

# Employees' Evaluations about their Innovative Capabilities: A Concept to Achieve Enhanced Innovative Performance

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This article introduces a new psychological concept i.e., innovativeness based self-esteem which is confined within self-concept paradigm. The concept reflects individual's self-evaluations about his personal innovative capabilities to determine his significance, successfulness, and worthiness in an organization. The study adopted knowledge void technique to identify the research gap and further discussed theoretical perspectives and characteristics of innovativeness based self-esteem. At last, the study argued how innovativeness based self-esteem can play an important role to enhance innovative performance of employees. It is worth mentioning that the introduced concept is equally applicable to both public and private sector organizations.

**Key words:** *Personal innovativeness, self-concept, self-esteem, psychological concepts, organizational behaviour, innovativeness based self-esteem.*

## Introduction

Nowadays, organizational researchers are exerting more efforts to explore innovative behaviour of employees because it is imperative for efficient and effective performance of organizations and employees (Farid, Hakimian, & Ismail, 2017; Riaz, Xu, & Hussain, 2018). Literature indicates that many factors (e.g., financial, legal, economic, structural, procedural, technical, and social) play an important role in determining success of an organization (Pourhanifeh & Mazdeh, 2016). In addition, former studies also highlighted the significance of workforce which is considered as a critical factor for organizations to outperform (Korzilius et al., 2017). Riaz et al. (2018) mentioned that currently organizations are investing their efforts to explore employees' innovative behaviour in order to get and sustain edge over rivals. Organizational researchers have called to focus on employees' innovative behaviour because

it is essential for efficient and effective performance of organizations (Grant, 2000). Getz and Robinson (2003) revealed that eighty percent of the innovative ideas in workplaces are introduced by employees. Unfortunately, employees are rarely encouraged by employers to innovate or explicitly rewarded for innovative behaviour (De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes, & Van Hootegem, 2014). Literature indicates that individual's innovative behaviour is considered as a purely discretionary/extra role behaviour in organizations (Qi, Liu, Wei, & Hu, 2019).

Farid et al. (2017) highlighted that most of the studies exploring employees' innovative behaviour were executed at organizational level (e.g., Mendoza, 2015). They called to devote more studies at individual level to explore innovativeness of employees in organizational settings. Farid et al. (2017) examined the effect of six leader related behaviours on employees' innovative behaviour in Malaysian organizations. Recently, Ali (2019) studied the impact of Big Five personality traits on individual innovativeness by collecting data from postgraduate university students in Pakistan. Similarly, Støren (2016) identified important factors contributing to promote individual innovativeness by testing the employees working in Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, and Norway. Thus, literature manifests that scholars have explored individual innovativeness in the context of individual, job, team, and organization level factors (Parzefall, Seeck, & Leppänen, 2008), training and learning (Støren, 2016), innovative work behaviour (Riaz et al., 2018) etc. It is worth mentioning that mostly public sector innovations have been investigated by using frameworks developed for private sector innovations (Roper et al., 2017). Demircioglu and Audretsch (2017) reported that a significant portion of innovation research i.e., definitions, strategies, practices etc. have been conducted in private sector, however, factors like organizational demography, performance, and human capital are equally important for both private and public sector organizations.

Literature implies that few studies explored association between individual innovativeness and self-concept. Self-concept has been analysed by personality and organizational psychologists, sociologists, and educational researchers for more than a century (Onetti et al., 2019). Self-concept and self-esteem (i.e., a component of self-concept) are vital concepts studied in developmental, clinical, personality, and social psychology (Marsh et al., 2019). Chan and Lee (1993) mentioned that a positive self-concept or ample self-esteem is essential to the mental health and adaptive functioning of individuals. Likewise, Marsh et al. (2019) signified that self-concept is the most widely accepted and adopted theoretical reflection of individual's positive self-beliefs. For example, McNeill (2018) mentioned that self-concept motivates women to become innovative in fashion independence.

Literature shows that self-esteem, being a component of self-concept (Klein, Fröhlich, & Emrich, 2017), plays an important role to motivate individuals to become innovative. Hitherto, Goldsmith and Matherly (1987) correlated Kirton's adaption-innovation inventory (KAI) with Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSS), and 12 items from adjective check list (ACL). They found



that innovative people are more likely to reflect high self-esteem. It is apparent that literature sheds little light on discovering associations between personal innovativeness and self-esteem. It is also rare to find studies investigating mechanism driving the positive significant relationship between personal innovativeness and self-esteem.

The fabulous words of wisdom by White (Neil, 2015. p. 99) “If a problem is not biological in origin, then it will almost always be traceable to poor self-esteem”, also guided and impelled the lead researcher of the present study to investigate personal innovativeness of employees by linking it to self-esteem. Organizational researchers are concentrating on employees’ innovative behaviour because it is necessary for the productivity of organizations (Grant, 2000; Riaz et al., 2018). Former literature shows that only few studies explored the association between individual innovativeness and self-esteem. For instance, Schutz (1994) subjectively indicated in his eminent research work that self-esteem is the source of all creativity, motivation, and employee productive behaviour. In making a creative decision, Sternberg et al. (1998) characterized the people involved in creative decision making on the basis of their high and low self-esteem. In the same way, Mason (2001) observed that employees with high self-esteem show more willingness to accept new challenging tasks, are confident and innovative as compared to employees with low self-esteem. Based on these evidences and the need to study personal innovativeness of employees within self-concept paradigm, the researcher has proposed a concept that innovative persons may evaluate their innovative capabilities to determine their significance, successfulness, and worthiness in organizations (Anwar, 2018). The title of this concept is “innovativeness based self-esteem” or in short “innovative esteem”. The researcher believes that introducing personal innovativeness within self-concept paradigm could enhance current understanding on how innovative individuals evaluate themselves and how this positive evaluation boosts individuals’ performance outcomes.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Self-Concept***

Self-concept is a psychological construct which has been analysed by psychologists, sociologists, and organizational/educational researchers for more than a century. Hitherto, this construct is very popular among personality psychologists and organizational researchers because its impact on human behaviour, cognition and affect is pervasive (Onetti et al., 2019). Oyserman, Elmore, and Smith (2012) mentioned that self-concept consists of cognitive structures. These structures include content, evaluative judgments or attitudes used to realize various contexts, perspectives, goal achievements, and recognition of self-worth. According to Carl Rogers, self-concept consists of three elements i.e., self-esteem, self-image, and ideal-self (Mishra, 2016).

Rosenberg (1976, p.7) defined self-concept as “the totality of an individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to him/herself as an object”, whereas Bailey (2003) mentioned that self-concept is referred to the self-perception of an individual about his overall personality and characteristics. Simply, the integrated beliefs or characteristics about how individuals perceive self is known as self-concept. Self-concept is rooted in social, academic, and emotional abilities of individuals. Moreover, research shows that self-concept of individuals is created when they associate themselves with these attributes (Byrne, 1984). Similarly, Baumeister (1998) asserts that a person’s awareness of self indicates that he/she has clear self-concept. Turner et al.’s (1979) self-categorization theory asserts that self-concept comprises of personal identity and social identity. Personal identity reflects individual dispositional characteristics and traits, whereas social identity includes individual’s belongingness to social, religious, cultural groups, and communities (Mehrad, 2016). The present study focuses on self-esteem which is an evaluative component of self-concept (Klein et al., 2017).

### ***Self-Esteem***

Heatherton and Wyland (2003) observed that a person’s self-esteem is primarily affected by his/her self-concept because, fundamentally, self-esteem is individual’s view towards “self”. Pagaduan-Apostol (2017) referred self-esteem to the view individuals have about themselves. It also reflects the assessment and evaluation of a person regarding his worth. In other words, self-esteem is an individual’s evaluation regarding his self-concept or an evaluative wedge of self-concept (Sari, Bilek, & Çelik, 2018). Moreover, Individual’s self-esteem is predisposed by his cognitive processing system, personality traits, characteristics etc. (Kernis, 2003). Literature of human psychology describes self-esteem as the degree of self-acceptance, self-worth, self-respect, and self-approval. McLeod (2012) viewed self-esteem as a gamut that can have high, medium, and low levels. He asserted that both extremely high or low levels of self-esteem can be detrimental for individuals in emotional and social contexts, therefore, an optimal level of self-esteem should be maintained. It is evident that people high on self-esteem scale focus on improvement and growth, while people low in self-esteem feel worthlessness and are unsatisfied with self.

It is also important to mention the historic development of self-esteem construct. The concept of self-esteem was first proposed by James (1892). He defined self-esteem in terms of a mathematical formula. According to his view, self-esteem can be realised as a person’s successes divided by his pretensions. He argued that self-esteem can be raised by increasing the success rate and evading the failure rate. If someone has achieved more successes than the pretensions, he will enjoy more self-esteem. In James’ view, self-esteem is a competence-oriented concept and is always open to change.

The second important contribution to self-esteem concept was made by Rosenberg in 1965. He introduced the concept of “individual worthiness” into the definition of self-esteem. He affirmed that individuals judge themselves as good or bad. Hence, Rosenberg was the first psychologist who presented the fact that self-esteem is evaluative in nature but self-concept is not (Rosenberg, 1965).

In the same line, Coopersmith (1967) further worked on this concept and determined potential antecedents to self-esteem. He added to the definition that self-esteem is essential to the self-awareness and personal identity. He also mentioned that self-esteem has levels like low or high. The levels of self-esteem affect individual’s behaviour either positively or negatively. Previously, researchers like Alexander (2001), Branden (1969), Mruk (1999), and Smith-Lovin (1995) also attempted to define self-esteem; their definitions were also based on the concept of worthiness, self-appreciation, and individual experience. The significant definitions of self-esteem are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Significant Definitions of Self-Esteem in Literature

No.	Author	Definition
1	James (1892)	Self-esteem is the sum of our successes divided by our pretensions (p. 311).
2	Rosenberg (1965)	Self-esteem refers to a person’s overall positive evaluation to the self and judgment about worthiness (p. 16).
3	Coopersmith (1967)	The extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy (p. 4).
4	Branden (1969)	Self-esteem is the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living (p. 110).
5	Smith-Lovin (1995)	Reflexive emotion that has developed over time in social processes of invention that individuals learn to experience and to talk about, that arises in predictable social circumstances, and that is subject to social control (p. 119).
6	Mruk (1999)	Self-esteem is the lived status of one’s competence in dealing with the challenges of living in a worthy way over time (p. 26).
7	Alexander (2001)	Unconditional appreciation of oneself (p. 4).

**Source:** Established for this research

Although James (1892) was the pioneer of self-esteem concept and his definition explicitly explicated this concept, nevertheless, due to its objective nature, personality psychologists attempted to explicate self-esteem subjectively. In the literature, the most significant definitions

of self-esteem are considered as the definitions proposed by Rosenberg (1965), and Coopersmith (1967).

It is important to note that the above-mentioned researchers conceptualized self-esteem as a global construct having one dimension only. However, Marsh (1990) argued that it is a multidimensional construct consisting of dimensions that reflect multiple roles and experiences of individuals. Contrary to this view, unidimensional measurement of self-esteem is popular nowadays among organizational and psychological researchers (García et al., 2019). Literature also segregates self-esteem into its global and domain specific facets. Von Soest, Wichstrøm, and Kvaalem (2016) reported that global self-esteem is mostly abstracted as individual's overall evaluation of self and reflection of individual's beliefs about self-worth. Typically, global self-esteem is measured with unidimensional scale (i.e., Rosenberg, 1965) of which each item taps individual's general perceptions of self-worth. This scale does not include any domain specific content (Rentsch & Schröder-Abé, 2018). Literature shows that scholars have rigorously developed global self-esteem concept over the past couple of decades, however, domain specific self-esteem is underdeveloped. Therefore, much less is known about how domain specific self-esteem functions in general and in the context of creativity and innovation (Barbot, 2019). Rentsch and Schröder-Abé (2018) noted that hierarchical models of global self-esteem divide it into different domains at subordinate level, which is referred to as domain specific self-esteem. For instance, Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) proposed four broad categories of domain specific self-esteem i.e., academic, social, emotional, and physical self-esteem. Likewise, Heatherton and Polivy (1991) theorised self-esteem as a hierarchical construct and divided it into three components i.e., performance, social, and physical self-esteem.

Gardner and Pierce (2015) extended the concept of domain specific self-esteem by testing self-esteem of teams working in computer hardware, software, and cellular phones manufacturing and developing organizations. They analysed "organization based self-esteem" (OBSE) of employees which is defined as "the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member" (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 625). Gardner and Pierce (2015) mentioned that Pierce et al. (1989) developed OBSE definition by adding an organizational context in the Coopersmith's (1967) definition of self-esteem. They further mentioned that OBSE is an individual's deep-rooted believe about worthiness in his organization. They found that OBSE is a significant predictor of team satisfaction and team members' effectiveness. Gardner, and Pierce (2015) reported that OBSE is a domain-specific facet of self-esteem that reflects individuals' evaluations about his self-worth within the job and organizational context.



### ***Personal Innovativeness***

The concept of innovativeness is viewed differently in psychology, management, technology, and marketing domains. In the view of Rogers and Shoemaker (1971), personal innovativeness refers to the degree to which a person is relatively earlier in espousing an innovative product than other members of his community. Above definition shows that researchers' main focus was on "adoption time". Therefore, Rogers and his colleague considered only those people as "innovative" who have the ability to adopt an innovative outcome earlier than the other people of their circle. However, Midgley and Dowling (1978) indicated that Rogers and Shoemaker's (1971) approach lacks reliability and validity and does not allow comparisons among different studies. Similarly, Agarwal and Prasad (1998) criticized that the "adoption time" component of Rogers and Shoemaker's definition is not very significant concept and also narrow in scope. Further, Leavitt and Walton (1975) worked on this concept and delineated innovativeness as a personal characteristic. They argued that innovative persons are open to new experiences and often try to find out new ways to experience different and significant but unique inducements. Agarwal and Prasad (1998) conceptualized personal innovativeness in the domain of information technology. They observed personal innovativeness as the willingness of an individual to test any newly developed products related to information technology. In the domain of marketing, Wu (2011) conducted a study to find association between customer satisfaction and electronic store loyalty. He asserted that personal innovativeness is related to consumer's attitude towards new notions and innovative decision making based on public experiences. Moreover, Sari et al. (2018) considered innovativeness as a personality trait which can be global or domain specific. The contribution of various researchers to the personal innovativeness definition is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Significant Definitions of Personal Innovativeness in Literature

No.	Author	Definition
1	Rogers & Shoemaker (1971)	The degree to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting an innovation than other members of his (social) system (p. 27).
2	Leavitt & Walton (1975)	A person who is open to new experiences and often goes out of their way to experience different and novel stimuli, particularly of a meaningful sort (p. 549).
3	Kirton (1976)	A basic dimension of personality relevant to the analysis of organizational change (p. 623).
4	Hurt et al. (1977)	A normally distributed, underlying personality construct, which may be interpreted as a willingness to change (p. 59).
5	Agarwal & Prasad (1998)	The willingness of an individual to try out any new information technology (p. 206).
6	Rogers (2003)	The degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier than other members of a system (p. 22).

**Source:** Established for this research

Although many scholars conceptualized and operationalized personal innovativeness in different ways, most contemporary researchers considered it as a personality trait (Roehrich, 2004; Svendsen et al., 2013) derived from sensory/cognitive motivations of individuals. It is also palpable that Leavitt and Walton (1975) recognized personal innovativeness as “trait” but they believed that persons high in innovativeness are low in recognition of potential applications of ideas, therefore, they would be far from pragmatism. Anwar (2018) believes that view of Leavitt and Walton lacks realism because people high in innovativeness based self-esteem prefer to apply their ideas practically. It is worth mentioning that Kirton (1976) also considered innovativeness as a personality trait and associated it with analysis of organizational change. Following Roehrich (2004), Sari et al. (2018), and Svendsen et al.’s (2013) stance, this study considers personal innovativeness of individuals as a trait and believes that individuals attempt to evaluate their personal innovative capabilities to determine their self-worth.

Personal innovativeness has been paid considerable attention in literature (e.g., Roehrich, 2004; Sari, William, & Tina; 2018; Svendsen et al., 2013) because it is considered as an important factor to achieve higher organizational performance (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018). However, studies exploring personal innovativeness within self-concept paradigm are rare.

### ***Gap Analysis***

This “a priori” theoretical study attempts to investigate the concept of individuals’ evaluation regarding their innovative capabilities. It is valuable to mention the identified theoretical gap which led to the main question and further development of this concept. Cooper and Schindler (2011) stated that the start point of a research is a problem and normally it is presented by a management question. Furthermore, Jacobs (2013) instructed that problem statement can be derived by using methods like literature reviews, personal experiences, discussion with others, knowledge void etc. For instance, Agarwal and Prasad (1998) developed their domain specific innovativeness related construct and derived the research problem by using personal experiences, whereas Matsuda, Pierce, and Ishikawa (2011) formalized the research problem by applying cultural variations for development of Japanese version of organization based self-esteem (JV-OBSE). However, the lead researcher of the present study applied knowledge void method to derive the research problem. For this purpose, it was observed that a study conducted by Goldsmith and Matherly (1987) gained extensive acceptance from psychologists, organizational researchers, educationists, and social scientists. Both scholars investigated link between self-esteem and innovativeness by correlating Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSS) and 12 items from adjective check list (ACL) with Kirton’s adoption-innovation inventory (KAI) (Kirton, 1976). They established their position by arguing that adoption-innovation theory has a strong standing in terms of its nomological network related to abilities, cognitive styles and personality traits. They cited that adopters may be different from innovators because innovators are more extravagant, tolerant, and flexible. The authors also cited previous studies showing consistent positive relationship between innovation and self-esteem for samples taken from American populace.

Kirton (2003) cited that adoption-innovation theory was founded on the postulation that every person solves problems effectively and is creative. However, the way of solving problems can be different. Adoption-innovation construct delineates that the problem-solving approach of a person could be tapped by labelling one side of continuum as adopter and the other side as innovator. Kirton’s adoption-innovation theory deals with cognitive styles of individuals and determines how people solve their problems. Kirton described adopters as people who like to do works better, and innovators as individuals who do things differently.

Rosenberg theory of self-esteem delineates self-esteem as an individual’s stable sense of self-worth (Minev et al., 2018). Rosenberg, in fact, reincarnated the self-esteem concept and is widely accepted by researchers in the fields of social psychology, personality and individual behaviour, and organizational behaviour. Flynn (2003) cited that Rosenberg theory of self-esteem manifests two components i.e., reflected appraisals and social comparison. Reflected appraisals describe that people see themselves from prospective of other people, whereas social comparison mean that they evaluate themselves by comparing them with other people. These

reflected appraisals and social comparisons lead to positive/negative self-esteem. As mentioned earlier, to explore the association between innovativeness and self-esteem, Goldsmith and Matherly (1987) correlated Kirton adoption-innovation inventory with two operationalizations i.e., Rosenberg self-esteem scale and adjective check list (ACL) and found significant positive association between innovativeness and self-esteem. However, they made no efforts to explore “why innovative people tend to exhibit high self-esteem and evaluate themselves better as compared to people low in innovativeness?” The researcher believes that investigating individual’s evaluation about his personal innovativeness can fill this research gap.

## **Theoretical Underpinnings**

### ***Maslow’s Theory of Motivation***

Maslow (1943) was the first psychologist presented his well-articulated theory of needs and motivation in order to provide answer to the question “what motivates human behaviour?”. Although his contemporary psychologists were investing their efforts to understand psychoanalysis and behavioural psychology, he was more concerned to learn and understand the potential motives that trigger human behaviour. Maslow realized that human being has an intrinsic need of self-actualization but before meeting this higher level need some lower level needs should be met such as food and water, safety and shelter, love and affection, and self-esteem. This theory is generally known as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. He structured these needs at levels. He argued that in order to move to subsequent level the lower level needs have to be met. For instance, an individual can only move to the need of self-esteem, if the lower level needs like physiological needs, safety needs and social needs have already been met.

Similar to many other social science theories, Maslow’s theory of needs has also been criticized in literature. For instance, researchers criticized the arrangement of levels of needs (Wahba & Bridwell 1976), and shape of pyramid (Bridgman, Cummings, & Ballard, 2019); however, significant literature advocates and reinforces Maslow’s theory of motivation (Mihinjac & Saville, 2019). Recent literature shows that researchers adopted Maslow’s theory of motivation to support various research frameworks developed to study crime prevention (Mihinjac & Saville, 2019), employee motivation (Alajmi & Alasousi, 2018), technological innovations (Bennett, 2006) etc. In addition to the application of Maslow’s theory of motivation in various research contexts, contemporary research scholars explicitly realized and discussed the significance of this theory.

Turabik and Baskan (2015) explicated Maslow’s theory of motivation by mentioning that individuals attempt to satisfy their needs according to the level of importance of each need. These needs play an important role to determine individual’s behaviour. From the perspective

of the present study, the need of self-esteem and its fulfilment for employees working in organizations is essential for higher level of employees' innovative performance. Esteem needs reflect personal worth, social inclusion, achievement, appreciation by others, freedom of thought and choice, independence, and gaining respect in society (Alajmi & Alasousi, 2018). People think that their efforts and accomplishments must be recognised by other members of society. However, if their efforts and achievements are not recognised properly, they feel disappointed and inferior. Madsen and Wilson (2012) affirmed that Maslow's theory of motivation encourages innovativeness and creativity. Since self-esteem is a strong motivator of human behaviour (Maslow, 1943), Maslow's theory justifies that need of self-esteem would stimulate individuals to become innovative.

### ***Self-Concept Implementation***

Korman's (1970) theory of self-consistency suggests that employees' work behaviour is dependent on the implementation of self-concept. In this context, Chen, Chen, Hu, and Wang (2015) discussed the career development model proposed by Super (1980). They argued that individuals' endeavour to apply self-concept via career choices as suggested by Super (1963). In the growth stage of career development, individuals attempt to implement self-concept via interaction with and recognition from the family and colleagues. Gradually, they realize the value of interests and abilities after participation in various events and accumulation of hands-on experiences. Korman (1970) mentioned that performing a task with self-perceived competence, resulted due to ample self-esteem, describes the extent to which individuals will be motivated to perform effectively in organizations. It can be inferred that an individual high in personal innovativeness may evaluate himself/herself for being innovative in workplace. Hence, the implementation of self-concept on innovative capabilities can be valuable in organizational context.

The introduction of innovativeness based self-esteem will encourage the debate in the arena of personality psychology and offer implications for theory and practice. Researchers and academics exploring different individual factors to understand the dynamics of innovativeness may recognize that implementation of self-concept can better explain the innovative behaviour of individuals within organizational settings.

### ***Linking Personal Innovativeness and Self-Esteem***

Social scientists unanimously believe that high self-esteem plays an important role in developing individual's personality and competences (Pagaduan-Apostol, 2017). Malhi and Reasoner (2000) expounded that self-esteem is a pre-requisite to productive behaviour and higher performance. Employees having high self-esteem are competent, hardworking, productive, quality-oriented, and perceive themselves as being worthy of success. Previous

literature shows significant positive associations between innovativeness and self-esteem. For instance, Goldsmith and Matherly (1987) correlated Kirton's adaption-innovation inventory with Rosenberg self-esteem scale and found that innovative people are more likely to reflect high self-esteem. Likewise, Schutz (1994) asserted that self-esteem is the source of all creativity, motivation and employee productive behaviour. His assertion subjectively supported finding of Goldsmith and Matherly's (1987). Sternberg et al. (1998) characterized the people involved in creative decision making on the basis of their high and low self-esteem. Similarly, Mason (2001) noted that employees with high self-esteem show more willingness to accept new and challenging tasks, are confident and innovative as compared to employees with low self-esteem. Likewise, Keller (2012) found in their investigation that self-esteem is a noteworthy determinant of individual's innovative outcome, whilst Maden and Koker (2013) found self-esteem as a significant predictor of consumer innovativeness.

To signify importance of self-esteem, Koltko-Rivera (2006) had revised Maslow's theory of motivation and explained that individuals' self-esteem level is raised if their achievements are recognized by their social circles. From the perspective of the present study, the need of self-esteem and its fulfilment for employees working in organizations is essential for higher level of employees' innovative performance. Madsen and Wilson (2012) indicated that Maslow's theory of motivation encourages innovativeness and creativity and individuals' motivation to achieve innovative outcomes boost their self-esteem level over time.

### **Characteristics of Innovativeness based Self-Esteem**

#### ***Performance Based, Domain Specific, Confined within Self-Concept Paradigm***

Heatherton and Polivy (1991) conceptualized self-esteem as a hierarchical construct and divided it into three components i.e., performance, social, and physical self-esteem. Performance based self-esteem includes evaluations about one's abilities, performance, capacities, and confidence. Though, social and physical self-esteem indicate individuals' evaluations about how other people perceive them and how they view their physical bodies? Performance based self-esteem is principally built on individual's achievements by physically doing tasks/assignments rather than superficial perceptions about one's abilities. The present study holds that innovativeness based self-esteem is a performance-based concept because people high in innovativeness based self-esteem prefer to practically apply their innovative ideas (Anwar, 2018).

Literature indicates that self-esteem can be referred to the self in totality or specific facets of self i.e., global self-esteem and domain specific self-esteem (Rentzsch & Schröder-Abé, 2018). Global self-esteem is considered as a stable trait that indicates the way individuals feel about themselves. Coopersmith (1965) considered it as a cognitive approach of people to make



decisions about their worth. However, Brown and Marshall (2001) signified it as feeling of affection about own.

Despite the significance of global view of self-esteem, domain specific self-esteem has been given considerable importance in many self-esteem theories (e.g., James, 1892; Pelham, 1995). Utilizing the Fishbein and Azjan's (1975) model, Rosenberg et al. (1995) derived that specific self-esteem strongly influences individual's behaviour as compared to global self-esteem. Fishbein and Azjan's (1975) model focusses on the power of an attitude to envisage a behaviour as a function of how closely that attitude associates to the act in question. Rosenberg et al. (1995) inferred that specific attitude would predict the behaviour with greater power. Following the Rosenberg et al. (1995) stance, it is expected that an individual may evaluate himself for being worthy if he/she is high in personal innovativeness in related domain.

The present study holds that innovativeness based self-esteem should be confined within self-concept paradigm. The construct reflects individuals' self-evaluations regarding their innovative capabilities in organizational settings. Innovativeness based self-esteem is a unique concept because it reflects attributes and capacities manifested by individual's innovativeness specific feelings and evaluations about self.

### **Innovativeness and Self-Evaluation**

Literature of innovation demarcated it generally in product, process, system, technological, and administrative contexts. Personal innovation can be abstracted in several ways. This concept has been operationalized in terms of personal characteristics, behaviours, and outcomes. For instance, literature considered individual innovation to be personality-based (Hurt et al., 1977; Sari et al., 2018). It is obvious that source of all innovation is human being, therefore, this study preferred to look into personal innovativeness. Leavitt and Walton (1975: p. 549) described it as "trait reflecting a person who welcomes new experiences and works in his own meaningful ways to experience different and novel stimuli", whereas Rogers (2003: p. 22) stated it as "the extent to which a person or unit of adoption is relatively earlier than other subjects of his circle".

The second construct this study deals with is self-esteem. According to Rosenberg (1965: p. 16), self-esteem reflects extent to which individuals feel pride in themselves, their capabilities and worthiness. Similarly, Coopersmith (1967: p. 4) defined it as "degree to which a person believes himself to be successful, capable, significant, and worthy". Being an evaluative aspect of self-concept (Baumeister, 1998; Sari et al., 2018), self-esteem is an attitude of approval and indicates individual's beliefs about his skills, abilities, social relations and other outcomes. Hence, considering innovativeness as a trait, it is inferred that an individual may evaluate himself for being innovative in organizational settings. Additionally, Zhou and Velamuri (2018) noted that employee innovative work behaviour includes incremental improvements

and radically novel ideas. Based on above definitions, this study defines innovativeness based self-esteem (innovative esteem) as “extent to which individuals feel pride and worthiness in their incremental and/or radical innovative capabilities”. This study holds that innovativeness based self-esteem should be confined within self-concept paradigm and is a unique concept because it reflects attributes and capacities manifested by individual’s innovativeness specific feelings and evaluations about himself/herself.

The concept of individual evaluations about his/her innovative capabilities will be a valuable addition to the self-concept paradigm because individual’s evaluations regarding his personal innovative capabilities can resolve the enigma of “why innovative people reflect high self-esteem?” This research also suggests that individuals who enjoy good standing in their circles due to their innovativeness are more likely to internalize the value of innovation and feel the innovativeness as their major force to achieve high performance level. This sensation of reputation is built into one’s self-identity. When a person views himself innovative, his self-esteem boosts the affirmative prospects of innovation and develops strong belief that innovativeness will augment his level of performance and efficiency.

### **Innovativeness based Self-Esteem and Innovative Performance**

Behaviours in which an employee is engaged or productive outcomes by an employee that contribute to the successful functioning of an organization is called employee job performance (Harari, Reaves, & Viswesvaran, 2016). Waldman and Spangler (1989) identified that individual characteristics, abilities, and motivational factors are important determinants of performance. Job performance theories allude it as function of motivation and ability (e.g., Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998). Maslow’s theory of motivation suggests that self-esteem is a convincing motivator of human behavior (Maslow, 1943), whereas innovativeness is an individual’s ability to produce new ideas through out of box thinking and an individual characteristic (Rogers, 2003). Therefore, innovativeness bases self-esteem could be seen as function of job performance. Similarly, self-consistency theory proposed by Korman (1970) suggests that employees perceive themselves as competent, qualified, and skilled for a specific job perform better in organizations.

Research shows omnipresence of various dimensions of job performance like task performance, in-role performance, creative performance etc. As the nature of work is changing continuously, other dimensions of job performance have been consistently introduced in literature (Harari, Reaves, & Viswesvaran, 2016). To investigate job performance of employees related to their innovative outcomes, researchers measure innovative performance of individuals. Zizlavsky (2016: 818) mentioned that the ability of individuals to transform innovation inputs into outputs, and thus the ability to transform innovation capability and effort into market implementation is called innovative performance.



The present study also established the position that innovativeness based self-esteem should be confined within self-concept paradigm. Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997) mentioned that self-concept is an important antecedent to job related behaviours, job satisfaction, and innovative job performance. More specifically, Judge and Bono (2001) reported that self-esteem is positively associated to job satisfaction and job performance. This study links employees' innovative job performance to innovativeness based self-esteem because innovative job performance reflects employees' job performance in the context of innovative outcomes (Rodrigues & Rebelo, 2019). Therefore, it is expected that innovativeness based self-esteem can play an important role to ameliorate innovative outcomes of public and private sector organizations.

### **Contributions**

The intent of this study was to provide contribution to self-concept paradigm and subjectively discuss the existence of innovativeness based self-esteem within individuals in the workplace. This study highlights that innovativeness based self-esteem may be an important construct in an organizational setting. This research extends Goldsmith and Matherly (1987) conceptual framework by suggesting that innovativeness based self-esteem may be responsible for the finding that innovative people are more likely to reflect high self-esteem. This proposition is also supported by assertion of Schutz (1994) that people with high self-esteem may be involved in more innovative and productive behaviours.

This study deems that introduction of innovativeness based self-esteem will encourage the debate in the arena of personality psychology and offer implications for theory and practice. Researchers and academics exploring different individual factors to understand the dynamics of innovativeness may recognize that implementation of self-concept can better explain the innovative behaviour of individuals. It is also worth mentioning that being a trait, innovativeness based self-esteem is equally important and should be objectively explored within public and private sectors to enhance the innovative outcomes and productivity.

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