

INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR AS A VALUE FACTOR OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

The article discusses the problem of a person's innovative behaviour in the context of social sustainability assessments. The article presents the history of the study of innovative behaviour and its development prospects. Innovative behaviour is characterised by an accidental feature and is presented as an integral part of a person's value system. The innovative features and characteristics of behavior are considered when studying the processes of intra-team interaction of a person in the work environment. The opinions of a number of authors on the functional definitions of innovative behaviour are analysed. Among the intra-team characteristics of innovative behaviour presented in the article, a number of features stand out, such as goal-orientedness, creativity, flexibility, independence in decision-making and the use of alternatives. The study considered innovative behaviour in the context of social sustainability characteristics, such as quality of life, social cohesion, a sense of belonging, intra-team trust, and career development. The characteristics of innovative behaviour and social sustainability

were studied in two age groups of employees. The results of the experimental study indicate a high level of interdependence of the phenomena under study, which is especially evident in the expression of positive correlations between the characteristics of social sustainability in the quality of life and career development and the characteristics of innovative behaviour. The results of the study allow us to assess the fundamental problem of social sustainability in a new way, considering it in the context of the development of modern society and the value transformations of individual needs manifested in innovative behaviour.

Keywords: Innovative behaviour, social sustainability, values, accidental feature, social cohesion, goal-orientedness, quality of life

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Համառոտագիր

Հոդվածում քննարկվում է անձի իննովացիոն վարքագծի հիմնախնդիրը սոցիալական կայունության գնահատումների համատեքստում: Հոդվածում ներկայացված են իննովացիոն վարքագծի ուսումնասիրման պատմությունը

և զարգացման հեռանկարները: Իննովացիոն վարքագիծը բնութագրվում է դիպվածայնությամբ և ներկայացվում՝ որպես անձի արժեհամակարգի բաղկացուցիչ մաս: Վարքագծի իննովացիոն հատկանիշներն ու բնութագրերը դիտարկվում են աշխատանքային միջավայրում անձի ներթիմային փոխգործակցության գործընթացներն ուսումնասիրելիս: Վերլուծվում են մի շարք հեղինակների կարծիքները իննովացիոն վարքագծի գործառույթային սահմանումների վերաբերյալ: Հոդվածում ներկայացվող իննովացիոն վարքագծի ներթիմային բնութագրերից առանձնառվում են մի շարք հատկանիշներ, ինչպիսիք են նպատակադրվածությունը, ստեղծագործականությունը, ձկունությունը, որոշումներ կայացնելու անկախությունը և այլընտրանքների օգտագործումը: Իննովացիոն վարքագիծը դիտարկվել է սոցիալական կայունության բնութագրերի համատեքստում, ինչպիսիք են՝ կյանքի որակը, սոցիալական համախմբվածությունը, պատկանելիության զգացումը, ներթիմային վստահությունը և կարիերայի զարգացումը: Իննովացիոն վարքագծի և սոցիալական կայունության բնութագրերն ուսումնասիրվել են աշխատակիցների երկու տարիքային խմբերում: Փորձարարական հետազոտության արդյունքները վկայում են ուսումնասիրվող երևույթների փխկապվածության բարձր մակարդակի մասին, որն հատկապես երևում է կյանքի որակի և կարիերայի զարգացման սոցիալական կայունության բնութագրերի և իննովացիոն վարքագծի հատկանիշների դրական կորելացիոն կապերի արտահայտվածությամբ: Հետազոտության արդյունքները թույլ են տալիս նորովի գնահատելու սոցիալական կայունության հինալիսնդիրը՝ այն դիտարկելով իննովացիոն վարքագծում դրսևորվող ժամանակակից հասարակության զարգացման և անձի պահանջմունքների արժեքային տրանսֆորմացիաների համատեքստում:

Բանալի բառեր՝ իննովացիոն վարքագիծ, սոցիալական կայունություն, արժեքներ, դիպվածային հատկանիշ, սոցիալական համախմբվածություն, նպատակադրվածություն, կյանքի որակ:

Introduction

It is no secret that in a transforming society, along with the restructuring of social relations and institutions, the behaviour of the individual is also transformed. In the current conditions of the development of society and the individual, innovative behaviour is characterised not only as a structural component of the psyche of the individual, but is also considered an important value factor of social sustainability. To understand it, it is necessary to present the social environment in which such characteristics of the individual's behaviour as initiative, situational understanding, and the ability to find solutions become required. Modern studies of innovative behaviour are mainly interdisciplinary and span the full spectrum of social sciences. Through the behavioural component of a person's vital activity, it is possible to reveal the level of intragroup cohesion in the sphere of interpersonal communication, the value factors of the social sustainability of the

communication field, and, more generally, the individual's external communication areas in the social environment. Modern studies of innovative behaviour are largely concerned with the transformations of value factors of behaviour. Of these factors, the most important are behavioural models and norms aimed at shaping the forms of interpersonal communication of employees in the workplace and social sustainability.

Theoretical and Methodological Bases

Although the term innovative behaviour began to circulate at the beginning of the 20th century, it has only recently been introduced into the psychological sciences. As is known, Schumpeter considered innovative behaviour at the beginning of the previous century within the framework of economics (Alsayegh et al., 2020; Abad-Segura et al., 2019; Mensah, 2019). Gradually, the emergence of new market relations and economic entities allowed the term to take on broader social interpretations and make sense from the perspective of individual behaviour. Thus, Akmal and Mehmood (2020) developed an interpretation of innovation as the result of acquiring new knowledge and innovative activity applied in various social spheres. According to Lukes and Stephan (2017), individuals and groups master innovation processes, depending on numerous socio-psychological factors. And according to Parveen and Vasudeva (2024), innovative behaviour, and, in general, the appreciation of innovations, is considered a determining factor in the character, activity and direction of a person's activity.

In the process of forming social sustainability in the field of interpersonal communication, the issues of legal and social support for innovative behaviour and the development of technologies for organising innovative activity are of greater importance (Pusparini & Aryasa, 2021; Wamsler et al., 2017). Value factors of social sustainability of the communication field and, more generally, the external communication field of a person's external communication within the social environment (Han, 2021; Hakobyan et al., 2024; Bysted, 2013).

We share Hutchison's (2018) view that psychological, pedagogical, and social sciences have not yet developed a unified understanding and interpretation of innovative behaviour. In scientific forums, this term is mainly examined as an initiative type of individual or collective behaviour, which is associated with the systematic mastery and application of new means of activity.

The process of identifying values and forming a value system contributes to the clarification of a person's attitudes, needs and expectations. The identified and realised values become preferable and acquire a stable, consistent nature. The long-term process of forming a value system includes the study and evaluation of existing values, a new perception and appreciation of self-expression at the workplace. A necessary condition is the presentation and circulation of a person's newly formed positions and opinions of a person in society so that they become socially important, stably manifested, and acceptable (Hakobyan & Khachatryan, 2022a; 2022b).

Thus, a person's value system is formed under social relations and is mutually conditioned by them. It does not at once turn into abstract ideas about society and the world, but rather appears as a certain structure based on the principle of the primacy of values. This principle is the most important characteristic of the formation of a person's value system and social sustainability. The acceptance of any value by a person already implies the classification of the entire system according to the principle of primacy in a given situation. In such conditions, innovative ways of orienting themselves in a given situation are formed (Ebrahim et al., 2023; Bawuro et al., 2019).

The multi-layered structure of the value system allows for the implementation of various functions. Values, being the basis for the formation and classification of a person's positions, help a person to occupy a certain social position and are formed during the socialisation of a person, the formation of social sustainability (Ashrafi et al., 2020). Innovative behaviour expresses certain social relations. Looking at them from the point of view of social functions, it can rightly be concluded that the manifestation of innovative behaviour is expressed in changing and developing relationships between people (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2021).

The nature of innovative behaviour cannot be revealed in depth unless the value functions of its social sustainability are investigated and, accordingly, the systematic analysis is supplemented with a functional analysis. This need arises because innovative behaviour is socially valued and therefore has a systemic-functional nature. Because the concept of "function" is ambiguous, we conventionally understand it as the systemic designation that appears in a person's social roles (Al-Omari et al., 2020).

Thus, innovative behaviour can be characterised as a phenomenon that is expressed in social systems, since it does not exist outside of society. For this reason, it is necessary to distinguish between general (typical) and specific (innovative) functions of behaviour, or between certain innovations of typical behaviour.

General functions are associated with systemic patterns expressed in parallel with the socialisation of a person. The following important functions of innovative behaviour can be distinguished, which are also important in the context of the formation of a person's value system:

1. Integrative function: by integrating the behaviour and activities of individuals, their thoughts and feelings, and directing the efforts of social groups and institutions, behaviour aimed at integration can support the social sustainability of a given society.
2. Regulatory function: national cultural ideas, stereotypes and traditionally repeated activities act as regulators of people's behaviour. In this context, innovative behaviour contributes to the creation of new stereotypes or the reinterpretation of old ideas.
3. Communicative function: innovative behaviour serves as a means of

communication between individuals. Driven by the need to modernise social values, it can be strengthened within a society and transmitted across generations, ensuring the sustainability of the value system adopted by society (Tolić et al., 2022).

Innovative behaviour can also be considered in the “accidental” type. It can become relevant in certain social conditions. In our time, these are, for example, emergency or conflict situations. Such behaviour can also be periodically updated. However, the process of forming innovative behaviour is not unambiguous. Innovative behaviour is understood as having numerous functions: the function of stabilising social ties, the translation of social experience, the transfer of information, the constructive and constitutional functions, the functions of culture-forming and regulating social relations, in general, the multi-layered functions of forming a value system (Kharima et al., 2023; Javed et al., 2019; De Vos et al., 2018).

Institutional forms of innovative behaviour are encountered in the process of communication, as a result of which public opinion is formed regarding the phenomenon. When studying it, it is possible to distinguish the ideas of different gender-age, educational and social groups around the problem. Thus, it becomes possible to identify the various functions of the innovative activity of individuals in society and give a socio-psychological assessment of this phenomenon. Therefore, the framework of the functions of innovative behaviour is outlined by the conceptual and symbolic system of the individual, which is expressed in the «person – society» relationship (Mutmainnah et al., 2022; Panda et al., 2020; Saracevic & Schlegelmilch, 2021).

Under these interpretations, innovative behaviour is characterised by such features as contingency and situational orientation. Such behaviour appears in the context of a problem of vital importance, and is valued by both the individual and society as innovative in its style and method of solving the problem. In other words, behaviour can be characterised as innovative if the contingency and innovation present in the behaviour become recognisable (Stanitsas et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2018; Stanitsas et al., 2021).

Methodology and Methods

To study the characteristics of innovative behaviour, such as the ability to quickly navigate, adapt to the pace of change, flexibility, and determination, we conducted a study among two age groups of service industry employees (20–35 years old and 40–55 years old). Employees from 15 companies operating in the Republic of Armenia participated in the study. The total sample size was 84 employees (N=40 in the first age group and N=44 in the second age group). The aim of the study was to classify work behaviour as innovative and highlight the social sustainability functions of innovative behaviour within employees’ value systems.

The study was based on classifying the formation of an employee's value system by core and instrumental values. The first group includes universal, moral norms that are clearly valued in any culture. These include human dignity, love, friendship, equality, etc. The second group includes values with specific behavioural significance, primarily expressed in the form of behavioural characteristics; they are more flexible and changeable, depending on the specific social situation. These include values expressed in terms of «loyalty,» «politeness,» «awareness,» and other characteristics. The development of this group of values largely depends on the assimilation of new experiences and is subject to change.

Results

At the end of the study, the results obtained showed a positive correlation between the manifestation of innovative behaviour and social sustainability in the context of the formation and development of a person's value system (Figures 1-2).

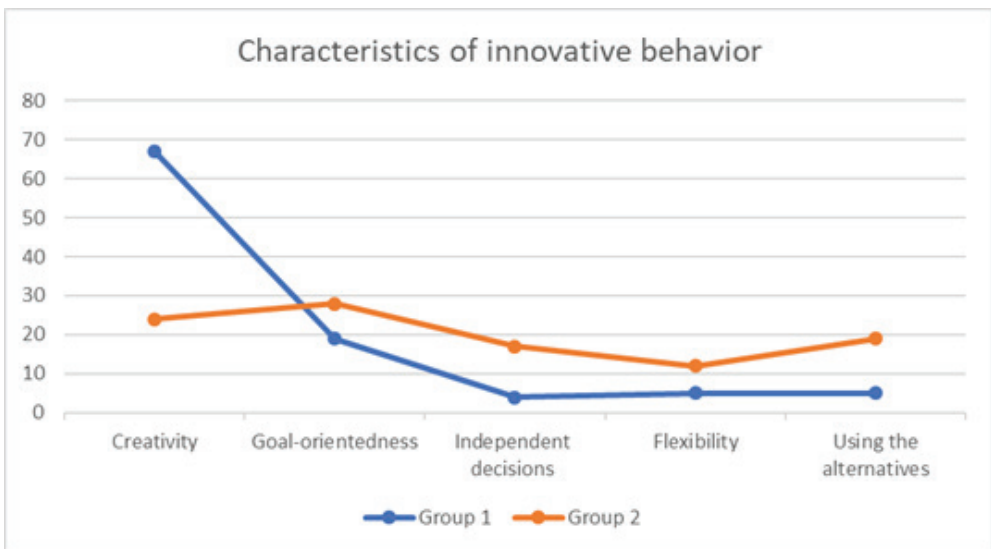


Figure 1. Per cent characteristics of innovative behaviour

If, in the first age group, only the characteristic of creativity dominated the behaviour of employees, then in the second age group, goal-orientedness, the ability to make independent decisions and follow through on those decisions, as well as flexibility in decisions made in response to changes in the situation and the use of alternatives were more pronounced.

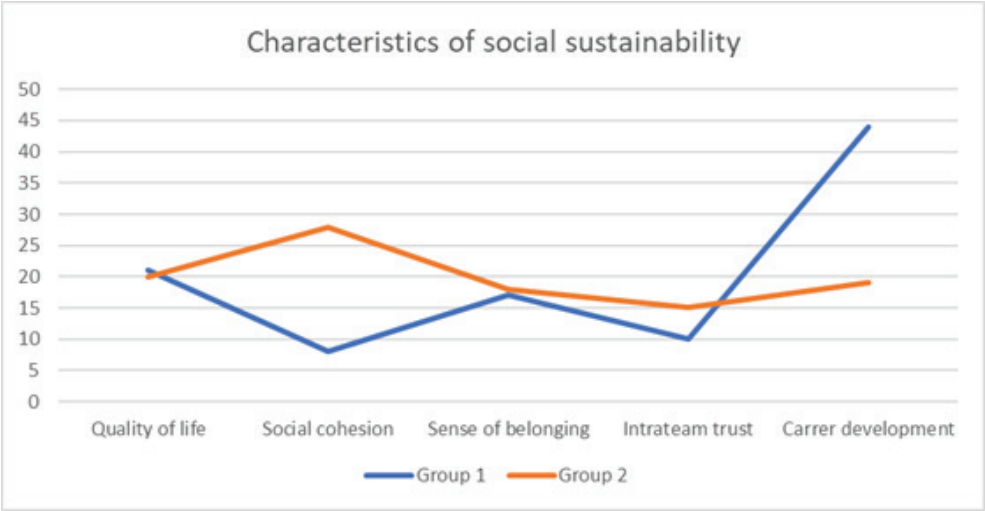


Figure 2. Per cent characteristics of social sustainability

Among the social sustainability characteristics, the largest age differences were observed in the percentage scores for social cohesion and career development. In the second age group, the social cohesion score increased compared to the first age group. Conversely, the career development score was most pronounced in the first age group.

Correlation ties between characteristics of innovative behaviour and social sustainability were revealed using the Spearman rank correlation coefficient (Table 1).

Table 1.

Correlation ties between characteristics of innovative behaviour and social sustainability

Characteristics	Quality of life	Social cohesion	Sense of belonging	Intra-team trust	Carrer development
Creativity	.230*	.356	.114	.206	.589***
Goal-orientedness	.768***	.402*	.461*	.771**	.698***
Independent decisions	.684*	-.414*	-.510*	-.122*	.599**
Flexibility	.587**	.381*	.320*	.558*	.784***
Using the alternatives	.739***	.265	.381	.340	.801***

As Table 1 shows, all characteristics of innovative behaviour show positive correlations with social sustainability indicators such as quality of life and career development. The characteristic of independent decision-making negatively impacts the level of social cohesion, sense of belonging, and intra-team trust. The obtained results allow us to draw the following conclusions.

Conclusion

We examined the process of forming the value factors of social sustainability from the perspective of the vital activity of innovative behaviour. The results of the above-mentioned study document the more vivid expression of innovative behaviour along with the development of a person's social sustainability and value system. It can also be assumed that the manifestation of innovative behaviour is so highly valued personally and accepted socially that it has become a prerequisite for socialisation and an integral part of a person's social sustainability.

From a socio-psychological perspective, the forms and methods of employee interaction with colleagues are part of a value system that takes on the connotation of innovative mediation. This characterises the specific influence of innovative behaviour on the formation of an individual's value system, the regulation of labour relations, and the perception of social sustainability. Thus, studying the functions of innovative behaviour aimed at social development serves as the basis for further in-depth research into the individual's value system.

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