive relationship between supervisor feedback and employees' innovative work behaviour. It was also noted that the employees who received regular personal/performance development feedback from their leaders tended to show a higher degree of trust in their leaders which subsequently led to the demonstration of innovative work behaviour. There was also conducive evidence to prove the hypothesis that the relationship between feedback from superior and innovative work behaviour was mediated by the employees' trust in their supervisors.

Given the substantial theoretical and empirical evidence, it is proposed that LMX would result in employees displaying high levels of affective commitment. This, in turn, would nurture IWB among the employees. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed.

***Hypothesis 5:** There exists a significant relationship between LMX and Affective Commitment.*

***Hypothesis 6:** Affective Commitment mediates the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behaviour.*

Analysing the research gaps, it is brought to light that the study in hand would be the first of its kind as it is directed towards fostering innovative behaviour among the employees working in manufacturing organizations in India by leveraging the relationship between them and their leaders the boosts their commitment towards their organization. The available literature has succeeded in contributing several strategies, plans and programs to nurture

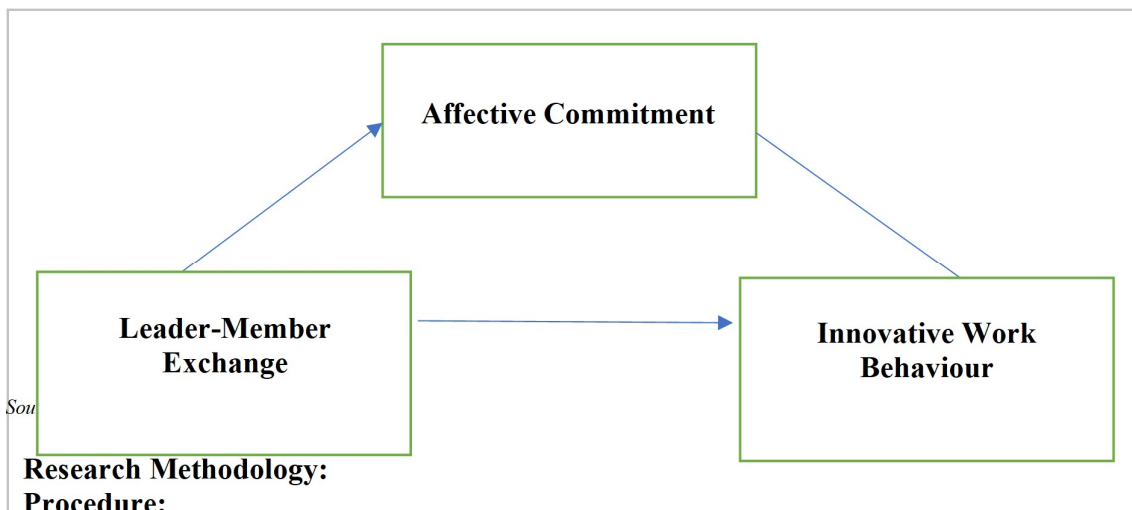


innovative behaviour among employees. However, there still exists a noticeable gap in the chosen area of study in the Indian context. Indian manufacturing organizations are still searching the answers for questions on strategies for innovation, that is, how does innovation lend competitive advantage to companies, what are the factors that contribute to innovative behaviour? Why does making innovation a priority have such an impact? How do we drive a culture of innovation? The present study tries to explore and conclude various strategies for fostering IWB.

The scope of this study is to find the roles of LMX and affective commitment in employees' IWB. The outcome of the study would highlight the relationship between the three variables and gaps in the available literature enable the research at hand to further how leader-member exchange and affective commitment affect innovative work behaviour of employees.

In summary, the conceptual framework of the study is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**



The research design adopted for the present study is descriptive research design as it allows one to understand the state of affair as they occur in the present. This study examines the conceptual model using the data collected from the full-times employees of enterprises in the manufacturing industry of India, which is selected for two reasons: India has a massive manufacturing industry and is working on implementing strategies that promote innovation-driven development. Following this strategy, a large number of manufacturing industry enterprises in India are advancing technological change and industrial upgradation through innovation. The research design adopted for the present study is descriptive research design as it allows one to understand the state of affair as they occur in the present. Non-Probability Convenience Sampling method was adopted for data collection. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique wherein the samples are selected based on the

convenience and ease of access to the researcher. The target population for the study in hand were accessible employees of different age groups, genders and different functional departments working in manufacturing companies in India selected by the researcher. Data was collected from a sample of 80 respondents. Questionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. The questionnaire was mailed to all the participants. The participants were explained of the research procedure and were informed that the survey is solely for academic research purpose and were assured of complete confidentiality, anonymity and protection of identity to encourage their participation in the research.

### **Measures:**

As already stated, a questionnaire was used for data collection. The study used measures that have been validated in the literature. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section was a 6-item questionnaire prepared by the investigator to gather socio-demographic details of the respondents. An outline of the measures used by the researchers for the present study is given below:

#### *Leader-Member Exchange:*

Leader-Member Exchange was measured using the 7-item LMX-7 scale developed by Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995). They developed the scale to measure the quality of working relationship between leaders and their members. The respondents self-report the degree of mutual trust, respect, loyalty and obligation transferred in the leader-member relationship. The respondents were requested to indicate the degree to which they think the item is true for them along a 5-point scale. Sample items are: "How well does your leader recognize your potential?" and "How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?" The Cronbach's alpha value for Leader-Member Exchange was 0.81

#### *Affective Commitment:*

Affective commitment was measured using 6 items from the 3-component model of commitment questionnaire developed by Allen & Meyer (1990). This one of the most widely used instruments to measure affective commitment as it shows good reliability and validity. The measure attempts to study the feelings that individuals may have about the company or the organization they work for. The respondents were required to indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement with each statement in the questionnaire on a seven-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. "Strongly Disagree" = 1; "Disagree" = 2;

“Slightly Disagree” = 3; “Undecided” = 4; “Slightly Agree” = 5; “Agree” = 6; “Strongly Agree” = 7. The scale consists of 3 reverse keyed items, the scores of these items will be recoded as “Strongly Agree” = 1; “Agree” = 2; “Slightly Agree” = 3; “Undecided” = 4; “Slightly Disagree” = 5; “Disagree” = 6; “Strongly Disagree” = 7. Sample items are: “I feel as if this organization’s problems are my own” and “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.” The Cronbach’s alpha value for affective commitment was 0.76.

*Innovative Work Behaviour:*

Innovative Work Behaviour was measured using the 14-item scale developed by Kleysen & Street (2001) to study degree to which employees exhibit opportunity exploration, generativity, formative investigation, championing and application of innovative ideas. The respondents were required to self-report the extent to which they practice the same in their current jobs on a six-point scale ranging from ‘Never’ to ‘Always’. “Never” = 1; “Almost Never” = 2; “Sometimes” = 3; “Fairly Often” = 4; “Very Often” = 5; “Always” = 6. Sample items are: “In your current job, how often do you experiment with new ideas and solutions?” and “In your current job, how often do you generate ideas or solutions to address problems?” The Cronbach’s alpha value for innovative work behaviour was 0.95.

**Control Variables:**

The authors controlled for confounding variables that correlate with both the independent and dependent variable. Therefore, all the demographic variables such as gender (0 = male, 1 = female), age (1 = 20-30 years, 2 = 31-40 years, 3 = 41-50 years, 4 = 51 years and above), marital status (0 = married, 1 = unmarried), department of the employee (1 = Human Resources, 2 = Research & Development, 3 = Marketing, 4 = Sales, 5 = Production, 6 = Finance, 7 = Operations, 8 = Engineering). The summary of the respondents who participated in the study is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of respondents based on Demographics**

Demographics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	63	78.8
Female	17	21.3
<b>Age</b>		
20 - 30 years	15	18.8
31 - 40 years	25	31.1
41 - 50 years	24	30
51 years and above	16	20
<b>Marital Status</b>		

Married	66	82.5
Unmarried	14	17.5
<b>Functional Department</b>		
Human Resources	11	13.8
Research and Development	17	21.3
Marketing	4	5
Sales	11	13.8
Production	12	15
Finance	9	11.3
Operations	15	18.8
Engineering	1	1.3

**Data Analysis:**

The statistical software, SPSS 20 was used for data analysis. It was used to test the reliability of the three measures used in this study.

*Correlation Analysis:*

Descriptive statistics and correlations among the three variables are shown in table 2. A strong correlation was found between LMX and affective commitment,  $r = .62, p < 0.01$ . A strong positive correlation was also found between affective commitment and IWB,  $r = .64, p < 0.01$ . There was a strong positive correlation between LMX and IWB as well,  $r = .63, p < 0.01$ .

Thus, our hypotheses that there is a significant relationship between LMW and IWB (H1), Affective Commitment and IWB (H3) and LMX and affective commitment (H5) are supported.

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation**

Variable	M	SD	1	2
1. Leader-Member Exchange	3.7	0.9		
2. Affective Commitment	4.9	1.5	.612**	
3. Innovative Work Behaviour	4.4	1.1	.635**	.649**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$  level (2-tailed); N=80

*Multiple Regression Analysis:*

The multiple regression test was applied to test the cause-and-effect relationship between LMX and affective commitment as the independent variables and IWB as the dependent variable.

**Table 3**  
**Results of Multiple Regression Analysis**  
Dependent Variable  
(Innovative Work Behaviour)

Independent Variables	$\beta$ -value	t-Statistics	p-Value
Constant	0.94	2.26	0.027
Leader-Member Exchange	0.38	3.78	0.000
Affective Commitment	0.42	4.13	0.000
R-value	0.715a		
R-square value	0.511		
F-value	40.243		

Table 3 shows the results of multiple regression analysis. The multiple correlation coefficient is 0.715 measures the degree of relationship between the actual values and the predicted values of Innovative Work Behaviour. Because the predicted values are obtained as a linear combination of Leader-Member Exchange (X1) and Affective Commitment (X2), the coefficient value of 0.715 indicates that the relationship between Innovative Work Behaviour and the two independent variables is quite strong and positive.

The Coefficient of Determination R-square measures the goodness of fit of the estimated Sample Regression Plane (SRP) in terms of the proportion of the variation in the dependent variables explained by the fitted sample regression equation. Thus, the value of R square, 0.511 simply means that about 51.1% of the variations in Innovative Work Behaviour is explained by the estimated SRP that uses Leader-Member Exchange and Affective Commitment as the independent variables and the R square value is significant at 1% level. Hypotheses 2 and 4 are confirmed. Hence it can be stated that there exists significant influence of the Leader-Member Exchange and Affective Commitment (Independent variables) on Innovative Work Behaviour (Dependent variable).

The multiple regression equation is

$$Y = 0.935 + 0.509 X1 + 0.328 X2$$

Here, the coefficient of X1 is 0.509 represents the partial effect of Leader-Member Exchange on Innovative Work Behaviour, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implies that such effect is positive and Innovative Work Behaviour would increase by 0.509 for every unit increase in LMX and this coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

The coefficient X2 IS 0.328 represents the partial effect of Affective Commitment on Innovative Work Behaviour, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implies that such effect is positive and Innovative Work Behaviour would increase by 0.328 for every unit increase in Affective Commitment and this coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

Based on the standardized coefficient, Affective Commitment (0.416) is the most important variable that impacts Innovative Work Behaviour followed by Leader-Member Exchange (0.380).

Also since the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is less than 4 and the tolerance values are more than 0.1, it is evident that the data met the assumption of collinearity indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern.

*Mediation Analysis:*

Mediation analysis was used to investigate the mechanisms that underlie the observed relationship between LMX and IWB and to examine how they relate to the third intermediate variable, the mediator, Affective Commitment. This was tested using PROCESS macro by Hayes (2013). Table 4 shows the results of the mediation analysis.

**Table 4  
Results of Mediation Analysis**

Independent Variable (X)	Variables		Unstandardized Beta			Bootstrap Results for Indirect Effect BC 95% CI (5000 Bootstraps) N=80				
	Mediator (M)	Dependent Variable (Y)	Effect of X on M (a path)	Effect of M on Y controlling X (b Path)	Total Effect of X on Y (c path)	Direct Effect of X on Y controlling M (c'path)	Indirect Effect	DE	LL	UL
Leader-Member Exchange	Affective Commitment	Innovative Work Behaviour	1.037	0.3282	0.8491	0.5087	0.3404	0.1308	0.0775	0.5865

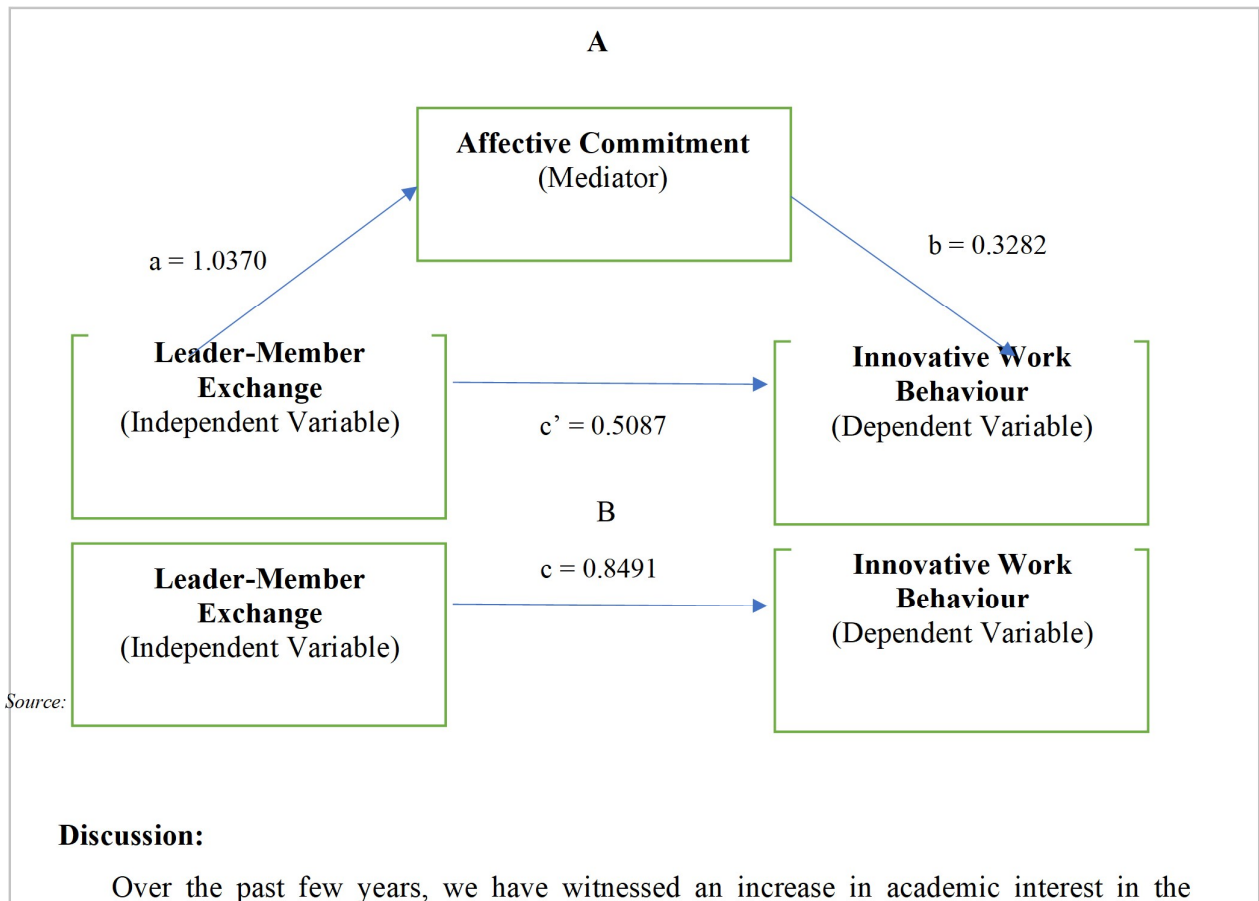
Validating Affective Commitment as a mediator between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behaviour based on Baron & Kenny’s criteria, it can be inferred from the above table that Leader-Member Exchange has a significant effect on the mediator, Affective Commitment ( $\beta = 1.037, p < 0.01$ ). Affective Commitment has a significant effect on Innovative Work Behaviour while controlling Leader-Member Exchange ( $\beta = 0.3282, p < 0.01$ ).

When Affective Commitment is controlled, the effect of Leader-Member Exchange becomes significantly smaller for Innovative Work Behaviour ( $\beta = 0.5087, p < 0.01$ ).

The indirect effect of Leader-Member Exchange on Innovative Work Behaviour ( $\beta = 0.3404, p < 0.01$ ) is significant, as can be by confidence intervals in the upper and lower limits

in the table, that excludes zero. The indirect effect of Leader-Member Exchange on Innovative Work Behaviour through Affective Commitment is positive, which implies that Leader-Member Exchange would lead to increase in the Affective Commitment which in turn would increase Innovative Work Behaviour. Hypothesis 6 is confirmed. Hence it can be stated that Affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behaviour.

**Figure 2. Mediating effect of Affective Commitment in the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behaviour**



Firstly, there is a positive relationship between LMX and IWB. It is also deduced that LMX positively influences IWB. Which means, stronger the exchange relationship between the leader and the subordinates, the more likely it is to foster innovative behaviour among the employees. This finding is consistent with previous researches that deduced that LMX is one of the antecedents of IWB (eg., Nazir et al., 2018; Javed et al., 2018; Park and Loe, 2018; Miller and Miller, 2020).

Secondly, the results also confirm that affective commitment shares a positive relationship with IWB. Affective commitment positively influences IWB. Which means, when the more emotionally attached to the organization, the more likely it is for them to exhibit innovative behaviour. This again is consistent with previous researches that deduced Affective commitment to be one of the factors that influence IWB (Hassan, 2010; Odoardi et al., 2019)

Thirdly, the results indicate that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between LMX and IWB. This implies that LMX would lead to increase in affective commitment which in turn would increase IWB. The findings are consistent with arguments that innovation is not entirely an innate cognitive activity but is also a behaviour that can be fostered through simple social exchanges.

#### **Theoretical Implications:**

First and foremost, this study extends the understanding of the mediating mechanism of LMX on IWB. It helps understand how simple social relationships at work and not merely rewards and recognition influence employees' attitude towards their work and could result in them demonstrating positive work outcomes. Secondly, there is very little evidence as to how LMX and innovative behaviour play out in the local context as most studies have been carried out in the western context. Thus, this study would add to the existing academic literature on LMX and innovation which can be used for future researches to improve organizational performance altogether. Thirdly, there have not been many attempts to study IWB as an outcome of how LMX leads to affective commitment. The mechanism of the relationship between LMX and IWB through affective commitment has received little to no attention nationally and internationally. But, the findings of this study demonstrate the significance of affective commitment in the relationship between LMX and IWB, and the relationship between LMX and affective commitment can be extended to IWB. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing body of literature that propagates the role played by affective commitment as an antecedent to IWB and as a mediating force in the relationship between LMX and IWB.

#### **Practical Implications:**



The world of work is changing constantly and rapidly and is becoming increasingly complex. Given the circumstances, today's organizations and leaders are grappling to manage these situations as they are very much beyond their control. These complexities, particularly due to technological changes demand the organizations to be more innovative in terms of not just the products and services they offer but also in their work processes and systems. These organizations are increasingly looking at ways to instigate innovative behaviour among employees. This study aims at investigating the mechanism that underlies the relationship between LMX and IWB and providing practical implications for innovation management at individual, team and organizational levels. The findings of the study clearly establish a positive relationship between LMX and IWB, and that LMX positively influences IWB. It is revealed that this relationship is mediated by affective commitment. Based on the findings, the study recommends that leaders should be trained on how to forming quality exchange relationships with their members. This is based on recommendations by Graen&Scandura (1986). Their study provided conclusive evidence that LMX relationships considerably improve when leaders are trained on the same. Which means that most members move from out-group to in-group. They were also able to decode the two major components of LMX training for leaders. The first component is LMX process and outcomes, which simply includes informing leaders about the value and strategic importance of high quality exchange relationships. The second component is LMX communication, that is, coaching on how to provide constructive feedback to their subordinates and building their ability to clarify the doubts of their subordinates with regard to their assignments. These trainings can be provided in the form of lectures and role-plays. In addition to training the managers to build better quality relationships with their members, the following ways will also help boosting LMX. Managers could consider identifying, respecting and praising every little contribution made by their subordinates. Organizations, on the other hand, should work on creating an atmosphere for the employees where they feel free to enter their leader/ supervisor's office to have open conversations about their personal and professional life, this, in turn, would help foster stronger bonds between leaders and their members. Managers should constantly check in with their subordinates and kindle conversations on their goals and performance as it would help them identify opportunities for improvement and would help tailor a development plan that would suit the needs of every individual employee. This would invariably enhance employees' commitment to the organization and foster innovative behaviour as it indicates that the leaders are genuinely interested in the growth and wellbeing of their subordinates.

Additionally, leaders should recognize the fact that innovation is a trial and error process. While idea generation may happen, the likelihood of the success or failure of these ideas is not known. Therefore, managers should work on their tolerance. Tolerance in terms of accepting the failure of the ideas generated by their members. Leaders should also serve as support systems for their member by encouraging them and helping with required resources. Superiors can also empower their subordinates to work independently and show that they trust them. When the subordinates realize that their leaders are supportivethey are more likely to be committed to their organization.

### **Limitations and Scope for Future Research:**

Although some theoretical contributions have been made, the findings of the study should be interpreted with a certain degree of caution as it has some limitations. First, the use of cross-sectional data may not allow us to deduce the cause-effect relationship between the variables used in the present study. To determine causality between variables, longitudinal data would be more suitable. Therefore, future research should focus on testing the relationships tested in the research in hand including other factors that may an influence on employees' tendency to be innovative, such as, leadership style, knowledge sharing, organizational performance, job autonomy and employees' voice behaviour. Secondly, this study covers only manufacturing firms in Tamil Nadu, India which demands the authors to recognize the lack of generalizability as the findings may not be applicable to other groups. The data was collected from multiple manufacturing organizations. However, it is also important to take into consideration that the culture in each organization varies from one organization to another depending on their location, size, demographics, resources etc. So, the future researches ought to focus on extending the study in hand to different contexts nationally and internationally. Thirdly, self-reported data was used to conduct the study. Which means there is a possibility of social desirability bias and common method bias. Although self-reported data is useful to conduct a perception study, future researches could use self-reported data as well as performance feedback of the managers. The study in hand only analyses the positive influence of LMX. The fact that LMX and IWB may share a non-linear relationship has to be taken into account. Hence, future studies can attempt to explore the curvilinear relationship between LMX and IWB. Another possible limitation could be the respondents who majorly contributed to the research were male, as the workforce of manufacturing firms in predominantly composed of male employees. Researchers, in the future, could possibly reach out to more gender balanced organizations in different sectors.

### **Conclusion:**

This study was conducted to gain deeper insights into the various antecedents of employees' innovative behaviour in the manufacturing sector. In the present age, organizations rely on employees' innovative behavior to enhance efficiency and productivity, which in turn ensures continuous organizational growth, sustainable competitive advantage, success and survival. Innovative work behavior being one of the antecedents of creative thinking, idea generation, generator managerial motivation, organizations are increasingly investing a significant amount of time and money to nurture a culture of innovation amongst their employees. Little is the realization that this innovative work behavior that employees are expected to display are, to a very large extent, dependent on the relationship that employees share with their leaders. Previous studies have also indicated that members who have high quality relationships with their leaders have higher morale, and are more productive than those who don't. To conclude, we believe that these findings can help organizations to unleash the innovative potential of employees by designing and implementing right and effective managerial practices and strategies.

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