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Factors Influencing Innovation of Telecom Industry Leaders: A Survey in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to elucidate the connection among organizational innovation capacity, leadership orientation, and strategic decision-making behavior among telecom industry leaders in Vietnam. This study further investigates the bridging role of leadership communication in the association between innovation capacity, leadership orientation, and strategic decision-making. A quantitative research design was employed, and cross-sectional data were gathered through survey questionnaires administered to mid- and senior-level executives in leading telecommunications corporations across major Vietnamese cities. SPSS was utilized to analyze the respondents' feedback. The findings suggest that both leadership orientation and organizational innovation capacity are associated with forward-thinking decision-making behavior, with leadership communication mediating these relationships. The present study advances existing works by linking prior research on leadership influence and organizational innovation systems, exploring how visionary leadership styles and robust innovation infrastructures shape high-level strategic behavior. Organizations can leverage these findings to foster innovation-driven leadership, raising awareness among senior managers about how their communication patterns and strategic frameworks shape organizational adaptability and performance, as informed by social exchange theory.

Keywords: High performance work system (HPWS), Strategic Leadership (SL), Employee Voice (EV), Innovative work behavior (IWB), Telecom Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Innovative work behavior (IWB) reflects employees' capacity to generate, promote, and implement new ideas, streamline activities, and enhance collaboration (Shojaei & Siuki, 2014). In a competitive digital economy, especially in dynamic sectors like telecommunications, fostering IWB is essential for sustainable business performance (Nassar & Faloye, 2015). Organizations can stimulate innovation by providing clear roles, supportive leadership, and participatory working conditions. Among these enablers, employee voice (EV) plays a critical role by enhancing control, commitment, and innovation-oriented efforts.

Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, employees are more likely to engage in IWB when they perceive organizational support such as investment in skills, fair leadership, and recognition as beneficial exchanges worth reciprocating (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Rana et al., 2021). This reciprocal dynamic is strengthened when High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and Strategic Leadership (SL) cultivate a psychologically safe environment where employees can share ideas without fear of retribution (Xing et al., 2022). EV thus becomes a vital mediator between HPWS, SL, and IWB, enabling employees to propose improvements and influence decisions meaningfully.

HPWS practices including targeted training, fair rewards, and structured career paths have been found to improve employee satisfaction, innovation, and retention (Obeidat et al., 2016; Raineri,

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2017). Despite growing attention to HPWS, its influence through EV remains underexplored, particularly in telecom a sector defined by constant disruption and technological shifts (Ali et al., 2023). Employees in this field are more likely to innovate when empowered to speak up and participate in decision-making (Kim et al., 2010), making EV not just a mechanism of feedback but a driver of innovation.

Strategic leaders contribute by aligning vision, goals, and organizational systems to employee potential, encouraging risk-taking and continuous improvement (Kim & Mauborgne, 2002; Zia-ud-Din et al., 2017). Prior research highlights their impact on innovation, risk behavior, and CSR (Petrenko et al., 2016; Simsek et al., 2018), emphasizing that leadership style and top management dynamics shape firm-level innovation outcomes (Arzubiaga et al., 2018).

However, many telecom firms still neglect feedback channels, limiting productivity and innovation (Dwomoh, 2012). When given the freedom to express ideas without fear, employees feel more intrinsically motivated (Hanif et al., 2021). This study therefore examines how HPWS and SL affect IWB, with EV acting as a mediator, specifically in the Vietnamese telecom context. By applying Social Exchange Theory, the research highlights the importance of fostering reciprocal, trust-based relationships to drive innovation and secure competitive advantage (Cortes & Herrmann, 2021; Umer & Richard, 2018)..

LITERATURE REVIEW

Innovative Work Behavior

The term “Innovative Work Behavior” (IWB) has been conceptualized in various ways across innovation literature. Commonly, it refers to the generation and application of novel and valuable ideas that can enhance organizational effectiveness traditionally in revenue-driven settings, but increasingly in knowledge-based sectors such as higher education. According to De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) and Scott and Bruce (1994), employees’ innovative activities have a direct positive impact on an institution’s innovation performance. In the context of universities, this suggests that innovation-driven institutions must view their academic staff as critical assets those capable of devising creative pedagogical approaches, interdisciplinary collaborations, and curriculum reforms vital for institutional growth and survival.

West (1990) defines innovative work behavior as the process of generating, promoting, and realizing new ideas within work groups to enhance performance at the individual, group, or institutional level. While often conflated with creativity, IWB goes beyond idea generation to include the recombination and implementation of ideas that add measurable value to services in this case, educational delivery, student engagement, or research outputs (Shalley et al., 2004).

Janssen (2000) identifies three key dimensions of IWB that are particularly relevant to academic innovation. First, idea generation, in which faculty develop new instructional techniques, learning platforms, or evaluation systems to address educational challenges. Second, idea promotion, wherein educators advocate for these innovations among colleagues, departmental leaders, or university stakeholders. Finally, idea implementation encompasses the actual integration of these innovations such as piloting a new blended learning model or launching interdisciplinary modules which, as Asmawi and Rahim (2015) suggest, often involves prototyping, feedback loops, and iterative refinement to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Strategic leadership and Innovative work behavior

Innovative work behavior (IWB) within public universities is strongly influenced by strategic leadership (Alshahrani et al., 2025). As Boal and Hooijberg (2001) emphasize, strategic leadership is a critical concept due to the leader’s role in shaping institutional vision, long-term goals, and transformative strategies. In the context of higher education reform, strategic leaders are not only tasked with planning for academic excellence but must also adapt policies and institutional direction in response to external pressures such as digital disruption, globalization, and shifting societal needs. Key traits of effective academic leadership such as foresight, innovation, decisive planning, change management, and faculty development have been highlighted by Ireland and Hitt (2005) as essential in shaping the university of the future.

Research has shown that strategic leadership positively affects overall institutional

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performance (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996), particularly when resource allocation and decision-making are aligned with dynamic reform agendas (Ahmad et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2020; Ahmad, 2018). The connection between leadership style and faculty behavior is now receiving greater academic interest, especially regarding how leaders encourage pedagogical innovation and collaborative research culture.

According to Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009), strategic leadership promotes creativity by shifting academic culture, securing resources for innovation, and enacting policies that foster intellectual risk-taking. In university settings, leaders can drive innovation by empowering academic staff, decentralizing decision-making, and cultivating environments that support experimentation in teaching and interdisciplinary research. Strategic leadership thus becomes a catalyst for IWB among faculty members, encouraging them to generate new ideas, engage in curriculum reform, and explore alternative models of knowledge delivery.

Today's rapidly evolving educational landscape demands that universities adopt diverse leadership styles paternalistic, inclusive, transformational, empowering, digital, and visionary to meet new challenges. These leadership modes activate mechanisms such as leader-member exchange (LMX), psychological safety, job crafting, and academic engagement to stimulate creative behaviors. Strengthening these leadership capacities is essential for public universities seeking to foster academic innovation, attract talent, and sustain long-term institutional competitiveness.

H1: Strategic leadership positively affects Innovative Work Behavior.

High-Performance Work System and Innovative Work Behavior

It has been noted that high-performance work systems (HPWS) substantially impact innovative work behavior (IWB) of employees via different methods. With Social Capital Theory as the basis, HPWS influences IWB directly and indirectly through social capital and knowledge-sharing behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Creativity as a form of IWB has been observed to function as a mediator between HPWS and IWB in SMEs (Do & Shipton, 2019). There are several gaps with the assessment of the impact of HPWS on IWB. Even though HPWS is generally beneficial, its impact is not that straightforward, and other factors such as learning goal orientation and psychological safety can moderate the relationship (Do & Shipton, 2019; Miao et al., 2020). While HPWS is effective in enabling knowledge sharing, enhancing social capital, and fostering an environment conducive to creativity, there are numerous organizational and individual factors that can offset its effectiveness in promoting IWB(Caniëls & Veld, 2019). In any case, HPWS assist greatly in nurturing IWB within organizations. Further investigations into these factors and their interplay could greatly contribute to understanding the HPWS-IWB dynamics across various settings (Kayani, et al., 2023; Khan, et al., 2021).

It has been documented that the use of HPWS enhances IWB, yet this is influenced, in part, by individual factors. It is known that personality traits and other individual aspects affect the workings of HPWS on IWB. Two such traits are conscientiousness and openness to experience, which seem to interact with organizational tenure in affecting IWB. Woods et al. (2018) observed that highly conscientious employees tend to be less innovative with longer tenure while employees high in openness to experience tend to generate more ideas as tenure increases (Sultana, Ahmed, & Imran, 2024; Khan, haq & Naseer, 2022).

H2: High-Performance Work System positively affects Innovative Work Behavior.

Employee Voice

High-performance work systems (HPWS) have been found to significantly influence the innovative work behavior (IWB) of university faculty, particularly in fostering research innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration. Grounded in Social Capital Theory, HPWS affect IWB both directly and indirectly by enhancing social capital and facilitating knowledge-sharing behaviors among academic peers (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In the context of academic institutions, creativity a key element of IWB has also been shown to mediate the relationship between HPWS and faculty innovation outcomes, particularly in resource-constrained environments like public universities or research-focused faculties (Do & Shipton, 2019).

However, the relationship between HPWS and research innovation is not linear. Factors such

as learning goal orientation and psychological safety can moderate how effectively HPWS translate into innovative actions (Do & Shipton, 2019; Miao et al., 2020). While HPWS are instrumental in creating conditions that encourage collaborative research, knowledge exchange, and idea generation, their full impact is often dependent on organizational climate and individual readiness for innovation (Caniëls & Veld, 2019).

Additional variables, particularly individual-level traits, also play a critical role in determining how faculty respond to innovation-supportive practices. For instance, personality traits such as conscientiousness and openness to experience significantly shape how faculty members engage with research innovation over time. Woods et al. (2018) observed that highly conscientious academics with long tenure may become risk-averse, thus exhibiting less innovation, whereas those high in openness to experience tend to generate more novel research ideas as their tenure increases (Sultana, Ahmed, & Imran, 2024; Khan, Haq, & Naseer, 2022).

Therefore, while HPWS offer powerful tools for advancing academic innovation, their effectiveness is moderated by both institutional design and the personal attributes of faculty members. Understanding these complex interactions is essential for university leadership aiming to build innovation-driven research cultures (Kayani et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2021).

Strategic leadership and employee voice

Strategic leadership has been shown to have a profound influence on faculty voice behavior within higher education institutions (Kuo et al., 2021). Drawing from Hosseini and Ferreira's (2023) insights, ethical leadership—a specific form of strategic leadership—can cultivate an academic environment where innovation, critical feedback, and dissenting perspectives are encouraged, enabling faculty members to speak up constructively (Ali et al., 2021; Muhammad et al., 2020; Farooq et al., 2019). This type of leadership builds trust and openness, which are foundational to creating a culture of dialogue and shared governance in universities (Prakasha et al., 2024). As strategic leadership research becomes increasingly multidisciplinary, emerging themes such as inclusive leadership have been shown to boost both promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors, allowing faculty to express support for improvements or raise concerns about institutional practices (Qi & Liu, 2017; Qi et al., 2023). In modern academic governance, silence is no longer golden (Ali et al., 2023; Yasmin et al., 2020).

Moreover, digital leadership, a growing trend in higher education leadership, has been associated with empowering faculty voice by promoting engagement in virtual collaboration, digital curriculum design, and pedagogical innovation (Yang et al., 2024). However, a nuanced challenge persists: organizational justice perceptions may undermine the positive impact of inclusive leadership on faculty voice, highlighting a gap that deserves further exploration (Qi et al., 2023). Thus, whether through ethical, paternalistic, inclusive, or digital forms, strategic leadership plays a key role in amplifying the voices of academic staff and aligning them with institutional reform and innovation goals.

H3: Strategic leadership positively affects faculty voice behavior.

In parallel, recent scholarship has increasingly focused on the link between High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and faculty voice in promoting innovation and academic performance. HPWS, by design, enhance faculty capabilities, motivation, and participation in decision-making processes, which in turn stimulate meaningful voice behaviors (Badru et al., 2024; Mowbray et al., 2021). Evidence suggests that HPWS support both promotive (constructive suggestions) and prohibitive (problem-oriented) forms of faculty voice and may even mediate the relationship between work environment and academic innovation (Miao et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the relationship is not without complexity.

Contradictory findings from primary research indicate that the effectiveness of HPWS in enhancing voice behavior among university faculty is contingent on psychological safety the extent to which faculty feel secure in expressing potentially controversial or dissenting ideas (Ashiru et al., 2022). In some institutional settings, HPWS may inadvertently stifle voice if not accompanied by cultural support for openness. As such, while the literature affirms HPWS as a catalyst for faculty voice, its influence is filtered through a web of contextual and psychological factors, calling for a more refined understanding of its mechanisms (Shahzad et al., 2019; Mowbray et al., 2020).

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H4: High performance work system positively affects employee voice.

Employee voice and innovative work behavior

Research has long identified antecedents of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), and there is consistent evidence of a positive relationship between faculty voice and institutional creativity and innovation (Zhou & George, 2001). While such outcomes are often used as proxies for IWB, they don't fully capture the complexity of this multidimensional construct in academic settings. Notably, recent literature reviews reveal a gap in studies that specifically position faculty voice as a direct antecedent of IWB (Haq, Bilal, & Qureshi, 2020). However, adjacent findings offer useful insights: Chen et al. (2020) observed that academic staff are more likely to express concerns and ideas when supported by ethical leadership, and Selvaraj and Joseph (2020) highlighted the positive link between voice behavior and innovation climate—particularly when faculty trust institutional leaders. Similarly, Guzman and Espejo (2019) found a strong relationship between promotive voice and innovation in educational management, especially in environments that suppress silence and encourage dialogue. Other studies, including those by Ng and Feldman (2012), reinforce the significance of faculty voice in fostering creativity and institutional performance.

H5: Employee voice positively affects innovative work behavior

There is growing interest in the mediating role of faculty voice between strategic leadership and IWB in higher education (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Ethical leadership, a form of strategic leadership, has been shown to enhance faculty voice, which in turn fosters innovation through psychological empowerment and an innovation-supportive climate (Nazir et al., 2021). The extent to which leadership style, institutional trust, and role clarity influence this mediation continues to be a fruitful area of study (Alobeidli et al., 2024; Cai et al., 2018; Jada et al., 2019).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a useful lens for understanding this dynamic: when academic leaders demonstrate transparency, support, and fairness, faculty are more likely to reciprocate by speaking up and contributing novel ideas. For example, research on protective leadership a subset of strategic leadership found that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and faculty voice acted as serial mediators between leadership behavior and IWB (Nazir et al., 2021). Furthermore, inclusive leadership was shown to strengthen voice behaviors when psychological empowerment and role clarity were present (Jiang et al., 2022). These findings highlight the importance of enabling open, trust-based communication as a driver of academic innovation (Sultana, Ahmed, & Imran, 2024; Khan, Haq & Naseer, 2022).

H6: Employee voice significantly mediates the relationship between strategic leadership and innovative work behavior.

The implementation of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) in higher education has also been linked to increased innovative behaviors among faculty. HPWS enhance motivation, capability, and opportunities for faculty to engage in institutional development and academic reform. Employee voice in this case, faculty voice acts as a key mediator in the relationship between HPWS and IWB (Miao et al., 2020). SET explains this by suggesting that when universities invest in systems that support faculty development and participation, faculty reciprocate with idea sharing and innovation.

HPWS encourage both advocative (suggesting improvements) and restrictive (raising concerns) forms of voice. Miao et al. (2020) argue that the mediating effect of faculty voice is especially strong in institutions that nurture psychological safety, allowing for candid feedback and knowledge-sharing. However, this relationship is not universally consistent. Factors like institutional politics, lack of academic freedom, or top-down governance structures can limit the effectiveness of HPWS in fostering innovation through voice (Ashiru et al., 2022). To maximize the benefits, institutions must implement HPWS alongside cultural reforms that promote inclusivity, empowerment, and dialogue.

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H7: Employee voice significantly mediates the relationship between HPWS and innovative work behavior.

Conceptual Framework

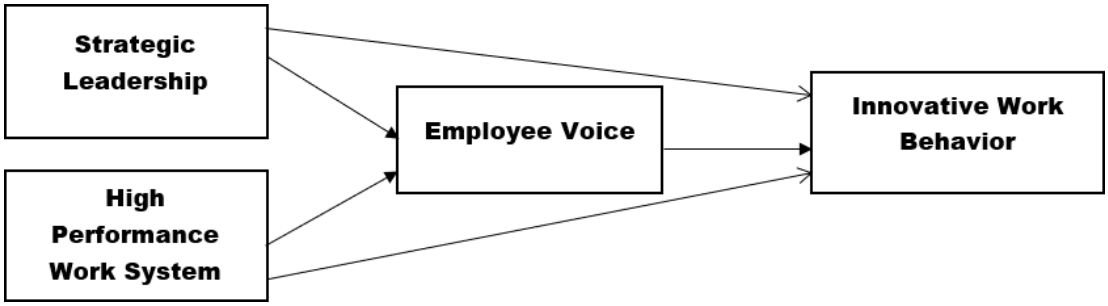

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a deductive approach, aiming to verify existing theories and utilizing a quantitative research method. The study investigates the causal relationship among strategic leadership (SL), high-performance work systems (HPWS), and innovative work behavior (IWB) within the context of Vietnamese public universities. The study further explores the mediating role of faculty voice in linking SL and HPWS to IWB. Grounded in a positivist research philosophy, this study relies on observable and measurable data to derive conclusions through empirical validation.

Data was collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire distributed to academic and administrative staff from public universities located in five major urban centers: Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Can Tho, and Hai Phong. Purposive sampling was employed to target middle and senior-level faculty and university managers, ensuring respondents held decision-making or leadership roles. Of the total responses received, 247 valid responses (70%) were retained and analyzed using standard quantitative techniques.

The data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modeling to examine the strength and direction of the relationships among variables. Correlation analysis was particularly used to assess the magnitude and significance of the associations between SL, HPWS, faculty voice, and IWB. The detailed results are presented in the following tables and are used to draw conclusions about leadership and innovation dynamics in higher education institutions.

Demographics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic analysis

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male Female	154	63.4
	93	36.6
Experience		
1-5	29	11.7
6-10	110	44.5

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11-15	44	17.8
16-20	36	14.6
21-25	21	8.5
26-30	7	2.8
Age	29	11.7
20-25	115	46.6
26-30	42	17.0
31-35	29	11.7
36-40	19	7.8
41-45	13	5.2
46-50		
Marital status	139	56.3
Single Married	108	43.7
Income	59	23.9
25000-45000	98	39.7
46000-65000	67	27.1
66000-85000	23	9.3
86000 and above		
Education	58	23.9
Intermediate	156	64.2
Graduation Masters	29	11.9

(Source: Data processing results on SPSS 22.0)

Table 1 depicts the information of employees who partake in this study. This research includes a total of 247 employees. The majority of respondents skewed towards being male, and those in the 26-30 age bracket, unmarried, with an income between 46000 to 65000 and graduates were the most dominant respondents.

Reliability Analysis

Table 2 depicts the alpha reliability of variables. All variables possessed Cronbach's alpha at a threshold level of 0.70 or more. Also, strategic leadership (α= 0.878), high performance work system (α= 0.921), employee voice (α= 0.883), and innovative work behavior (α= 0.739) confirmed with their respective alpha reliability values.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

	No of items	Alpha reliability
SL	21	0.878
HPWS	18	0.921
EV	08	0.883
IWB	09	0.739

Note: SL=Strategic leadership, HPWS=High Performance work system, EV=Employee voice, IWB= Innovative work behavior

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Descriptive statistics:

Table 3 displays the main variable of the study in terms of its normality and

descriptiveness along with their respective Skewness and Kurtosis values. The strategic leadership value carried mean and standard deviation value of (M=3.48, STD=0.51) while high performance work system (M=3.50, STD=0.35) employee voice (M=3.62, STD=0.36) and innovative work behavior (M=3.78, STD=0.39). In addition to that, the mean value range from the lower 3.48(strategic leadership) to the upper range of 3.72(employee voice). The standard deviation value range from 0.34(high performance work system) to 0.31(innovative work behavior). According to George (2011), the data considered normally distributed for the Skewness and Kurtosis values fall within the +/-2 range.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

	Mean(M)	Std Deviation (STD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
SL	3.478	0.513	-0.897	0.853
HPWS	3.5079	0.347	-1.621	1.023
EV	3.7221	0.359	-1.201	1.858
IWB	3.7169	0.391	-1.633	1.726

Note: SL=Strategic leadership, HPWS=High Performance work system, EV=Employee voice, IWB= Innovative work behavior

Correlation analysis

In order to assess the relationships among variables in this study, the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed through SPSS. The values of the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of the main constructs of the study are given in the table below. All relationships between the aforementioned constructs are significant and are within the correlation level accepted. The results show that both SL (strategic leadership) and HPWS (high-performance work system) positively contribute to IWB(innovative work behavior) SL (strategic leadership) HPWS (high-performance work system) where r=0.384**, p < 0.01), (r=0.331**, p < 0.01). SL and HPWS also positively correlate to EV (Employee Voice) where (r=0.340**, p < 0.01), (r=0.427**, p

< 0.01). Furthermore EV significantly positively correlates to other variables with IWB where (r=0.369**, p < 0.01).

Table 4: Correlation analysis

	Exp	Age	Income	Education	SL	HPWS	EV	IWB
Experience	1							
Age	0.181**	1						
Income	0.038	0.128*	1					
Education	0.023*	0.163	0.146	1				
SL	0.034	0.018	0.028	0.069	1			
HPWS	-0.043	-0.067	0.048	-0.112	0.349**	1		

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EV	0.023	-0.020	0.063	-0.093	0.340**	0.427**	1	
IWB	-0.053	-0.057	0.080	-0.011	0.384**	0.331**	0.369**	1

Note: SL=Strategic leadership, HPWS=High Performance work system, EV=Employee voice, IWB= Innovative work behavior, **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regression analysis

Relationship of SL and HPWS with IWB:

Table 5 contains the values obtained from the initial calculation where SL and System HPWS were regressed on Innovative Work Behavior IWB. The findings (refer to table 5) reveal that SL (β = 0.143, t = 4.643, p < 0.001) and HPWS (β = 0.145, t = 3.371, p < 0.010) both have positive and statistically significant regressive impacts on IWB which confirms H1 and H2 of the analysis. From the R square result, it can be seen that SL and HPWS jointly account for 23.4 percent of the variation in IWB.

Table 5: Regression analysis of SL and HPWS with IWB

	B	t-value	p-value	R square
(Constant)	2.053	6.607	0.000	0.234
SL	0.143	4.643	0.001	
HPWS	0.145	3.371	0.010	

Relationship of SL and HPWS with EV

As seen in Table 6, it displays the outcome for the second step where SL (strategic leadership) and HPWS (high performance work system) were regressed on EV (Employee voice). The outcome of table 6 indicates SL (β=0.209, t=3.656, p<0.010) and also HPWS (β=0.212, t=5.737, P<0.001) respectively confirm that indeed EV was influenced which substantiate H3 and H4 of the study decisively. The R square value indicates that SL and HPWS undertake to explain 18.30 percent of the variation in EV to substantiate hypothesis. The results SL and HPWS have a significant effect on the outcome.

Table 6: Regression analysis of SL and HPWS with EV

	B	t-value	p-value	R square
(Constant)	2.178	8.244	0.000	0.183
SL	0.209	3.656	0.010	
HPWS	0.212	5.737	0.001	

Relationship EV with IWB:

According to Table 7, the SL and HPWS R square value accounts for an 18.5 percent variation in EV. In the third step to test hypothesis 5 (refer to table 7), EV (Employee voice) was regressed on HPWS (High performance work system) and the results were below. So as per the results of the table, voice of employee has a positive and significant relationship with innovative work behavior (β =0.545, t=3.140, p<0.010), thus supporting H 5 of the study.

Table 7: Regression analysis of EV with IWB

B	t-value	p-value	R square

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(Constant)	2.198	8.242	0.000	0.185
EV	0.545	3.140	0.010	

Mediating role of EV:

The results on Table 8 illustrate the mediating influence of Employee voice. The results on table 8 show that the direct impact of SL and HPWS on IWB is also significant (β = 0.053, t=3.489, p<0.000), (β = 0.287, t=3.102, p<0.003) and so is the indirect impact of SL and HPWS on IWB through (Employee voice) was also significant (β = 0.228, t=3.349, p<0.000). This shows that Employee voice is a partial mediator in the linkage between strategic leadership and innovative work behavior and high performance work system and innovative work behavior. So to this extent, it is favorable to the H6 and H7. In addition, the R square shows the amount of variance in innovative work behavior which is explained by the two constructs is 28.6% with employee voice being the moderator where both strategic leadership and high performance work system interact.

Table 8: Mediation analysis

	B	t-value	p-value	R square
(Constant)	1.343	4.976	0.000	0.286
SL	0.053	3.489	0.000	
HPWS	0.287	3.102	0.003	
EV	0.228	3.349	0.000	

Mediation role of Employee voice between SL and IWB

Table 9 illustrates that both SL significantly affect IWB and EV (SL influences IWB, β =0.278, t=5.23; SL influences EV, β =0.15, t=3.59) and EV influences IWB (β =0.28, t=4.12) as well. To assess the mediation effect of EV between SL and IWB, the PROCESS technique was applied through SPSS. The analysis output showed that the effect of SL on IWB is both direct and indirect was significant (β =0.15, t=4.85, p < 0.01), (β =0.195, p < 0.00). The finding indicates EV has a partial mediating role in SL- IWB relationship. Also, the outcome of Normal theory test revealed (β =0.195, p< 0.00, z=3.765), with bootstrap method at 95% confidence interval (LL=0.145, UL=0.195) indicates EV partially mediates the SL and IWB relationship. The R square value indicates that SL accounts for 12% of the variance in IWB when EV is considered.

Table 9: Results for mediation role of Employee voice

Direct and indirect effect

Dependent: IWB(Y), Independent: SL(X), Mediator: EV(M)

Total effect and direct effect	β	SE	p	t	R^2
Part1: Outcome EV(effect of X on M) SL	0.15	0.01	.000	3.59	0.05
Part2: Outcome IWB	β	SE 0.02	p	t	R^2
(effect of M and X on Y) EV	0.28	0.04	0.01	4.12	
	0.15		0.01	4.85	0.12

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Part3: Outcome IWB (total effect model) SL	β	SE	p	T	0.124
	0.278	0.04	0.00	5.23	
indirect effect					
Normal theory/Sobel test	β	SE	P	Z	
SL→ EV→ IWB	0.195	0.024	0.00	3.765	
indirect effect (Bootstrap method)					
Bootstrapping	Indirect effects	LLCI at95%		ULCI At95%	
SL→ EV→ IWB	0.195	.0142		0.145	

Note: N=247, 2,000-bootstrapping sample size, LLCI = Lower Limit Confidence Interval confidence interval, ULCI=Upper Limit Confidence Interval, DEPV=Dependent variable INDV= Independent variables, MEDIV=Mediating variable SL=Strategic leadership, IWB= Innovative work behavior, EV=Employee voice.

Mediation role of employee voice between HPWS and IWB

From Table 10, we can infer that HPWS deeply affects both IWB and EV as in results show (β=0.31, t=6.23) and (β=0.34, t=6.97) respectively. Also, EV has lof a significant impact on IWB (β=.22, t=3.53). The mediating effect of EV on the relationship between HPWS and IWB was tested using the PROCESS tool in SPSS. The analysis showed that HPWS had a significant direct effect on IWB (β =0.25, p<0.00), and an indirect effect of HPWS through EV with (β=0.132, p<0.00). Thus, the result indicates that EV partially mediates the relationship between HPWS and IWB. Moreover, EV also partially mediates the relationship between HPWS and IWB supported by the Normal Theory Test (β=0.132, p<0.00) and Bootstrapping Method at 95% Confidence Interval (LL=0.132, UL=0.257). The value of R square shows that 12% of IWB is explained by HPWS in the presence of EV.

Table 10: Results for mediation role of employee voice

Direct and indirect effect					
Dependent: IWB(Y), Independent: HPWS(X), Mediator: EV(M)					
Total effect and direct effect	β	SE	p	t	R^2
Part1: Outcome EV (effect of X on M) SL	0.34	0.03	0.001	6.97	0.15
Part2: Outcome IWB (effect of M and X on Y) EV	β 0.22	SE 0.05 0.04	p 0.00	t 3.53	R^2
HPWS	0.25		0.00	3.23	0.12
Part3: Outcome IWB(total effect model)	β 0.31	SE 0.02	p 0.01	t 6.23	0.41

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HPWS indirect effect Normal theory/Sobel test	β	SE	P	Z
HPWS→ EV→ IWB indirect effect (Bootstrap method)	0.132	0.03	0.00	3.708
Bootstrapping	Indirect effects	LLCI at95%		ULCI At95%
HPWS→ EV→ IWB	.0.132	.0232		0.257

Note: N=247, 2,000-bootstrapping sample size, LLCI = Lower Limit Confidence Interval confidence interval, ULCI=Upper Limit Confidence Interval, DEPV=Dependent variable INDV= Independent variables, MEDIV=Mediating variable, IWB = innovative work behavior, HPWS=High performance work system, EV=Employee voice.

Hypothesis	Remarks
H1: Strategic leadership positively affects Innovative Work Behavior	Accepted
H2: High-Performance Work System positively affects Innovative Work Behavior.	Accepted
H3:Strategic leadership positively affects employee voice	Accepted
H4: High performance work system positively affects employee voice	Accepted
H5: Employee voice positively affects innovative work behavior	Accepted
H6: Employee voice significantly mediates the relationship between strategic leadership and innovative work behavior.	Accepted
H7: Employee voice significantly mediates the relationship between HPWS and innovative work behavior.	Accepted

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study addresses a critical gap in Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) by examining how strategic leadership (SL) and high-performance work systems (HPWS) influence innovative work behavior (IWB) in the Vietnamese higher education sector, with faculty voice as a mediator.

Findings confirm H1, supporting previous studies (Elrehail et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2024), that strategic leadership significantly enhances IWB. Strategic leaders articulate vision, allocate innovation-focused resources, and create climates of trust and psychological safety (Alshahrani et al., 2024), enabling faculty to take risks and experiment with novel ideas.

H2 also holds true: HPWS positively affect IWB. Through practices like selective hiring, training, merit-based rewards, and participative governance, HPWS provide the motivation, skills, and autonomy necessary for faculty innovation. This aligns with the AMO model and is consistent with findings by Karim & Basit (2024) and Koo et al. (2023), who emphasize the strategic value of

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HPWS in fostering proactive academic cultures.

Jointly, H3 and H4 confirm that SL and HPWS exert a synergistic effect on IWB. While SL builds the innovation-oriented climate, HPWS offer the structure and tools to enable individual creativity. As Jia et al. (2023) and Kocamaz (2022) note, the interaction of strategic leadership and HRM frameworks is particularly effective in knowledge-intensive environments such as higher education.

H5 validates that faculty voice is a key antecedent of IWB. Open communication, trust, and empowerment allow faculty to engage in idea generation and implementation (Azevedo et al., 2021; Ajmal et al., 2025). Voice behavior strengthens ownership, motivation, and risk-taking, particularly when psychological safety is present (Jin et al., 2022; Han et al., 2022).

The results also confirm H6 and H7: faculty voice mediates the relationship between SL, HPWS, and IWB. While SL and HPWS establish the structural and cultural conditions, innovation only materializes when faculty are empowered to express concerns and propose ideas (Neuenfeldt & Sulíková, 2024; Al-Ajlouni, 2021; Afsar & Umrani, 2023). This aligns with Social Exchange Theory, where faculty reciprocate institutional support with creative engagement (Rasheed et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the critical role of strategic leadership and high-performance work systems (HPWS) in cultivating innovative work behavior (IWB) among university faculty. Strategic leaders are instrumental in shaping a vision-driven academic culture that embraces experimentation, academic freedom, and responsible risk-taking. Simultaneously, HPWS through faculty development programs, performance-based incentives, and shared governance create an enabling environment where educators feel empowered to innovate. These two forces work synergistically to foster a fertile ground for academic innovation. However, this dynamic is significantly amplified by the mediating role of faculty voice, which serves as a conduit for expressing ideas, feedback, and constructive concerns. When faculty feel genuinely heard and valued, they are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors such as curriculum redesign, research collaboration, and pedagogical experimentation. Thus, faculty voice becomes the essential bridge linking leadership, HR practices, and institutional innovation.

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