

## Employee Voice Determinants And Organizational Innovation: Does The Role Of Senior Manager Matter?

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### Abstract

This study investigates the effect of employee participation and involvement via voice behavior on organizational innovation using a quantitative methodology. Data collection is conducted via e-mail on samples of employees in the textile industry of Pakistan. This study can help resolve the many challenges faced by the Pakistani textile industry of today by presenting ways in which it can practice self-innovation via its employees thus improving its competitive advantage. This study reveals that employee involvement and participation through their voice and idea sharing can positively impact organizational innovation. Senior managers act as the moderator in this study whereby their supportive role is proven to increase employee voice behavior, participation and involvement as well as strengthen the relationship between the determinants of employee voice behaviour and innovation. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study investigating this topic in this context; hence, it serves as an enriching addition to the existing literature on this subject. All the combined effects of the independent, dependent and moderating variables were examined through PLS.

**Keywords:** Employee voice, determinants of employee voice behaviour, innovation, textile industry of Pakistan, role of senior manager

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### Introduction

The textile industry is considered as Pakistan's largest industry and greatly contributes to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Ravi Magazine, 2015). According to the statistics released by the government of Pakistan, 57% of the country's exports are contributed by the textile industry. Today, the textile industry of Pakistan is facing new challenges that are affecting its contribution to the country's total exports. According to the textile industry division of the government of Pakistan, the sector needs to improve its supply chain and productivity as well as formulate innovative and value adding strategies. Such IN (IN) in production, strategies and supply chain would be helpful in improving its global competitive advantage.

These realities of the market put pressure on the industry to enhance its productivity, competence and efficacy. Such improvements can be achieved by injecting creativity into the organizational processes. Tidd and Bessant (2014) mentioned that "creativity is the thing that change concepts into actuality and catching value from them through four key phases namely search, select, implementation, and capturing value". Innovation (IN) entails new and improved concepts, procedures, strategies, products and processes (Fu et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2016).

In this competitive environment, companies have no other options but to continuously improve. Companies should learn from past experiences and continue to grow and offer something new to their customers. By doing so, companies can survive in today's ever challenging global market (Gray & Jones, 2016). Many researchers have examined IN and organizational factors that affect novelty . IN is

a very vast term and is a source of competitive advantage. Companies that can create this competitive advantage in a competitive global market are better able to improve their process and products (Popa, Preda, & Boldea, 2010).

IN is a very slow process. It depends not only on the organizations, but also on the employees. Employee voice (EVC) is a strategy of knowledge sharing from the lower level to the upper level. The voice behavior of employees plays a vital role in the innovative attitude of the organization (Gambarotto, & Cammozzo, 2010). EVC is defined as the various articulations of the employees (Dyne et al., 2003) about concepts, opinions, views and concerns related to the organization (Morrison, 2011). By doing so, the employees show their participation and involvement in their works and organization (Armstrong, 2009).

Participation and involvement are the determinants of the voice behavior of employees. Participation entails taking part in important decision-making processes in the organization and the power to influence management decisions. According to Williams and Adam-Smith (2006), employee involvement is the inertia that influences the organization's decision. Through involvement, employees can discuss their issues with the management. Williams and Adam-Smith (2006) further state that involvement is useful in the communication between the employees and the management and is helpful in increasing employee

commitment. According to Marchington et al (2001), these two features of EVC play a typical role in ascending the hierarchy of organizations.

EVC has the ability to alter the decision of managers (Millward et al, 1992). Through EVC, employees can also express their complaints and anger towards the management. Dundon et al. (2007) suggest for organizations to devise strategies that can develop trust between employees and managers. With solid trust, employees can share their ideas, beliefs and concerns with their managers and take part in organizational improvement initiatives along with the managers. Senior managers play a vital part in driving EVC creativities (Wilkinson, Townsend & Burgess, 2013; Townsend, 2013).

This paper aims to establish the relationship between EVC and organizational IN with the moderating role of senior management. Below are the main objectives of this paper:

- To examine the relationship between EVC and IN.
- To examine the relationship between employee participation and IN.
- To examine the relationship between employee involvement and IN.
- To investigate the moderation role of senior manager.
- To examine the role of senior manager in IN.

### **Literature Review**

EVC

IN

Role of Senior Manager

### **Conceptual Framework**

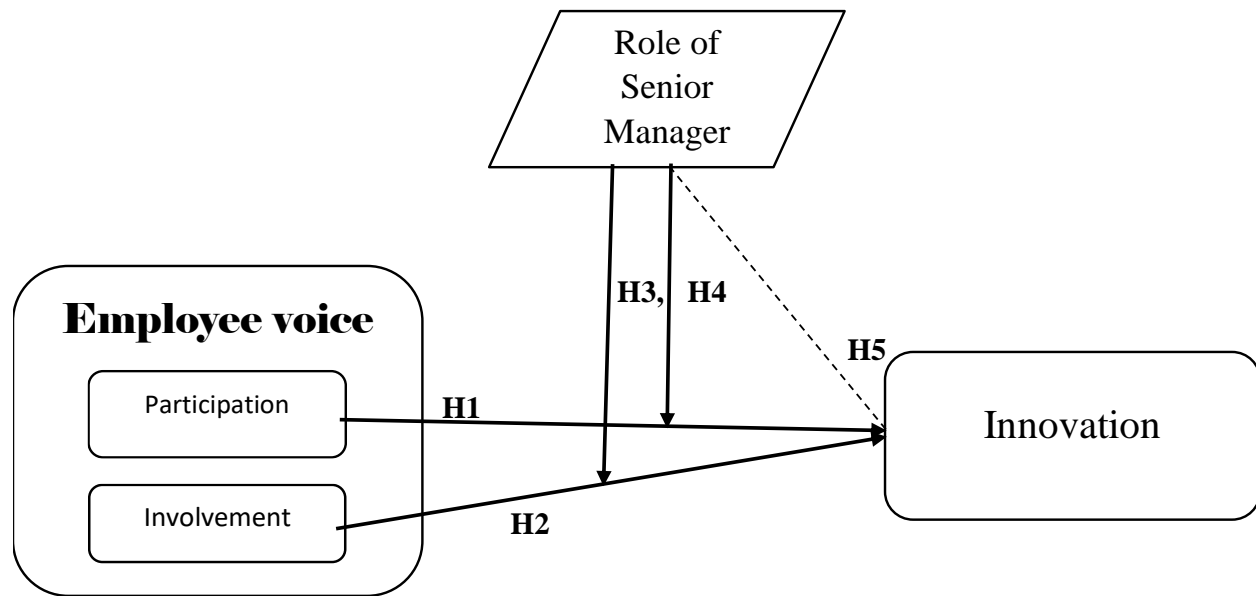


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The term ‘EVC’ has different meanings as established by different researchers and scholars. EVC is the opportunity that enables employees to share their views and ideas and alter workplace decisions (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). It also entails employees speaking up about organizational issues. Morrison (2011) delineates EVC as the direct communication between employees and the management about ideas and suggestions that could improve organizational functions. Armstrong (2009) recognizes EVC as the participation and involvement of the employees in organizational matters. Studies have proven that EVC affects organizational performance (Sako, 1998; Morrison, 2011; Wilkinson et al, 2004).

EVC is a way of communication and can be observed under the procedure of the organizational justice theory. This theory relates to the process of interaction within the decision making process between the employee and the management (Nowakowski & Conlon, 2005). This theory suggests that employees feel satisfied if they are fully involved in the making of organizational decisions (Anyango, Ojera & Ochieng, 2015). EVC increases employee motivation as they feel satisfied when they can share their views with the managers. This motivation in turn helps improve employee

creativity and IN as proposed by the componential theory of creativity (Ganjali & Rezaee, 2016).

EVC creates new ideas and suggestions which are helpful in solving interconnected glitches at work (Cabreres et al., 2009). This in turn leads to the invention of new processes and products in the organization (Zhou et al., 2017). Dyne et al. (2003) proved that the voice behavior of employees brings positive organizational changes, a view which is also supported by Zhou et al. (2017). Voice behaviour stimulates organizational learning through the sharing of new ideas and suggestions when the employees actively participate in discussions about organizational issues (Detert and Burris, 2007).

Such organizational learning helps to change processes, procedures and strategies which in turn lead to organizational IN. The resource-based view (RBV) theory suggests that employee level learning will ascend to the group level and finally reaching the organizational level learning. Such inimitable advantage gives the organization an upper hand to its rivals in terms of product and IN (Lee et al., 2005). Subramaniam and Youndt (2005) and Thornhill (2006) found a significant link between employee involvement and an organization’s ability to innovate.

In their study, Dyne and LePine (1998) treated EVC as the extra-role behavior and IN as the performance. They examined the effect of employee opinion on IN and found that employee expression is a strong predictor of performance. Zhou and George (2001) stated that EVC behavior positively affects organizational IN. Budd et al. (2010) explored a substantial positive link between voice behavior and productivity. According to the RBV theory, firms can achieve competitive advantage if they use the knowledge, skills and abilities of their employees. Employee knowledge is indeed a strategic tool (Bajwa et al., 2015).

Rasheed et al. (2017) found that organizations can enhance their IN via employee involvement. An additional significant result of the present study is that EVC improves novelty in organizations. Very little research is available on the link between IN and employees, but there is sufficient theoretical and empirical support to this topic. Generally, the voice behaviors of employees are found to have a positive organizational effect. Thus, the following hypotheses are developed:

H1: Employee participation has a significant impact on IN.

H2: Employee involvement has a significant impact on IN.

Most organizations involve their employees in organizational decision-making processes (Macky & Boxall, 2007). Purcell and Hall (2012) said that senior managers play a significant and positive role in encouraging and replying to EVC behaviour. Moreover, it is said that senior managers play a crucial part in EVC behavior (Townsend, 2013). Communication and interaction between senior managers and employees effectively support EVC behaviour. The effectiveness of EVC in expressing opinions and feedbacks depends upon the knowledge, skills and preferences of the senior managers, line managers and supervisors (Kaufman, 2000).

Through exposed and helpful interactions between the employees and specifically with the senior managers, organizations can take opportunities from the external environment and efficiently respond to the market on time (Puck et al., 2007). EVC not only increases organizational performance, but also the

motivation and learning of the employees (Rusbult et al., 1988).

Ng and Feldman (2012) found that aggressive senior manager behaviour can gradually discourage EVC behavior, creativity and motivation and ultimately the overall performance of the organization. Voicing of employees is difficult a challenge to handle for senior manager because it takes part in important decisions and give their suggestions and ideas for refining methods, goods and policies in directive to innovate organization (Subhan et al., 2014). By giving suggestions and pointing out the errors in strategy formulation, the voice behavior of employees directly affects organizational IN (Enz & Schwenk, 1991).

The social exchange theory states that if employees have a strong relationship with their senior managers, then their level of involvement will gradually increase (Dietz, Wilkinson & Redman, 2009). The positive attitude of the senior manager can make the employees feel acknowledged and valued (Korsgaard et al. 1995). The behavior of the senior manager is shown to be the most vital aspect affecting EVC behaviour. Hence, the following hypotheses are developed:

H3: The role of senior manager moderates the relationship between involvement and IN.

H4: The role of senior manager moderates the relationship between participation and IN.

H5: The role of senior manager has an impact on IN.

### Methodology

In any research, the methodology is an important and fundamental step that depends upon the research objective and question (Hameed et al., 2018; Bsheer et al., 2018; Hafeez et al., 2018). It tells of type of research as well as methods and techniques employed. The methodology also explains the reason for the instrument and measurement choice. This research is quantitative in nature. Data for this study is collected from the textile industry in Pakistan via e-mail. The e-mail addresses of the respondents were taken from related sites.

The simple random sampling technique is used for data collection. It is a simple and efficient form of probability sampling which provides an effective and quick way for collecting data. The survey

questionnaires were sent via e-mail. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the items in the questionnaire whereby 1 denotes strongly agree and 5 strongly disagree. Other related numbers are present on the semantic pace within the scales of 1 to 5.

A sample size of 1000 is considerable. Consequently, this research uses a sample size of 500 which is considered as very good. Data was collected from employees working in the selected textile industries. Thus, five hundred (500) questionnaires were distributed out of which two hundred and forty (240) were returned and two hundred twenty-seven (227) were usable for data analysis. This indicates a 45% response rate after

data entry because 13 questionnaires have missing values and thus were excluded. According to Sekaran (2003), a response rate of 30% is enough for analysis when the data is collected through e-mail.

The objective of this study is to find the link between EVC (as determined by involvement and participation) and IN using the moderation effect of the role of senior manager in the context of the textile industry in Pakistan. Data analysis was carried out using PLS 3 which is a better tool for complex models with mediation and moderation effects. PLS-SEM was employed by following the recommendations of Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics (2009). The steps of PLS-SEM are shown in Figure 2.

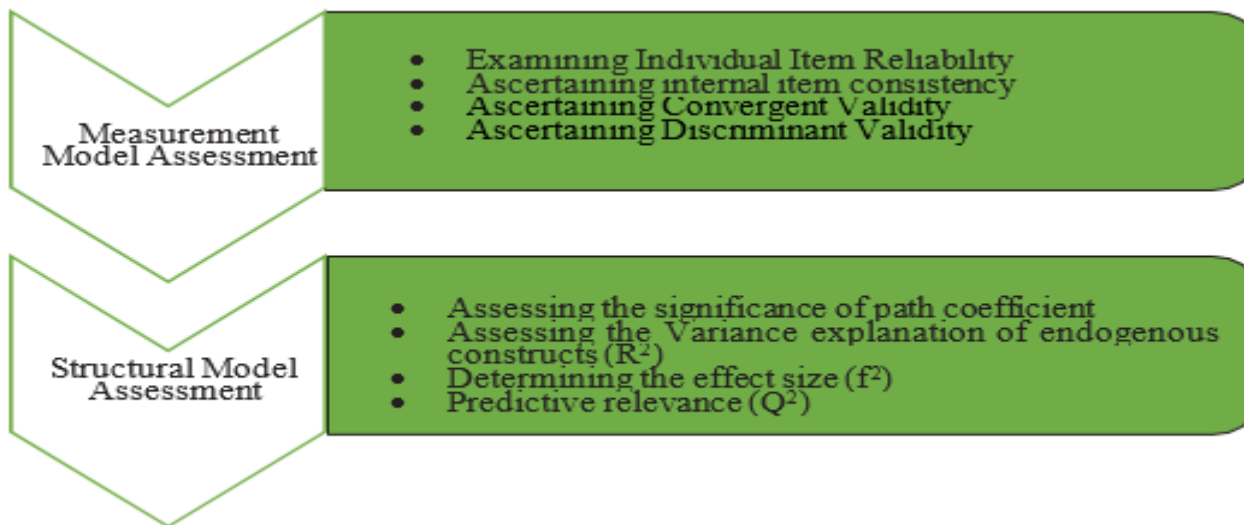


Figure 2. PLS-SEM steps

Source: Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics (2009)

**Measures**

EVC along with its two determinants i.e. involvement and participation act as the independent variables in this study and are measured by instruments developed by Van Dyne and LePine (1998). The role of senior manager acts as the moderator and its instruments are adapted from the study of Cook and Wall (1980). Instruments for open IN which act as the dependent variables were developed by Siegel, S. & Kaemmerer, W. (1978). All these instruments are demonstrated in Table 1.

**Data analysis and results**

Firstly, the reliability and validity of data are tested before testing the hypothesis. The measurement of reliability and validity is the first and most important step in the data analysis. Reliability is measured to check the consistency of the measuring instruments whilst validity is measured to check the quality of the research design. Hair and Lukas (2014) measure reliability using the Cronbach’s alpha with an acceptance level of 0.7. Factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE) are used for assessing the inter item consistency and convergent validity. The factor loading and AVE values should be greater than 0.5 (Hair & Lukas, 2014; Hair et al 2010). In this current analysis, the Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values are more than 0.7 whilst

the factor loading, and AVE values are greater than 0.5 as shown in Table 1 and Figure 3.

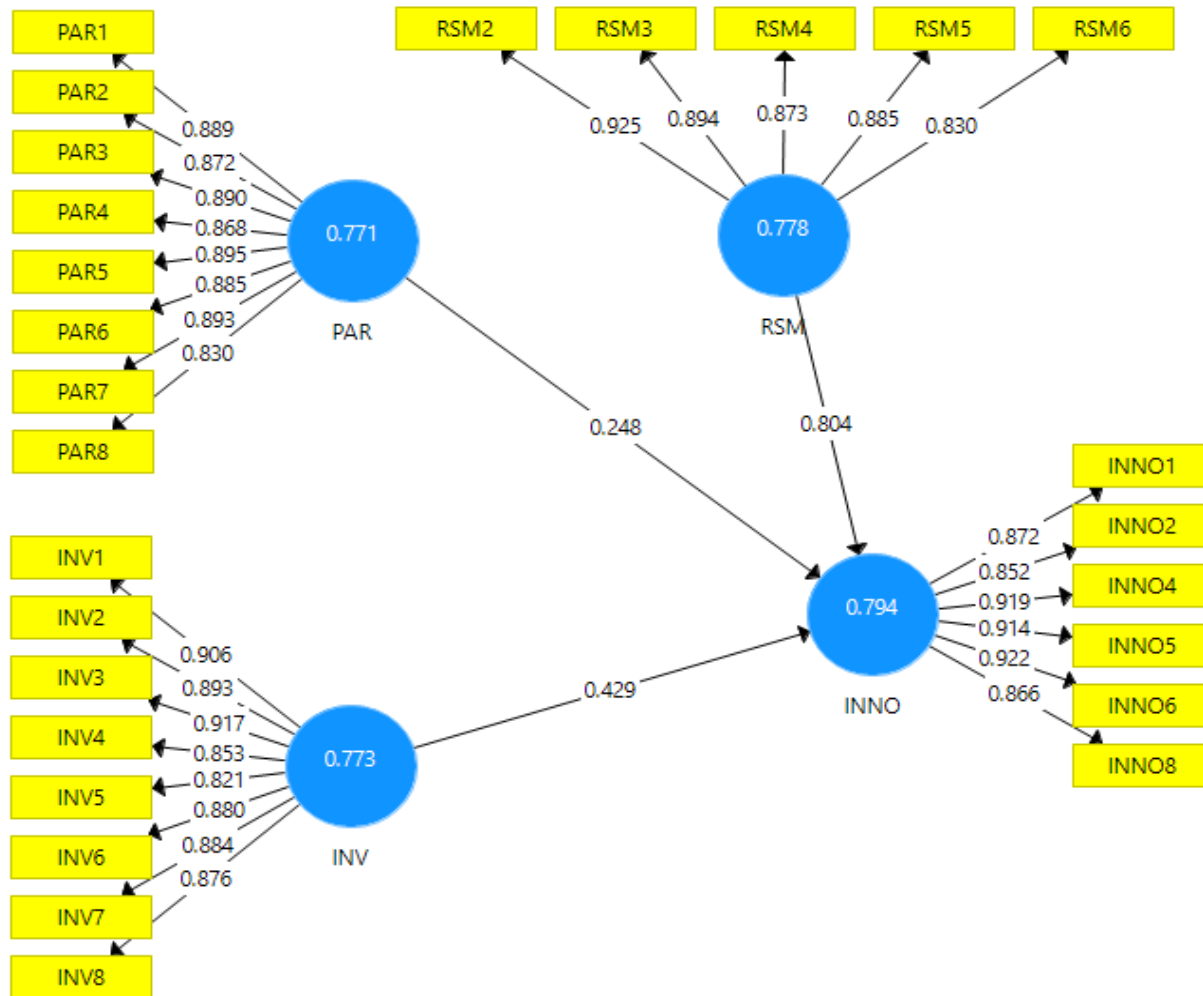


Figure 3. Measurement Model Assessment

Table 1. Internal Consistency, Reliability and Validity

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha		AVE
				Composite Reliability	
IN (INNO)	1. Organization give attention to the new and innovative ideas and accept it. 2. Change is constantly accepted by organization. 4. Innovative ideas are stimulated in here. 5. Creative opinions are equally received from everyone who working in organization	0.872 0.852 0.919 0.914	0.948	0.959	0.794



	6. People that working in this organization always give new ideas	0.922			
	8. Innovative ideas are generally unnoticed in this organization	0.866			
Involvement (INV)	1. I am involved to solve those issues that affect my excellence of work.	0.906	0.958	0.965	0.773
	2. I feel pleased when doing my work.	0.893			
	3. I feel myself confident about my work.	0.917			
	4. I feel energized when I am doing my job.	0.853			
	5. I am fully engaged myself, when I am doing my work.	0.821			
	6. I consider new ideas that improve my way of working.	0.88			
	7. I am doing my job while I am not at my job.	0.884			
	8. I am doing hard work for making my job well.	0.876			
Participation (PAR)	1. I give new ideas relating to my job.	0.889	0.957	0.964	0.771
	2. I give inspiration to others that they should want to speak up.	0.872			
	3. I give opinion also at that time when other could disagree with it.	0.89			
	4. I give my attention to organizational issues and give my opinion.	0.868			
	5. I raise my voice for updating work procedures.	0.895			
	6. I am trying new ideas at work to improve it.	0.885			
	7. I am trying to adopt new ideas that improve my skills.	0.893			
	8. I discuss with others that how I am update my way of doing work.	0.83			
Role of Senior Manager (RSM)	1. Senior manager's equally treat their employees	0.925	0.928	0.946	0.778
	2. Senior managers paid attention to employee's new opinions.	0.894			
	3. Senior managers are loyal to their organization.	0.873			
	4. Senior managers give respect to employees.	0.885			
	5. Senior managers provide valued to employees.	0.830			

To check the external consistency, discriminant validity is measured through the square root of AVE and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) as shown in Tables 2 and 3. The acceptance level for

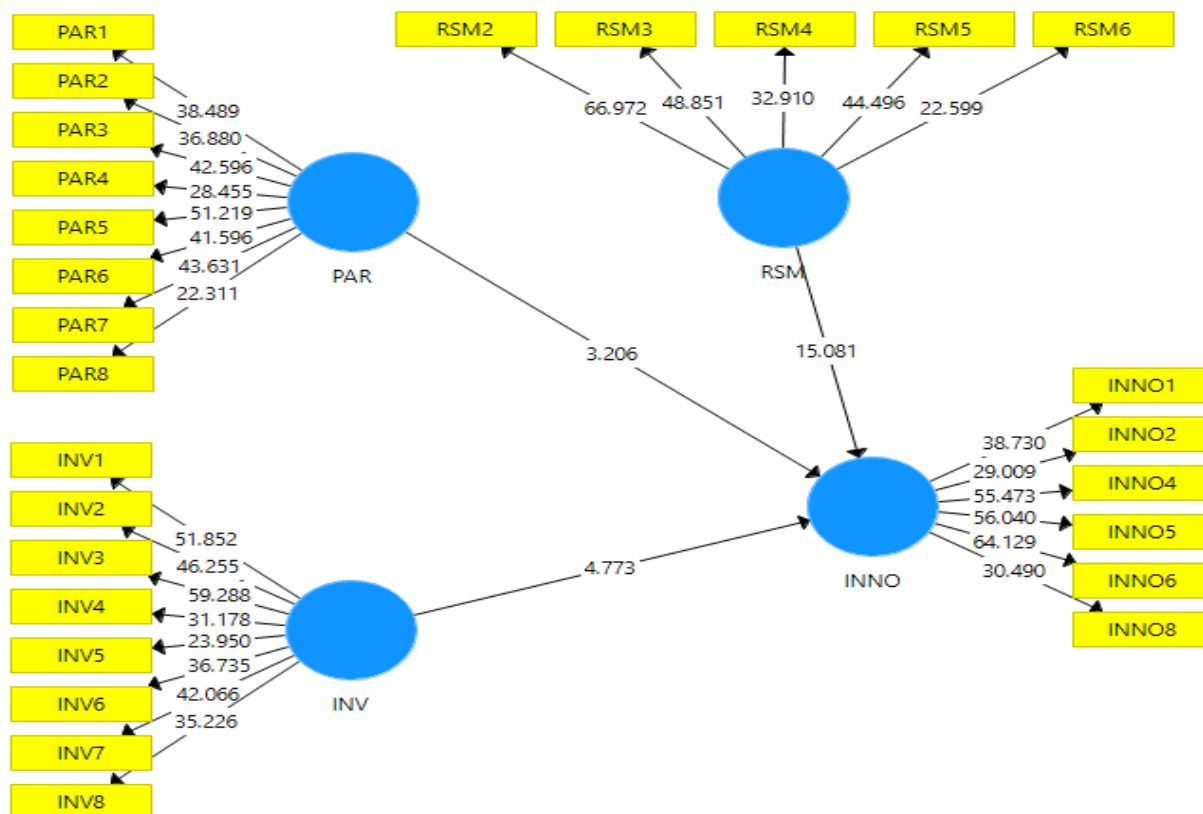
the HTMT ratio is 0.9 (Chin, 1998). As shown in the table below, the HTMT ratio value is lower than 0.9 which is acceptable

**Table 2.** Discriminant Validity (AVE square root)

	INNO	INV	PAR	RSM
INNO	<b>0.891</b>			
INV	0.773	<b>0.879</b>		
PAR	0.724	0.834	<b>0.878</b>	
RSM	0.835	0.716	0.711	<b>0.882</b>

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio)

	INNO	INV	PAR	RSM
INNO				
INV	0.809			
PAR	0.757	0.874		
RSM	0.895	0.758	0.752	



**Figure 4.** Structural Model Assessment

After clarifying that the data collected is normal, reliable and valid, hypothesis testing is carried out using the bootstrapping method through PLS. The table below is hence generated. If the t values are

greater than 1.96, then the hypothesis is accepted; otherwise, it is rejected. In this study, H1, H2 and H5 are accepted because their t values are greater than 1.96. Beta value (β) values determine whether

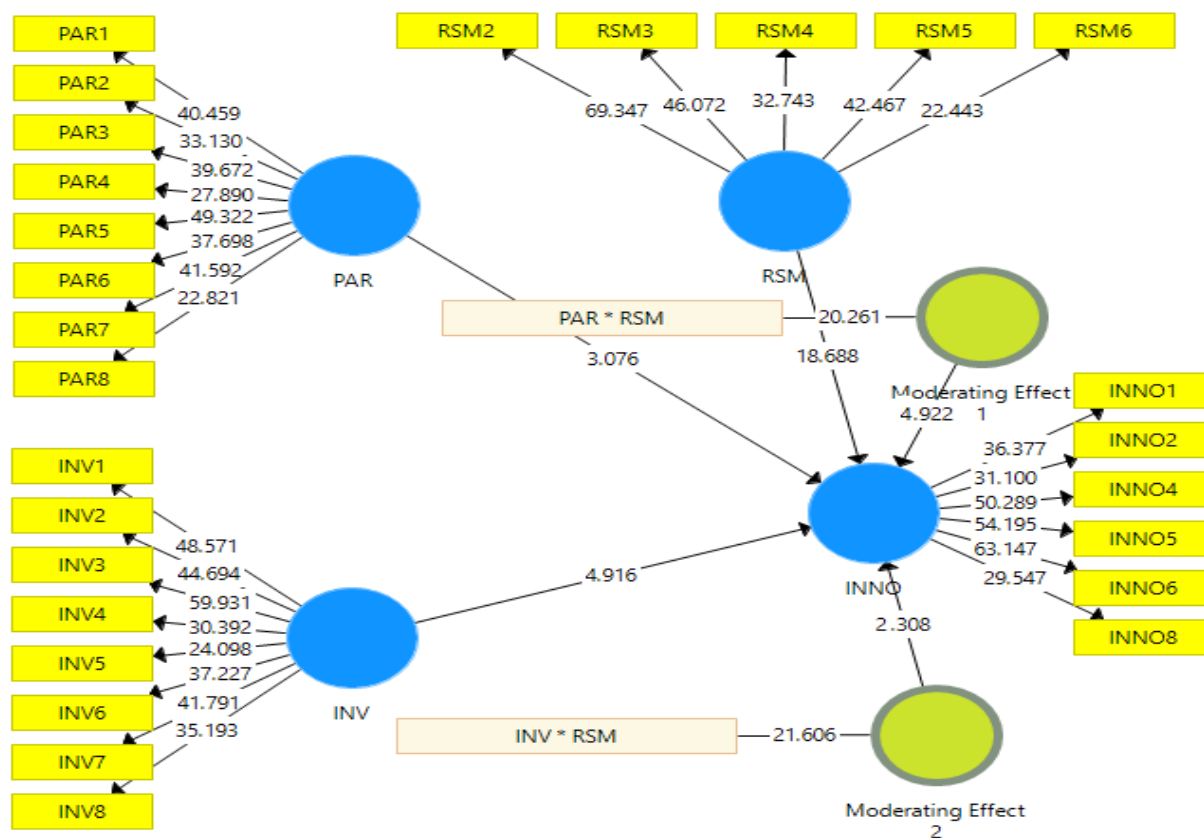


the relation is negative or positive. In the given table, all the beta values are positive which indicates

that all the relations made through the hypotheses are positive.

**Table 4. Direct Effect**

Hypothesis	( $\beta$ )	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision	
H <sub>1</sub>	INV -> INNO	0.429	0.439	0.09	4.773	0.000	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	PAR -> INNO	0.248	0.247	0.077	3.206	0.001	Supported
H <sub>5</sub>	RSM -> INNO	0.804	0.794	0.053	15.081	0.000	Supported



**Figure 5. Structural Model Assessment (Moderation)**

In the given table and the above figure, the moderation effect is shown. The role of senior manager acts as the moderator in this research. Similar to the direct effect, the beta values are

greater than 1.96; hence, the role of senior manager positively moderates i.e. strengthens the actual relations. This moderation effect is shown in Figures 6 and 7.

**Table 5. Moderation Effect**

Hypot hesis	( $\beta$ )	(M)	(STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H <sub>3</sub>	PAR* RSM	0.473	0.47	0.096	4.922	0.000

	-> INNO						Moderation
<b>H4</b>	INV* RSM	0.138	0.119	0.06	2.308	0.029	Moderation
	-> INNO						Moderation

Variance explained (R<sup>2</sup>) shows the change in the dependent variable due to the independent variable (Basheer et al., 2019; Hameed et al., 2019; Munner et al., 2019; Zahra et al., 2019 ). The value of

variance explained is 0.57 which is moderate (Chin, 1998). It means that 57% of the change in IN is due to the variables of employee participation and involvement. This value is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Variance Explained (R<sup>2</sup>)

Latent Variable	Variance Explained
IN	57%

Table 7 shows the effect size. According to Cohen (1988), an f-squared value of 0.02 is considered as small, 0.15 is moderate whilst 0.35 is strong. The f-

square value for involvement is 0.234 which is moderate, 0.079 for participation which is small, and 0.821 for role of senior manager which is strong.

**Table. 7.** Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>)

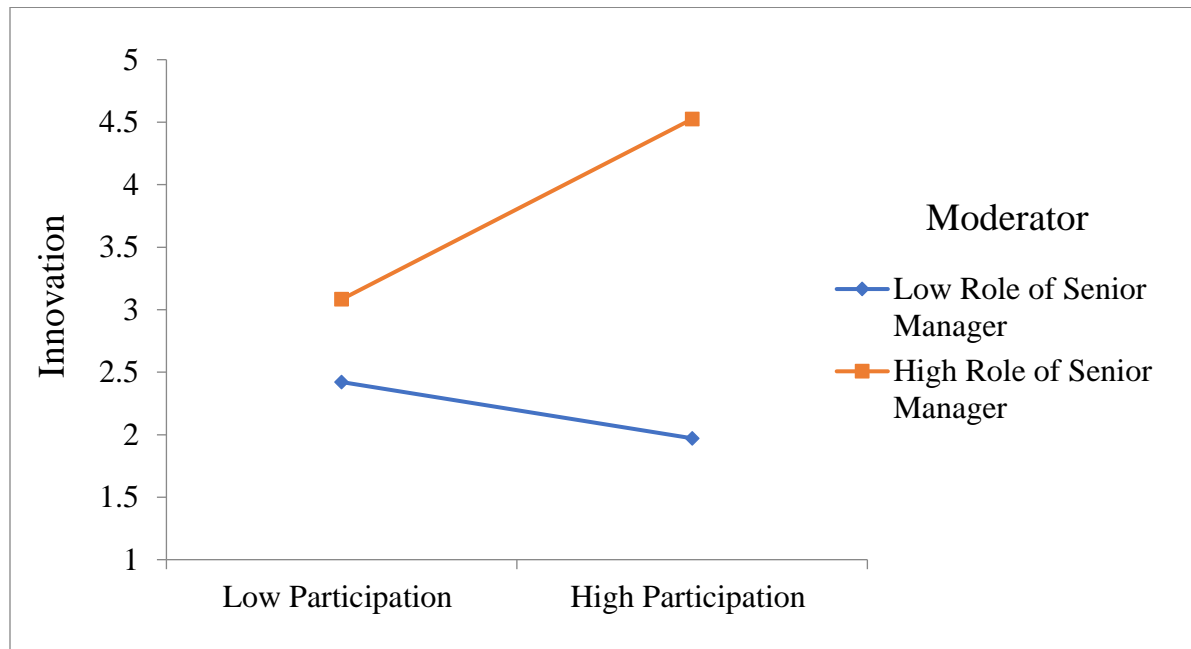
	f-squared	Effect Size (f <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Involvement (INV)</b>	0.234	Moderate
<b>Participation (PAR)</b>	0.079	Small
<b>Role of Senior Manager (RSM)</b>	0.821	Strong

Table 8 shows the predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>) which depicts the quality of the model. This value should not be less than zero (Henseler et al., 2009). The Q<sup>2</sup>

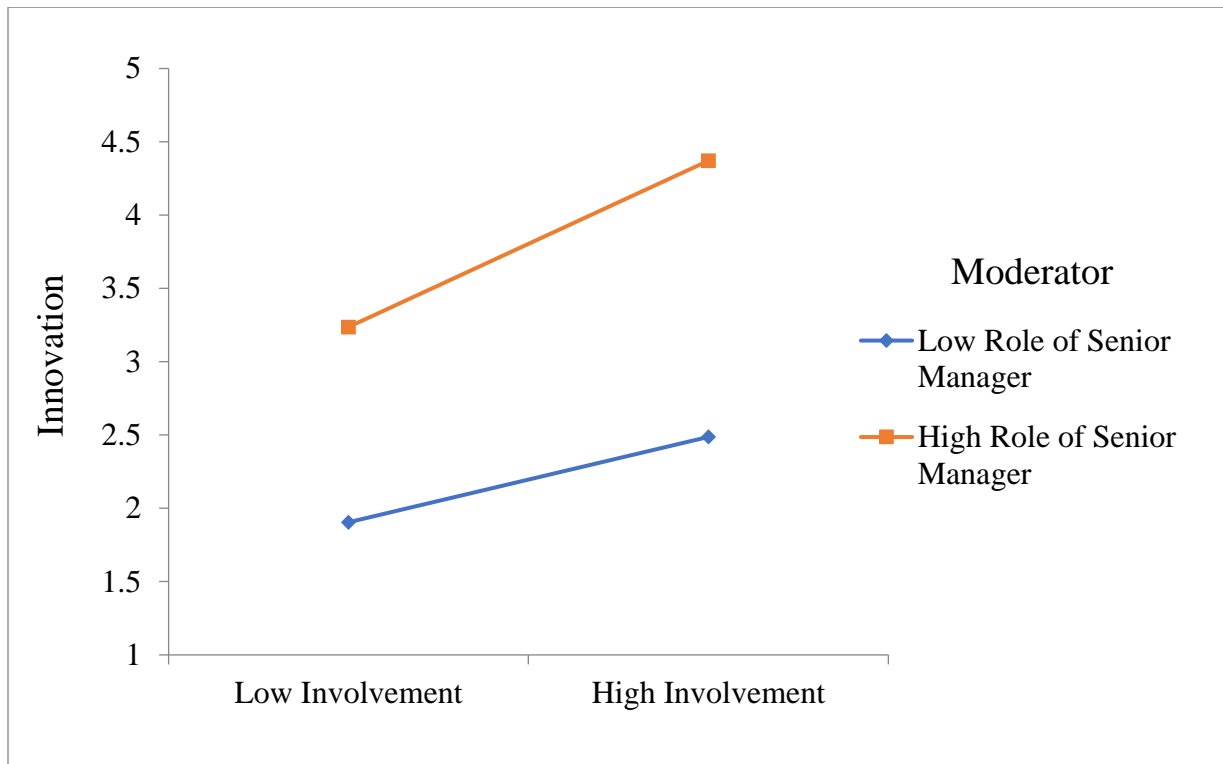
value in this study is 0.669 which is greater than zero.

**Table 8.** Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)

	SSO	SSE	Q <sup>2</sup> (=1-SSE/SSO)
<b>INNO</b>	1,080.00	357.874	0.669



**Figure 6.** Moderation effect between participation and IN



**Figure 7.** Moderation effect between involvement and IN

In both cases, the moderator strengthens the relationship between involvement, participation and IN.

**Discussion**

This study examined the link between the two determinants of EVC namely involvement and participation with IN, with the moderating effect of the role of senior manager.

In the analysis of this study, it is clarified that the determinants of EVC i.e. involvement and participation have significant impacts on IN. In the direct effect analysis, the t-values are 4.773, 3.206 and 15.081 respectively. The t-values in this analysis are greater than 1.96 which means that the independent variables have a substantial effect on the dependent variable.

Additionally, the positive beta values show that the relation between the variables is positive. In this current study, the beta values are 0.429, 0.248 and 0.804 which show that the relation between involvement, participation and IN is positive. This result is consistent with that of previous studies

which revealed that EVC and its determinants are helpful in enhancing IN (Bajwa et al., 2015). Employees participation and involvement through their voice behavior is helpful for organization to innovate, these results are consistent with some previous studies (see, for instance, Thornhill 2006, Rasheed et al., 2017).

Moreover, this current study also examined the role of senior manager in the actual relationship as a moderator. Results from the current analysis shows that the role of senior manager moderates the relationship between the determinants of EVC and IN. In the analysis, the t-values are greater than 1.96 which means that they are acceptable. The t-values are 4.922 and 2.308.

Likewise, the beta values in this analysis are positive i.e. 0.473 and 0.138 which show a moderately positive relationship. It means that the role of senior manager is helpful for employees in raising their voice and showing involvement and participation in

decision making as well as organizational IN. Senior managers build trust in employees which in turn makes them helpful for the organization. Hence, the role of senior manager strengthens the relationship between the EVC determinants and IN. These results are consistent with previous studies (e.g. Dundon et al., 2004; Macky & Boxall, 2007; Purcell & Hall 2012; Wilkinson, Townsend & Burgess, 2013; Townsend, 2013; Kaufman, 2000; Rusbult et al., 1988; Sels et al., 2006; Enz & Schwenk, 1991; Dietz, Wilkinson & Redman, 2009; Korsgaard et al. 1995).

### Conclusion

This present study was conducted to examine the relationship between EVC and organizational IN in the textile industry of Pakistan. Pakistan's textile industry is the backbone of the country's economy but is now experiencing a gradual decline. According to the textile industry division of the government of Pakistan, the textile sector is required to update its supply chain, improve productivity and formulate strategies that add value to this sector. Data is collected from the employees of the textile industry in Pakistan.

The findings revealed that the employees and their senior manager take active part in organizational IN. The employees participate and are involved in organizational issues, whilst the supportive behavior of the managers drives the organization to innovate. Employees of any firm or organization know the ground realities more than the managers. They are able to give out-of-the-box ideas, suggestions and opinions and if the managers support their ideas, the employees will become more involved in their work and participate more actively in solving organizational problems.

Likewise, the Pakistani textile industry could focus on the voice of their employees and behavior of their senior managers. The employees' new ideas and the supportive role of the upper management help enhance IN. IN in products and supply chain is a crucial need for organizations of today.

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