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Determinant Factors that Drive Innovative Work Behavior of Public University Academic Staff in Uganda

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Abstract:

The study was set to determine the factors influencing innovative work behavior of public university academic staff in Uganda. Factor analysis was employed to identify variables for inclusion in subsequent analytical procedures, and seven key factors were extracted and rotated using the varimax method. These factors were subsequently subjected to multiple regression analysis to determine their combined predictive significance on innovative work behavior. The results revealed that five of the seven factors significantly influence innovative work behavior of university academic staff. These include financial resource support, creative self-efficacy, leader-member exchange, psychological empowerment, and satisfaction at work. The other two factors, knowledge sharing and participatory decision making, were not significant in the model although they partially predict and individually associate with innovative work behavior. The study therefore recommends a model with human resource management implications for implementation by government and leaders of public universities to cultivate innovative work behavior amongst university academics.

Keywords:

Innovative Work Behavior, Academic Staff, Public Universities, Leader Member Exchange, Uganda

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Introduction

The reported accelerating pace of technology diffusion and the convergence of multiple technologies, coupled with the emergence of global platforms that are disrupting traditional development models (Pauwels 2019; World Bank 2019h), have pushed governments including that of Uganda to demand for innovative work behavior from professionals in the different sectors of the country (Ren et al., 2025). Universities are therefore focusing on innovative work behavior because the world is experiencing rapid technological change with far-reaching implications for development (Namono et al., 2022b). This demand for innovative work behavior from political and different social actors has grown steadily given the pragmatic contribution that higher education makes towards the economic, political and social development of the country (Chankseliani et al., 2021). Consequently, academic institutions at present do not only have a duty to teach, conduct research, and store knowledge but also publish impactful findings (Khelalfa and Hadidane, 2023). Both public and private institutions of higher learning are challenged by government to demonstrate strong innovative capabilities that can foster growth of the communities in which they are located (Kruger and Steyn, 2024).

Moreover, as developing nations strive to achieve middle income status and adapt to the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0), fostering innovation among academic staff becomes imperative (Ismail et al., 2020). Workplace innovation can be understood as a broader process that not only includes idea generation termed as creativity but also the implementation of ideas within the work setting (Saud, 2025). That is why organizational success in today's volatile environment is dependent on having an innovative workforce in an age of digitization, globalization and fast changes (Erhan et al., 2022).

Innovation is recognized as a critical factor for competitiveness and a mechanism for increased quality, equity, coverage and efficiency demonstrated by a country (Dempere et al., 2023). Despite this widespread recognition, studies focusing on the factors that determine innovative work behavior for academic staff in public universities especially in developing countries like Uganda are scanty. Whereas organizational variables such as leader behavior, organizational support, institutional culture, higher education type, type of ownership, individual commitment, and the geoeconomic strength of the university have been linked to innovative work behavior, they have not been empirically investigated to conclusion (Fındıkoğlu and İlhan, 2016; Zainudin et al., 2024).

Besides, research on the antecedents of IWB has been carried out by many researchers such as the influence of leadership on IWB, characteristics of individuals and from organizations such as Human Resource Management (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017), but no research has comprehensively mapped out the factors that influence IWB especially in public universities. Therefore, this study is vital owing to the fact that innovative work behavior in education brings with it the proactive and creative actions of individuals working in academic settings to generate novel ideas, solutions, and practices (Hosseini and

Haghighi Shirazi, 2021; Srirahayu et al., 2023). Moreover, the urgency of research on innovative work behavior among academics in Uganda cannot be overstated because as the country strives to become a middle-income status and adapt to the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Guloba et al., 2019), the factors that unlock the potential and innovation among academic staff should be central to the educational development agenda (Rajandran and Subramaniam, 2023).

Unlike business companies, where the main economic goal of innovation is to target productivity through profit and sales growth, public university staff is expected to drive innovation that requires (1) updating the curriculum by predicting the needs of education and the labor market, (2) anchoring innovation through research that impacts society to solve community problems. This second aspect is the main activity of choice for those academics who seek career progress, personal recognition, and reward (Predrag et al., 2023), since scientific papers out of such an endeavor are considered new products in the research market if they contain a new problem-solving approach (Guindalini et al., 2021); (3) technology transfer innovation in which scientific assets of an entrepreneurial university are used to benefit society. This practice can help universities innovate, have licensing rights, and establish scientific parks, incubators, and spinoffs (Amry et al., 2021). The above three have the potential to accumulate financially rewarding contract research, consulting services, technology transfer licensing rights, and advanced training for the multiplier benefit of the external environment. The above are vital outcomes of innovation that demand practical drivers to trigger desirable innovative work behavior at the individual and organizational levels.

According to Mpaata & Mpaata (2018), in this era of mass education, universities are not only expected to think quality, produce quality, and uphold quality but also to remain centers of excellence fully equipped with diverse knowledge in order to act as conveyor belts that can prepare students with an entrepreneurial mindset. Such graduates are expected to demonstrate innovativeness and bolster competitive advantage with a sustainable growth focus in the face of the present global competition with changing customer expectations in a highly dynamic business environment (Arnout et al., 2024). Therefore, before innovative work behavior is practiced in the manufacturing industry, it must be prepared, appreciated, assimilated, integrated, and measured among the university research output quality and quantity index (Mpaata, 2023).

In light of the above, a study on the factors that are desirable to unlock the potential of innovative work behavior in a developing country like Uganda is critical given the need for universities to thrive and survive in a dynamic competitive work environment (Khelalfa & Hadidane, 2023). Equally, the research by (Nugroho, 2023) observed that while public universities are accountable to the government and the communities in which they are located, the academics therein have not sufficiently developed unique ideas that can link their institutional capabilities to problem solving. Particularly in Uganda, it has already

been noted that the willingness of academic staff to engage in innovative activities has not been effective, yet it constitutes a crucial factor not only in the progress of a given academic institution, but also in the overall education system (Namono et al., 2022a; Wanyana et al., 2025). In other words, the factors that influence innovative work behavior have been widely studied. Despite that, no researcher has ever comprehensively mapped the factors that affect IWB, especially in public organizations.

The main purpose of the study therefore was to determine the factors influencing innovative work behavior (IWB) of a public university academic staff in Uganda. The three specific objectives were.

1. To determine the factors that influence innovative work behavior of a public university academic staff in Uganda.
2. To identify the relationship between the different factors identified and their influence on innovative work behavior.
3. To determine the combined effect of the different factors on innovative work behavior.

Consequently, the following hypotheses were tested.

1. There are significant factors that drive innovative work behavior of a public university academic staff in Uganda.
2. There is a significant correlation between the identified factors and their influence on innovative work behavior.
3. There is a significant combined effect of the identified factors on innovative work behavior.

As noted earlier, this study was motivated by the increasing lack of innovative work behavior among employees in public universities in Uganda (Kansiime, 2023). While data suggest an increasing investment in higher education and research, it is undeniable that there is also an equally concerning decline in creativity, proactiveness, and initiative among university staff (Namono et al., 2022a). Moreover, challenges such as bureaucratic processes and limited resource allocation for innovation have been documented not only in Uganda but in other countries as well (Jjagwe et al., 2024). Despite the fundamental role that public universities play in fostering research, knowledge creation, and societal development, the lack of innovative approaches might hamper their ability to remain competitive and responsive to changing educational and societal needs (Atuhaire et al., 2022). While there is significant scholarly interest in studies on IWB, research specifically focused on IWB in higher education institutions remains limited (Ayoub et al., 2023). This is reenforced by (Roffeei et al., 2018) who observed that education is crucial since it serves as a reservoir of knowledge and helps shape people's attitudes and talents to become knowledge workers.

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Theoretical Background

This research was informed by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which establishes a reciprocal relationship between behavior and the environment (Cardina et al., 2022). By continuously improving the conditions of service for academic professionals, the government, as emphasized by the social exchange theory, expects that individual academic staff can make logical choices to not only maximize their ethical social interactions (Arsawan et al., 2022), but also undertake a multitude of responsibilities that go beyond conventional expectations of teaching (Alaaraj et al., 2018). In addition, the relationship between university leaders and academic staff requires effective social exchange (Li and Gao, 2022) as emphasized by the leader member exchange theory in that leaders of government institutions are expected to not only act with servant traits to offer support to staff, but also lobby the government for funds in developing, processing, and transferring knowledge. It is because of this that universities are knowledge-intensive organizations by nature (Richards and Duxbury, 2015). Academic leaders are therefore obligated to design a motivating culture through routine supervisory support to colleagues and cultivate positive work attitudes and loyalty, which consequently builds high-quality service and innovation in return (Chen et al., 2022). In other words, administrators are expected to ensure role autonomy and professional independence through psychological empowerment that create work satisfaction that is vital to facilitate employee motivation and guarantee confidence, constancy, and resilience amongst staff (Mpaata and Mpaata, 2019; Wanyana et al., 2025). Finally, this study is also supported by the jobs demands resources theory that highlights the physical or mental effort needed by a person to pursue innovation. Job resources are elements of the workplace that assist staff in achieving work objectives and lessen workload pressures to enhance well-being (Bakker and De Vries, 2021). This theory emphasizes the need for government through university leadership to provide resources that can empower staff to comfortably focus on teaching, research and innovation, thereby guaranteeing a constant balance between resource availability and innovation through quality research output (Koroglu and Omur, 2022; Kwon and Kim, 2020).

Literature Review

Financial Resource Support and Innovative Work Behavior

A proliferation of existing literature on innovative work behavior provides evidence that there are different organizational elements that can influence innovative work behavior. This study builds on the widely supported individual behavior elements in that regard. For example, financial resource support is widely acknowledged as a foundational enabler of innovative work behavior (IWB), particularly in knowledge-intensive environments like higher education institutions (Handiman and Adam, 2024). It is well documented that adequate financial resources empower academic staff to move beyond idea generation

and engage in experimentation, prototyping, and implementation of new initiatives ((Garcia, 2023; Ma and Deeprasert, 2024). Similarly, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model asserts that job resources including research funding, innovation grants, and dedicated development budgets can lessen job strain and encourage proactive behaviors, most notably innovation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Koroglu and Omur, 2022). Within academic settings, the category of financial resources comprises internal grant programs, sponsorship for conferences, initial seed funding for nascent projects, and various incentives tied to publishing or patenting original results (Guindalini et al., 2021; Rajandran and Subramaniam, 2023). Predrag et al. (2023) argue that these financial instruments not only empower faculty members to commit time and effort to innovation-related tasks but also convey a powerful institutional message: that creativity carries explicit recognition and tangible rewards. Supporting this, several empirical investigations confirm that when academic institutions deliver funding that is stable on schedule, and commensurate with needs, faculty members are more inclined to take the initiative, to tackle complex problems, and to create novel methods or instruments (Amry et al., 2021; Dempere et al., 2023).

Besides, Jjagwe et al. (2024) posits that inadequate funding for research and development remains one of the most persistent barriers to innovation among academic staff in Uganda, particularly in translating knowledge into practical solutions or commercial outputs. It is for this reason that when universities fail to allocate funds specifically for innovation activities, some of the most capable and motivated employees may abandon their efforts on the way due to financial uncertainty (Arnout et al., 2024; Atuhaire et al., 2022). Alternatively, institutions that implement performance-based funding models and reward innovation through grants and stipends have witnessed significant improvements in staff engagement and creative output (Chen and Pongtornkulpanich, 2024; Zainudin et al., 2024). Current research supports this observation and concludes that financial support reduces the perceived risk associated with innovation given that university academics are willing to pursue complex or unconventional research (Karimi et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). Longitudinal studies have also documented that it is through financial support that academics are encouraged across disciplines to collaborate in terms of sharing logistical and operational costs, thereby amplifying the collective innovative capacity of academic units (Canavesi and Minelli, 2022; Kruger and Steyn, 2024).

Creative Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior

Another factor identified and researched widely is creative self-efficacy that is defined as the belief in one's ability to produce creative outcomes. According to Abdullah et al. (2019), CSE is a key predictor of innovative work behavior (IWB) across multiple organizational contexts, including higher education. Wang et al. (2024) also noted that individuals with high CSE are more likely to initiate, promote, and implement new ideas because they possess the confidence to challenge established norms and propose original solutions. Such studies therefore provide support that creative self-efficacy represents a

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particular type of drive that focuses on personal belief in relation to creative functioning (Liu et al., 2023). That is why the research by Beghetto et al. (2011) historically highlighted creative self-efficacy as an individual's self-confidence their creative ability. Recent findings by Karimi et al. (2022) further support this claim and reveal that academic staff with high CSE are more resilient in the face of setbacks and more committed to experimenting with new pedagogical and research approaches. In other words, academic institutions where autonomy and cognitive flexibility are crucial, staff members are more likely to engage in cross-disciplinary research, curriculum design, and process improvements (Canavesi and Minelli, 2022; Nugroho, 2023).

Psychological Empowerment and Innovative Work Behavior

A third identified factor is psychological empowerment which nurtures role autonomy and professional independence. According to Wanyana et al. (2025) psychological empowerment is the degree of freedom and discretion employees have in performing their job tasks and has therefore been recognized as a strong predictor of innovative work behavior (IWB). The study by Llorente-Alonso et al. (2024) also documented that psychological empowerment is a process that involves an individual's subjective, cognitive and attitudinal experiences that enables them to feel capable, competent and authorized to complete activities. Historically, extensive research on psychological empowerment has provided compelling evidence of its significant impact as a motivational element in influencing innovative work behavior (Yadav et al., 2023). In other words, when staff have a sense of empowerment, they perceive their job as having a more significant purpose, exhibit increased levels of skills in their work, possess a larger ability to affect outcomes and have a wider range of options for completing tasks (Desta and Mulie, 2024).

In academic institutions, where knowledge generation and dissemination are core functions, autonomy in teaching, research, and service roles are essential to enable innovation (Jekabsone and Anohina-Naumeca, 2024). Meng and Sun (2019) observed that university professionals with high psychological empowerment are more likely to take the initiative, propose new ideas, and execute them without fear of rigid oversight. This is because autonomy satisfies psychological needs for competence and control, which are crucial antecedents of innovation according to the Self-Determination Theory (Koroglu and Omur, 2022; Rajandran and Subramaniam, 2023). Furthermore, psychological empowerment enables staff to allocate time and resources toward creative pursuits, particularly in environments with minimal administrative interference and high leadership trust (Zainudin et al., 2024).

Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behavior

Another important variable identified as a factor in this research is Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) which refers to the quality of the relationship between leaders and their subordinates (Tanskanen, 2025).

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According to the study by Lee et al. (2025) leader member exchange begins with the vertical dyad linkage theory which emphasizes a relationship that develops between two different people at different levels or levels in an organization between the leaders and subordinates. Consequently, High-quality LMX relationships, characterized by mutual trust, respect, and obligation, foster an environment in which employees feel supported and are more likely to go beyond routine responsibilities to engage in creative tasks (Liu et al., 2023; Zainudin et al., 2024). To support this view, Wang et al., (2024) observed that such relationships contribute to psychological safety which is a vital condition for innovation, by reducing the perceived risk associated with proposing and implementing new ideas. Therefore, in an academic setting, where hierarchical structures often dominate, a supportive leader-subordinate relationship can significantly reduce bureaucratic resistance and encourage academic staff to pursue novel approaches to teaching, research, and service delivery (Chen & Pongtornkulpanich, 2024; Mpaata, 2023).

It is therefore important to note that LMX has been linked to IWB by enhancing employee motivation, autonomy, and organizational commitment. A study by Afsar et al. (2021) argues that when employees perceive their leaders as fair, approachable, and supportive, they are more likely to reciprocate through constructive models and innovative behaviors. Recently, Canavesi and Minelli (2022) noted that leaders who cultivate strong dyadic relationships foster a culture of trust that enhances creative self-efficacy and risk-taking among academic staff. In public universities, especially in developing contexts like Uganda, where structural constraints may limit autonomy, the role of strong LMX becomes even more vital in unlocking innovative potential. As highlighted by Jjagwe et al. (2024) leadership support through informal mentoring, personal recognition, and involvement in decision-making significantly contributes to innovation at both individual and institutional levels. Therefore, strengthening LMX within academic institutions is not only essential for enhancing IWB but also for advancing organizational adaptability and resilience.

Satisfaction at Work and Innovative Work Behavior

In another development, industrial psychologists have provided empirical support on the relationship been work satisfaction and innovative work behavior in which researchers like Khan and Abbas (2022) have noted that employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to display higher levels of engagement, commitment, and willingness to go beyond routine duties, which are essential conditions for innovation. Other recent studies have noted that work satisfaction enhances intrinsic motivation, which plays a critical role in creativity and the generation of new ideas, particularly in environments that value autonomy and feedback (Wang et al., 2024). According to Afsar et al. (2021), it is employees who are satisfied at work that exhibit resilience and have emotionally and physically invested in their day-to-day work, making them more likely to initiate, develop, promote, and implement novel productive ideas. Consequently, in an academic setting, employee satisfaction does not only stem from remuneration but

also from the job itself, recognition by supervisors and colleagues at work who offer support, as well as opportunities for promotion that are laid on table by the organization to spur innovation with a strong sense of institutional ownership (Cardina et al., 2022; Mpaata et al., 2024). Besides, research by Vakira et al. (2023) documents that when employees perceive their workplace as fair, supportive and inclusive, they feel more at home and psychologically protected to share new ideas. Work satisfaction also buffers the negativity associated with high workloads and institutional rigidity that are counterproductive in the long run (Koroglu and Omur, 2022; Rajandran and Subramaniam, 2023).

Knowledge Sharing and Innovative Work Behavior

Studies on industry collaboration with academic institutions of high regard have documented the importance of knowledge sharing as a critical driver of IWB (Iqbal et al., 2025). The current research by De Wit-de Vries et al. (2019), knowledge sharing involves the dissemination and exchange of information, ideas, expertise, and skills among individuals and teams, which enables the generation of new knowledge and solutions. Within academic institutions, knowledge sharing fosters collaboration and cross-disciplinary learning, thereby expanding the cognitive base from which innovation can emerge. Studies have demonstrated that employees who actively engage in knowledge donation and knowledge collection are more likely to contribute to IWB, especially when supported by a collegial and open organizational climate (Chen & Pongtornkulpanich, 2024; Zainudin et al., 2024).

Mpaata (2023) emphasized that leaders who invest in building knowledge-sharing networks contribute to the development of innovative cultures in universities. Academic environments that reward collaborative learning and remove barriers to communication are more likely to witness sustained innovation (Cardina et al., 2022; Vakira et al., 2023). Knowledge sharing also enhances creative problem-solving by enabling individuals to access diverse perspectives and expertise, thereby improving the quality and feasibility of new ideas (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Canavesi and Minelli, 2022). According to Almulhim (2020), knowledge sharing may be incredibly beneficial to partners or employees when it comes to solving problems, implementing policies or developing new ideas. Higher education institutions are classified as knowledge-intensive enterprises due to their significant involvement in knowledge generation, development and dissemination through teaching learning and research (De La Torre and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2022). Empirical research indicates that the act of sharing knowledge, which includes donating and collecting knowledge, plays a significant role in enhancing employees' innovative work behavior (Akram et al., 2018; Kmieciak, 2021).

Participatory Decision Making and Innovative Work Behavior

Research that links participatory decision making (PDM) and innovative work behavior has also been documented in both the service and production industrial settings (Farzana and Charoensukmongkol,

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2023; Kimpah et al., 2023). The general finding on this revealed that PDM allows employees to take part in organizational decision-making processes thereby enhancing their sense of ownership, autonomy, and trust in leadership (Kwon and Kim, 2025; Mpaata and Mpaata, 2018b). These psychological empowerment benefits are crucial antecedents of IWB, which involves generating, promoting, and implementing novel ideas within the workplace (Mata et al., 2023; Wanyana et al., 2025). When employees are engaged in decisions that affect their tasks and work environment, they are more motivated to initiate and support innovation-related activities (Ghani et al., 2023).

Methods

Research Design

According to Kothari (2004), a research design that establishes causal relationships between variables is referred to as explanatory. Therefore, this study primarily employed an explanatory research design because its objective was to analyze the factors influencing innovative work behavior of public university academic staff. Additionally, the researcher utilized a cross-sectional design as the data was col lected at a single point in time. a cross-sectional design involves sampling various population segments at a specific moment (Davidavičienė, 2018).

Research Approach

Quantitative research approach allows researchers to measure relationships and associations between different variables which aid in establishing causal relationships (Creswell, 2014). hence, a quantitative research approach was used in the study.

Target Population and Sample Size

The target population of this study was 3,396 academics from ten public universities in Uganda. A sample of 357 academic staff was used in the study, of which 308 returned completed and usable questionnaires. The returned questionnaires from academic staff were factor analyzed using principal component analysis with varimax rotation.

Results

Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis was employed in this research to identify two or more questions that result in a set of responses that are highly correlated among the data. The use of an eigenvalue cut-off point of 1.0, as suggested by Kaiser, resulted in seven factors. The factors were then rotated using varimax rotation.

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The results of factor analysis for the 30 items as explained in terms of factors from the varimax rotation matrix can be detailed in table 1.

Factor 1: Financial Resource Support		
Item No.	**Item**	**Loading**
IV1	I receive funding to attend conferences where I gain innovative insights.	.752
IV9	My university provides financial incentives for creative work.	.760
IV21	There is timely disbursement of funds for projects	.543
Factor 2: Creative Self Efficacy		
Item No.	**Item**	**Loading**
IV23	I believe my work is meaningful and impactful to the university.	.526
IV24	I am confident in my academic decision-making abilities.	.796
IV25	I have significant control over what I do in my academic role.	.607
IV26	I feel that I contribute substantially to university goals.	.737
IV27	I feel empowered to introduce changes in how I teach or research.	.731
IV28	I determine the way to improve in my job performance	.590
IV29	My opinion counts in the university decision-making	.690
IV30	I have a significant influence on service quality.	.522
IV20	I have the freedom to decide how I carry out my academic duties.	.594
Factor 3: Knowledge Sharing		
Item No.	**Item**	**Loading**
IV6	I freely share my teaching materials with colleagues.	.680
IV8	I collaborate with others to co-create new teaching or research tools.	.742
IV16	There is openness to change in academic processes at my university.	.874
IV18	I feel empowered to introduce changes in how I teach or research.	.875
Factor 4: Leader-Member Exchange		
No.	**Item**	**Loading**
IV7	My supervisor encourages me to volunteer in community service.	.864
IV15	My supervisor cares more about my success than his/her own	.755
IV17	If I have a personal problem, I approach the supervisor who provides much needed assistance.	.871
Factor 5: Psychological Empowerment		
No.	**Item**	**Loading**
IV3	My efforts are ever noticed as much as possible by management	.516
IV5	My supervisor encourages me to handle important work decisions on my own	.399
IV11	The rationale behind key decisions is communicated clearly to all staff members.	.800
IV13	Leaders at my university foster a climate for innovation.	.569
IV14	When I develop new academic solutions, there is financial support for execution.	.684

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Factor 6: Satisfaction at Work		
No.	**Item**	**Loading**
IV2	This university cares about my general satisfaction at work.	.634
IV10	Decisions are made in a timely manner to address issues and challenges promptly.	.631
Factor 7: Participatory Decision Making		
No.	**Item**	**Loading**
IV4	The input and feedback from staff are considered in the decision-making process	.590
IV12	I am confident that decisions are made in the best interests of the community we serve.	.687
IV19	Everyone has access to information when they need it.	.726
IV22	Consensus is easy to reach within the university	.678

Table 1: Factor loadings and communality estimates

Hypothesis Testing

The major purpose of this study was to identify the factors that determine innovative work behavior of a public university academic staff in Uganda. The hypotheses were therefore tested as follows.

Hypothesis I

The first hypothesis stated that there are significant factors that determine innovative work behavior of a public university academic staff in Uganda. The Factor analysis reveals that there are seven factors which were identified as follows; (1) Financial Resource Support; (2) Creative Self-Efficacy; (3) Knowledge Sharing; (4) Leader-Member Exchange; (5) Psychological Empowerment; (6) Satisfaction at Work; and (7) Participatory Decision Making. All the seven factors explained a total of 63.3% of the rotation sums of squared loadings.

Hypothesis II

The second hypothesis stated that there is a significant correlation between the different identified factors and innovative work behavior of a public university academic staff in Uganda.

In order to test this hypothesis, a correlation analysis was performed using seven identified variables as indicated in the correlation matrix in table 2.

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	FIR	CSE	KNO	LMS	PE	WS	PDM	IWB
FIR	-							
CSE	.370**							
KNO	-.048	.271**						
LMX	.197**	.087	.310**					
PE	.241**	.270**	.477**	.449**				
WS	.405**	.227**	.346**	.332**	.590**			
PDM	.258**	.498**	.295**	.144**	.338**	.338**		
IWB	.408**	.369**	.224**	.355**	.530**	.473**	.309**	-

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of the Seven (7) Factors and Innovative Work Behavior

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis in Table 2 reveals that all the extracted factors have a positive and significant correlation with innovative work behavior. Specifically, there is a significant and positive relationship between innovative work behavior and: (i) Financial Resource Support [r = .408**, p < 0.0001]; (ii) Creative Self-Efficacy [r = .369**, p < 0.0001]; (iii) Knowledge Sharing [r = .224**, p < 0.0001]; (iv) Leader-Member Exchange [r = .355**, p < 0.0001]; (v) Psychological Empowerment [r = .530**, p < 0.0001]; (vi) Satisfaction at Work [r = .473**, p < 0.0001]; and (vii) Participatory Decision Making [r = .309**, p < 0.0001]. Put another way, the more public universities emphasize financial resource support for academic staff, the more likely they are to foster innovative work behavior. Likewise, creative self-efficacy is a vital factor in motivating staff to think creatively and take initiative. Knowledge sharing across departments and individuals enhances collaboration and stimulates innovation. Moreover, institutions that promote strong leader-member relationships and psychological empowerment are better positioned to unlock the innovative potential of their staff. When academic staff feel satisfied at work and involved in participatory decision-making, they are more likely to engage in creative and forward-thinking practices. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of a supportive and empowering organizational environment in promoting innovative work behavior among academic staff in public universities.

Hypothesis III

The third hypothesis stated that the seven (7) factors have a significant influence on innovative work behavior of public university academic staff in Uganda.

In order to test the above hypothesis, a multiple regression analysis was performed using the following as independent variables: (1) Financial Resource Support (FIR); (2) Creative Self-Efficacy (CSE); (3) Knowledge Sharing (KNO); (4) Leader-Member Exchange (LMX); (5) Psychological Empowerment

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(PE); (6) Satisfaction at Work (WS); and (7) Participatory Decision Making (PDM). Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) was therefore used as the dependent variable. Thus, the regression model was hypothesized as follows:

$$\mathbf{IWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1\ FIR + \beta_2\ CSE + \beta_3\ KNO + \beta_4\ LMX + \beta_5\ PE + \beta_6\ WS + \beta_7\ PDM + \varepsilon}$$

Where:

IWB = Innovative Work Behavior

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7$ = Constants in the model

FIR = Financial Resource Support

CSE = Creative Self-Efficacy

KNO = Knowledge Sharing

LMX = Leader-Member Exchange

PE = Psychological Empowerment

WS = Satisfaction at Work

PDM = Participatory Decision Making

Results of the multiple regression analysis are indicated as in table 3.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.894	.203		4.413	.000
	FIR	.112	.033	.169	3.372	.001
	CSE	.184	.050	.186	3.646	.000
	KNO	-.046	.035	-.067	-1.323	.187
	LMX	.071	.025	.131	2.797	.005
	PE	.239	.043	.318	5.558	.000
	WS	.078	.029	.149	2.697	.007
	PDM	.012	.037	.016	.317	.751

Table 3: Results of the Multiple Regression of the Seven (7) Factors against IWB

a. Dependent Variable: IWB

The analysis in Table 3 reveals that out of the seven (7) extracted factors, only five (5) significantly influence Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) of public university academic staff when considered together in a combined multiple regression model. The five significant predictors of IWB are: (1) Psychological Empowerment [$\beta = .318$, $t = 5.558$, $p < .001$], (2) Creative Self-Efficacy [$\beta = .186$, $t = 3.646$, $p < .001$], (3) Financial Resource Support [$\beta = .169$, $t = 3.372$, $p < .001$], (4) Satisfaction at Work [$\beta = .149$, $t = 2.697$, $p = .007$], and (5) Leader-Member Exchange [$\beta = .131$, $t = 2.797$, $p = .005$]. Among these, Psychological Empowerment emerged as the strongest contributor, highlighting its central role in fostering innovation among academic staff, followed by others.

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In order to determine the individual contribution of the different factors on innovative work behavoior, partial regression models were performed as indicated in table 4. Results reveal that all the factors partially and independently contribute significantly to IWB of a public university academic staff. This highlights the importance of the factors under study in promoting innovative work behavior.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
FIR	IWB	0.270	0.032	0.408	8.430	.000
CSE	IWB	0.366	0.049	0.369	7.487	.000
KNO	IWB	0.153	0.035	0.224	4.328	.000
LMX	IWB	0.191	0.027	0.355	7.150	.000
PE	IWB	0.398	0.034	0.530	11.762	.000
WS	IWB	0.246	0.024	0.473	10.124	.000
PDM	IWB	0.233	0.038	0.309	6.125	.000

Table 4: Individual Parametric Test

ANOVA

The overall model demonstrates that all factors combined account for 41.3% of the variance in IWB ($R^2 = 0.413$), indicating that the examined factors collectively make a significant contribution to innovative work behavior. Furthermore, the significance of the model is affirmed by the ANOVA results [$F = 35.141$, $p < .001$], confirming that the combined effect of the investigated factors on IWB is statistically robust and empirically revealing.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.973	7	14.568	35.141	.000b
	Residual	144.678	349	.415		
	Total	246.652	356			

Table 5: ANOVA results

a. Dependent Variable: IWB

b. Predictors: (Constant), PDM, LMX, FIR, KNO, WS, CSE, PE

Discussion

The findings contribute to theory that there are multiple organizational factors that significantly influence innovative work behavior (IWB) especially for a public university academic staff in Uganda. It is documented specifically that psychological empowerment emerged as a key enabler of innovation, confirming earlier findings that it is psychologically empowered employees who are likely to demonstrate higher levels of innovative work behavior (Grošelj et al., 2021). This means that when an academic staff

is given a sense of empowerment, they perceive their job as having a more significant purpose with increased levels of skill and ability to affect outcomes (Wanyana et al., 2025). Therefore, university managers and government priorities should be focused on ensuring that academics have the freedom, sufficient funding and opportunity to not only try new things but come up with creative solutions (Erdavit et al., 2023). Consequently, psychological empowerment is a key driver because, in the creative process, employees who are engaged in their work with such support can contribute to the generation and development of new ideas, thereby constantly expanding their cognitive processes and activities (Madrid et al., 2014).

Another significant factor was financial resource support that emerged as a prime enabler of innovative work behavior. This factor aligns with the Job Demands–Resources theory, which asserts that job resources like funding act as motivational tools that stimulate proactive behaviors, including innovation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). As Amry et al. (2021) and Ma and Deeprasert (2024) observed, adequate funding provides academics with the capacity to experiment, collaborate, and commercialize knowledge outputs. The study showed that financial support had a significant effect on IWB, confirming earlier assertions by Karimi et al. (2023) that universities investing in innovation-related incentives are better able to unlock staff creativity and experimentation. In the same line of argument, Yuan and Woodman (2017) noted that when employees feel supported by their organizations through access to resources, recognition, and opportunities for professional development, they are more likely to engage in innovative work behaviors. The offered support fosters a culture of risk-taking and creativity, thereby enabling the academic staff to move beyond routine tasks and actively contribute to institutional innovation and growth. Similarly, Du et al. (2019) confirmed that when support is provided, it promotes openness to experience, which can easily influence academics to become open-minded, curious, vividly imaginative, and creative thinkers. The research findings documented here imply that in order for public universities in Uganda to nurture creativity and promote the commercialization of new ideas, there is a need to enlist support from not only immediate colleagues to the academic staff at a personal level, but also that of both the government and the actors in the organization at another level so that government and other actors can provide a fund not only for teaching but also research and innovation.

Creative self-efficacy (CSE) was also a significant predictor of IWB, reinforcing the idea that belief in one's creative abilities is essential to initiating and executing new ideas (Erdavit et al., 2023). This is supported by the view that perceived competence promotes intrinsic motivation and risk-taking, both of which are vital for innovation to ensue (Rajandran and Subramaniam, 2023). According to Liu et al. (2023), employees with high CSE are more willing to challenge norms and experiment with new methods, particularly when backed by a supportive culture. This resonates with the study's results, suggesting that enhancing academic confidence through training, recognition, and empowerment can bolster innovation in universities (Chen et al., 2022).

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Satisfaction at work also emerged as a significant driver of innovative work behavior (IWB) for a public university academic staff. This is in line with modern literature which has widely documented that satisfaction at work regardless of organization is a vital factor influencing the wellbeing of employees (Kuo et al., 2023). Consequently, the composition of the different facets of job satisfaction including (1) satisfaction with the job itself; (2) satisfaction with colleagues; (3) satisfaction with promotion; and (4) satisfaction with the physical work environment, increase employee motivation, zeal and enthusiasm to stay happy with the job so as to enable innovative work behavior (Rosdaniati and Muafi, 2021).

The study here also reinforces the observation that leader member exchange significantly influences innovative work behavior, implying that there is a role that relational dynamics play in fostering innovation. Put another way, leaders who foster trust, support, and open communication enable employees to engage in creative problem-solving without fear of reprisal (Zainudin et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2023). In hierarchical academic settings, such relationships reduce bureaucratic barriers and encourage risk-taking (Chen & Pongtornkulpanich, 2024). As Abbas et al. (2021) observed, supportive leadership stimulates employee engagement and reinforces the psychological safety necessary for innovation. The study confirms that academic staff are more innovative when they perceive their supervisors as mentors rather than mere administrators. The leader member exchange in Uganda should be strengthened because it has been observed that when it comes to fostering comfortable working relationships, professors as mentors should always be respected because they are quite beneficial in that a collegial atmosphere inspires the young ones to do new things by presenting ideas unconventionally, sharing inspiring articles and putting heads together to discuss new findings (Brimhall, 2019).

Besides, whereas Participatory Decision Making (PDM) and Knowledge Sharing (KNO) were not statistically significant in the combined regression model, their individual contribution cannot be underestimated because these practices are conceptually linked to innovation (Al Khajeh et al., 2021; Nugroho, 2023). However, their actual operationalization within Ugandan public universities might be negligible because according to Jjagwe et al. (2024) ineffective knowledge-sharing frameworks and exclusionary decision-making processes can impede innovation despite being structurally present. Therefore, while academic staff may recognize the value of these practices, their practical impact on innovation remains weak unless supported by deliberate leadership and organizational reform.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that psychological empowerment, financial resource support, creative self-efficacy, leader-member exchange, and satisfaction at work significantly influence innovative work behavior (IWB) among academic staff in Uganda's public universities. The results here highlight the crucial interplay between individual motivation, leadership quality, and organizational

support in fostering innovative work behavior. To effectively enhance innovative behaviors, universities are encouraged to focus on empowering staff psychologically, ensuring access to adequate financial resources, nurturing strong leader-member relationships, and creating work environments that boost satisfaction. These elements are critical not only for institutional innovation but also for the retention and development of highly engaged and forward-thinking staff. It is perhaps the neglect of such factors that contributes to stagnation in research output, limited pedagogical transformation, and low adoption of innovative teaching and administrative practices across public universities. Therefore, this study calls for government and university leaders to do the following; (1) establish funding for research and innovation which requires that there is significant investment in education to generate new ideas that can spur new ideas for industries or value addition to products and develop a relevant and friendly curriculum in line with the above; (2) universities to prioritize funding for research; (3) invest in developing people; and (4) strengthen collaboration with industries and the private sector so that they can support higher education innovations and help universities commercialize their output to fruition.

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