



# The Meaningful Relationship between Employee Reading Habits and Innovation Competency\*

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Strategic management research and findings are usually not focused on dealing with concrete instruments for measuring individual competencies. The presence of traditional human resources management instruments, which include the aspects of job analysis, selection training, and even development, has been used frequently for many years in organizations. This study aims to investigate the relationship between employee reading habits and their innovativeness. **Research design, data and methodology:** The research methodology applied in this case is qualitative research methods. It is a method that involves the collection of data from non-numerical formats. The technique helped in understanding the relationship that exists between the reading habits of the employees and the competencies of innovation. **Results:** The present researchers figured out the meaningful connection between the independent variable (Reading Habit and dependent variable (Innovative Competency), explaining ‘The Reason Why Employees Should Read More Books’ and ‘How Organizations Promote the Reading Habits of Employees’. **Conclusions:** . It is clear that with reading habits among employees, innovation is easily achieved since these employees know their goals, how to achieve these objectives and overcome any challenge that might hinder innovation. Organizational management should work towards fostering positive reading cultures among employees in organizations.

**Keywords :** Employee Reading Habit, Innovaton Competency, Human Resource Management (HRM)

**JEL Classification Code :** O15, O32, J53

## 1. Introduction

In today’s business and societal environment, it is argued that the success of an organization or the success of a business is something that increasingly depends on the presence of intellectual assets. These are assets that are opposed to the available tangible resources. Organizations’ other assets include employee skills, attitude, knowledge, and skills in different working forces. The American Society for Training and Development findings highlight that these

assets are organizational competencies (Abbas et al., 2020). Other areas of personal capabilities enable employees in the organization to perform successfully and meet their individual and corporate needs through these competencies; employees can get the needed outcomes and complete tasks effectively. When looking at the work of organizations and how companies define explicitly what competencies are all about, they state that there are aspects that must be met through the combination of tools to bring change and development in society (Abbas et al., 2020). Employees in

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the workplace have an opportunity to better their lives and organizational success through talents and reading habits (Younas et al., 2020). When employees engage in reading habits, they get a chance to see situations through diverse aspects, making it easy to make decisions and become innovative in society.

According to several organizational disciplines, there is an attempt they have undertaken to come up with ways through which they can be applied to help in leveraging the assets. Looking at these options through strategic management points of view, questions emerging are how can organizations use their assets to secure persistent competitive advantages? A company with a robust competitive advantage enjoys a vast customer base that it can depend on for income generation and strengthening the company's operational activities (Arif, 2019). There is a level of individual competency that one has to meet in workplace environments. Through personal competencies, employees create a mix of company systems and culture, achievement of technologies and success in growth for the business aspects (Abbas et al., 2020). Hence, when managing individual competencies, it is the role of the management to create competitive advantage, which can include motivating the employees to have reading habits, enjoy creative thinking and improve their teamwork in the organization.

Strategic management research and findings are usually not focused on dealing with concrete instruments for measuring individual competencies. The presence of traditional human resources management instruments, which include the aspects of job analysis, selection training, and even development, has been used frequently for many years in organizations. Even with the frequent use, the element questioned is whether these present instruments can cope with new levels of productivity challenge because today, the world is in a knowledge-based economy. Innovations and innovative technologies come in handy in organizations (Arif, 2019). The main goals extracted from the innovation processes are to ensure access to information, the ability to share and further creation of knowledge in the organization (Yang, 2020).

## 2. Literature Review

Employees and innovations are aspects that should be compatible, meaning that the employees in every organization should be capable of innovating different processes, products, or even solutions that can aid in maintaining the business's competitive advantage. Organizational management should understand that the process of just providing the employees with better access to different available pieces of information or

communication channels is something that, over time, has been argued to not produce the desired results. But these can be improved by the presence of people's ability to make use of the knowledge and apply the knowledge that they have acquired for generating critical issues and solving diverse problems that happen in society (Alzamora-Ruiz et al., 2021).

The presence of paradox knowledge in different firms or various organizations creates a challenge since these institutions must be able to transform the information. The primary ability encountered when it comes to the transformation of knowledge is found in people and the presence of their competencies. Through this paradox, the emerging issue is that individuals in academia and practitioners have struggled with different questions, especially on how they can leverage human competencies in other organizations. The question has been approached differently, meaning that different techniques are present and can be used to deal with these issues. Even when these questions are approached differently, some limitations must be corrected, or solutions must be established to overcome these limitations (Alzamora-Ruiz et al., 2021). Innovations are identified as an essential competence attached to individuals. Therefore, the purpose of innovations in organizations is to create business value.

In organizations, individuals or employees must be motivated to be innovative because innovation helps create employee competencies. It is agreed that the purpose of the invention is to ensure the creation of a business value. Through these values, the employees will be able to identify different problems in the organization, solve them and work as a team to propel the institution forward. The created business value can happen in various forms, including having to apply an incremental improvement towards these existing products, dealing with the creation of new products or services in the market and reducing the costs of the products (Asplund, 2020). Every organization needs to have one core competence, which is innovation. With the presence of invention, it is also vital to ensure a measuring of creation. In every organization, there should be a way out on how the institutions can record and appraise the innovator with their performances (van Aaken et al., 2022). For the economy or the nation to achieve pre-eminent positions or superior status, then the institution needs to be a pioneer in the culture of innovation (Asbari et al., 2021). The rationale behind why institutions motivate their employees to be focused on innovation is to allow the enterprise to survive and promote the enterprise to grow. Where there is a rapidly changing market environment, the appropriate way that these mechanisms can be achieved is through effective innovation and towards the stipulated directions. When analyzing business history, innovators have a better chance of surviving in the environment. In contrast, non-innovators

have difficulties surviving at all (Schuckert et al., 2018). Through this innovation method, the main aim is to develop different ideas, refine the pictures and bring out valuable forms for market growth. The institutions will be profitable and maintain a competitive edge in the market, instrumental in business success.

Employees are the individuals that should be innovative in businesses or organizations. However, findings suggest that employees are not doing what is enough to make them creative in their actions. For example, it is argued that employees will not be interested in innovations when they are not motivated (Alves et al., 2021). These workers will instead stay in the same lane in the business and avoid trying new things because they feel they are not appreciated in the institution. On the other hand, when employees are motivated, and the working environment is appropriate, they come up with different but appropriate ways for innovation.

An innovative employee can look at situations differently, establish the root cause and find the right solutions, which, when applied, will bring change and development to the institution (Asbari et al., 2021). One activity that employees can use to achieve innovation and competency levels in the organization is to enforce or have appropriate reading habits (Sabuhari et al., 2020). These are the actions of constant reading of new items, business outcomes and networking where possible. Employees' mind becomes critical, better thinking, are curious, and they start identifying innovative ideas which, when they use them, will be easy for the development of success and business growth in institutions (Atrizka, 2021). Studying employee reading habits is vital since it will add to the available literature and identify barriers employees face when they read different materials in the organization (Tian et al., 2020). These loopholes create opportunities for decision-making and improvement of not only employee attitude towards reading but also organizational culture to promote innovative competence.

Research questions are essential when conducting studies because through the research question. A researcher can collect adequate data, make appropriate discussions on the data and provide needed solutions that are effective for improvements on different outcomes of the problem. In this study, the main research question is as follows.

-What is the relationship between employee reading habits and organizational innovation competency?

The study's rationale is to find a relationship between the employees' reading habits and innovation levels. The findings will help convince organizations or top management to support their employee reading habits to ensure that they can diversify their thoughts and ideas and promote innovation. Furthermore, employees are argued as the pillars of the success of organizations. Therefore, they

have to be supported where possible to allow them to complete their tasks and handle any activity allocated to them effectively (Boštjančič & Slana, 2018). Through reading habits, employees learn how to interact with other colleagues in the organization and the management and customers. These create a harmonious coexistence that brings positive connection, growth and support. Therefore, innovation will be freely achieved without forceful actions (Bloom, 2019). The study also allows other researchers to widen their scope and find more associations between reading technologies and the innovative competencies of employees.

### 3. Research Design

Qualitative literature approach is to comprehensively investigate the prior literature, assessing previous and current research. That implies that the current researchers try to find proper solutions based on the current literature review regarding our research topic and problem even though some previous authors insisted that the qualitative research is difficult to provide hypotheses and trust results. However, the current researchers handle this lack of trustworthiness with providing the themes and topics which are categorized in more detail (Woo & Kang, 2020). The current findings of this research were based on a systematic investigation of 'Employee Reading Habits' and 'Innovation Competency'. Specifically, we attempted to take a look at the useful prior resources in the databases that focused on specific words such as employee innovation competency, innovative capabilities, employee reading management, and reading habit etc.

The research methodology applied in this case is qualitative research methods. It is a method that involves the collection of data from non-numerical formats. The technique helped in understanding the relationship that exists between the reading habits of the employees and the competencies of innovation (Kim, 2020). Consequently, an advantage of the qualitative method is that data was collected in depth and allowed for thematic development, which created an easy opportunity for decision-making and conclusions regarding the research questions.

The research design applied was a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design is where the researcher of the study describes the findings and the research process in detail and in a manner in which they appear (Han & Kang, 2020). Descriptive research design is in pieces and helps disseminate all the information and conclusions to the audience for easy understanding and knowledge. Furthermore, it helps to eliminate the biasness that might occur in the study, which will affect the credibility and reliability of the study.

Data was collected from articles written about reading habits and innovation. The collected data was secondary. In selecting the pieces to be used in the study, there were inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the data collected was appropriate for decision-making and fit into the research question identified in the study. Therefore, an application of keywords guided the researcher in selecting the articles. Articles that were authored between the years 2010 to 2022 were used in the analysis process (Putnik et al., 2019). The rationale for selecting these articles is that they are up-to-date and contain relevant information that can be used in the study's decision-making process. Furthermore, in navigating through databases, keywords like reading habits, employee innovation, and employee reading were used to help select articles containing relevant information for data collection and analysis (Woo, 2020).

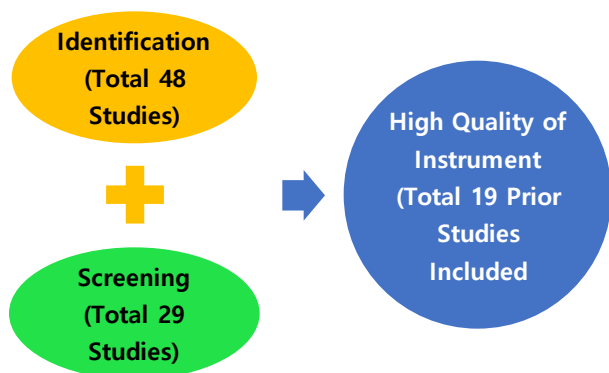


Figure 1: Textual Data Collection

#### 4. Findings from Textual Dataset

In this section, there will be an analysis of literature from different authors, which will help to build on the information about employee reading habits, why it is essential to engage them in reading habits, and the benefits organizations get from these actions (Sopa et al., 2020). Analysis of these different kinds of literature helps strengthen the knowledge about employee attitudes towards reading, what they should read often and how organizations promote employees to achieve a reading habit.

Reading habits are identified as the behaviour that an individual has and which they use for reading. Reading habit is made regularly to promote one's ability to understand the information in question and ensure that one can get entertainment from the written material. Reading can be obtained from fictional or non-fictional books, magazines, and newspapers to acquire practical knowledge (Goswami

et al., 2021). Hence, employee reading habits, in this case, are from the different available reading materials that allow the employees to get information, knowledge and ideas on how they can be better employees or propel the organization forward for success. Employees with a positive reading habits are constantly reading different materials that benefit the organization and bring about change personally and to the institution.

#### 4.1. The Reason Why Employees Should Read More Books

Proceeding Research has been conducted to explain why employees should read more books when in the organization and when they have free time. Researchers, through various pieces of research on books, come up with the findings that books are essential for other people's personal and professional development. Organizations that are interested in growing and achieving their objectives utilize knowledge from books, which are regarded as an invaluable resource aimed at building a strong as well as a workforce that is educated. The rationale is that businesses and organizations have a culture of ordering books from different stores regularly. Companies also have financial, human resource-related, market-oriented or communication-oriented magazines that apply to organizational growth and development. Employees get advantages when they develop strong reading habits and go beyond personal growth to corporate success and improvements (Kanter, 1999).

Books are fun, and having a reading habit makes the employees enjoy the fun in the books and improve their lives. Interestingly, not everyone finds it attractive to read books. Still, when the individual or even the employees find the right book, the situation can put the employees on the right path to becoming avid readers. If the material in the book is found to be entertaining and relatable, employees will end up having fun and fun; hence the content that they will get will share with other employees. It relieves stress since the employees discover new things that trigger their innovative minds, making them willing to share and exchange with other employees. These actions promote growth and innovation capabilities (Gao, 2020). Consequently, through these reading habits, the employees get the opportunity of encouraging other people to read, interact and be able to share ideas. Organizations are recommended to ensure that they have a space for the employees to talk and share about book content they have read (Hermawan et al., 2021). After every individual has finished reading the book, it is appropriate for the institution to organize book club meetings to discuss the material. These are avenues for innovation because employees might pick on specific ideas from the book that they can use to develop innovative ideas or make decisions regarding significant challenges that they

have been facing (Gupta, 2019). It is relaxing and promotes critical thinking as through such way, employees can take a break from their usual routines, making it easy for them to reset their brains towards positive work and established goals.

Books are important because they can reinforce core values. Therefore, employees need to have strong reading habits as they can use these opportunities to strengthen the organizational core values and promote sustainable development of these values (Abbas et al., 2020). The core values can be exemplified by recommending titles that expand or promote the company's core values. These pieces of information from the book can be used by the management or even the employee that has read the book to reiterate different essential principles that are in the business. It is important to understand that choosing the correct text is critical because it helps strengthen the company's corporate culture and promote healthy working environments that team members in the institution can depend on, communicate about and rely on for the purposes of thriving (Hermawan et al., 2021).

Further, the books that the organization selects are vital because they inspire innovation and creative development. Researchers on employee management establish that it is pretty challenging to encourage people to have thinking that goes beyond the day-to-day activities. However, through processes such as introducing a book to the company, the management presents a new set of ideas from an outside world. The importance of books is that they bring about fresh and vital new respective, hence breathing life into old ideas (Huang et al., 2020). The books, therefore, stimulate the grains, promoting creative thinking. Employees that have developed a culture of constantly reading books and expressing what they have learned from the books achieve success in critical thinking because they get different views on how ideas or actions are solved hence ease of communication and implementation.

## 4.2. How Organizations Promote the Reading Habits of Employees

When organizations do not motivate employees to achieve reading habits, it becomes a challenge to find the employees a book or reading even a magazine. However, there are strategies that institutions can apply to achieve positive reading habits among employees. The first step is to always provide books for the employees to read. These books should be based on the departments. For example, if employees are in the marketing department, they should be provided with marketing books. If they are in human resources, then they should be given human resource books to read. There should also be general books about life and organizational management. When these books are made

available, they encourage the employees to read them since workers will not waste time getting out of the organization and looking for the books they should read (Ispik et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the workers will be motivated since the organization has brought books for them; they will strive as much as they can to read the books, get to know what is in and share with other members. These opportunities eliminate barriers to reading and promote positive reading habits among the working force in an organization (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Another method is to create a space where there is discussion and sharing of ideas that have been read from the books. It is interesting to create an avenue where the employees will share their ideas, thoughts and new developments from the books. These mechanisms will create communication processes that use to network and share ideas (Kawiana et al., 2018). The employees will also be at the forefront of establishing the approaches institutions can use to achieve reading habits while promoting knowledge and innovations.

## 4.3. Skills Gained from Reading Habits.

Communication skills are gained from having good reading habits. Employees will establish communication which can either be interpersonal or intrapersonal. As communication takes place, employees learn how to strengthen the different activities in the organization, better their workplace environments and solve situations that might occur in organizations. Communication is about sharing information from one person to another, and these pieces of information are needed for decision-making purposes (Laursen & Salter, 2020). Reading habits are essential as they promote employee communication processes, creating an opportunity for creativity and innovation in the institution.

Innovation also depends on teamwork skills, and having a positive reading culture among employees in the organization fosters the growth of teamwork. It arises when employees read a book, magazine or article and start sharing the information they have gotten with other employees. For example, they can share the message with other employees if they get a leadership strategy or an innovative idea (Laursen & Salter, 2020). These aspects of sharing ideas foster teamwork since there will be other employees interested in the concept, and they will form a team that will work together to implement the idea or get the best in the organization (Lasisi, 2020). Employees who work in a group can achieve innovative ideas because these employees can collaborate, discuss, and come up with the needed findings that are instrumental for decision-making and growth. A strong team in an organization fosters the development culture, bringing positive results for development purposes.

Reading culture also enhances leadership skills in the organization and among the employees. As much as employees are given tasks, they are to complete them in the organization, and they are also leaders in their aspects (Younas, 2020). Reading habits make employees understand different leadership strategies that can be applied in the organization (Lei et al., 2020). Through these strategies, the employees will determine what is best when they want to use or come up with innovative ideas and what is challenging (Na, 2021).

The leadership processes motivate the employees to be keen on innovation and establish ideas that are viable and which will propel the institution forward. Leadership skills allow the employees to focus on their goals, use the available resources, and become innovative in an environment that is good for successful working situations. Leadership also promotes effective decision-making among the employee, which is mandatory for establishing sound creative ideas for development and growth purposes for both employees and the institution (prior study).

#### 4.4. Challenges Facing Employees and Innovations in Organizations

Employees' lack of support from relevant authorities is a significant challenge when conducting or engaging in innovative ideas. When employees come up with an innovative concept, they need support from either the top management or their colleagues or, in other cases, from both of these individuals. The consent can be in the form of ideas, discussion, teamwork and financial support. However, most employees do not get the necessary help that they need, which they can use to propel the business idea forward (Jenkins, 2009).

The situation creates an unhealthy working environment that might result in innovation barriers. Even with reading habits and lack of support, the employees will not believe in themselves to conduct the idea towards achieving success. Institutions need to look into these situations, identify these barriers and come up with resonating solutions that will allow employees' support when dealing with innovations. Employees that are supported feel like they are part of the organization (Khan & Mohiya, 2020). They feel motivated in the institution and constantly work their way out to achieve objectives that can either be personal or organizational or both.

The other challenge is the lack of a clearly defined vision, mission and goals or objectives of the organization. Innovation depends on the precise objectives stipulated in the institution where the employees know what they are needed to do, what they have to avoid and what they should achieve (Makkonen et al., 2018). When employees have no clear pathway in the organization, they will not understand

what innovations they should engage in or what support structures they should get for innovation processes (Marsden & Keller, 2022). This creates the employees to avoid even reading books or materials geared towards innovation because they understand that they will not have an opportunity to enjoy the success of innovations.

**Table 1:** Results of Previous Textual Dataset from Literature

Main Concept	Lists of the Related Prior Studies
1. The Reason Why Employees Should Read More Books	Gao (2020), Hermawan et al. (2021), Gupta (2019), Abbas et al. (2020), Huang et al. (2020), Kanter (1999)
2. How Organizations Promote the Reading Habits of Employees	Ispik et al. (2021), Ibrahim et al. (2020), Kawiana et al. (2018)
3. Skills Gained from Reading Habits.	Laursen and Salter (2020), Lasisi (2020), Younas (2020), Lei et al. (2020), Na (2021)
4. Challenges Facing Employees and Innovations	Jenkins (2009), Khan and Mohiya (2020), Makkonen et al. (2018), Marsden and Keller (2022)

## 5. Conclusions

There is a relationship between employees' reading habits and the employees' competency level of innovation. Employees who constantly engage in reading habits have an opportunity to get new ideas, new skills and new information not only about the organization but also about personal growth. Therefore, these employees can depend on the information to engage in innovation. The knowledge gained from the books opens the mind of the employees, making them critical thinkers who will embrace innovation and development. Furthermore, through reading habits, employees can communicate and have leadership skills which will guide them on actions they can do, what they can avoid, and how to conduct the innovation processes effectively. Hence, with knowledge from reading habits, employees can be part of the innovation and even champion innovation activities in organizations. However, there are barriers that employees face regarding reading habits and innovations.

For example, significant challenges include a lack of support and guidance on what the employees should read, unavailability of books and lack of motivation for the employees to embrace reading. It hinders these employees

from achieving critical thinking skills that can be dependent on innovation. The management's role is to establish support strategies and mechanisms that will boost innovations. For example, the administration should provide the employees with books they should read, guide them on reading processes and create an environment where they will share information or ideas after reading the books. These cultivate the culture of reflection and positive thinking that results in innovation development. It is clear that with reading habits among employees, innovation is easily achieved since these employees know their goals, how to achieve these objectives and overcome any challenge that might hinder innovation. Organizational management should work towards fostering positive reading cultures among employees in organizations.

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