

## **Leading Innovation: The Role of Leaders' Self-Concordance and Voice Climate in Shaping Leadership Effectiveness**

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### **Abstract**

Using componential theory of creativity, we propose a model of self-concordance, innovative work behavior, voice climate, and leader's effectiveness. This research aimed to inspect the impact of self-concordance on leaders' effectiveness through innovative work behavior. Moreover, considering the importance of contextual factors in enabling innovation, this study also examines the moderating role of voice climate over the relationship between self-concordance and leaders' effectiveness through innovative work behavior. The sample uses the quantitative survey method to include hotel employees in Pakistan. Results supported all hypotheses of the current study and showed the positive and significant relationship of self-concordance with the leader's effectiveness through innovative work behavior. Moreover, the relationship between leaders' self-concordance and effectiveness through innovative work behavior is stronger when voice climate is high. Limitations and implications of the current study and recommendations for future researchers are also discussed.

**Keywords:** Self-concordance, innovative work behavior, voice climate, leader's effectiveness

## Introduction

In today's dynamic work environment where products and customer preferences are continuously changing, competition is fierce, innovative adaptation is more critical than ever before thus organizations seek leaders with an ability to continuously innovate to ensure effectiveness in terms of performance (Yukl, 2008; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010; Ishaq et al., 2021). For long, it has been argued that self-concordance, which refers to alignment of goals with one's values, interests, and needs, is critical for having positive behavioral and performance outcomes at work (Judge et al., 2005; Smyth et al., 2020). Such a relationship is primarily reasoned through persistent effort and resiliency, which self-concordant individuals put to ensure their effectiveness at work (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2010; Henry et al., 2023).

However, we propose an alternate mechanism for effectiveness by self-concordant leaders at work, and that is through leaders' innovative behaviors, where leaders' innovative work behaviors refer to initiating and introducing unconventional and valuable ideas, processes, products, or procedures (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Theorizing based on componential theory of creativity and innovativeness and self-concordance model (Amabile, 1988; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), we will attempt to examine the impact of intrinsic motivation of self-concordant leaders at work not only on their creative ideas through openness, risk taking and involvement but also their effort and persistence towards successful implementing those ideas thus leading to their effectiveness (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2010; Hon, 2011).

Moreover, drawing on componential theory of creativity and innovativeness which suggests that leaders innovative behaviors and effectiveness is not only dependent on individual factors such as intrinsic motivation, but also over enabling environment where innovation is valued, enthusiasm is freely expressed and support is extended for risk taking and exploration of new ideas (Amabile, 1988), thus we further examine impact of voice climate over the relationship between leaders' self-concordance and leader's effectiveness through leaders innovative work behaviors. Voice climate is an environment that encourages individuals to voice their ideas and opinions openly (Brykman & Maerz, 2023). Individuals are encouraged to behave innovatively in such climates through open expression of creative, unconventional, challenging ideas without fear of rejection and also through fostering learning via open exchange and sharing of such ideas (Morrison et al., 2011; Frazier, 2009; Rubbab et al., 2023). Thus, such a climate not only enhances the emergence of innovative work behaviors on the part of intrinsically motivated leaders but also enhances support from followers towards such behaviors, leading to their effectiveness.

Overall, the current study enables us to better conceptualize innovative work behaviors in the domain of leaders' work patterns by identifying contingent factors affecting their emergence and respective effectiveness (see Figure 1).

## **Theory and Hypothesis Development**

### ***Self-concordance and Leaders' effectiveness***

As per self-concordance theory by Sheldon and Elliot (1999), the reasons individuals pursue their goals are a key determinant of their behavior; such reasons may range from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. Goals are considered self-concordant if they are consistent with one's values, interests, and needs. It is believed that the degree to which the goals are self-concordant determines the amount of effort individuals put towards attaining them and thus increases the likelihood that those goals will be achieved (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Henry et al., 2023). For this reason, self-concordance has been associated with several positive behavioral and performance outcomes at work (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2010; Smyth et al., 2020). Since for ensuring leaders effectiveness which is defined in terms of leader's ability to meet his responsibilities and meet organizations mission through the cooperation of subordinates, it is considered critical on part of leaders to be persistent with their efforts, involvement and innovation towards their performance goals (Yukl, 2008) thus we may assume that intrinsically motivated self-concordant leaders may have positive relationship with their respective effectiveness.

H1: Leaders' self-concordance is positively associated with leaders' effectiveness.

### ***Self-concordance and Leaders' Effectiveness: Mediating Role of Leaders' Innovative Work Behaviors***

Previous literature suggests that it is through persistent efforts that individuals with high level of self-concordance towards goals at work can favorable individual and organizational outcomes, we however tend to propose an alternate mechanism through which leaders self-concordance may contribute towards leaders effectiveness and that is through leaders innovative work behaviors, since it is considered critical for effective leaders not just to be persistent and hardworking but also come up with innovative ideas to be able to fulfil competitive organizational goals (Yukl, 2008).

Innovative work behaviors have been defined as individuals' behavior that aims at achieving the initiation and introduction of new and valuable ideas, processes, products, and procedures (Farr & Ford, 1990). Thus, it differs from creativity since it also considers the implementation of creative ideas (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Theorizing based on componential theory of creativity and innovativeness and Self concordance model, we build an argument suggesting that intrinsic motivation of

individuals at work will not only add to their creative tendencies but will make them put considerable efforts towards implementing those ideas in order to fulfil their goals at work, since attainment of such goals adds to their satisfaction about psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2010). It is believed that self-concordant individuals are intrinsically motivated thus they tend to enjoy their goals at work since they find those goals interesting, enjoyable and satisfactory as opposed to non-concordant individuals who are extrinsically motivated and thus pursue their goals for the sake of extrinsic rewards or avoid punishments (Hon, 2011; Smyth et al., 2020).

As per componential theory of organizational theory (Amabile, 1988), intrinsic motivation automatically stimulates openness and freedom to thought processes, which is intellectual playfulness. It adds to excitement about the work, thus enhancing their desire to learn more and more about the tasks, evokes risk taking and attraction by challenges at work, thus leading to creativity, where creativity is characterized by the production of new ideas regarding products, processes, or procedures, and is considered critical for innovation. Since as per self-concordance model concordant individuals who are intrinsically motivated put considerable efforts towards achieving their goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Greguras & Diefendorff, 2010; Henry, Thorsen & Uztosun, 2023), thus we may assume that self-concordant individuals may not be able to come up with creative ideas due to their intrinsic motivation at work but such motivation will evoke considerable effort on their part to implement those ideas thus making them not only creative but innovative. Because innovation on the part of leaders is critical for their effectiveness (Yukl, 2008), we may assume that innovative work behaviors of highly self-concordant leaders may result in their effectiveness at work.

H2: Innovative work behavior mediates the relationship between leaders' self-concordance and leaders' effectiveness

***Moderating Role of Voice Climate over the Relationship between Leaders' Self-Concordance and Leaders' Innovative Work Behavior***

As per componential theory of creativity and innovation, creativity is an integral part of innovation; however, the enabling environment plays a significant role in ensuring innovation on the part of individuals. Where the enabling environment refers to the one where innovation is appreciated, passion for creativity is openly expressed, and support is extended for meaningful risk taking (Amabile, 1988). Voice climate is defined as the shared perceptions in a work group of the extent to which the group is encouraged to speak out and challenge the status quo in the work group (Frazier, 2009; Brykman & Maerz, 2023). In other words, voice climate represents an environment where individuals have a shared perception that they are encouraged to engage in voice behavior, where voice behavior emphasizes the expression of

constructive challenge intended to improve a situation (Frazier, 2009; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Such an environment thus aims to foster freedom of expression by encouraging divergent thinking patterns, creative ideas, and challenging the status quo by proposing unconventional operation modes. (Morrison et al., 2011; Chen & Hou, 2016; Rubbab et al., 2023). Hence, we may assume that in an environment such as a strong voice climate where raising unconventional thinking patterns are accepted and supported at ease, leaders may show a tendency towards innovative work behaviors not only through the expression of their creative abilities but also through learning through open exchange of ideas under such climates with followers. Based on the arguments, we suggest the following hypothesis.

H3: Voice climate moderates the relationship between self-concordance and innovative work behavior, and the relationship is stronger when voice climate is high than when it is low.

***Performance Moderated Mediation of Voice Climate over the Relationship Between Leaders' Self-Concordance and Leaders' Effectiveness Through Leaders' Innovative Work Behavior***

Though continuous innovation is considered critical to be effective in an organizational setting, leaders also need followers' support to be effective (Murtagh et al., 2012; Aquino & Douglas, 2003). In this respect specifically, any change or innovation on the part of leaders if perceived to be a threat to existing worth and identity, may limit their efforts towards facilitating leaders' innovative behaviors thus making such leaders laps on their effectiveness (Eilam & Shamir, 2005; Murtagh et al., 2012; Aquino & Douglas, 2003).

Considering that voice climate facilitates open expression, enabling leaders as well as followers to voice their problems or concerns at work with a belief that their voice will be heard (Morrison et al., 2011; Brykman & Maerz, 2023), thus such an environment strengthens employees' confidence to voice their concerns in case change is threatening their existing worth and self-identities. Consequently, such an environment may also help to avoid any antisocial behaviors or resistance on the followers' part towards accepting change and innovation by leaders. Such an environment may instead facilitate innovative work behaviors of their respective leaders through open exchange of ideas, thus leading to the effectiveness of self-concordant leaders. Based on these arguments, we may assume.

H4: Voice climate moderates the relationship between self-concordance and effectiveness through innovative work behaviors, and the relationship is stronger when voice climate is high than when it is low.

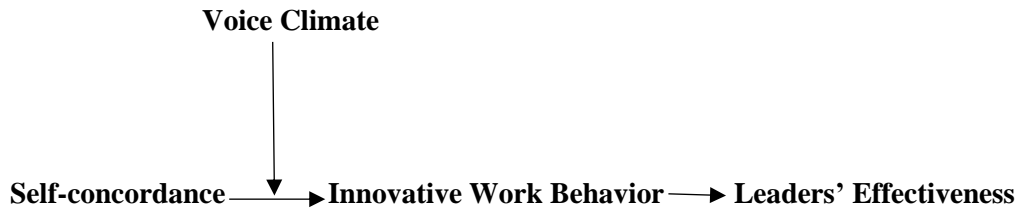


Figure 1. *Research Model*

## Methodology

### *Sampling and Data Collection*

Data was collected through surveys to test the hypotheses for the current study. The sample included the employees of two different hotels, ranging from two to five stars in the hospitality industry. Self-concordance was self-reported by leaders at T1. Innovative work behavior at T2 was reported as the follower's and leader's effectiveness at T3 by the follower. At the same time, followers at T2 reported the voice climate. Respondents included middle-level workers who were asked to rate their manager's innovative work behavior. The time interval between Time1, Time2, and Time3 was 2 weeks. A multi-stage sampling technique is deployed, in which at the first stage, companies are randomly selected, and at the second stage, employees are selected randomly from selected companies.

Overall, 300 questionnaires were distributed among leaders and their followers. Of them, 286 questionnaires were received, and 9 were omitted due to inadequate responses. The rest of the 277 questionnaires were considered for data analysis. We used G\*Power software to determine the sufficiency of the sample size of 277. With a medium effect size (Cohen's  $f^2 = 0.15$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ) and statistical power = 0.80, 200-250 responses were required. Hence, the current study's 277 responses exceed the minimum threshold for sample size, and hence it depicts sufficient power to conduct data analyses for hypothesis testing. All the respondents were guaranteed anonymity of their data.

## Measures

The current study adopted already established instruments based on their relevance to the current study's constructs. The measurement scales used in this study were selected based on their reliability and validity in prior research. All the scales adopted have been widely used and validated in organizational behavior studies and

are known for their strong psychometric properties. Nonetheless, potential limitations of these instruments include self-report bias for self-concordance and the cross-sectional nature of the data. These limitations were mitigated by using multisource data with a multistage time-lagged design.

The independent variable, *self-concordance*, was measured using Sheldon and Elliot's (1998) questionnaire. It consists of 8 items, and the scale ranges from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree). The scale's reliability is .948.

*Voice climate* was measured using the 6-item scale by Van Dyne and LePine (1998). Response was measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The scale's reliability is .931.

*Innovative work behavior* was measured using the scale of Scott and Bruce (1994), which contains 6 items. Response was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The scale's reliability is .952.

*Leader's Effectiveness* was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, which was adopted from Bass (1985). Response was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = not effective to 5 = extremely effective). The scale's reliability is .771.

## Results and Discussion

Data were initially examined and screened for analysis. We compared a two-factor unconstrained model with a one-factor model for all variables for which data were collected at one time, T2, such as leaders' innovative behavior and voice climate. Table 1 presents results showing better fitness of unconstrained multiple factors than a single-factor model. Results also show sufficient fit for the hypothesized model.

Table 1

### *Confirmatory factor analyses*

| Measurement models    | CFI | TLI | CMIN/DF | RMSEA |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|---------|-------|
| IWB-VC (1 factor)     | .77 | .73 | 12.6    | .17   |
| IWB-VC (2 factor)     | .91 | .90 | 4.20    | .87   |
| SC-IWB-VC (1 factor)  | .71 | .68 | 12.4    | .20   |
| SC-IWB-VC (3 factor)  | .95 | .93 | 3.00    | .07   |
| FULL MODEL (4 factor) | .91 | .90 | 3.12    | .08   |

Note: N= 277; IWB = Innovative work behavior, VC = voice climate, SC = leader's self-concordance .

Table 2.

*Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities*

|                             | Mean | SD   | 1      | 2     | 3      | 4    | 5    | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Leader Gender            | 1.69 | .465 | 1      |       |        |      |      |        |        |        |   |
| 2. Leader Age               | 2.59 | .622 | .403** | 1     |        |      |      |        |        |        |   |
| 3. Leader Tenure            | 1.19 | .394 | -.04   | -.018 | 1      |      |      |        |        |        |   |
| 4. Peer Age                 | 1.90 | .94  | .104   | .109* | -.042  | 1    |      |        |        |        |   |
| 5. Peer Tenure              | 1.19 | .39  | .102   | .014  | .208** | .068 | 1    |        |        |        |   |
| 6. Self-Concordance         | 3.06 | 1.33 | -.029  | -.067 | .004   | .038 | .028 | 1      |        |        |   |
| 7. Innovative Work Behavior | 2.70 | 1.13 | -.023  | -.97  | .016   | .036 | .11  | .635** | 1      |        |   |
| 8. Voice Climate            | 2.96 | 1.37 | .014   | -.21  | .063   | .043 | .023 | .108*  | .557** | 1      |   |
| 9. Leadership Effectiveness | 2.32 | .86  | .027   | .02   | -.11   | .043 | .023 | .345** | .571** | .550** | 1 |

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$



Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and a correlation. It depicts that all constructs are positively and significantly correlated with each other. Similarly, ANOVA was performed to see if the relationship of demographic variables like marital status, age, and tenure was related to the study's variables; no demographic variable showed a significant relation with our studied variables. Thus, no control variables were used while performing mediation and moderation. Self-concordance is positively correlated with innovative work behavior of leaders ( $r=.635$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and leaders' effectiveness ( $r=.345$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Innovative work behavior is significantly and positively correlated with leaders' effectiveness ( $r=.571$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Table 3  
*Direct and Indirect Effects*

| Relationship   | B        | SE    | t     | P    |
|--|----------|-------|-------|------|
| SC → LE  | 0.545*** | 0.811 | 14.93 | .000 |
| SC → IWB → LE  | 0.437*** | 0.033 | 15.81 | .000 |
| Bootstrap for indirect effects at 95% Confidence Intervals |          |       |       |      |
|  |          | LLCI  | ULCI  |      |
|  |          | 0.403 | 0.602 |      |

Note: N=277. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. LL=Lower limit, CI=Confidence Interval, UL=Upper Limit, SE=Standard Error, SC=Self concordance. IWB = Leaders ' innovative work behavior. LE=Leader's effectiveness

Table 3 shows the results of Hypotheses 1 and 2, supporting the hypothesis that leaders' self-concordance is positively related to leader effectiveness ( $B=.545$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and innovative work behavior mediates this relationship ( $B=.437$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Results were further confirmed by 99% bootstrapped CI, and the indirect effect did not contain any zero (0.403, 0.602). So, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 4 contains the results of the moderation analysis, which involved three steps. This study found no controls, so in steps 1 and 2, the independent variable and moderator were controlled. Step 3 added an interaction term of self-concordance and voice climate.

Hypothesis 3 states that voice climate moderates the relation between self-concordance and leaders' innovative work behavior. Interaction term of Self concordance x voice climate was significant ( $b= .258$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Figure 2 shows the plot of significant self-concordance x voice climate. As suggested, the relationship between

self-concordance and leaders' innovative work behavior was stronger for high voice climate (simple slope=.829,  $t=40.86$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). On the other hand, the effect was low for low voice climate (simple slope=.40,  $t=26.43$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

Table 4

*Moderation of SC and VC on Innovative Work Behavior*

| Predictors       | Step1 $\beta$ | Step 2 $\beta$ | Step 3 $\beta$ |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Self-concordance | .727**        | .729**         | .726**         |
| Voice climate    | .547**        | .546**         | .534**         |
| VC x SC          |               |                | .258**         |
| R2               | .839**        | .840           | .906**         |

Note: N=277. Bootstrap sample size=5000. LL=Lower limit, CI=Confidence Interval, UL=Upper Limit, SE=Standard Error, SC=Self concordance. IWB=Leaders innovative work behavior. LE=Leader's effectiveness

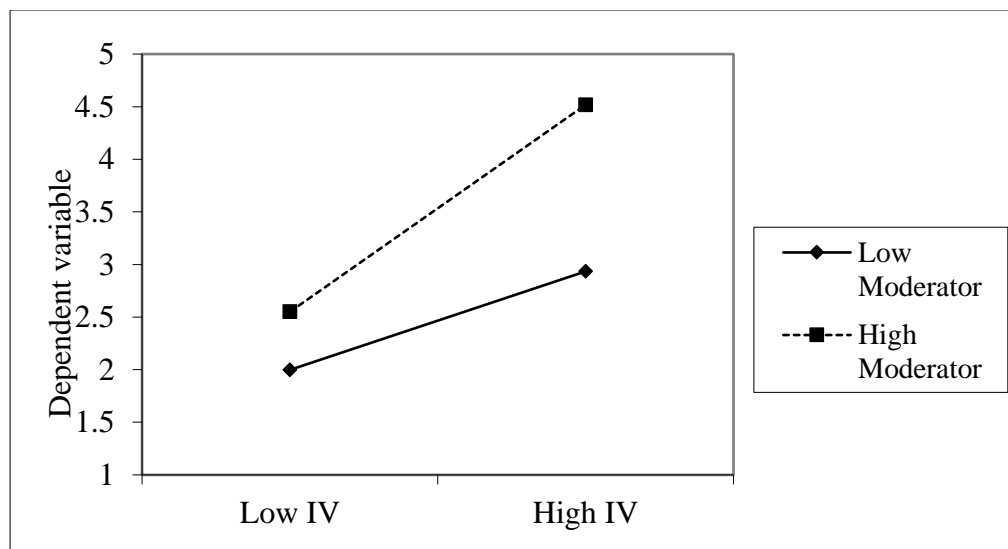


Figure 2. *Interaction of self-concordance by voice climate on the leader's innovative work behavior*

Hypothesis 4 predicts that voice climate moderates the mediated relationship between leaders' self-concordance and leaders' effectiveness through leaders' innovative work behavior and leaders' effectiveness, such that the relationship is stronger when voice climate is high than low. As shown in Table 5, Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Table 5

*Moderated mediation of voice climate via innovative work behavior*

| <i>Moderated mediation tests for VC</i> | <i>Estimate, p-level</i> | <i>95% low</i> | <i>LLCI</i> | <i>95% ULCI</i> |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| SC-IWB-LE                               |                          |                |             |                 |
| -1 SD                                   | .104*                    | .033           |             | .201            |
| +1 SD                                   | .196**                   | .021           |             | .282            |

Note: N=277. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. LL=Lower limit, CI=Confidence Interval, UL=Upper Limit, SC=Self concordance. IWB = Leaders ' innovative work behavior. LE = Leader's effectiveness.

## Discussion

Leaders' innovative work behavior and effectiveness are crucial for organizations to work efficiently. The study presented here aims to describe the causal relations that can improve the leader's effectiveness in the workplace. The hotel industry has received much focus in literature (Pine, 2002; Wong & Ladkin, 2008); however, few empirical studies cover leaders' innovative behavior and effectiveness. So, this study attempts to increase understanding of how self-concordance of leaders fosters high leaders' effectiveness indirectly through leaders' innovative work behavior in this industry specifically.

As per the results of the current study. A positive relationship was found between leaders' self-concordance and leaders' effectiveness. It is argued in literature that self-concordance is one of the main drivers of intrinsic motivation at work (Bono & Judge, 2003; Sheldon et al., 2003), which scholars consider a determinant of creative performance in organizations (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Shalley et al., 2004; George, 2007). Thus, consistent with the componential theory of creativity, leaders high in self-concordance report greater effectiveness at the workplace. Further, this effect was explained through the leaders' innovative work behavior. Moreover, the current study also inspected the moderating effect of voice climate on the relationship between self-concordance and leaders' innovative work behavior. Results suggested that the relationship was stronger when the voice climate was high. Similarly, the results of moderated mediation of voice climate suggested that the relationship between self-concordance and leaders' effectiveness through innovative work behavior was stronger when voice climate was high than low.

## *Theoretical implication*

The data in this study suggest that leaders have high self-concordance with more innovative behavior and a more positive voice climate in organizations. Since

self-concordance is positively related to motivation and creativity at work, the results of the current study endorse that leaders' innovative work behaviors are an important pathway through which self-concordant leaders establish their effectiveness at work.

One theoretical contribution of this study is proposing a link between self-concordance of a leader and their innovative work behavior. Previous studies have proposed and established the relationship between employees' intrinsic motivation and creativity (Hon & Leung, 2011). Intrinsic motivation is considered a desirable quality among employees as it ultimately results in positive outcomes as increased job satisfaction, increased level of performance, and creativity (Shalley et al., 2004; George, 2007). Previous studies found an impact of intrinsic motivation on outcomes as employees' post hoc valuation of their interest in their tasks (e.g., Shin and Zhou, 2003); however, by focusing on leaders' self-concordance, this research provides direct evidence between self-concordance and leaders' innovative work behavior.

Another important contribution of this study was to investigate the impact of self-concordance on leaders' innovative behavior in the presence of a voice climate. Results suggest that if organizations have a supportive voice climate, employees are more likely to support innovative behaviors of their leaders, which will ultimately reflect in leaders' effectiveness.

### ***Managerial Implications***

The results of this study suggest many practical implications for the hospitality industry's achieving competitive advantage and unique position in a rapidly changing market. This research highlights the importance of self-concordance, which managers must consider as a means through which motivated and supportive managers can enhance their innovative work behavior.

Moreover, managers who want to increase their innovative work behavior should encourage the voice climate to minimize the threat to employee self-worth. Thus, by building a supportive environment and reducing employees' threat to relevance and competence, self-concordant managers will be more effective through their innovative work behaviors. Past studies also indicate that when individuals recognize their unique perspectives and intellectual stimulation, they show more self-determined drive (Deci & Ryan, 2000). So, this study highlights the significance of self-concordance in the hospitality sector, especially regarding managers' innovative behavior and effectiveness. In addition, Ryan and Deci (2000) concluded that an individual's self-concordance is linked with many coping strategies. Therefore, enhancing individuals' identification with their tasks can be valuable in assisting organizations to manage the changes and reconstructions. Overall, this study contributed to our understanding of how organizational climate and self-concordance

of a leader are related to their effectiveness through innovative work behavior. For organizations going through a phase of change and restructuring, top management must offer a supportive and knowledge-sharing approach to middle managers to enhance their motivation and innovation.

### ***Limitations and Future Directions***

The current study has a few limitations that offer potential for future directions. The first limitation of this study is that self-concordance is based on self-reports. Secondly, this research has covered substantial organizations from the hotel sector. However, future researchers must consider organizations from multiple sectors to increase the generalizability of the current study's results. Despite some limitations, the current study contributes to existing research on innovation and identifies several avenues for future research. More specifically, we suggest considering alternate mechanisms that lead to innovative behavior and effectiveness, for instance, how positive interpersonal communications and relations between leaders and followers can play an important role in boosting innovation. We also suggest that future researchers consider the role of contextual factors in studying creativity and innovation at work.

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