ACADEMIA International Journal for Social Sciences
Volume 4, Issue 3, 2025 ISSN-L (Online): 3006-6638

Impact of Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior on Project Success in IT Projects in Pakistan

Zargi Takeed
Ph.D Scholar, University of Haripur, Department of Management Sciences

Mohammad Laiq Salarzai
Ph.D. Scholar, University of Haripur

Abdul Ghafoor Rahmanzai
Department of Management Sciences, Islamia College University Peshawar

Sheikh Wajeeha Zamirr
Scholar Institute of Management Studies, University of Peshawar

Dr. Bilal Khan
rjbilalkhanbk@gmail.com
Assistant Professor, Abasyn University Peshawar
Corresponding Author: * Dr. Bilal Khan rjbilalkhanbk@gmail.com

Received: 16-06-2025 **Revised:** 25-07-2025 **Accepted:** 18-08-2025 **Published:** 05-09-2025

ABSTRACT
This study explores the impact of entrepreneurial leadership (EL) and innovative work behavior (IWB) on project success (PS) in IT sector projects in Pakistan. Guided by the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, the research adopted a quantitative and causal design, collecting data from employees engaged in IT projects. The findings reveal that entrepreneurial leadership plays a vital role in enhancing project success by fostering adaptability, building shared vision, and encouraging proactive decision-making. Similarly, innovative work behavior was found to positively contribute to project outcomes by promoting creativity, problem-solving, and responsiveness to client needs. The study concludes that both entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior are significant predictors of project success, with entrepreneurial leadership demonstrating a comparatively stronger influence. These results provide theoretical insights into the dynamics of leadership and innovation in project-based organizations and offer practical guidance for IT sector managers in Pakistan to strengthen leadership practices and cultivate innovation-friendly environments that enhance project performance.
Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Leadership; Innovative Work Behavior; Project Success*

INTRODUCTION

The accelerated digitalization of the Pakistani economy has increased the strategic value of the IT industry and especially within the project-based setting. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), IT projects have become the driving force behind innovation, service delivery and regional economic growth. Nevertheless, in spite of these opportunities, most IT initiatives in the area have not been able to realize sustained success because of lack of leadership, lack of innovative capacity, and immature project management culture (Khan et al., 2025).

The concept of entrepreneurial leadership, the ability to recognize opportunities and take risks and make proactive decisions, has been identified as the driver of organizational performance in dynamic industries (Fayaz & Shah, 2019). However, in the Pakistani IT industry little empirical evidence exists between entrepreneurial leadership and project success. The available limited research in KP has pointed out that the role of leadership is usually mediated by other factors like innovative work behavior and

psychological empowerment (Ali et al., 2020), yet no study has been done in IT project contexts to identify this relationship.

Creative behaviour at work, which includes idea generation, promotion, and implementation, is one of the essential factors that lead to project adaptability and competitiveness. The IT sector in KP, however, has systemic challenges to innovation such as poor industry-academia connections, inadequate organizational support systems, and bureaucracy in the application of new solutions (Aziz et al., 2024), (Ali et al., 2024). These obstacles are further aggravated by the lack of training of the IT project teams that impairs their capacity to undertake long-term innovative practices.

Although global literature has been able to argue in favor of the positive impact of entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior on the outcomes of projects, there is a significant research gap in comprehending these dynamics in the socio-cultural and institutional environment of the IT sector in KP. Past studies in the province have mainly focused on SMEs, manufacturing, or public-sector organizations, causing IT project environments not to capture many empirical studies (Muhammad & Orakzai, 2020). Moreover, the developing entrepreneurial environment of the region has not been fully exploited to develop leadership styles and innovation practices that can be directly converted into the success of the projects.

The importance of these gaps is that IT projects in KP are increasingly being undertaken in unstable and resource-limited conditions and their success is determined by the capacity of leaders to motivate innovation and to lead in uncertain conditions. This paper aims at empirically examining the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior with project success in IT sector projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, both to theory and practice of improving project performance in the emerging digital economy in Pakistan.

Research Questions

1. Does entrepreneurial leadership affect project success?
2. What is the effect of innovative work behavior on project success?

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the effects of entrepreneurial leadership on project success
2. To understand the impact of innovative work behavior on project success

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Leadership

entrepreneurial leadership can include traits of a good leader, like taking risks, figuring out what the future holds, being innovative, creative, open to new ideas, and tactful. Recently, Renko et al. (2015) said that EL includes encouraging and guiding group members in the direction of achieving administrative goals by appreciating and taking advantage of innovative opportunities. Entrepreneurial leadership gives people the skills they need to face business challenges. Entrepreneurial leadership is shown by convincing subordinates that they can reach their goals, describing an administration's vision clearly, reassuring them that their work will have a big impact, and being able to deal with changes in the environment, which helps get projects done. Leadership in an entrepreneur-ship needs to be realistic for many different kinds of productions.

Entrepreneurial leadership (EL) can be viewed as a leadership style that combines the strategic orientation, an orientation toward innovation, and calculated risk-taking to recognize and take advantage of opportunities within dynamic markets. Entrepreneurial-style leaders are flexible, promote independence

among subordinates, and are proactive when it comes to environmental changes (Fayaz & Shah, 2019). EL can assist in project-based environments and especially in the field of IT to address the uncertainty and ever-changing client needs (Khan et al., 2025).

Innovative Work Behavior

IWB is the creation, exposure and achievement of new ideas to enhance organizational performance. It is an individual-level construct, although it is highly reliant on the organization culture, the leadership, and the resources available (Aziz et al., 2024). IWB in IT projects plays a critical role in meeting the new technological requirements and client requirements as it improves a cycle of improvement and the capacity to solve problems (Ali et al., 2024).

Project Success

The success of projects (PS) in IT is frequently measured in addition to the conventional iron triangle (time, cost, scope) and stakeholder satisfaction, innovativeness outcomes, and strategy (Ali et al., 2020). Leadership quality and team innovativeness are the key success factors in the IT sector of Pakistan, where the environment of projects is volatile and resource-constrained (Muhammad & Orakzai, 2020).

Entrepreneurial Leadership and Project Success

There is evidence that EL positively affects PS directly by increasing adaptability, building a shared vision, and decision-making agility. Entrepreneurial leaders enable teams to attempt, respond to unexpected difficulties, and coordinate the project objectives with new opportunities (Khan et al., 2025), (Ali et al., 2020). Good leadership increases the level of confidence in the project-based administrations because it adds positive attitude and values that facilitate the success of the project (Aga et al., 2016). Project leaders are applied in competitive pressure by different project based organizations to change swiftly in response to institutional variations and meet organizational goals. In the existing body of knowledge on leadership, numerous leadership philosophies and their hidden influence on the management of organizations and the success of projects are pointed out (Aga et al., 2016). The entrepreneurial leadership can be characterized as the leadership that shapes and informs the employee performance towards the organizational goals, leads to the success of the project and reveals many opportunities to the workforce (Renko et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the burden of tasking the executives has permeated the aid sector over the past years, particularly in the field of limit building and community service programmes (Diallo and Thuillier, 2005).

H1: There is positive significant effect of entrepreneurial leadership on project success

Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior

It has also been found that EL has been linked to more IWB by creating psychologically safe environment, promoting experimentation, and removing fear of failure. In IT projects, where the technological transformation is the norm rather than the exception, the entrepreneurial leaders will encourage knowledge sharing and innovative problem-solving, which will lead to more innovative outputs (Aziz et al., 2024), (Fayaz & Shah, 2019). Entrepreneurial leaders also establish a positive environment and positive culture whereby all members of the team make innovation one of their priorities and are persistent in the event of challenges experienced in the process of innovation. Leaders have to remove numerous barriers to instill creativity in the work practices within the organization employees. In addition to motivating and guiding employees to implement innovative ideas at the workplace, leaders must foster a culture that embraces the same (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010; Radaelli et al., 2014).

H2: There is positive connection between innovative work behavior and entrepreneurial leadership

Innovative Work Behavior and Project Success

IWB has a direct contribution to PS since it allows teams to build tailor-made solutions, optimize procedures, and adjust to client needs in a short time. Studies have shown that teams that engage in innovation on IT projects are more contented with project stakeholders and more aligned to strategic positions (Ali et al., 2024), (Ali et al., 2020). Creative behavior assists individuals to achieve their objectives in the workplace (Yuan, 2010). Employees who exhibit innovative behaviors are convinced to work harder and realize that their performance is positively impacted by their actions and will enable them to achieve their targets (Yuan, 2010). The company must ensure that the workplace environment enhances creativity of employees. Also, workers will strive to work hard when they notice that the office is functioning well and this will make the project successful.

According to Martens, Machado, Martens, and Freitas (2018), difference is also mentioned to be useful in making business people successful in their enterprises. The rules of project completion as described by the project administrator however do not align. Ika et al. (2012) and Khang and Moe (2008) have a complete work that can be utilized in upgrading projects. The regulations that these individuals have developed involve such things as relevancy, productivity, viability, effect and supportability. Relevance refers to the extent to which the project addresses the needs of the target group, the beneficiary and the one who foots the bill.

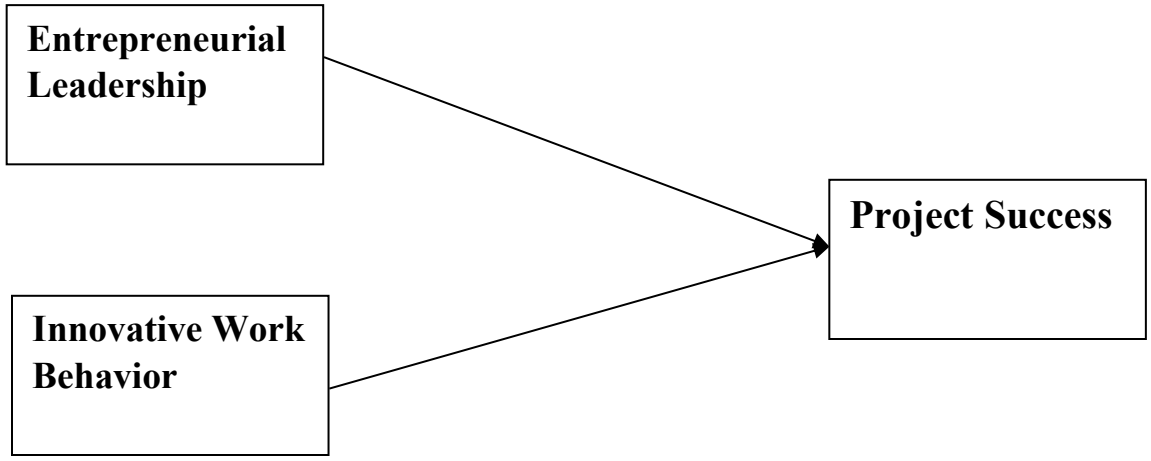
H3: There is significant positive effect of innovative work behavior on project success

Supporting Theory for the Study

The guiding premise of this investigation is LMX or leader-member exchange. This is an original theory of leadership that was formulated by Dansereau et al. in 1975, which explains the vertical dyadic interaction between colleagues and frontrunners. The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory of leadership is displayed in the social exchange between the employee and his/her superiors. Literature shows that leaders are very important in motivating their teams. Innovative behavior is exhibited by employees when a boss provides them with freedom, authority and chance to develop. In organizations, there is reciprocity of giving and taking. Consequently, workers are able to work with more creativity hence leading to the success of the project. Entrepreneurial leaders enable their co-workers, assist them and provide them with ownership.

Leader member exchange paradigm of leadership has all the traits that great leaders share like minimization of risk and innovation, which motivates and encourages staff to be creative and innovative. The innovative work behavior (IWB) is usually associated with the observation of possible consequences and the development of new ideas, although it can also be characterized by the actions aimed at change implementation and improvement of processes to enhance the success of the project. The leader-member exchange theory has some entrepreneurial leadership characteristics. In case a leader is capable of motivating and influencing open-minded employees, innovative working habits would inevitably thrive. The features of entrepreneurial leadership that can be observed in LMX, originality, risk reduction, inspiration, and motivation of personnel, are present. The staff is motivated and encouraged and consequently they come up with unique, innovative, and fresh ideas. New work practices in the companies are also demonstrated by them, which is also a contribution to the success of the project.

Theoretical Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy and Quantitative Research

This study uses a deductive analysis method that is predicated on the determinism hypothesis. Our theoretical presumptions, which were subsequently tested based on observation in order to verify the proposed hypothesis, were demonstrated and supported by prior research and current hypotheses. The quantitative approach has been used and esteemed to reach a large population scale. In this manner, the quantitative analysis of the data was used.

Research Design

The present research study is causal and focused to explore the influence of entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior on project success in IT sector projects in Pakistan. Furthermore, this study will be quantitative in nature because it will use survey method for data collection.

Type of Study

This study will emphasize on the entrepreneurial leadership, innovative work behavior, and project success. In addition, IT sector projects are targeted in Pakistan. The study will collect data from 250 respondents working in IT sector projects.

Unit of Analysis

Projects in IT industry are actually the total unit of analysis. Each and every element in the IT industry are the units of analysis.

Time Horizon

To collect data, the researcher will take almost one month. 250 questionnaires will be distributed among the respondents in IT projects employees in Pakistan.

Population and Sample

The project employees working in IT industry are considered as the population in this research. Each member of the population is known as the element. All the employees working in IT sector projects in

Pakistan were the total population of the study. Convenience sampling method was used for selecting the sample size. Sample size for this research will be 250.

Table 1: Scales/Measures

S.No	Variables	Items	Adopted From
1	Entrepreneurial Leadership	8	Renko et al. (2015) and recently used by Bagheri, (2017)
2	Project Success	14	Mir and Pinnington (2014)
3	Innovative Work Behavior	9	Janssen (2000).

Data Analysis Procedure

SPSS 24 version will be used for the data analysis. Data analysis techniques will be regression, descriptive, and inferential analysis.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 202)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	202	100.0
Age	20–30 years	77	38.1
	31–40 years	105	52.0
	41–50 years	14	6.9
	51 and above	6	3.0
Education	Undergraduate	27	13.4
	Graduate	161	79.7
	Master	14	6.9

Male respondents in the survey sample were all, as the male population in the IT sector workforce is highly dominant in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Most respondents fell in the age bracket of 31 40 years (52%), which is a relatively mature and experienced workforce, whereas younger professionals aged 20 30 constituted 38.1%, which is an indicative representation of new talent. The workers aged 41 and more comprised slightly less than 10 percent indicating a lack of senior level workforce, perhaps as a result of the fast technological change and mobility in the IT sector.

Educationally, the highest proportion (79.7%) was in possession of graduate degrees, which indicates a good academic base in the industry. The undergraduates comprised 13.4 percent of the entire population whereas only 6.9 had a master degree, an indication that there may be a shortage of high level qualifications that may affect strategic thinking and ability to innovate in IT projects. Such demographic profile indicates a young-to-mid career, well-educated yet male dominated workforce that can be a factor in terms of leadership building and diversity in the sector as well as innovation.

Reliability Test

Reliability analysis means that to check the questionnaire items that they are reliable to be used for data collection or not. Therefore, cronbach's alpha test is used in SPSS to calculate the reliability results. Table 3 shows that cronbach's alpha value is 0.920 which showed that the questionnaire is reliable because the value is higher than 0.7 and is good for data collection process.

Reliability Statistics

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.920	31

Regression Analysis

Table 4 describes that how much dependent variable is dependent on independent variable. In this research, project success dependent variable while entrepreneurial leadership (EL) and innovative work behavior (IWB) are independent variables. The results showed that both EL and IWB has positive impacts on project success because the r square value is 0.819 which shows that 82% change in project success is contributed by EL and IWB.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.905[a]	.819	.817	.01666

a. Predictors: (Constant), IWB, EL

ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA model shows that the model used in this research is good or not. The results in table 5 discusses that the model is very good fitted because the f value is 448.773 and is significant because level of significance is less than 0.05.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.249	2	.125	448.773	.000[b]
	Residual	.055	199	.000		
	Total	.304	201			

a. Dependent Variable: PS

b. Predictors: (Constant), IWB, EL

Coefficients of Regression

Table 6 shows coefficients of regression which means that how much change in dependent variables occurs due to one unit change introduced in independent variable. So, the results described that beta value for EL and IWB are 0.660 and 0.323 respectively which are also significant because p value is lower than 0.05. Thus, EL and IWB both are very important factors that contribute towards the success of projects in IT sector.

Table 6: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.003	.009		-.375	.708
	EL	.352	.021	.660	16.572	.000
	IWB	.258	.032	.323	8.108	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PS

Correlational Analysis

Correlational analysis is used for showing the relationship between dependent and independent variables in a research study. Pearson correlation test are used for showing the linkage between variables. Table 7 presents that the pearson value for EL is 0.871 and for IWB 0.754 which highlights that EL and IWB both have strong relationship with project success as much as the managers focus and implement the factors of EL and IWB in a project the more there will be chances of achieving project success. The level of significance is also less than 0.05 so, it is resulted that there is strong association between PS, EL, and IWB all variables.

Table 7: Correlations Analysis

		PS	EL	IWB
PS	Pearson Correlation	1	.871**	.754**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	202	202	202
EL	Pearson Correlation	.871**	1	.652**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	202	202	202
IWB	Pearson Correlation	.754**	.652**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	202	202	202

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

Hypothesis

The results showed in table 8 discuss that all the proposed hypothesis in this study are accepted.

Table 8: Hypothesis

S.No	Hypothesis	Accepted	Rejected
1	H1: There is positive significant effect of entrepreneurial leadership on project success	**Accepted**	
2	H2: Innovative Work Behavior has positive relationship with project success	**Accepted**	
3	H3: There is significant positive effect of innovative work behavior on project success	**Accepted**	

CONCLUSION

The goal of the current study was to investigate how the most sought-after and dynamic area in the modern era—entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior—affect project performance. The study's main focus is on demonstrating how entrepreneurial leadership affects project success. In this study, questionnaires distributed to Afghan personnel working on various IT projects were used to gather data for the study.

The study's primary contribution is that it has added significantly to the body of knowledge because little has been written about the impact of innovative leadership and entrepreneurial work practices on project success. Our study contributes to the body of knowledge on entrepreneurial leadership and project success. Since entrepreneurial leadership is a relatively new concept, these findings would serve as further stepping stones for future leadership study. Our research has a number of theoretical and practical ramifications and offers fresh research directions to other academics.

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes a review of the major findings in the context of the research paradigm that has been suggested. The goal of the research was to examine how entrepreneurial leadership impacts project success. In this study, the second independent variable was creative workplace behavior. Data for the proposed hypothesis was gathered for this purpose from IT industry projects in Pakistan. With the aid of pertinent references from prior research in the field, this chapter clarifies the effects of hypothesis analysis. The chapter's thesis was hampered by its theoretical and practical ramifications, the limitations of the research, the common references to leadership attributes, and the conclusions and recommendations for further study. The results, in particular, demonstrated that innovative work practices and entrepreneurial leadership are the predicators of project success.

The current study's major goal was to stimulate the idea that innovative work behavior and entrepreneurial leadership are related to project performance in project-based organizations in the IT sector. We developed the theoretical framework based on our hypotheses about the relationships between study variables. According to the findings of our study, entrepreneurial leadership contributes significantly to the completion of the project and has a good impact on project success. In general, this chapter discusses a synopsis of our research.

H1: Entrepreneurial leadership has a positive relationship with project success.

Under Hypothesis 1, it is stated that there is a positive correlation between entrepreneurship and project success. The results justify the hypothesis because they indicate a positive and robust correlation between the concept of entrepreneurial leadership and project performance. The results confirm the main hypothesis of the study that in case the entrepreneurial leadership changes by one unit, the probability of the project success will also be increased. In the case of the embraced and already formulated hypothesis of the study, adequate research can be found.

The success of the organization is influenced by the capacity of the leader to be innovative, viable and successful in his leadership. The entrepreneurial leaders in question will expose their team members to the possibility of jeopardizing the achievements of the team members by demonstrating entrepreneurial behavior to them and by being entrepreneurs themselves (Renko et al., 2015). Many scholars have recognized the entrepreneurial type of leadership that focuses on the identification of opportunities to enhance creativity and the creation of ideas that can make an organization successful. As indicated in the hypothesis that we have considered, the relevance and advantages of entrepreneurial leadership have been extensively pointed out in our research. The presence of entrepreneurial leadership within an organization and their leadership qualities are observed to affect the project success positively and encouragingly which is confirmed by the literature and then by the further confirmation of our hypothesis. The study showed that project-based organizations were characterized by entrepreneurial leadership, and that is why their employees were more creative and generated tremendous ideas. Also, theory indicates that when the leadership portrays a positive attitude in response, the employees are prone to contribute more energy towards their work, thus resulting in creation of novel ideas, products, and services.

H2: There is a positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

Hypothesis 2 states that the innovative work behavior and entrepreneurial leadership are positively related to one another. The data supports the hypothesis and demonstrate that there is a significant and positive relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior. The coefficient value of 0.660 implies that it is possible that a one-unit change in the entrepreneurial leadership would increase the innovative work behavior. The EL study states that innovative leaders in business not only come up with

new ideas to themselves but also encourage and empower their staff to show their ability to work out complex issues and complete challenging tasks (Cai, Lysova, Khapova, & Bossink, 2019). The research shows that when the entrepreneurial leadership is present, the individuals working in the project-based companies within the IT industry exhibit innovative behaviors of work and come up with novel and unique ideas. In theory, humans will be more productive and will be able to present more innovative ideas, products, and services when the leaders adopt a positive approach.

H3: There is a positive effect of Innovative Work Behavior on Project Success.

The third hypothesis demonstrates the strong and positive relationship between innovative work behavior and project performance. The hypothesis is supported by the results of the study, which show a strong and favorable relationship between innovative work behavior and project performance. The value of the coefficient, which is equal to 0.323, indicates that one unit of innovative work behavior would improve project success. The direct connection between innovation and PS has recently been studied by Leone and Schiavone (2019). The foundation of innovation is made easier by the development and application of creative concepts that boost employees' inventiveness (Vande Ven, 1986). Employees would be more engaged to their jobs if they displayed innovative work behavior, which would lead to project success. Numerous studies have shown that employees' commitment to innovation leads to higher organizational performance, which contributes to the project's success (Harter, Schmidt, &Hayes, 2002; Macey &Schneider, 2008).

According to the study, employees exchange creative, novel, and innovative ideas in the IT sector projects in Pakistan, which relates to their innovative work behavior and results in the achievement of objectives and project success. Additionally, according to theory, if workers exhibit innovative work behaviors at their places of employment, this encourages the achievement of the organization's goals and results in project success.

Theoretical Implications

The current study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership, creative work behavior, and project performance. This investigation has numerous theoretical consequences, which are explored below. There are few prior research on innovative work practices, entrepreneurial leadership, and project performance. By identifying the mechanisms that lead to entrepreneurial leadership, creative workplace behavior, and project success, this study supports the works. As a result, this represents a new research phase and contribution to our research.

The underlying premise of this study draws on the Leader-member exchange (LMX). This unique theory of leadership was introduced by Dansereau, et al. (1975), and it replicates the vertical dyadic interaction between frontrunners and followers. The Leader-Member Exchange theory, which describes the social exchange interaction between the employee and the leader, was extended in this study and supported. The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) of leadership welcomes traits like risk optimization and innovation that inspire and foster trust in subordinates to be more inventive and creative.

Innovative work behavior (IWB) typically involves observing potential outcomes and coming up with fresh ideas, but it can also include actions aimed at implementing change and enhancing workflows to increase project success. Entrepreneurial leadership traits are present in the leader-member exchange theory. If a leader has the ability to inspire and sway open-minded workers, then innovative work habits will naturally flourish. Therefore, the results of our investigation are in agreement with and lend support to the LMX theory's theoretical underpinnings.

Practical Implications

This study also has some practical implications as well. It shows that entrepreneurial leadership leads to project success. Consequently, it is suggested that leaders were risk-takers so they listened to the unique ideas of their team members; he encouraged his employees as a result of which they think out of the box. This leads to the project's success. In project-based organizations throughout the project growth phase, the leader accentuated such accomplishments which boost the thinking proficiencies of the team members.

The present study also proposes that leaders in the project base association were apprehending how workforces are persuaded to efficaciously subsidize to the large project enactment. Leaders did this, by making themselves involved with employees in all the activities of the projects, which gives self-assurance and a pleasant work atmosphere to the employees.

Entrepreneurial leadership empowers his organization to be an effective innovation behavior at the workplace which in turn emboldens the team members to think innovatively and thus be the cause of success in projects.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Generally speaking, time and resource constraints are one. Due to time constraints, a cross-sectional time horizon has been used for the study rather than a longitudinal one, which requires more time and resources. There is considerable room for variation in an employee's knowledge and experience levels depending on the time period.

Second, because this lesson just emphasizes the project-based establishments in Pakistan, the sample is medium in size and might not be large enough. As a result, only Pakistani organizations have tested the idea. If a different context had been taken into consideration, the results would have been different. A large sample size improves the generalizability and applicability of results in a wider context. Future researchers might broaden their method of data gathering and get information from various Afghan cities and project groups.

REFERENCES

Aga, D. A., Noorderhaven, N., & Vallejo, B. (2016). Transformational leadership and project success: The mediating role of team-building. *International Journal of Project Management, 34*(5), 806-818. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.02.012

Ali, M., Li, Z., Khan, S., & Shah, S. J. (2020). Entrepreneurial leadership and project success: A mediating role of innovative work behavior. *Journal of Management Development, 39*(4), 453-469. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-08-2019-0321

Ali, M., Lodhi, S. A., Raza, B., & Ali, W. (2024). Barriers to innovation in IT projects: Evidence from Pakistan. *Technology in Society, 66*, 101-112. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2024.101112

Aziz, R., Khan, M. A., & Orakzai, M. (2024). Organizational support and innovative work behavior in IT projects: The moderating role of leadership. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge, 9*(1), 45-58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2024.100345

Bagheri, A. (2017). The impact of entrepreneurial leadership on innovation work behavior and opportunity recognition in high-tech SMEs. *Journal of Small Business Management, 55*(3), 438-456. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12344

Cai, W., Lysova, E. I., Khapova, S. N., & Bossink, B. A. (2019). Does entrepreneurial leadership foster creativity among employees and teams? The mediating role of creative efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 34*(2), 203-217. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-018-9536-y

Dansereau, F., Graen, G., & Haga, W. J. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 13*(1), 46-78. https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(75)90005-7

De Jong, J., & Den Hartog, D. (2010). Measuring innovative work behavior. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 19*(1), 23-36. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8691.2010.00547.x

Diallo, A., & Thuillier, D. (2005). The success of international development projects, trust and communication: An African perspective. *International Journal of Project Management, 23*(3), 237-252. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2004.10.006

Fayaz, M., & Shah, S. J. (2019). Entrepreneurial leadership and organizational performance: The role of innovation in Pakistani IT firms. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies, 11*(2), 298-315. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEEE-05-2018-0047

Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(2), 268-279. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.2.268

Ika, L. A., Diallo, A., & Thuillier, D. (2012). Critical success factors for World Bank projects: An empirical investigation. *International Journal of Project Management, 30*(1), 105-116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2011.03.005

Janssen, O. (2000). Job demands, perceptions of effort-reward fairness and innovative work behavior. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 73*(3), 287-302. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317900167038

Khan, M. A., Abbas, S., & Ullah, R. (2025). Digital transformation and project success in Pakistan: The role of entrepreneurial leadership. *Journal of Business Research, 145*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2025.02.003

Khang, D. B., & Moe, T. L. (2008). Success criteria and factors for international development projects: A life-cycle-based framework. *Project Management Journal, 39*(1), 72-84. https://doi.org/10.1002/pmj.20034

Leone, D., & Schiavone, F. (2019). Innovation and project success: The role of knowledge sharing in IT projects. *International Journal of Innovation Management, 23*(5), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919619500423

Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1*(1), 3-30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2007.0002.x

Martens, C. D. P., Machado, F. J., Martens, M. L., & Freitas, H. M. R. (2018). Linking entrepreneurial orientation to project success. *International Journal of Project Management, 36*(2), 255-266. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2017.10.005

Mir, F. A., & Pinnington, A. H. (2014). Exploring the value of project management: Linking project management performance and project success. *International Journal of Project Management, 32*(2), 202-217. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2013.05.012

Muhammad, N., & Orakzai, M. (2020). Entrepreneurial leadership in emerging economies: A study of Pakistani SMEs. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 27*(3), 347-364. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-08-2019-0279

Radaelli, G., Lettieri, E., Mura, M., & Spiller, N. (2014). Knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior: The case of healthcare professionals. *European Management Journal, 32*(1), 221-231. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2013.06.004

Renko, M., El Tarabishy, A., Carsrud, A. L., & Brännback, M. (2015). Understanding and measuring entrepreneurial leadership style. *Journal of Small Business Management, 53*(1), 54-74. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12086

Van de Ven, A. H. (1986). Central problems in the management of innovation. *Management Science, 32*(5), 590-607. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.32.5.590

Yuan, F. (2010). Individual and contextual predictors of creative performance: The mediating role of psychological processes. *Creativity Research Journal, 22*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1080/10400410903579569