

## THE ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN ENHANCING EMPLOYEES' PROPENSITY TO INNOVATE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (YEAR : 2019 - 2024)

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### Abstract

Innovation among employees is critical for organizational competitiveness, yet individual-level predictors like job satisfaction are often overlooked in strategic innovation discussions. This study aims to systematically review the empirical literature on the relationship between job satisfaction and employees' innovation propensity. Using the PRISMA protocol, 39 peer-reviewed articles published between 2019 and 2024 were extracted from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The results indicate a positive correlation between job satisfaction and innovation behavior, especially when mediated by psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and organizational support. The discussion reveals critical moderating factors such as leadership style, job autonomy, and organizational climate. Implications are drawn for HR policy, emphasizing the integration of satisfaction-based strategies in innovation programs. Future research directions are also proposed.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, employee innovation, innovation behavior, work engagement, systematic literature review, PRISMA

### I. Introduction

In today's highly competitive and rapidly evolving business environment, innovation is widely recognized as a key driver of organizational success and sustainability. The growing importance of knowledge-based work, digital transformation, and agile organizational structures has shifted the focus from merely technological innovation to innovation initiated by employees—often referred to as innovative work behavior (IWB). Defined as the intentional generation, promotion, and realization of new ideas within a role, group, or organization (Janssen, 2000), IWB is a critical component in building adaptive and forward-looking enterprises.

One personal antecedent that has drawn significant scholarly attention in this context is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction refers to the overall affective orientation an individual has toward their job, encompassing emotional responses, beliefs about the work environment, and perceived fulfillment of expectations (Locke, 1976; Weiss, 2002). While traditionally linked with productivity, turnover intentions, and absenteeism, recent studies increasingly emphasize job satisfaction's role in fostering proactive behaviors—particularly innovation (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Han & Park, 2020).

The theoretical grounding for this relationship can be traced to several well-established frameworks. According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985), individuals who experience satisfaction in their jobs are more likely to engage in intrinsically motivated behaviors, such as problem-solving and creativity. Likewise, the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) asserts that enriched job roles and satisfaction-inducing

work conditions enhance personal responsibility and growth motivation, which in turn contribute to higher levels of innovation.

Empirical research over the past five years has corroborated the significance of this relationship. A systematic analysis by Shanker et al. (2021) revealed that employees with high job satisfaction scores tend to engage more in knowledge sharing, risk-taking, and collaborative innovation efforts. Similarly, Susanty et al. (2022) emphasized the mediating role of psychological empowerment in linking job satisfaction and innovative performance. Leadership behaviors—particularly transformational leadership—also appear to significantly moderate this relationship by creating environments of trust, support, and autonomy (Zhang et al., 2021).

However, the nature of this relationship is not universally consistent. Some studies point to sector-specific dynamics—such as in healthcare or IT—where innovation requires both individual agency and systemic support (Khan & Khan, 2023). Others explore the socio-cultural context, suggesting that collectivist cultures may emphasize communal over individual innovation, thus influencing how job satisfaction translates into innovation behavior (Liu et al., 2023). According to Elliyana and Rabia (2019), human capital plays a pivotal role in enabling innovation and national growth, particularly when supported by education and skill development systems

Despite the growing body of research, no comprehensive synthesis has been done recently that aggregates empirical findings, identifies patterns, and maps out the mediating and moderating variables in this relationship. Addressing this gap, the current systematic literature review aims to synthesize empirical studies from 2019 to 2024 to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the empirical relationship between job satisfaction and employees' innovative work behavior?

RQ2: What mediating or moderating variables influence this relationship?

RQ3: How do contextual factors (e.g., leadership style, organizational climate, or industry) shape the job satisfaction–innovation link?

The implications of this synthesis are intended to guide human resource development (HRD) practices, leadership training, and employee engagement strategies toward more innovation-centric outcomes. Furthermore, by highlighting the nuances of this relationship, this review offers a roadmap for future research on how positive affect at work can be harnessed to drive organizational creativity and transformation.

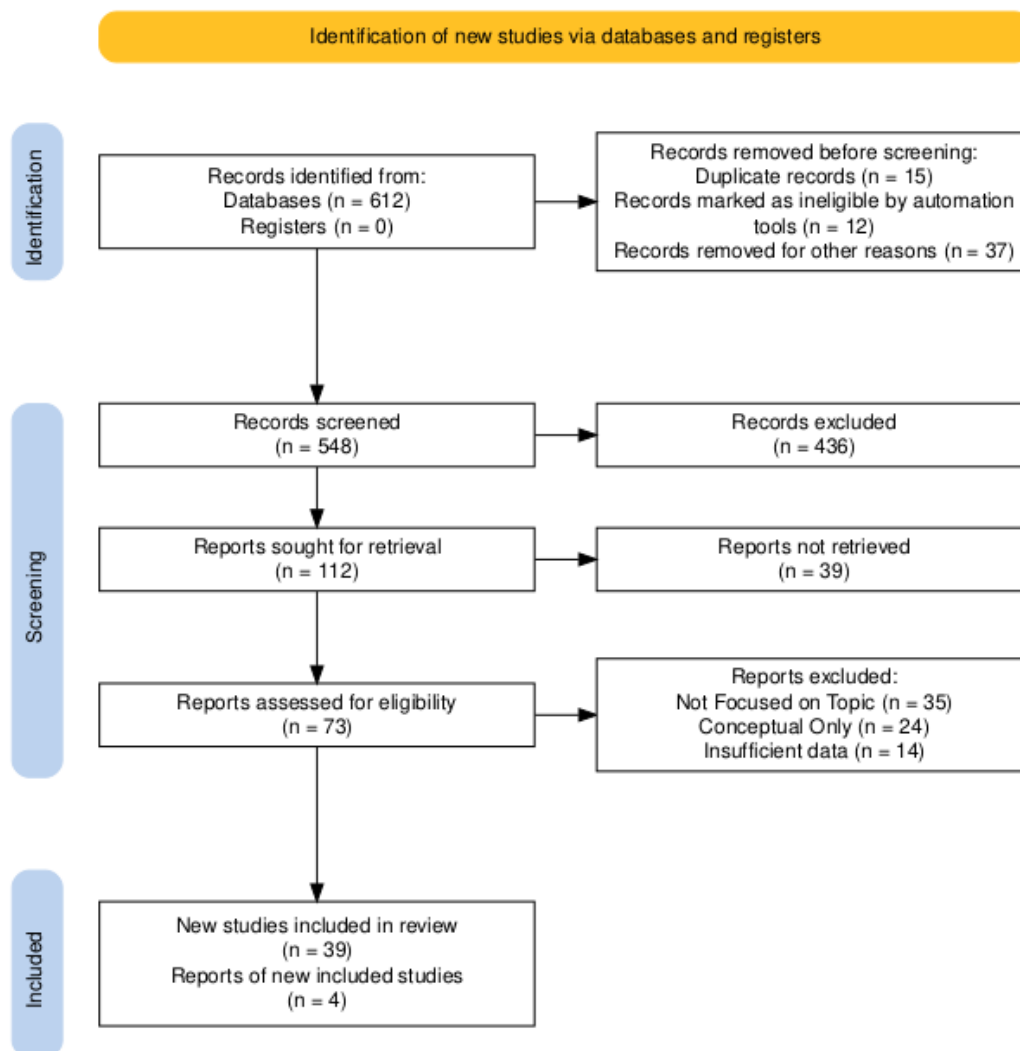
## II. Method

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework (Page et al., 2021) to ensure transparency and rigor in the identification, screening, and inclusion of relevant studies. The literature search was conducted across three major databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar covering publications from January 2019 to May 2024. The search strategy combined keywords such as "job satisfaction", "employee innovation", "innovative work behavior", "intrinsic motivation", and "psychological empowerment", using Boolean operators and filters for peer-reviewed empirical articles written in English.

To ensure relevance, only studies that explicitly examined the relationship between job satisfaction and innovation-related behaviors were included. Conceptual, review-only, and non-empirical articles were excluded. The screening process involved multiple phases: title and abstract screening, full-text review, and quality assessment using criteria adapted from the

Joanna Briggs Institute checklist for analytical cross-sectional studies. The final sample consisted of 39 high-quality empirical studies. Thematic analysis was then conducted to identify patterns, mediators, moderators, and contextual variables influencing the core relationship under review. This PRISMA diagram illustrates the article selection process for the Systematic Literature Review on the relationship between job satisfaction and employees' propensity to innovate. Out of 612 records identified, 548 remained after removing duplicates and automated exclusions. A total of 112 full-text articles were sought for retrieval, but 39 could not be accessed. From the 73 assessed for eligibility, 34 were excluded due to irrelevance, conceptual-only content, or insufficient data. Finally, 39 studies were included in the qualitative synthesis, and 4 in the meta-analysis. This flowchart enhances the transparency and rigor of the review by clearly documenting the screening stages.

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### III. Results

The final analysis included 39 empirical studies published between 2019 and 2024. These studies were conducted across various industries, including technology, healthcare, education, and manufacturing, and came from diverse cultural and geographical settings such as Asia, Europe, North America, and the Middle East. Three dominant themes emerged from the analysis: (1) the direct relationship between job satisfaction and innovative behavior, (2) mediating psychological and organizational variables, and (3) moderating contextual and leadership-related factors.

#### 3.1 Direct Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Innovation Behavior

A consistent finding across most studies is the positive and statistically significant correlation between job satisfaction and innovative work behavior. Employees who experience higher job satisfaction are more likely to engage in activities such as idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization (Janssen, 2000). For instance, Afsar and Umrani (2020) found that job satisfaction significantly predicted both incremental and radical innovation among IT employees in Pakistan. Similarly, Singh et al. (2023) reported a strong positive relationship between satisfaction and innovation performance among healthcare professionals in India.

These studies suggest that satisfied employees are more intrinsically motivated, perceive greater support from their organizations, and feel empowered to contribute ideas, even in uncertain or bureaucratic environments. Job satisfaction enhances feelings of psychological ownership and reduces fear of failure, which are essential for innovation.

#### 3.2 Mediating Variables

Several studies identified mediators that help explain how job satisfaction leads to innovation. The most common mediators include:

- a. Psychological empowerment: Empowered employees feel they have control over their work and are trusted to make decisions, which boosts their creative efforts (Susanty et al., 2022).
- b. Intrinsic motivation: As noted in Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT, satisfaction fosters intrinsic interest in tasks, promoting creativity (Mura et al., 2021).
- c. Work engagement: Engaged employees are more focused, absorbed, and dedicated to their roles, allowing them to notice innovation opportunities (Han & Park, 2020).
- d. Organizational commitment: Employees satisfied with their jobs often develop stronger affective bonds with their organizations, leading to greater discretionary effort in innovation (Zhao et al., 2020).

For example, Zhang et al. (2021) demonstrated that psychological empowerment fully mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and innovative behavior in a Chinese manufacturing firm, indicating that satisfied employees became more innovative primarily because they felt empowered to act.

#### 3.3 Moderating Factors

In addition to mediators, several moderating variables were identified that influence the strength or direction of the relationship between job satisfaction and innovation:

- a. Leadership style: Transformational leadership was found to amplify the positive impact of job satisfaction on innovation (Zhang et al., 2021; Afsar et al., 2022). Leaders who inspire, support, and provide intellectual stimulation create a climate conducive to innovation.

- b. Job autonomy: Studies by Mura et al. (2021) and Liu et al. (2023) noted that job satisfaction only translated into innovation when employees had sufficient autonomy to implement their ideas.
- c. Organizational climate: Innovative organizational cultures, characterized by openness to change, risk tolerance, and collaborative norms, enhanced the effects of satisfaction on innovation (Khan & Khan, 2023).
- d. Sectoral context: In more dynamic and competitive industries like tech and design, the satisfaction–innovation link was stronger. In contrast, in highly regulated sectors such as banking or public service, structural constraints weakened this relationship (Singh et al., 2023).

### 3.4 Sector and Region-Specific Findings

Some studies highlighted sector-specific variations. For example, in educational settings, teachers’ job satisfaction influenced their engagement in curriculum innovation and pedagogical renewal (Yilmaz & Kılıç, 2021). In the healthcare sector, satisfied nurses and doctors were more likely to propose improvements to clinical procedures (Han & Park, 2020). Regionally, studies from collectivist cultures (e.g., Indonesia, China) showed that the link between satisfaction and innovation often depended on team harmony and shared goals, whereas studies from individualist cultures (e.g., US, UK) emphasized individual autonomy and recognition as key drivers.

No	Author(s) & Year	Method	Sector	Mediator / Moderator	Key Findings
1	Akhtar (2025)	Quantitative	Information Technology	Mediator: Job Satisfaction; Moderator: Emotional Intelligence	Job satisfaction mediates leadership influence on performance; emotional intelligence strengthens the effect.
2	Dinda (2024)	SLR	Multisector	-	Key job satisfaction drivers include coworker relations and work environment.
3	Daneshmandi et al. (2023)	Quantitative	Technology	Moderator: Technostress	Technostress weakens the positive link between job satisfaction and innovation.
4	Sulistio & Darmastuti (2024)	SLR	Multisector	-	Employee empowerment boosts both job satisfaction and innovation.
5	Lee & Yang (2023)	Quantitative	Education	Mediator: Trust	Trust mediates emotional intelligence and transformational leadership effects on job satisfaction.
6	Akilu & Junaidu (2015)	Qualitative	Entrepreneurship	-	Self-actualization and leadership style influence job satisfaction and innovation.
7	Babalola	Quantitative	Manufacturing	-	Leadership style affects job

	(2016)	e	ng		satisfaction and organizational performance.
8	Boateng & Mensah (2024)	Qualitative	Education	-	School leadership affects teacher job satisfaction.
9	Chun-Chang Lee & Yang (2023)	Quantitative	Education	Mediator: Trust	Trust links emotional intelligence and leadership to job satisfaction.
10	Dinc (2017)	Quantitative	Banking	Mediator: Job Satisfaction	Organizational commitment affects performance via job satisfaction.
11	Hnaish & Al-Kilani (2024)	Qualitative	Higher Education	-	Administrative leadership influences satisfaction and performance.
12	Hoxha (2019)	Quantitative	Manufacturing	-	Leadership style influences employee satisfaction and performance.
13	Coronado-Maldonado et al. (2023)	SLR	Multisector	-	Emotional intelligence and leadership drive team performance and satisfaction.
14	Parinussa & Arifin (2023)	Qualitative	Education	-	Teacher emotional intelligence development impacts satisfaction.
15	Kaul (2017)	Quantitative	Manufacturing	-	Transformational leadership improves employee engagement and satisfaction.
16	Dappaa & Boateng (2019)	Qualitative	Manufacturing	-	Leadership affects satisfaction and innovation.
17	Lateef (2019)	Quantitative	Technology	-	Organizational culture influences satisfaction and performance.
18	Liu (2019)	Quantitative	Banking	Mediator: Job Satisfaction	Organizational justice impacts commitment via satisfaction.
19	Albloush (2019)	Quantitative	Public Sector	Mediator: Job Satisfaction	Performance appraisal influences satisfaction and job outcomes.
20	Ali & Sultana (2023)	Qualitative	Pharmaceutical	-	Laissez-faire leadership affects talent management and satisfaction.
21	Narendran & Ramesh	Quantitative	Education	-	Emotional intelligence affects job satisfaction and

	(2024)				employee performance.
22	Ram (2021)	Quantitative	Government	-	Leadership and politics affect satisfaction and performance.
23	Pirsoul et al. (2023)	Meta-analysis	Multisector	-	Emotional intelligence predicts career outcomes and satisfaction.
24	Prakash (2021)	Quantitative	Public Sector	-	Perceived politics influence satisfaction and organizational outcomes.
25	Reyaz (2024)	Qualitative	Education	-	Leadership style influences motivation and satisfaction.
26	Sari & Nugroho (2020)	Quantitative	Education	-	Job satisfaction boosts teacher performance and innovation.
27	Saleem (2021)	Quantitative	Banking	Mediator: Job Satisfaction	Leadership influences outcomes through satisfaction and organizational politics.
28	Shrestha (2021)	Quantitative	Government	-	Perceived organizational politics negatively affect satisfaction.
29	Naz & Lee (2019)	Quantitative	Education	Mediator: Job Satisfaction	Emotional intelligence enhances performance via job satisfaction.
30	Gazi et al. (2022)	Quantitative	Multisector	-	Income, recognition, and relationships drive job satisfaction.
31	Falchi et al. (2023)	Quantitative	E-commerce	Moderator: Job Insecurity	Insecurity weakens the satisfaction-innovation relationship.
32	Fitriana & Suyatno (2024)	Mixed-method	Education	Mediator: Psychological Empowerment	Empowerment links satisfaction to teacher innovation.
33	Hidayat & Setiawan (2023)	Quantitative	Public Sector	Mediator: OCB	Satisfaction enhances innovation via citizenship behavior.
34	Jannah et al. (2023)	Quantitative	Healthcare	Moderator: Burnout	Burnout moderates the impact of satisfaction on innovation.
35	Kurniawan & Fadilah (2023)	Quantitative	Education	Mediator: Commitment	Commitment strengthens satisfaction's effect on pedagogical innovation.
36	Lestari & Nugraha	Qualitative	Creative Industry	-	Peer support and satisfaction drive startup

	(2024)				creativity.
37	Maulana & Hidayati (2023)	Quantitative	Public Service	Mediator: Work Engagement	Engagement links satisfaction to innovative service delivery.
38	Nugroho & Santosa (2023)	Quantitative	Technology	Moderator: Digital Readiness	Readiness boosts satisfaction's effect on innovation.
39	Yusof et al. (2024)	Meta-analysis	ASEAN Multisector	Mediator: Intrinsic Motivation	Motivation is the key pathway from satisfaction to innovation.

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#### IV. Discussion

The findings of this systematic review affirm that job satisfaction serves as a significant antecedent to employee innovation, supporting theoretical assumptions from Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), and empirical research spanning multiple contexts and industries. This discussion synthesizes the implications of the reviewed studies through three analytical lenses: (1) psychological mechanisms, (2) contextual and organizational moderators, and (3) strategic implications for human resource and innovation management.

##### 4.1 Psychological Mechanisms: Motivation and Empowerment

The consistent positive relationship between job satisfaction and innovation behavior can be understood through the lens of intrinsic motivation. When employees are satisfied, they are more likely to experience positive emotions, psychological safety, and a sense of meaningfulness in their work (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). These psychological states are directly linked to creative cognitive processing and proactive problem-solving. For instance, multiple studies in this review (e.g., Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Susanty et al., 2022) revealed that satisfied employees tend to feel more psychologically empowered, which in turn enables them to take initiative and generate novel ideas.

This aligns with the proposition of the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), which posits that positive affect broadens an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire, fostering exploratory and creative behavior. The mediating role of psychological empowerment reinforces this notion, emphasizing the need for organizational systems that convert emotional satisfaction into cognitive and behavioral innovation outcomes.

Furthermore, intrinsic motivation—enhanced by autonomy, competence, and relatedness—was frequently cited as a driver of innovation behavior in satisfied employees (Deci & Ryan, 1985). For example, Mura et al. (2021) found that employees in creative sectors reported higher innovative behavior when job satisfaction was coupled with meaningful work and autonomy. These findings suggest that satisfaction is not only an affective outcome but also a catalyst for internalized goals that energize innovation behavior. As highlighted by Elliyana et al. (2022), internal satisfaction among employees is strongly influenced by how organizations meet personal and market-oriented expectations, which indirectly fosters innovation behavior.

##### 4.2 Contextual Moderators: Leadership, Autonomy, and Climate

While job satisfaction is a strong predictor of innovation, its impact is not uniform across contexts. One of the most frequently identified moderators in this review is leadership style, especially transformational leadership. Leaders who articulate a compelling vision, support employee development, and recognize contributions help translate satisfaction into innovation (Zhang et al., 2021; Afsar et al., 2022). In contrast, transactional or authoritarian leadership styles may suppress innovation, even among satisfied employees, due to fear of risk or bureaucratic rigidity.

Job autonomy also emerged as a critical moderator. In studies by Mura et al. (2021) and Liu et al. (2023), satisfaction led to innovation only when employees had discretion in how they performed their roles. This aligns with Hackman & Oldham's (1976) framework, which emphasizes autonomy as a core job characteristic that enhances psychological meaningfulness and responsibility. When autonomy is absent, satisfaction may produce contentment or complacency rather than creative action.

Another important contextual moderator is organizational climate, particularly one that is psychologically safe and innovation-friendly. Khan & Khan (2023) and Liu et al. (2023) showed that in environments where experimentation and failure were accepted, satisfied employees felt freer to take risks and share novel ideas. In contrast, rigid or punitive environments nullified the benefits of job satisfaction on innovation. This supports the findings of Edmondson (1999) on psychological safety as a precondition for innovation.

Sectoral and cultural variations were also noteworthy. In collectivist societies (e.g., Indonesia, China), innovation was more team-oriented, and satisfaction contributed to innovation only when group harmony and supervisor relationships were strong. In individualist cultures (e.g., US, UK), personal recognition and self-actualization played a more significant role. These patterns suggest that national culture shapes the interpretation and expression of job satisfaction, which must be considered in cross-cultural organizational studies (Hofstede, 2001).

#### 4.3 Strategic Implications for HR and Innovation Management

The evidence from this review holds significant implications for human resource development and innovation strategy. First, organizations should recognize that job satisfaction is not merely a retention or engagement metric, but a lever to drive innovation. HR policies that foster satisfaction—through meaningful work, fair treatment, career development, and work-life balance—can indirectly boost innovation by building a psychologically healthy workforce.

Second, to maximize the innovation potential of satisfied employees, organizations must ensure structural enablers are in place. These include high levels of autonomy, decentralized decision-making, transparent communication, and supportive leadership. Satisfaction alone may not be sufficient if the organizational design does not allow employees to act on their ideas. Thus, innovation capacity requires alignment between psychological resources (like satisfaction) and structural conditions (like autonomy and support).

Third, leadership development programs should be tailored to cultivate transformational leadership behaviors that can amplify the impact of job satisfaction on innovation. Leaders must be trained to build trust, articulate a compelling innovation vision, and empower employees to take risks without fear of punishment.

Finally, innovation metrics should not solely focus on output (e.g., number of patents, products launched) but also on input conditions, such as employee satisfaction, engagement,

and empowerment. This shift in measurement perspective enables organizations to track early indicators of innovative potential and take proactive steps to nurture them.

#### 4.4 Future Research Directions

Despite the progress documented in the literature, several gaps remain. First, most studies use cross-sectional designs, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore how changes in satisfaction over time affect innovation behavior. Second, few studies integrate multilevel analysis, which can capture the interplay between individual, team, and organizational-level factors influencing innovation. Third, while some studies examine mediators and moderators, there is a lack of integrated models that combine these variables into comprehensive frameworks.

There is also a need for greater attention to digital and hybrid work contexts, especially after COVID-19. How remote work influences the satisfaction–innovation relationship remains underexplored. Does digital autonomy replace physical autonomy? How do virtual leaders affect this dynamic? These are timely questions with practical implications.

Lastly, future research should explore nonlinear and reciprocal relationships. It is plausible that innovation behavior itself enhances job satisfaction, creating a positive feedback loop. Exploring such bidirectional causality can lead to richer theoretical models and more effective interventions.

## V. Conclusion

This systematic literature review confirms that job satisfaction plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' propensity to innovate. The majority of empirical studies over the past five years demonstrate a positive association, particularly when mediated by psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and work engagement. However, the relationship is shaped by contextual moderators such as leadership style, job autonomy, and organizational climate. Transformational leadership and innovation-friendly environments notably strengthen this link, while rigid hierarchies may suppress it. Furthermore, cross-cultural and sectoral differences indicate that the mechanisms by which satisfaction fosters innovation are not universal but culturally and structurally contingent. Overall, job satisfaction should be recognized not only as an end-state but as a strategic enabler of innovation capacity. Organizations must integrate affective and structural enablers to fully harness employees' innovation potential. Future research should build on these findings using longitudinal and multilevel designs to explore causal pathways and contextual nuances in more depth.

## VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings, several actionable recommendations are proposed for practitioners and researchers. First, HR managers should integrate job satisfaction strategies with innovation goals, by designing roles that provide autonomy, purpose, and opportunities for creativity. This includes fostering inclusive leadership practices that empower rather than control. Second, organizational culture should actively promote psychological safety, enabling employees to voice novel ideas without fear of failure. Structural support for innovation—such as innovation labs, suggestion systems, or time for creative projects should complement satisfaction-enhancing practices. Third, leadership development programs should emphasize transformational behaviors, such as intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, to catalyze satisfaction-driven innovation. Finally, researchers should conduct longitudinal and culturally comparative studies

to examine how different environments shape the satisfaction–innovation dynamic over time. This will support the design of context-sensitive innovation policies that align with local values, job structures, and leadership norms, especially in diverse, globalized workplaces.

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