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LEADERSHIP THAT RESONATES: UNLOCKING INNOVATION VIA WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WORKPLACE HAPPINESS

Qasim Zahoor[*1], Dr. Nida Usman Jahangir[2], Muhammad Adnan Tariq[3], Muhammad Waqas[4]

[*1]Lecturer, School of Commerce & Accountancy, Minhaj University Lahore
[2]Assistant Professor, National University of Modern Languages, Lahore
[3,4]PhD Scholar, Hailey College of Commerce, Lahore

[*1]qasimzahoor.sca@mul.edu.pk

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Corresponding Author: * **Qasim Zahoor**

Abstract
This study aims to examine how ebullient supervision—a dynamic and emotionally engaging leadership style—can enhance employees' innovative work behavior, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of work-life balance and happiness at work. Drawing on the Broaden and Build Theory (B&B theory), data were gathered from 382 employees across 25 software houses of Pakistan, representing the IT sector, using purposive sampling. Structural equation modeling reveals that ebullient supervision significantly contributes to fostering both a healthy work-life balance and a positive emotional climate, which in turn promotes greater innovation among employees. Both mediators, work-life balance and happiness at work, partially explain this relationship, with work-life balance emerging as the stronger pathway. This research advances current understanding by introducing a previously underexplored mechanism that links positive supervisory behavior to employee innovation through emotional and well-being dimensions. The findings offer practical insights for organizational leaders aiming to cultivate innovation through supportive and emotionally intelligent leadership practices.

1. Introduction

The process of Technological Digitization has been of utmost importance for the past two decades (Kulkarni & Bansal, 2024) and almost every business regardless of its size or type is adapting the digitalized technologies in their operations. In this revolutionized era, the advancement of technologies such as Industry 4.0 and Industry 5.0, value-driven, have become a jargon of the business world (Xu, Lu, Vogel-Heuser, & Wang, 2021). In such a volatile era, where technologies are developing with the blink of an eye another challenging situation for Human Resource Development (HRD) is to identify and boost creativity and innovative thinking at the workplace among the employees. This concern is not only limited to the manufacturing industries but it has also affected the service sector including the hospitality industry (Delevska & Osorio, 2024), ecotourism industry (Kumar, Hasija, Kumar, & Sageena, 2023), educational industry (Chidziwa, Chidziwa, & Langa, 2023) as well as information technology industry. Employees being the blood of any organization are required to be more creative and present more innovative work behavior for the efficient and productive environment to achieve the maximum satisfaction of customers.

For happy customers, happiest employees are significant and to achieve the later one the

concept of leadership styles originates. The literature is enriched with numerous leadership styles, both positive and negative explaining their pros and cons but this paper aims to explore the novel and underexplored leadership style, Ebullient Supervision (ES), coined by (Ford, Guzzo, Abbott, & Bowen, 2019) emphasizing the fun at the workplace to boost the happy and friendly environment which in turn increases the employee creativity (Mashkoor & Muhammad, 2023a) and fosters the efficiency of the organization.

It is a common myth that creativity and innovation are synonymous but literature also identified that both are different constructs with separate identities (Vehar, 2020) and with indifferent instruments to measure each of these variables. Yusuf (2007) explained that employee creativity itself is one of the major causes of innovative work behavior. Thus another aim of this paper is to explore the extent of impact that ebullient supervision has on innovative work behavior by operationalizing it (as Idea generation, Idea Promotion, and Idea Realization) of employees in an IT sector.

The continuous variable demand from the clients and rapid fluctuation of technology in IT sector, mainly the Software Houses leads to enhance the competition (Sun, Wang, Deveci, & Chen, 2024) among the suppliers because this opportunity can be adapted by any rival competitor. Moreover, the IT sector also faces the unending updates from the clients which needs to be fulfilled in time to avoid the customer loss. Similarly, as other sectors of the industry, IT sector also empowers their workers to input their innovative ideas and creativity (Ritonummi, Siitonen, Salo, & Pirkkalainen, 2024) to strengthen and reducing the lead time thus enhancing the customer satisfaction. Mashkoor and Muhammad (2023c) claimed that employee creativity embarks the organization to improve its products and services as per the demand of the market. Although, the IT sector or the software houses cannot expect flourishing growth without the concept of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), this concept is still underexplored in the IT industry; which creates a loophole in the existing body of the knowledge which needs the researchers to uplift and fill this gap. Thus, this study will fill this gap in literature by identifying the predictors of IWB specifically in software houses.

Employees' training and development is nowadays a challenge for the Human Resource Department, for which effective leadership that can properly alter the way employee behaves within the premises of the workplace is of significant importance for the prolonged success of the organization. A well-empowered employee is a keystone for a well-developed organization. The impact of leadership styles on creativity and innovative behavior of employees got heap in the past few years by researchers (AlMulhim & Mohammed, 2023; Sjahruddin,Ariawan,Tj, Efendi, & Yuwanda,2024; Ullah, Hameed, & Mahmood, 2024). Leadership plays a vital role in the development of the workplace flourishing a productive environment, drafting the job specification and description, acquiring, allocating, and identifying the unused resources of the society thus acting as a reason of boosting innovative behavior of employees (Islam, Zahra, Rehman, & Jamil, 2024). Literature is enriched with multiple leadership styles; both positive and negative. The autocratic leaders compel to obstruct the fundamental rights of the employees and enforce employees with their demands in an organization and demining their innovative behavior, whereas democratic and supportive leaders support the employees by providing them with a safe and positive workplace where they can express their ideas without fear of losing their jobs and designations within a workplace. The charismatic leaders influence the employees' development and learning behavior (Kement, Zeybek, Soylu, Erkol Bayram, & Raza, 2024), enabling them to come up with new ideas; thus employees feel empowered to take initiatives in an innovative way which consequently assists in the development of the organization.

The researchers and practicing leaders are striving to identify other leadership styles too, that can influence the employees' behavior and enhance innovative thinking at the workplace thus achieving the ultimate goal of efficient and effective organization. Here Ford et al. (2019) coined a new leadership style; the Ebullient Supervision (ES), a positive leadership style to enhance the productivity and innovative behavior of employees in an organization

through positive environment building. The fun at the workplace is created through multiple tasks and activities including positive hailing, acknowledgment of one's efforts, buoyancy, laughter, citizenship behaviors, and suitable positive humor resulting in decreasing the depressive environment and enhancing the motivation and innovativeness of employees. Ford et al. (2019), also identified the consequences of ES stating, "*.....while ebullient supervision produces desirable work-related outcomes like organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, work engagement and reduced intention to leave.*"; but still, the impact of this newly coined supervision style is enigmatic on IWB.

Additionally, the concept of ES is studied in the manufacturing concerns and hospitality industry as service sector. Fun at workplace is studied enormously and its vital role for the enhancement of the innovative behavior and improvement of satisfaction and ultimately the performance in return (Erselcan & Özer, 2023). But the fun at the workplace in the software houses; the IT sector is still a question in the literature and thus researchers are exploring it. The IT industry in a developing country like Pakistan, reach $1.15bn, marking 5.89% growth in FY 2023-24 first five months (Hanif & Sultan, 2024), thus it is necessary to identify all the possible contingent factors that can play an important role in turning the table of employees of this industry. Moreover, fun and creative ideas of innovative behavior are tied and evident in literature (Islam et al., 2024; Knezović & Drkić, 2021) but still mysteriously obscure in the IT industry, thus this study aims to identify the impact of ES in the IT industry of Pakistan through the employees of software houses.

As discussed earlier, employees being building blocks of an organization work day and night to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in their firm. Apart from supervision style there are multiple factors that may impact the productivity of employees by hindering their abilities and frustrating their mind. Work-life Balance (WLB) is one of the antecedents of IWB studied by many scholars and researchers in the literature.

A state of equilibrium between life at workplace and the personal life is termed as Work-life balance, which is studied in various dimensions including time, psychological well-being, and social relationships (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Scholars acknowledged WLB and its dimensions stating that it influences on overall life satisfaction and happiness in the personal and professional life of an employee (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Employees' well-being is also evident having a positive correlation with work-life balance. Employees experiencing a better balance often report higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved mental health (Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving, 1992). Resultantly, this positive well-being is closely associated with increased work effort and overall productivity (Frone, Russell, & Barnes, 1996). A satisfied employee can handle their personal life without compromising their professional life. Recent studies include the work-life balance to understand its impact on the innovative behavior of employees but the relationship between ES and WLB is still unexplored. Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of ebullient supervision on the work-life balance of employees of the IT sector.

Happiness at work, the another construct of this study, Fisher (2010) coined Happiness is a construct of "dispositional affectivity, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and typical mood at work". It is generated by acknowledgement, acceptance and sense of fulfillment at the workplace. The improvement in mental health of employees, reporting low level of stress (Kim & Beehr, 2023) at work is also evident for the employees who are experiencing happiness at work (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Particularly, this positive emotional state is closely linked with higher levels of work engagement, innovative thinking, and productivity of the employees (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). The positive and fun working environment not only thrives to fulfillment of the assigned job but also uplifts the organizational social embeddedness by focusing on relationships of the employees with their organization (Tews, Michel, & Allen, 2014). Apparently, this study aims to identify the impact of ebullient supervision, where the team leaders intentionally create fun at the workplace, on Happiness at work. Whereas, this study is considering ES to investigate the impact on work-life balance as well as happiness at work which then studied for the impact on IWB of

employees; through a cross-sectional study in the IT industry; the software houses. Figure 1 represents the proposed model of this study.

This research paper will enhances the existing body of knowledge in many dimensions; and act as a basic research for the HRD as well as future scholars. First of all, this study explores the novel connections of the recently coined leadership style; the ebullient supervision (ES) with the work-life balance of employees (WLB) and happiness at work (HAW) which later on shapes innovative work behavior of the employees (IWB). This study has empirical importance and evidence as such types of relationships and influence of this recently explored leadership style have never been studied, up to the best knowledge of the author. Secondly, emphasizing ebullient supervision, this paper explores the intensity of a positive workplace to generate innovative behavior of employees and identifies the extent that this leadership style creates for happiness at work which leads to be innovative at the workplace. Lastly, this study also contributes for the human resource development (HRD) practitioners of the software houses; IT industry to define their strategies and recalculate their existing policies to align with ebullient supervision for enriching more innovation among their employees.

2. Theorizing and hypothesis development

2.1 Broaden & Build Theory

Ford et al. (2019) explains the logical pinning of ebullient supervision that the supervisor creates the intentional fun at workplace to strengthen the employees. Fredrickson (2004) advocates in his Broaden and Build theory (*B&B theory*) that the affective and positive environment generates cognitive behavior among employees and thus boosts their innovative capabilities. According to this theory, positive environment helps the employees to feel empowered (Radu, 2023; Sahoo & Das, 2011) and thus come up with new creative (Kim & Beehr, 2023) and innovative ideas. Whereas, ebullient supervision proposes a positive environment, thus drawing upon the B&B Theory the author hereby, proposes that ebullient supervision will help to create a balance between the work-life of employees as well as creates happiness at workplace and builds a cognitive environment which resultantly makes the employees more innovative. Thus hypothesizing the following relationships.

2.2 Influence of Ebullient Supervision on Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative work behavior of employees at the workplace has a strong ground in all sectors and has vividly been researched by scholars and is evident in past literature. In service sector like IT industry, the software houses need this kind of behavior to ensure their existence as this industry is rapidly growing. Moreover the literature also supports that by applying the democratic leadership style (Dewi, Setini, Hapsari, & Dharmanegara, 2023; Jaboob, Awain, & Al-Ansi, 2023) and positive supervision styles (Foster, 2024) the creative thinking of employees' increases thus leading to innovativeness. However, the study of the relationship between ES and IWB is novel and has negligible literature support. The literature also supported the development of cognitive behavior of employees by feeling happiness and attachment to the organization thus acting creatively Ford et al. (2019) also coined that ebullient supervision also generates a fun working place through the intentional initiatives of supervisors and enjoyable games boosts the energy of employees. Then, it becomes necessary to identify that and up to what extent; a recently explored positive leadership style that is supporting employee creativity (Mashkoor & Muhammad, 2023a); has been influencing the innovative work behavior of employees. So in light of the above discussion and literature, we hypothesize that:

H1. Ebullient Supervision is positively related to Innovative Work Behavior.

2.3 Impact of Ebullient Supervision on Work-Life Balance and Happiness at Work

Ebullient supervision and its relationship with work-life balance is unrevealed yet in the literature; the reason is scarcity of evidence and novelty of this supervision style. Moreover the proposer of ES, Ford et al. (2019) claimed that ES supports the development of affirmative attitudes and outcomes in organization. Furthermore, with the support of B&B Theory (Fredrickson, 2004), it can be justified that a positive environment at the workplace may

generate positive vibes like empowerment that can build affective positive behavior (Nimran, Al Musadieq, & Afrianty, 2024) in personal lives of employees (Palumbo, 2024) and in return they may focus on their job more confidently and innovatively think about new technologies.

Work-life balance is an equilibrium state between the demands at work and personal life of an individual. But as mentioned above that the impact of ES on balancing the personal and professional life of an employee of IT industry is yet mysterious. To fill this gap in the literature and based upon the theoretical framework in Fig. 1, furthermore drawing upon the B&B Theory we may formulate the following hypothesis:

H2. Ebullient supervision has a significant impact on Work-life balance.

The relationship between ebullient supervision (ES) and happiness at work (HAW) is also unexplored yet and has no literature evidence. Happiness at work is a construct coined by Fisher (2010), explained as "dispositional affectivity, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and typical mood at work". Enormous literature highlighted that there is a positive correlation between happiness at work and overall employee well-being.

Employees experiencing happiness at work report lower levels of stress, increased job satisfaction, and improved mental health (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Similarly entrepreneurial support leads to maintaining work-life balance which then leads to happiness at work and increases productivity at work (Zhao, Jiang, & Yin, 2020). This positive emotional state is closely associated with higher levels of engagement, creativity, and job performance (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Such feelings of employees foster their productivity but this study aims to identify the influence that ES puts on HAW that later turns into IWB too as discussed in section 2.4. Thus, it is presumed based on the above discussions that there will be a relationship between ES and HAW which can be hypothesized as follows:

H3. Ebullient supervision has a positive significant impact on Happiness at work.

2.4 Work-Life Balance and Happiness at work as mediators

Work-life balance as discussed earlier, a state of stability between the personal as well as the professional life of a person; where he successfully manages his official tasks efficiently without compromising his day to day routine at home. Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, Schippers, and Stam (2010) emphasized the focused sound mind as well as full engagement at work for boosting the IWB of employees; whereas job bullying affects the balance adversely (Zahoor, Shaheen, & Tariq, 2023). One of the main antecedents of this affirmative and successful balance is the existence of positive leadership (Islam et al., 2024), less job stress (Yu, Liu, Lin, & Chi, 2024), supportive work behavior (Hadi, Setiawati, Kirana, Lada, & Rahmawati, 2024), and organizational citizenship (Al-Shami, Rashid, & Cheong, 2023) which is expected to enhance the innovative work behavior of employees. Thus, on the basis of this theoretical background the following hypothesis is formulated.

H4. Work-Life Balance has a positive significant impact on Innovative Work Behavior.

Rahimnia, Nosrati, and Eslami (2022) also claimed that embeddedness at the workplace is due to multiple contingent factors that further turn into innovative work behavior; whereas job embeddedness is evidently studied as a precedent of work-life balance. Ali, Li, and Qiu (2022) explored the mediating role of work-life balance between employee engagement and innovative work behavior and claimed a significant positive relationship among these variables and justified that employees with more balance in work life and personal life show more innovative behavior. However, the mediating role of work-life balance between the ES and IWB has not been explored. Based on the aforementioned discussion it is predicted that WLB has the power to mediate the relation between ES and IWB. Hence, the following hypothesis is derived as:

H5. Work-life Balance mediates the relationship between Ebullient Supervision and Innovative work behavior.

Whereas Happiness at Work (HAW) is concerned with the well-being of a person at the workplace, Ryan and Deci (2001) explored the

hedonic and the eudaimonic approaches of well-being that led to the development of HAW as a construct in literature. Knezović and Drkić (2021) claimed the progressiveness of happy employees is twice than unhappy and six times more enthusiastic at workplace; joy and hope that led to HAW fosters the innovativeness (Al-Shami et al., 2023); performance is influenced by happy attitudes at work (Bangun et al., 2021); innovativeness is influenced by being happy at work (Diržytė, Kačerauskas, & Perminas, 2021); a main component of innovative thinking is openness to novelty and risk-taking abilities which are influenced when employees use the positive fun to enhance satisfaction as their doubtfulness is imbalanced (Mendiburo-Seguel & Heintz, 2020). Parallel to the literature, this study wants to unravel the relationship between ES and IWB through HAW; as it influenced the IWB as discussed above. Thus the following hypotheses are formulated firstly to check the direct relationship between HAW and IWB and then the mediation of HAW between ES and IWB:

H6. Happiness at work has a positive significant impact on Innovative Work Behavior.

H7. Happiness at Work mediates the relationship between Ebullient Supervision and Innovative work behavior.

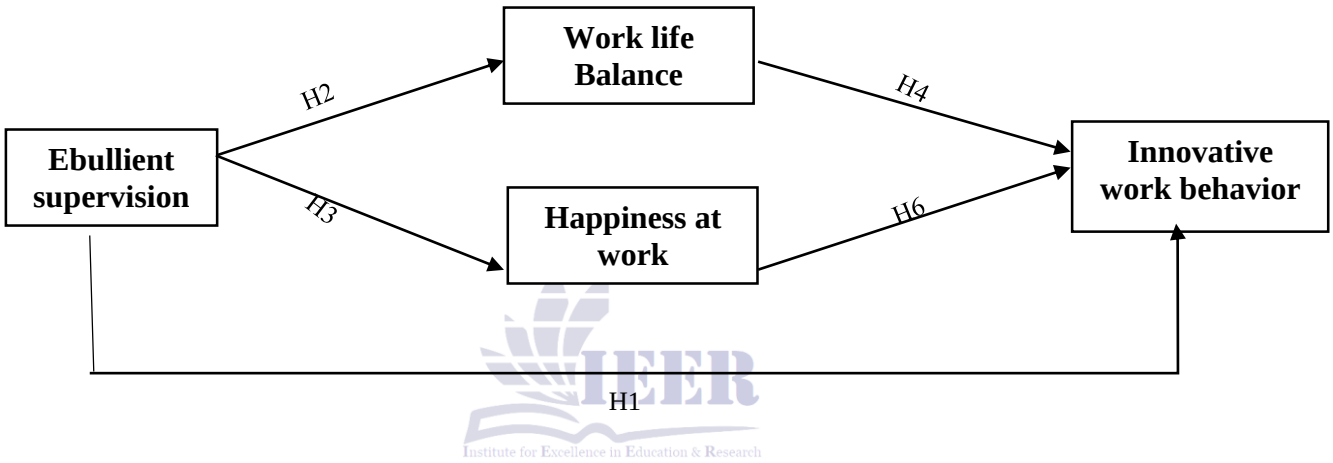


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

3. Research Methodology

This study relies on the survey data collected from 382 employees working in 25 Software houses (selected randomly) using a purposive sampling technique with a time lag of six weeks for both mediations. These employees include the supervisors and their direct supervisees, aligning with the past literature (Mashkoor & Muhammad, 2023b; Sarwar, Aamir, Bichao, & Chen, 2022) the data was collected based upon the criteria of being working under the same supervisor for at least a half year and direct involvement in innovation and bringing the novel idea in web development and software creation and up-gradation. The positivist paradigm is adopted here to impetus the logical relation and objectivity of the research. Two questionnaires using Google Forms were designed using the strategy formulated by (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) to avoid common method biasness. The first questionnaire designed for the supervisors to calculate the innovative work behavior of their supervisees comprised upon 9 items, adopted from (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010) operationalizing the three dimensions (idea generation, promotion, and realization) for each supervisee measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The second questionnaire was designed for supervisees to measure ebullient supervision, and work-life balance in (T1) and from same supervisees for happiness at work in (T2) as suggested by (Podsakoff et al., 2003) stated earlier. This second questionnaire contained; 13 items for ebullient supervision anchored by (Ford et al., 2019); 4 items scale proposed by (Brough, Timms, & Bauld, 2009) to measure work-life balance at T1; after a six-week interval, 16 items to measure the happiness at work

coined by (Singh & Aggarwal, 2018) was adopted and measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Coding was ensured to avoid mismatching. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed based upon rule defined by Barclay, Higgins, and Thompson (1995), at least 10 times to the number of total adopted items. 390 questionnaires were received back; whereas 382 were in position to be reused in T2 maintaining the response rate of 84.4%. The issue of reliability and validity was abstinent (∞ = 0.791-0.878) as all items were adopted from well-developed questionnaires. Since, this study contained the underexplored and novel relationships of ebullient supervision with innovative work behavior, work-life balance, and happiness at work of employees, so using the PLS-SEM technique is justifiable in light of recommendations of Hair Jr, Matthews, Matthews, and Sarstedt (2017). Moreover, despite of minimal sample size PLS-SEM is reliable for robust results (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

4. Results and Discussions

Descriptive analysis of the respondents is discussed in Table 1. Total 382 responses of were in evitable condition to conduct the analysis consisting upon 81.2% male and 18.8% female respondents. In a developing country like Pakistan, male dominance in the IT industry is evident (Ajmal, Islam, & Khan, 2024). The maximum respondents 90.1% were below the age of 45 years and 64.9% were with 1-5 years working experience. It is furthermore studied that these demographics have either weak or negligible relation with the criterion variable and thus need no further involvement in the model.

Demographics	Category	Respondents Frequency	Respondents Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	310	81.2
	Female	72	18.8
Age	<25	50	13.1
	26-35	221	57.9
	36-45	73	19.1
	>45	38	9.9
Qualification	Intermediate	75	19.6
	Bachelors	131	34.3
	Masters	128	33.5
	Above	48	12.6
Marital Status	Married	237	62
	Unmarried	145	38
Job Type	Contractual	95	24.9
	Permanent	240	62.8
	Third Party	47	12.3
Service	6 months - 1 Year	102	26.7
	1 -5 Years	248	64.9
	> 5 Years	32	8.4

Table 1 – Descriptive Analysis (N = 382)

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4.1 **Measurement model**

Table 2 describes the reliability analysis of the constructs. Since the items of all measures were adopted from the actual source thus no issue of reliability was faced. Outer Loadings of all items were greater than the benchmark of 0.700, thus no requirement of deletion of item was necessary. Cronbach's Alpha (α) represents the acceptable internal reliability (i.e. >0.70) and for more confidence in factors' internal consistency the Bacon, Sauer, and Young (1995) formula of composite reliability (CR) was adopted where the values of CR meets the required threshold to range between 0 and 1, whereas higher the CR; higher the reliability, here for all measures the value is >0.80. Furthermore, the convergent validity of the measures was accessed, as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was greater than the required threshold of 0.50.

	Measures	OL	α	CR	AVE
IWB	*I...*		0.877	0.890	0.517
IWB1	...create new ideas for difficult issues.	0.756			
IWB2	...search out new work methods, techniques or instruments.	0.838			
IWB3	...generate original solutions for problems.	0.787			
IWB4	...mobilize the support for innovative ideas.	0.753			
IWB5	...acquire the approval for innovative ideas.	0.771			
IWB6	...make important organizational members enthusiastic about innovative ideas.	0.720			
IWB7	...transform innovative ideas into useful applications.	0.718			
IWB8	...introduce innovative ideas into the work environment in a systematic way.	0.733			
IWB9	...evaluate the utility of innovative ideas.	0.747			
ES	*My supervisor...*		0.847	0.891	0.583
ES1	...greets employees in passing.	0.718			
ES2	...goes out of his/her way to brighten the day at work	0.766			
ES3	...uses a cheerful tone when speaking with subordinates	0.772			
ES4	...attempts to make people laugh	0.805			
ES5	...uses appropriate humor at work	0.782			
ES6	...gladly take on routine task responsibilities (e.g., schedules, meetings)	0.791			
ES7	...helps people feel enthusiastic about their jobs	0.786			
ES8	...tries to put people at ease	0.771			
ES9	...smiles when someone enters his/her office for any meeting or discussion	0.740			
ES10	....let's people know that it's OK to be playful at work	0.727			
ES11	...praises individual wins	0.733			
ES12	...compliments employees in front of others	0.796			
ES13	...finds reasons to celebrate (e.g., birthdays, group or personal milestones.	0.757			
WLB	*I...*		0.840	0.847	0.675

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WLB1	...have a good balance between the time I spend at work and the time I have available for non-work activities	0.824			
WLB2	...difficulty balancing my work and non-work activities.	0.798			
WLB3	... feel that the balance between my work demands and non-work activities is currently about right.	0.848			
WLB4	... believe that my work and non-work life are balanced	0.815			
HAW *I...*			0.775	0.881	0.599
HAW1	...remain inspired and try to inspire others as well	0.795			
HAW2	...feel internally driven to do great things at my work	0.743			
HAW3	When I start doing my work I forget everything else	0.743			
HAW4	...enjoy what I am doing at work	0.719			
HAW5	...continue to do a task till it is perfectly done	0.730			
HAW6	... am not very comfortable in approaching my boss	0.854			
HAW7	... hate lot of people here for always being around the boss for personal gains	0.787			
HAW8	... feel stressed at work	0.701			
HAW9	... feel like quitting my job	0.811			
HAW10	My organization provides all necessary training and information to complete work on time.	0.736			
HAW11	The decision-making process in my company is fair and just	0.742			
HAW12	Top leaders of my organization have clear vision and focus	0.777			
HAW13	We celebrate and cheer each other at the accomplishment of targets.	0.783			
HAW14	My organization does not have proper guidelines to regulate team behaviour and work that require collective effort	0.751			
HAW15	My company does not have a proper interface that can allow us to work for social cause	0.738			
HAW16	... do not get sufficient credit for my contributions.	0.790			

Table 2 – Outer Loadings (OL), Cronbach's Alpha (α), Composite Reliability (CR) and Convergent Reliability (AVE)

To exhibit the discriminant validity in Table 3, the recent approach of heterotrait– monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015) was used. The HTMT of all constructs met the required threshold of less than 0.90, showing the discriminant validity.

Constructs	IWB	ES	WLB	HAW
IWB	-			
ES	0.856	-		
WLB	0.634	0.711	-	
HAW	0.794	0.844	0.761	-

Table 3 – Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

4.2 Structural model

After the assessment of reliability, discriminant, and convergent validity, the structural models were studied in PLS-SEM due to the unexplored theoretical background for indirect mediated paths. Table 4 represents the results of direct paths, whereas Table 5 shows the results of indirect paths.

4.2.1 Direct path analysis

Table 4, firstly presents the impact of IV i.e. ebullient supervision on DV i.e. innovative work behavior, and then the impact of IV on mediators i.e. work-life balance and happiness at work, and finally the impact of mediators on DV. The findings are evident that ES positively and significantly predicts the IWB (□=0.312, p<0.001), thus *H1* is supported. Furthermore, ES also shows a positive and significant impact on WLB (□=0.623, p<0.001) and HAW (□=0.655, p<0.001) resultantly supporting *H2* and *H3*. Thus these paths were unexplored in previous literature, thus supporting the theoretical background of this study based on B&B theory. Moreover, the mediators WLB (□=0.431, p<0.001) and HAW (□=0.262, p<0.001) also impact the DV predicting the support of *H4* and *H6*. The results not only supported the literature of this study as well as it is in consonance with the existing literature (Afsar, Al-Ghazali, Cheema, & Javed, 2021; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Nimran et al., 2024; Palumbo, 2024; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009)

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Hypothesis	Structural Path	□-value	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	ES ->IWB	0.312	6.418	0.000	Supported
H2	ES->WLB	0.623	16.274	0.000	Supported
H3	ES->HAW	0.655	17.65	0.000	Supported
H4	WLB->IWB	0.432	8.172	0.000	Supported
H6	HAW->IWB	0.262	4.844	0.000	Supported

Table 4 – Hypotheses Testing (Direct Paths)

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4.2.2 Indirect path analysis

Table 5 explores the indirect pathways (mediation analysis) of the model of this study. It is conspicuous that the indirect effects of ES through work-life balance (i.e. 0.269) and happiness at work (i.e. 0.172) are significant but both are less than the direct effect (i.e. 0.312, p < 0.001), justifying that both work-life balance and happiness at work partially mediate the relation between ebullient supervision and innovative work behavior of employees (supporting *H5* and *H7*). The results are in line with the literature grounding of this study assuming that ES impacts the IWB through unexplored role of WLB and HAW. These all-significant results of structural modeling shows the conclusively support for the proposed relationships

No	Structural Paths	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	t-values	p	Result
H5	ES>WLB>IWB	0.581 (p=0.000)	0.312 (p=0.000)	0.269	7.106	0.000	Partial Mediation
H7	ES>HAW>IWB	0.484 (p=0.000)	0.312 (p=0.000)	0.172	5.299	0.000	Partial Mediation

(Figure 2).

Table 5 – Hypotheses Testing (Mediation)

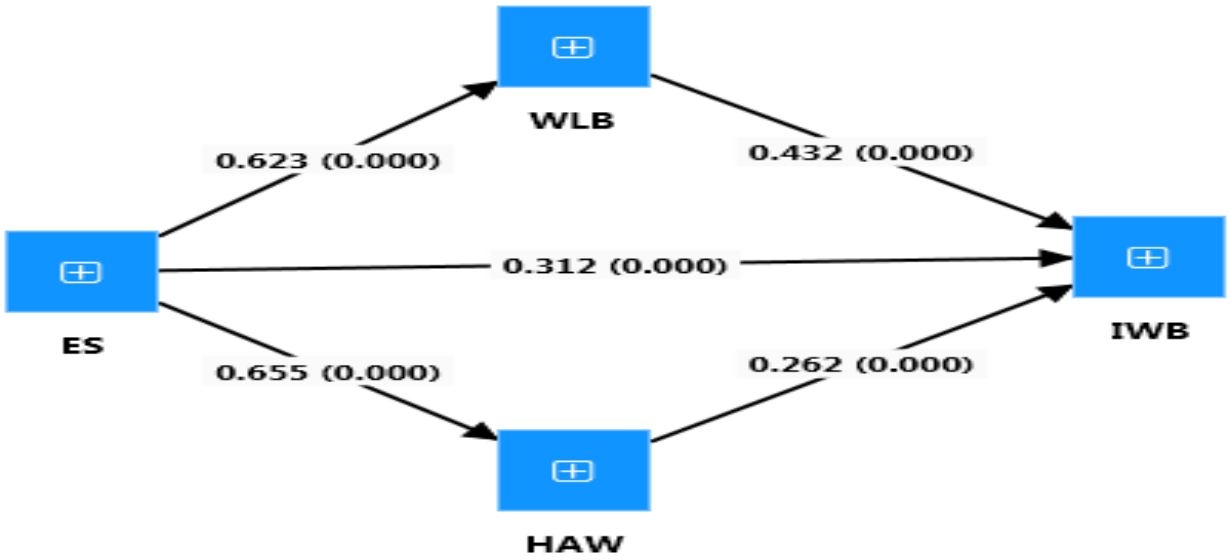


Figure 2: Confirmation of Proposed Relationships

5. Implications of the study

5.1 Theoretical contribution

As highlighted in previous sections of this study, ebullient supervision is the most recently explored type of leadership thus its literature in management is scarce. Although, scholars are working on this type of supervision but its relationship with IWB has not been identified before. Identifying this gap, this study has valued this investigation and identified the direct and indirect impacts that ebullient supervision can have on innovative work behavior. The indirect pathways are novel in nature themselves as there is no evidence of such study available in the existing literature of management to the best of the author's knowledge.

Presumed relationship among the variables have been supported by the empirical evidence of the results. More importantly, this study also identified the two different pathways through which these constructs can be connected to influence innovation within technological firms. Relying on the results of this study, it is worth mentioning here that this study has not only identified the practical acceptance of ebullient supervision in the IT industry but also emphasized that employees are of utmost importance to any organization and must be considered as assets of the organization. This paper also highlights that positive results can be generated with the execution of ebullient supervision in the organization and thus future researchers can also identify the further antecedents and precedents of this type of supervision.

5.2 Practical implications

The existing body of knowledge of human resource development is not only enriched by this study as discussed in the previous section. Furthermore, the results supported that when employees faced ebullient supervision in the organization they feel a cognitive connection with the firm and thus think more openly and vice versa. This feeling of fun at work also boosts their happiness at work and supports them to manage their work-life balance and thus fosters their innovative work behavior.

This study will explore new dimensions in policy building and the execution of strategies within this sector of the economy. Most importantly, the world of technology is too volatile. Thus

retaining the human capital in these IT firms; the software houses is one of the difficult tasks. Secondly, enhancing the potential and critical thinking, and innovative behavior of current resource of the software house is also a matter of significant importance for the team leaders or supervisors. Thus this study will help the supervisors to be more ebullient and helps the employees to be more creative. The concept of ebullient supervision is of much significance because it is almost costless but can be a medium of high financial returns.

Smiling, greeting, encouraging play at work, using an appropriate sense of humor, being supportive, and having social events, such as celebrating achievements or birthdays as coined by (Ford et al., 2019), are the ways that may have zero or less monetary value but it boosts the happiness at work and thus employee feels to work more enthusiastically and think more innovative. Similarly, these tactics used by an ebullient supervisor help the employees to manage their personal lives too and thus come up with a fresh mind every day which will be more productive in nature.

5.3 Limitations and future directions

Although this study identifies the new linkages between ebullient supervision and innovative work behavior with mediating effects of first work-life balance and then the second path through happiness at work and thus gave the theoretical and practical implications for the HRD of the IT Sector to strategize their policies to enhance the ebullience in their firm to achieve the highest level of innovation in this swiftly changing technological race of globe; but still there lies certain limitations to this study.

Firstly, the future researchers can enhance the sample size to eliminate the question of generalizability and moreover the cross-sectional design of this study can be replaced with longitudinal design to mitigate the common variance problem. Secondly, the scholars may include psychological empowerment, organizational identity, and job embeddedness as constructs to identify the role of other individual-level attitudes to improve their studies. Finally, each boom has a pitfall too thus identifying and exploring the cons of ebullient supervision can be a matter of interest for future scholars.

6. Conclusion

Ebullient Supervision, although having less theoretical background due to being recently explored by Ford et al. (2019), still has significant importance in the volatile world of technology. The IT industry being a part of the service sector is highly changing and thus a challenging situation of retention of employees and rapid innovativeness arises for the supervisors. So, keeping this importance in view, this study considers to highlight the effects of ES on the IWB of employees of Software Houses through a mediation model.

Here the results of this study are two-fold; firstly it identifies the two different mediating pathways between ES and IWB and reveals that the innovative work behaviors increased significantly with the partial mediation of WLB and HAW as presumed. Whereas, from the second perspective it also concluded the importance of ES by the addition of this study with the empirical support of Broaden & Build theory of Fredrickson (2004), in the existing scarce body of knowledge on this topic.

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