

Enhancing Innovative Work Behavior: Unleashing the Role of Affective Commitment, Emotional Intelligence, and Collectivism

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the intricate relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior among service employees. It also investigates whether emotional intelligence mediates the association between affective commitment and innovative work behavior, and further examines the moderating role of collectivism in these connections. Data was collected from 450 service sector employees, using 366 valid responses for analysis. The analysis was conducted using SPSS 21. The specific mediation effects were investigated using bootstrapping with 5000 samples. And the significance of predictor coefficients was tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The model tested the direct effect of affective commitment on innovative work behavior, yielding positive results. Additionally, findings revealed that emotional intelligence significantly mediated this relationship, and collectivism notably moderated the strength of these effects. The paper discusses the theoretical and practical implications, addressing limitations, and suggesting directions for future research.

Keywords: *Innovative Work Behavior, Affective commitment, Emotional Intelligence, Collectivism*

1. Introduction

Considering the continually changing nature of the modern corporate environment, innovation has emerged as a critical factor in determining the success and longevity of service organizations (Afolashade et al., 2024). As the capacity to produce, promote, and execute unique ideas is essential for maintaining a competitive edge, organizations are increasingly seeking strategies to encourage innovative work behavior (IWB) among their employees (Al-Oweidat et al., 2023). Innovative work behavior can be characterized as the implementation of new methods or the deliberate development of new ideas relevant to work (Janssen, 2000). The literature (de Jong & den Hartog, 2010; Spanuth & Wald, 2017) suggests some possible aspects of innovative behavior, such as idea investigation, idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation. Idea exploration, or idea investigation, is the pursuit of alternative perspectives or methods for improving existing products, services, or processes (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Idea generation is a creative behavior that aims to identify and develop novel, innovative solutions and approaches to problems, along with novel functioning methods and techniques (Kmieciak, 2021). Idea championing is the act of advocating for and promoting new ideas within an organization in order to secure support and resources for their implementation (Endres & Huesig, 2022). The final stage, idea realization or idea implementation, is responsible for the practical realization of the generated and promoted ideas, which leads to the development of new products, services, and job procedures (Janssen, 2000; Kmieciak, 2021). Within this context, the roles of affective commitment (AC) and emotional intelligence (EI) have garnered significant attention as potential drivers of innovation at work (Anvari et al., 2023).

Organizational commitment is defined as an individual's psychological attachment to and identification with the organization they belong to (Punia, 2000; Al-Yami et al., 2018). It plays a crucial role in determining whether an employee remains with the organization for an extended period and works diligently to achieve the organization's goals (Arasanmi & Krishna 2019). Although commitment is a multi-dimensional concept (Gambino, 2010), the present study emphasizes the emotional base of commitment, i.e., affective commitment (AC). Affective commitment, a type of organizational

commitment, is characterized by an emotional attachment to and identification with the organization (Sharma, 2024; Bansal et al., 2025). By aligning their beliefs with the organization's values and goals, individuals demonstrate their emotional connection to the organization. In the literature, the emotional connection (affective commitment) of employees with their organization is considered a significant determinant of loyalty and dedication (Rhoades et al., 2001). Employees continue working for the organization because they 'want to'. Employees exhibiting strong affective commitment are not only more engaged, loyal, and willing to contribute to organizational goals but also more inclined to go beyond formal job requirements (Devi et al., 2024). A strong emotional bond with the employer can significantly enhance an employee's motivation to engage in innovative activities (Xerri & Brunetto, 2013; Torlak et al., 2024).

Emotional intelligence (EI), on the other hand, encompasses the capacity to recognize, comprehend, regulate, and utilize one's emotions effectively (Yadav & Punia 2015). This is a critical skill impacting various aspects of both individual and organizational performance (Prentice et al., 2020; Bayu et al., 2023). Employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle interpersonal dynamics, manage stress, and establish healthy professional connections, all of which are essential for fostering an innovative environment (Chigeda et al., 2022). Despite the growing body of research on EI, AC, and IWB, there remains a gap in understanding how these concepts interact and collectively influence innovation.

Furthermore, previous studies have yet to fully explore the role of collectivism, defined as the degree to which individuals prioritize group goals over personal goals in this context (Verma, 2020). Collectivism can moderate the relationship between EI, AC, and IWB, potentially enhancing or diminishing the effects based on the cultural and organizational context (Elayan, 2023). Employees in collectivist cultures may exhibit different patterns of emotional engagement and commitment, which could impact their innovative behaviors. For instance, strong group cohesion and shared values might amplify or weaken the effects of emotional intelligence and affective commitment on innovative work behavior (Kaur, 2023).

This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the interplay between emotional intelligence (EI) and affective commitment (AC) in influencing innovative work behavior (IWB), with a particular focus on the moderating role of collectivism. By examining how these factors synergistically contribute to innovative work behavior, the research will offer valuable insights for organizations striving to enhance their innovative capacity. Additionally, it will provide actionable recommendations for fostering emotional intelligence and affective commitment while considering the impact of collectivism on these dynamics. The upcoming sections of this article unfold as follows: a detailed account of the literature review, a presentation of the research methodology and data analysis, results reporting, and the subsequent discussion. Next, the study explores the practical and theoretical implications based on the research findings. Finally, authors conclude the article by briefly discussing the research limitations and suggesting potential avenues for future research in this area.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Affective Commitment (AC) & Innovative work Behavior (IWB)

Affective commitment indicates employees' emotional attachment to organizational values and reflects their affinity for the organization (Kaur, 2023). Employee commitment signifies an employee's willingness to continue working with the organization (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019). Innovative work behavior, on the other hand, can be defined as the introduction of new ideas within the workplace for the organization's success (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2022; Saxena, & Prasad, 2024). An array of studies has depicted that the adoption or development of innovative work behaviors is positively linked to employees' emotional attachment to the organization. Employees who are affectively or emotionally committed to their organization are more engaged and willing to pursue the firm's goals and core values, as suggested by researchers (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Gong et al., 2009; Brimhall, 2021; Bansal et al., 2025). Recent research has also shown that fair treatment influences employees' commitment and collaboration with an organization, which in turn motivates them to perform creative tasks and receive the skills, experience, and empowerment they need to succeed (Pasumarti et al., 2022). Ultimately, this results in innovative behavior at work. Additionally, Nazir et al. (2018) conducted a study among Chinese nurses that demonstrated an advanced level of innovative work behavior associated with higher affective commitment. Another study examined the relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior of service employees in Sulaymaniyah and found a positive correlation between them. The findings also revealed that employees' affective commitment significantly mediates the relationship between understanding, training, future prospects, and IWB (Torlak et al., 2024). In a similar vein, one more study conducted among Australian nurses to assess organizational commitment also reported a statistically significant relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior (Xerri & Brunetto, 2013). Social exchange theory and equity theory serve as the foundation for these studies. Furthermore, researchers found that supervisor feedback alone was ineffective in measuring innovative work behavior among local government employees in South Korea; however, the use of affective commitment as a mediator revealed a significant relationship (Bak, 2020). Organizations can cultivate emotional dedication by promoting social interaction,

effective communication, the sharing of knowledge, and enabling individuals to engage in discretionary processes (Suma & Lasha, 2013), resulting in heightened levels of innovative work behavior.

However, some research contradicts the notion of a positive and meaningful connection between organizational commitment and innovative work behavior (Khaola & Coldwell, 2019; Fitrio et al., 2020). In a nutshell, analysis of various studies concluded that individuals with high levels of affective commitment are more inclined to take risks and thrive on challenges to contribute to the organization compared to those with low levels of affective commitment. Several organizations have also established a vision and goals aimed at enhancing organizational performance and efficiency by fostering employees' innovative work behavior and creativity. As a result, researchers proposed the following hypotheses:

H1-There is a significant relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior

2.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a mediator between affective commitment (AC) and innovative work behavior (IWB)

In recent studies, the role of “emotional intelligence” (EI) in shaping organizational outcomes has garnered significant attention (Husain et al., 2022). Psychology first discussed it, and other sciences later applied it. Salovey and Mayer (1989) coined the term emotional intelligence for the first time. Emotional intelligence is well-defined as the ability to track one's individual and other people's sentiments, to resolve and precisely mark distinct emotions, and to use emotional theory to inform one's thoughts and actions (Serrat, 2017; Dhani & Sharma, 2019; Husain et al., 2022). The authors further identified four types of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, which involves being aware of and responding to one's own emotions and surroundings; self-management, which involves controlling one's own emotions, preferences, and true, right, and consistent behavior; social awareness, which involves distinguishing other people's feelings and sensations and responding accordingly at the individual, group, and organizational levels; and relationship management, which involves initiating clear and satisfying communications and relationships, easing changes, and fostering strong bonds and connections among people. This ability helps to create a well-organized atmosphere for work (Baron and Parker 2000). The researchers focus in this present hypothesis on the direct relationships between affective commitment and emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior, and the indirect relation i.e., mediation effect of emotional intelligence between affective commitment and innovative work behavior.

Past studies have established a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment, or affective commitment, meaning that employees in organizations with higher emotional intelligence are also more committed (Gunu & Oladepo, 2014; Yadav & Punia, 2016; Dhingra & Punia, 2016; Al-Oweidat et al., 2023; Anvari et al., 2023; Afolashade et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the reverse relationship—whether affective commitment has a substantial impact on emotional intelligence—has received less scholarly attention. However, other relevant researches indirectly supported this hypothesis. Studies have shown that affective commitment positively influences various aspects of employee behavior and performance, such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and learning orientation (Lombardi et al., 2019; Nauman et al., 2021). These outcomes are frequently associated with high levels of emotional intelligence, suggesting that affective commitment may indeed contribute to emotional intelligence improvement. It is conceivable that the relationship is bidirectional, in light of the well-established connection between affective commitment and emotional intelligence. As a result, the following hypothesis emerges:

H2- There is a significant relationship between affective commitment and emotional intelligence

Mumford et al. (2002) examined innovative behavior as a demonstration and explored several original ideas, such as regulation progressions, problem analysis, concept discovery, progress and combination, and theoretical testing, as well as the research with their assistance. Furthermore, as a deliberate decision-maker with a high level of understanding, the manager's emotional intelligence is more energetic when making decisions (England & Nagel, 2022). In the literature, there was a solid and substantial association between management's innovative work behavior and emotional intelligence and its mechanisms (Shojaei & Siuki, 2014; Bayu et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence positively and significantly predicts innovative work behavior in high-tech knowledge-intensive organizations (Malik, 2022), suggesting that employees with higher EI can effectively manage their stress and navigate social complexities, thereby fostering innovation at work. Orhan & Dinçer (2012) also investigated the association between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviors in the Turkish banking sector and found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviors. In this view, the author proposed the following hypothesis:

H3- There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior

Several academics have questioned the validity and reliability of the EI paradigm. For instance, Locke (2005) has labeled EI as an "invalid notion." Despite criticisms regarding the various conceptions and measurements of the EI concept, there is a growing body of work emphasizing its significance (Goleman, 1995; George, 2000; Law et al., 2004; Punia & Yadav, 2015). Further, Jordan et al. (2002) asserted that emotional intelligence regulates the connection between affective

responses (i.e., affective commitment) and specific behaviors (engaging in innovation and novelty at work) drawing from Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) affective events theory (i.e., coping behaviors). Additionally, employees with high emotional intelligence can leverage their ability to understand others' emotions and moods to generate thoughtful and socially appropriate responses to others' actions (George, 2000), which motivates them to engage in innovation at work. Further, previous research has substantiated the notion that affective commitment (AC) fosters emotional intelligence (EI), which in turn encourages innovative work behavior (IWB). Based on this evidence, the researchers proposed the following hypothesis:

H4- Emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior.

2.3 Moderating Role of Collectivism

Collectivism is a culture that emphasizes on the achievement of group goals rather than personal goals, thus compelling employees to place high importance on collective well-being and concerns (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). In other words, Collectivism promotes individual adherence to the group, harmony, and interconnectedness in general (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Hong et al., 2018). Two types of collectivism are distinguished based on Triandis' conceptualization: horizontal collectivism (HC) (cooperativeness), wherein individuals identify with their in-groups, and vertical collectivism (VC), wherein individuals defer to the ruling class within the group and are willing to sacrifice themselves for their in-group (Lee & Choi, 2005). Individuals with high levels of collectivism, as opposed to individualists who are more concerned with their personal interests and benefits, prioritize the welfare of others or the group over their own (Singelis et al., 1995). Employees guided by collectivist principles demonstrate more cooperative and organized attitudes toward task performance. Additionally, they tend to be more dedicated, satisfied, and trusting of other organizational members and the organization as a whole, as highlighted by Gómez et al. (2000).

In literature, collectivism has often been used as a moderator. For an instance, when it moderates between loneliness and health, the effect of loneliness on health is culturally moderated. The adverse health effects of loneliness are more pronounced in less individualistic countries with more collectivism (Beller & Wagner, 2020). Further, when job satisfaction was studied in organizational culture, it was observed that Americans scored higher than Japanese on job satisfaction in the case of individualism. On the other hand, collectivism was strongly associated with job dissatisfaction (Hui et al., 1995). Additionally, one more study conducted on Chinese employees, study revealed that vertical collectivism moderated the relationship between perceived insider status and organizational citizenship behavior (Hui et al., 2015). Similarly in one more study of Chinese firm employees, positive relationship between task conflict and job satisfaction is amplified by high level of horizontal and vertical collectivism whereas negative relationship between relationship conflict and job satisfaction is strengthened by high Horizontal collectivism (Ye et al., 2019). Further, collectivism culture moderates the relationship between Job attitude variables (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) and turnover intention of Chinese female worker. It interprets that with higher level of collectivism, job satisfaction and commitment are stronger in predicting turnover intention (Chen et al., 2016). However, in the past, there has been a lack of literature related to collectivism as a moderator between emotional intelligence and innovative behavior at work, and affective commitment and innovative behavior at work.

According to research on entrepreneurs, those who hold strong collectivist beliefs are more likely to engage in innovative behavior, particularly if they possess a high level of self-efficacy (Wennberg et al., 2013). Culture has an impact on creativity (Erez & Nouri, 2010). Researchers have explored the link between collectivism and employee innovation, but have yet to agree on how collectivism influences innovative behavior (Erez & Nouri, 2010). However various researches in the past have argued that collectivism culture at work restrain the employee novelty, creativity or a sense of adventure (Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Yao et al., 2012). But recently various scholars also suggested that collectivism reflect the individual psychological tendency to concern for others that motivate them to make extra contribution to the team effort and shared mutual interests (Rossberger, 2014), actively engaging in exploration of novel ideas and insights, strengthening interdependent relations with colleagues which facilitate information exchange and knowledge sharing leads to employee's innovative behavior at work (Zhou et al., 2011; Song et al., 2018). Further, collectivism positively moderate the relation between behavior-oriented knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior (Pian et al., 2019). Similarly, Affective commitment is defined as the employee's emotional attachment, identification with, and engagement in the organization (Rashid et al., 2003). Collectivism employees align their personal beliefs with the company's values and goals, that reflects the level of emotional investment an individual has in the organization. Employees choose to remain with the company out of personal desire, increasing their affective commitment with the organizations. A study conducted on employees of public organizations in Spain revealed that collectivism based organizational culture significantly affected the affective commitment of employees implies the collectivist employees are more inclined to transform their own concerns for the fate of organization followed by their emotional attachment and identification with the organization (Triguero-Sánchez et al., 2022). Further collectivism significantly moderated the relationship between affective

commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Xu et al., 2019). Additionally, a study demonstrated that personnel with low level of autonomy, high level of collectivist orientation reflected high level of affective commitment. In contrast employees with high level of pay, low collectivist orientation remains demonstrate high tendency of affective commitment (Williamson et al., 2009). In line with this, it can be suggested that Collectivism can provide a supportive environment that amplifies the effects of affective commitment on IWB by fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective engagement in innovation. The following hypothesis is formed:

H5- The effect of affective commitment on innovative work behavior is moderated by collectivism.

The relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and innovative work behavior (IWB) has been widely acknowledged, with numerous studies highlighting how individuals with high EI are better equipped to navigate social complexities, manage stress, and engage in creative problem-solving (Bayu et al., 2023). However, the role of cultural dimensions, such as collectivism, in moderating this relationship remains underexplored. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6- The effect of emotional intelligence on innovative work behavior is moderated by collectivism.

3. Research Framework

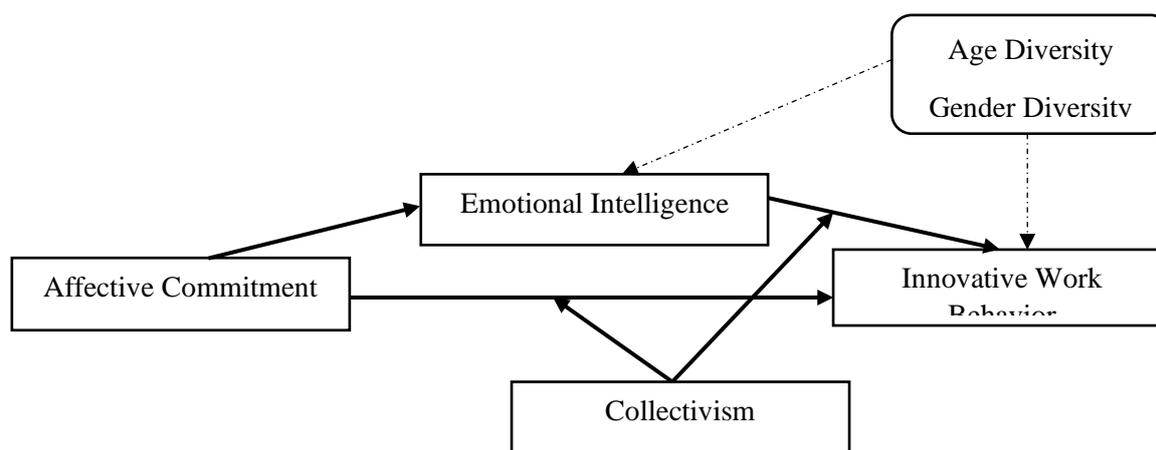


Fig.1: Research Framework

Source: Authors own

The research framework as shown in Fig. 1 establishes the mediation effect of emotional intelligence (EI) between affective commitment (AC) and innovative work behavior (IWB), as well as the moderation effect of collectivism in these connections. The study used three employee demographics—Gender Diversity, Age Diversity, and experience—as control variables to account for their potential impact on Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB).

4. Method

4.1 Sample and procedure

Data were collected from participants across Indian service sector employees (including managers, leaders or team members). All participants independently provided their demographic information (i.e., age, gender, marital status, and education) and their perceptions of affective commitment, innovative work behavior, collectivism orientation in the organization, and their assessment of individuals' emotional intelligence. The responses were gathered on a five-point Likert scale, and a convenience sampling technique was employed. It is a suitable approach for targeting respondents who are easily reachable and willing to participate in the survey (Etikan et al., 2016). The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample to ensure clarity and reliability. Over a span of 6 months, from May 2024 to October 2024, four hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to employees within the surveyed organizations, out of which 366 were returned, resulting in an effective response rate of 81.33%.

4.2 Measures

Affective Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) developed a 6-item scale to measure affective commitment. Organizational members were asked to indicate their level of attachment to their working organization. An example item is 'I would be pleased to spend my

entire career in this organization.’ Participants rated their responses on a scale ranging from 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 5 (‘strongly agree’). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.84.

Emotional Intelligence

Authors assessed emotional intelligence using a 16-item scale that divided into four equal sub-parts: self-emotion assessment (SEA), others' emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE). The scale is adapted from Wong and Law (2002). Sample items for each variable include 'I have a good understanding of why I have certain feelings most of the time,' 'I infer my friends’ reactions from their behavior,' 'I consistently set goals for myself and strive to achieve them,' and 'I am able to regulate my displeasure and handle difficulties wisely,' respectively (rated on a scale of 1 =‘strongly disagree’ to 5 =‘strongly agree’). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.845, indicating high internal consistency.

Collectivism

Collectivism was assessed using a 5-item scale adapted from Dorfman and Howell (1988). Researchers asked the participants to express their preferences for either individualistic or group goals. A sample item is ‘Individual accomplishment is less significant than group success’ (rated on a scale from 1 = ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 = ‘strongly agree’). For this scale, Cronbach's alpha was 0.70.

Innovative work Behavior

Innovative work behavior was assessed using a 10-item scale divided into four subparts: idea exploration (IE) (2 items) ('I pay attention to matters that are not part of everyday work'), idea generation (IG) (3 items) ('I seek out new approaches, practices, or tools'), idea championing (IC) (2 items) ('I motivate significant organizational members to embrace innovative ideas'), and idea implementation (II) (3 items) ('I systematically introduce innovative ideas into work routines'). The scale is adapted from De Jong & Den Hartog (2010). Authors rated the items on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 representing ‘strongly agree’. For this scale, Cronbach's alpha was 0.821.

Control variables

The study used three employee demographics—Gender Diversity, Age Diversity, and experience—as control variables to account for their potential impact on Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB).

5. 5. Data Analysis and Findings

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Table 1. Characteristics of the Study Sample

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender Diversity	Male	178	48.6
	Female	188	51.4
Age Diversity	18-25	118	32.2
	26-35	117	32.0
	36-50	62	16.9
	Above 50	69	18.9
Experience	Below 5 years	154	42.1
	6-10 years	126	34.4
	Above 10 years	86	23.5
Marital Status	Married	207	56.6
	Single	159	43.4
Education	Below 12 th	8	2.1
	Graduation	100	27.3
	Post-Graduation	159	43.4

	PH. D	48	13.1
	IT/ITES	130	35.5
Sector	Banking & Insurance	160	43.7
	Consultancy & Counselling	76	20.8

Source: authors own

Table 1 presents the demographics of the service employees who responded to the survey. Female workers comprise 48.6% of the workforce, while male workers account for 51.4%. As per the age distribution, the majority of respondents, 32.2% of the sample, were aged between 18 and 25 years, followed by the next notable group consisting of individuals aged 26–35 years, making up 32.0% of the participants. The 36–50 age group accounted for 16.9% of respondents, while those above 50 years old made up 18.9%. As far as work experience is concerned, employees with 6 to 10 years of professional experience constitute the most important proportion (34.4%), followed by those with less than 5 years of experience (42.1%), and employees with over 10 years of experience making up 23.5% of the sample. Additionally, 56.6% of employees are married. Graduates (27.3%) and people with post-graduate degrees (43.4%) made up the majority of participants in education, whereas a smaller percentage had finished intermediate (2.1%) or continued education beyond post-graduation (13.1%). In terms of sectors, IT/ITES and Banking & Insurance employees made up the largest segment (30.1% and 38.2%, respectively), while consultancy & counselling formed 20.8% of the sample.

5.2 Data Analysis and Findings

The collected data was analysed using SPSS 21. Initially, the researchers calculated descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, and correlation matrix (Table 2) for the study variables. Secondly, confirmatory analysis was performed to check the validity and reliability of the scales. Finally, hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted for hypothesis testing, specifically to measure the direct, mediation, and moderation effects. The specific mediation effects were investigated using bootstrapping with 5000 resamples (Hayes, 2013).

5.3 Confirmatory factor analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the key variables, namely affective commitment, emotional intelligence, innovative work behavior, and collectivism. At first, as referred to in Table 2, the CFA results show that the values of all factor loadings are higher than the suggested threshold of 0.6 (Chin et al., 1997). To make sure the scale was valid and reliable, researchers calculated the average variance extracted and the composite reliability of each construct, following the suggestions made by Fornell and Larcker in 1981. As for the average variance extracted values, they were 0.55, 0.56, 0.67, 0.79, 0.79, 0.69, 0.74, 0.69, 0.64, 0.53, 0.53, and 0.56, all above the 0.50 threshold. For composite reliability, results revealed that affective commitment, collectivism, innovative work behavior, emotional intelligence, and others were 0.88, 0.83, 0.89, 0.89, 0.87, 0.89, 0.89, 0.88, 0.81, and 0.84, all above the 0.70 threshold (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, for measuring the discriminant validity, there were higher squared correlations between the constructs than the average variance extracted (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which means that the study established the required discriminant, convergent validity, and reliability of scale. Further, the model demonstrated a satisfactory fit, with $\chi^2(541) = 1148.17$, $p < .01$, TLI = 0.91, CFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.05 (Hu & Bentler, 1998). These findings indicate that the proposed components can test all hypotheses.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age diversity															
2. Gender diversity	-0.13*														
3. Experience	0.78*	-0.03													
4. Innovative work behavior	0.19**	-0.08	0.16**	(0.82)											
5. IC	0.20**	-0.09	0.19**	0.78**	(0.89)										
6. IE	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.66**	0.39**	(0.89)									
7. IG	0.15**	-0.09	0.11*	0.73**	0.68**	0.37**	(0.83)								
8. II	0.23**	-0.05	0.16**	0.73**	0.76**	0.31**	0.65**	(0.86)							
9. Emotional Intelligence	0.14**	-0.05	0.09	0.65**	0.55**	0.39**	0.61**	0.56**	(0.83)						
10. SEA	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.47**	0.37**	0.33**	0.46**	0.37**	0.79**	(0.73)					
11. ROE	0.16**	-0.01	0.1	0.54**	0.48**	0.32**	0.49**	0.46**	0.82**	0.57**	(0.72)				
12. UOE	0.05	-0.05	0.06	0.55**	0.48**	0.31**	0.48**	0.51**	0.82**	0.63**	0.55**	(0.75)			
13. OEA	0.17**	-0.12*	0.1*	0.57**	0.47**	0.32**	0.55**	0.49**	0.80**	0.59**	0.54**	0.52**	(0.80)		
14. Affective Commitment	0.45**	-	0.22**	0.33**	0.37**	0.01	0.32**	0.38**	0.32**	0.22**	0.26**	0.21**	0.35**	(0.74)	
15. Collectivism	0.21**	-0.04	0.17**	0.55**	0.49**	0.35**	0.47**	0.47**	0.52**	0.43**	0.39**	0.38**	0.51**	0.26**	(0.75)
16. Mean	31.97	0.51	7.28	5.51	5.47	5.51	5.51	5.52	5.49	5.54	5.18	5.77	5.47	4.61	5.51
17. SD	8.59	0.5	6.38	0.99	1.33	1.19	1.22	1.19	0.91	1.04	1.21	1.09	1.08	1.52	1.01

Notes(s): n= 366 *p>0.05, **p> 0.01 (Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alphas) are presented along the diagonal in parentheses)

IC= Idea Championing, IE= Idea Exploration, IG= Idea Generation, II= Idea Implementation, SEA= Self-emotion Assessment, ROE= Regulation of Emotion, UOE= Use of Emotion, OEA= Others' Emotion Appraisal

Notes(s): n= 366 *p>0.05, **p> 0.01 (Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alphas) are presented along the diagonal in parentheses)

IC= Idea Championing, IE= Idea Exploration, IG= Idea Generation, II= Idea Implementation, SEA= Self-emotion Assessment, ROE= Regulation of Emotion,

UOE= Use of Emotion, OEA= Others' Emotion Appraisal Table 2 illustrates the mean, standard deviations, correlation, and internal consistency reliability of the study variables, i.e., collectivism, affective commitment, innovative work behavior, emotional intelligence, and their subdimensions. As shown in Table 2, the results revealed that all the correlations presented significant relationships (**p<0.01, *p<0.05). In terms of demographic variables, age diversity is positively correlated to innovative work behavior (r = 0.19**), affective commitment (r = 0.45**), emotional intelligence (r = 0.14**), and collectivism (r = 0.21**), whereas it is negatively correlated to gender diversity (r = -0.13*). Gender diversity is negatively correlated to both affective commitment (r = -0.34**) and innovative work behavior (r = -0.08). Employee experience positively correlates with innovative work behavior (r = 0.16**), collectivism (r = 0.17**), and affective commitment (r = 0.22**). Additionally, innovative work behavior is positively and strongly correlated with its sub-dimensions, i.e., IC (r = 0.78**), IG (r = 0.73**), IE (r = 0.66**), II (r = 0.73**), and emotional intelligence (r = 0.65**). Similarly, emotional intelligence has a strong and positive correlation with its components, such as SEA (r = 0.79**), ROE (r = 0.82**), UOE (r = 0.82**), and OEE (r = 0.80**), and a moderate correlation with collectivism (r = 0.52**). Conversely, the relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior (r = 0.33**), emotional intelligence (r = 0.32**), and collectivism (r = 0.26**) was not as strong. Additionally, to check if the scale is internally consistent, referred to Table 2. The Cronbach's alphas (shown in parentheses along the diagonal) are above the 0.7 threshold (Hair et al., 2019), which means the scale is reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.72-0.89$).

Table 3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression with dependent variables Emotional Intelligence and Innovative Work Behavior

Variable	Emotional Intelligence		Innovative Work Behavior				Overall model fit
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Constant	-0.49(0.26)	0.30(0.27)	-0.61(0.26)	-0.01(0.2)	0.05(0.01)	0.06 (0.19)	0.05 (0.19)
<i>Control Variables</i>							
Age Diversity	0.02	0.02(0.01)	0.02*(0.01)	-0.002(0.01)	-0.02 (0.007)	-0.01 (0.007)	-0.02 (0.01)
Gender Diversity	-0.13	0.07(0.1)	-0.19(0.1)	-0.03(0.08)	-0.02 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.001 (0.08)
Experience	-0.001(0.01)	0.02(0.1)	0.003(0.01)	0.01(0.009)	0.05 (0.009)	0.04 (0.009)	0.04 (0.01)
<i>Independent Variable</i>							
Affective Commitment		0.44** (0.66)		0.16** (0.05)	0.17** (0.05)	0.19** (0.05)	0.18** (0.05)
Emotional Intelligence				0.62** (0.04)	0.53** (0.04)	0.52** (0.04)	0.51** (0.04)
<i>Moderator</i>							
Collectivism					0.25** (0.04)	0.24** (0.04)	0.24** (0.04)
<i>Interaction</i>							
EI*COLV						-0.1** (0.05)	-0.12** (0.03)
AC*COLV							0.09* (0.04)
R ²	0.029	0.166	0.053	0.512	0.553	0.561	0.566

ΔR^2		0.137		0.459	0.041	0.009	0.005
F	0.89	17.935**	6.698**	75.522**	63.149**	57.137**	51.615**

Note(s): $n = 366$; $p > 0.05$, ** $p > 0.01$

EI= Emotional Intelligence, COLV=collectivism, AC = Affective Commitment, IWB=Innovative Work Behavior

5.4 Hypothesis Testing:

For hypothesis testing, hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. To begin with, demographic variables, including gender diversity, age diversity, and experience, were entered to investigate their impact across various models. The results indicated that age diversity has a substantial positive impact in Model 2, but it becomes non-significant in subsequent models. Gender diversity does not have a significant impact on all models, similarly, experience has a non-significant impact on most models. However, in Models 5 to 7, experience becomes marginally favourable, although this change is not statistically significant.

Further the table 3 shows the results of hypothesis testing, hypothesis (H4), proposes that emotional intelligence would mediate the relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior. The results in Table 3 show that after controlling for age diversity, gender diversity, and experience, affective commitment is positively & significantly related to emotional intelligence (Hypothesis H2) ($\beta = 0.44$, S.E. = 0.06, $p < 0.01$, Model 2) and innovative work behavior (Hypothesis H1) ($\beta = 0.16$, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.01$, Model 4), after adjusting for all relevant variables. These results support hypotheses H4.

To further test hypothesis H3 regarding the direct-effect relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior, the results were analyzed. The findings indicated a significant association between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.62$, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.01$, Model 4).

The present study also measures the moderating effect of collectivism on the paths of affective commitment and innovative work behavior (hypothesis H5) and emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior (hypothesis H6). To conduct further analysis, the authors first examined the direct effect of collectivism on innovative work behavior, resulting in a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.25$, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.01$, Model 5). The interaction effects of emotional intelligence \times collectivism on innovative work behavior were found to be negative and significant ($\beta = -0.1$, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.001$; ($\beta = -0.12$, SE = 0.03, $p < 0.001$, Models 6 and 7, respectively), implying that the correlation between innovative work behavior and emotional intelligence declines in the presence of higher collectivism.

However, when the interaction effect of affective commitment \times collectivism on innovative work behavior was analyzed, the relationship was found to be positive and significant ($\beta = 0.09$, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.01$, Model 7). These findings indicate that the positive effect of affective commitment on innovative work behavior is stronger in the presence of higher collectivism.

Additionally, results also revealed that Model 7 overall fits well, as indicated by an F-value of 51.615, which is significant at 1% ($p < 0.01$), suggesting the model is statistically significant. In Model 7, the total explained variance (R^2) is 0.566, which suggests that the model explains 56.6% of the variance in innovative work behavior. The model explains a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable, as indicated by the high R^2 value.

6. Discussion & Implications

In today's highly competitive working environment, employees across all sectors are endeavouring to achieve high goals and innovation in their work and work behavior. The present study delves into the complex relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior, either directly or through emotional intelligence, with the moderation effect of collectivism. Hypothesis (H1) posits that there is a positive association between affective commitment and innovative work behavior. Employees who exhibit high affective commitment express a high level of dedication in the workplace (Nazir et al., 2018; Brimhall, 2021), encouraging increased creativity, novelty, and innovation at work. Using data from multiple sources in three different industries, the study findings show that affective commitment leads to innovative work behavior. These results show a strong link between the two variables, consistent with previous research (Hakimian et al., 2016; Torlak et al., 2024). Furthermore, a sense of belongingness directly links employees' emotional attachment to the workplace, heightening their social interconnection, pursuing social awareness and relation management skills, and developing their personal ability for better emotional regulation (Lombardi et al., 2019). In line with this, hypothesis (H2) posits that there is a significant relationship between affective commitment and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, we widely understand the crucial role emotions play in human lives. Before reacting to something, we need to understand various emotional states such as happiness, anger, and conflict. With increased work and economic pressures in individuals' lives, there is a need for emotional intelligence in organizational settings. Hypotheses (H3) and (H4) also

explored the direct relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior, as well as its role as a mediator between affective commitment and innovative work behavior, respectively. The findings indicated a significant association between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior (England & Nagel, 2022; Malik 2022). Individuals with high EI generally cultivate a heightened level of self-awareness and emotional regulation, developing a healthy mental state conducive to creative thinking and idea generation. Furthermore, it serves as a source of intrinsic motivation, encouraging personnel to explore novelty in their work environment. In terms of social interactions, individuals with high EI are effective in teamwork, have better conflict management, and strengthen their collaboration with co-workers and clients. Additionally, the results revealed that emotional intelligence would mediate the relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior, highlighting the critical role of EI in translating employees' emotional attachment to their organization into innovative actions.

Furthermore, the moderating role of collectivism between affective commitment and innovative work behavior and emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior was also examined through hypotheses H5 and H6, respectively. Collectivism in this context negatively moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior, indicating a diminished positive impact of emotional intelligence on innovative work behavior in collectivist cultures. This is due to the fact that in collectivist culture there is a strong emphasis on conforming to group norms and maintaining group harmony over individual initiatives that suppress their expression and risk-taking, which are essential for innovation. Therefore, the cultural pressure to conform may stifle an individual's innovative ideas, even if they possess high EI. Further collectivist cultures often value hierarchical and paternalistic leadership styles that may not always encourage bottom-up innovation. Employees with high EI may find it challenging to navigate these hierarchical structures to promote innovative ideas, especially if the leadership is not supportive of such initiatives. Whereas it positively moderates the connection between affective commitment and innovative work behavior implies that the relationship between AC and IWB becomes stronger under higher levels of collectivism. In collectivist settings, employees who are emotionally committed to their organization are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors due to the supportive and collaborative environment fostered by the cultural values of group cohesion and mutual support.

Additionally, the study's findings make important theoretical and practical contributions, as well as valuable contributions to the existing literature. In terms of theoretical contributions, this study presents a novel perspective by integrating Organizational Support Theory (OST) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) to explore how affective commitment (AC) influences innovative work behavior (IWB), with emotional intelligence (EI) as a mediator and collectivism as a moderator (Garg & Punia 2016; Mbabazi, 2024). While existing research has primarily examined the relationship between innovative work and the originality of artistic ideas, this study shifts the focus to real-world applications by emphasizing the practical implications of affective commitment on innovative work behavior. The research reveals that emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between affective commitment and innovative work behavior. The study elucidates that while affective commitment fosters a sense of belonging and motivation, emotional intelligence enables employees to manage emotions effectively and navigate complex social interactions, thereby facilitating innovative behavior by employing OST. According to social exchange theory, employees who feel emotionally committed to their organization are likely to reciprocate with positive behaviors, including innovative work efforts. Emotional intelligence (EI) enhances this dynamic by enabling employees to manage their own and others' emotions effectively, thereby facilitating their engagement in innovative activities. Thus, EI acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between AC and IWB, as employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to leverage their affective commitment into actionable, creative contributions. Further, social exchange theory posits that collectivist cultures prioritize group harmony, which can diminish the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on innovative work behavior (IWB) by emphasizing group needs over individual emotional skills. In contrast, organizational support theory suggests that collectivism enhances the relationship between affective commitment (AC) and IWB. In collectivist settings, employees with strong organizational commitment thrive in collaborative environments, boosting their innovative efforts.

In terms of practical implications, our proposed model suggests that emotional intelligence positively mediates the association between affective commitment and IWB and should be reinforced. The current study offers guidance on leveraging innovative work behavior in the workplace. Firstly, organisational leaders must pay attention to team members' task-related challenges and encourage individuals to contemplate and reassess task plans by offering both emotional and tangible rewards that may foster creative outcomes. To maximize the positive impact of affective commitment on IWB, organizations and human resource managers should establish a specialized support system for managing interpersonal conflicts. Herzberg's motivation theory (Alshmemri et al., 2017) views relationships as a hygiene factor; a good exchange relationship does not necessarily lead to high creativity, while a poor exchange relationship significantly limits innovation. Therefore, a human resource policy that imposes penalties for interpersonal conflict could help mitigate the detrimental effects of relationship conflicts. As our findings indicate, emotional intelligence can be a valuable tool for enhancing the positive impact of affective commitment on innovative work behavior. Cultivating an environment that promotes and fosters innovation requires not only efforts from top management teams to establish incentive mechanisms, such as

attractive promotion and reward systems for innovative performance, but also support and emotional encouragement from team leaders. Further, understanding the moderating role of collectivism allows organizations to tailor their strategies based on cultural context. In collectivist cultures, enhancing group cohesion and collective support can strengthen the affective commitment and innovative work behavior link, while in individualistic cultures, focusing on individual emotional intelligence and personal achievement may be more effective.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its merits, this research has certain drawbacks. The first constraint pertains to data collection. Although data were collected from various sources to mitigate common method biasness (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the data is cross-sectional and can only demonstrate a correlational relationship between our target variables, not causality. To explore the causal effects of affective commitment and innovative work behavior, future investigations should employ longitudinal strategies or field studies. Additionally, we limited the data collection period for team members and their respective leaders to 5 months, which could potentially allow other factors to interfere with the outcome variables (i.e., IWB) and compromise the reliability of our findings. For example, team leaders may prioritize the level of creativity as team members' innovative skills develop and enhance. As teams require time to foster novel ideas, future research should incorporate pre- and post-procedures of innovative events from the same participants to capture the dynamic evolution of new ideas prompted by affective commitment, individualism/collectivism, and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, due to the team leader's dual role as a team member, social desirability response biases could potentially influence our findings, as they might place a higher value on their team's creativity. Future research should utilize objective innovation data to scrutinize the identified relationship. Finally, this study only investigated the moderating influence of collectivism. Future research should explore other potential confounding factors such as organizational atmosphere and interactive connections (e.g., leader-member or member-member exchanges) (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Future studies can develop a fuller picture of how affective commitment promotes team innovative behavior by examining additional contextual elements that may enhance the effects of affective commitment on IWB.

8. References

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