

**EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, JOB TENURE, AND JOB SECURITY AS PREDICTORS OF INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR AMONG STATE AGENCIES FOR MASS EDUCATION EMPLOYEES IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA**

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**Abstract:** *Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), an employee's ability to explore, generate, realize, promote and sustain new ideas, is a prerequisite for job performance and goal attainment in the workplace. However, evidence indicated low IWB of State Agencies for Mass Education (SAMEs) in southwestern Nigeria, which has influenced effective delivery of mass education programmes. This study, therefore, investigated the predictive power of educational qualifications, job tenure, and job security on employees' innovative work behavior in southwest Nigeria. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. Purposive sampling was used to select five (Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ekiti and Ondo) out of six states in southwestern Nigeria owing to their homogenous patterns in programme*

*monitoring, evaluation, and implementation. Two-hundred and eight (208) SAMEs employees were sampled. The questionnaire tagged Innovative Work Behaviour and Job Security were used to elicit information from the respondents, while interview guide was used to obtain information from the executive secretaries of the SAMEs. The quantitative data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 significance level, while the qualitative data were content-analyzed. The study revealed that the employees of the SAME maintained low degree of job security ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.22) at the agency level. The results revealed that the IWB of the SAME personnel did not vary statistically significantly based on their educational background ( $F_{2, 198} = 2.542$ ;  $p_{0.081} > 0.05$ ). Finally, the study indicated a statistically significant difference in the SAME employees' IWB on the basis of their job tenure  $F_{3, 197} = 7.081$  ( $p_{0.000} < 0.05$ ). The SAME employees' IWB differed in favor of those who had spent 6 years and above compared with their counterparts that did not. The study concluded that while employees exhibited a low orientation towards job security, their Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) was not significantly influenced by their educational background. However, job tenure emerged as a significant factor, with employees having 6 years or more of service demonstrating higher IWB. The study recommended among other that the government and another concerned stakeholder should priorities job security by providing employees with a sense of stability and permanence. They should introduce programmes that prioritize employee retention, recognizing that high turnover rates can negatively impact innovation and creativity. Creating opportunities for professional development, providing competitive compensation and benefits, and fostering a positive and supportive work environment are some strategies to do this.*

**Keywords:** *innovative work behavior; educational qualifications; job security; job tenure.*

### **Introduction**

Literacy is crucial for a nation's progress, enabling citizens to navigate daily life, adapt to change, and contribute to society. It opens doors to

opportunities and empowers individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Non-formal education initiatives fill gaps left by formal systems, targeting marginalized groups and out-of-school children (Kester, Gbenro, and Ogidan, 2021). The setup of NMEC and SAME/AANFE agencies ensures a structured approach to tackling literacy gaps among adults and out-of-school individuals. NMEC sets policies and provides support, while SAMEs implement programs and adapt policies to local needs, targeting vulnerable groups like women and nomads (Wami, 2022).

The establishment of SAME is a timely solution to Nigeria's literacy gap, given that 31.62% of Nigerians are non-literate (World Bank, 2022). Globally, 773 million adults struggle with basic literacy, with 580 million in E-9 countries like Nigeria (UNESCO, 2021). In some countries, formal education hasn't guaranteed literacy, e.g., in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, and Nigeria, only 49.6%, 33.9%, 27.2%, and 19.5% of elementary graduates can read/write, respectively (World Bank, 2022). Significant out-of-school populations exist across Nigeria's zones: South-East (19%), South-South (24%), North-Central (26%), North-East (33%), South-West (22%), and North-West (25%). In southwest states, rates vary: Ekiti (17%), Lagos (19%), Oyo (20%), Ondo (22%), Ogun (26%), and Osun (27%) (National Bureau of Statistics Report, 2020).

Aderinoye and Ladan (2021) highlighted that Nigeria faces significant literacy challenges: one-third of children are out of school, and one in three or four adults is non-literate. This has economic implications, with global costs estimated at \$1.2 trillion in GDP decline yearly, Nigeria losing around \$4.9 billion (Cree, Kay & Steward, 2022). The high non-literacy rate might be linked to low Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) among State Agency for Mass Education (SAME) employees. This could be further enhanced or marred by SAME employees' educational qualifications, job security and job tenure, respectively.

Educational qualifications are official confirmations, typically in the form of certificates, diplomas, or degrees, indicating the successful completion of an education programme or stage for employees (Amegayibor, 2021). Workers with advanced degrees like Master's or Ph.D. holders, are likely to display IWB because of their superior knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities. This to infer that higher educational qualifications can enhance employees' creativity, problem-solving skills, and adaptability which are crucial for IWB. The SAME might enhance its literacy mandate and promote creative by focusing on the educational qualifications of its employees especially the Adult and Mass literacy Officer (AMLO).

Job tenure is the duration an employee has with an organisation which indicate their seniority and experience. Employee loyalty, job stability, and progression prospects are all impacted by promotions, pay raises, and perks (Raja and Madhavi, 2018). Job tenure could be categorised into short-term, medium-term, and long-term. This varies for employees and organisations. In the short-term, employees often experience probationary periods, while in the long-term, employees gain more autonomy and influence. There is a need to note that tenured employees with extensive experience might be in position to provide a competitive advantage to organisations compare with his/her counterparts that lack similar experience.

Job security is a fundamental aspect that transcends organisational boundaries which seem to influence employees' stability, morale, and job satisfaction. Job security is the general certainty that an employee will remain employed at their present position for the foreseeable future (Butali and Njoroge, 2018). Job security creates a climate of confidence and commitment among employees. Stable employment guarantees a steady income. The success of the business and the team as a whole might be significantly impacted by job security. Employees' job security is critical for organisational survival and expansion, respectively.

Previous studies on the poor performance of SAME employees have focused largely on Personalised System of Instruction (Kester and Okemakinde (2008), compensation, resource provision, allocation and utilisation (Oyelami and Alokun 2019; Jonathan, 2020; Kester and Owojuyigbe, 2021), available programmes, instructors, accessibility, clientele distribution, and facilities (Soyele and Egunyomi, 2020), insufficient classrooms, reading facilities, educational resources, and power supply (Joseph, Ayodele, and Sia, 2014), with little or no attention on employees' IWB.

IWB-focused studies explored predictors such as leadership styles and training opportunities (Khaola and Oni, 2020; Aransi, and Akinyooye, 2025), gender and age (Aransi, Akinyooye, Odusanya, Sanni, and Babawale, 2025), and workplace happiness (Moreno and Ibara, 2017). In view of this, attention has not been fully tailored towards the predictive power of educational qualifications, job tenure and job security on SAME employees' IWB in Southwestern Nigeria. Hence, the gap filled by this study.

### **Objective of the Study**

The study's broad objective was to explore the predictive influence of educational qualifications, job tenure, and job security on SAME

employees' innovative work behaviour in southwest Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to;

- i. determine the level of job security maintained by SAME employees in Southwestern, Nigeria; and
- ii. investigate the differences in SAME employees' IWB on the basis of job tenure, and educational qualifications in Southwestern, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided the study.

- i. What is the level of job security maintained by SAME employees in Southwestern, Nigeria?
- ii. What are the differences in SAME employees' IWB on the basis of job tenure, and educational qualifications in Southwestern, Nigeria?

### **Literature Review**

Bekele and Singh (2022) examined how workers' creative behavior was affected by differences in demographic traits. The finding indicated that employees with advanced educational qualifications demonstrate more innovative work practices. Furthermore, Research revealed that individual employees with greater work experience tagged job tenure usually exhibit more innovative work practices than their counterparts with little experience. Leong and Rasli (2014) found no correlation between employees' innovative work habits and their educational attainment or sex. Sari and Adi (2021) reported no significant difference in educational level and employees' IWB during the global pandemic.

Throughout history, the human race has been concerned about security. It indicates a desire to maintain the status quo while believing that events and future trends of change will be predictable. Job security is a universal need; however, its prevalence differs between countries. A multitude of countries remain profoundly worried about the issue of unemployment and the stability of employment. Job insecurity increases the likelihood of individuals participating in creative work activities, as shown by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on companies and organizations. Two forms of work instability may be differentiated: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative work insecurity pertains to the continuity of employment, while qualitative job insecurity emphasizes the sustainability of different aspects of the job (Ham and Salendu, 2022).

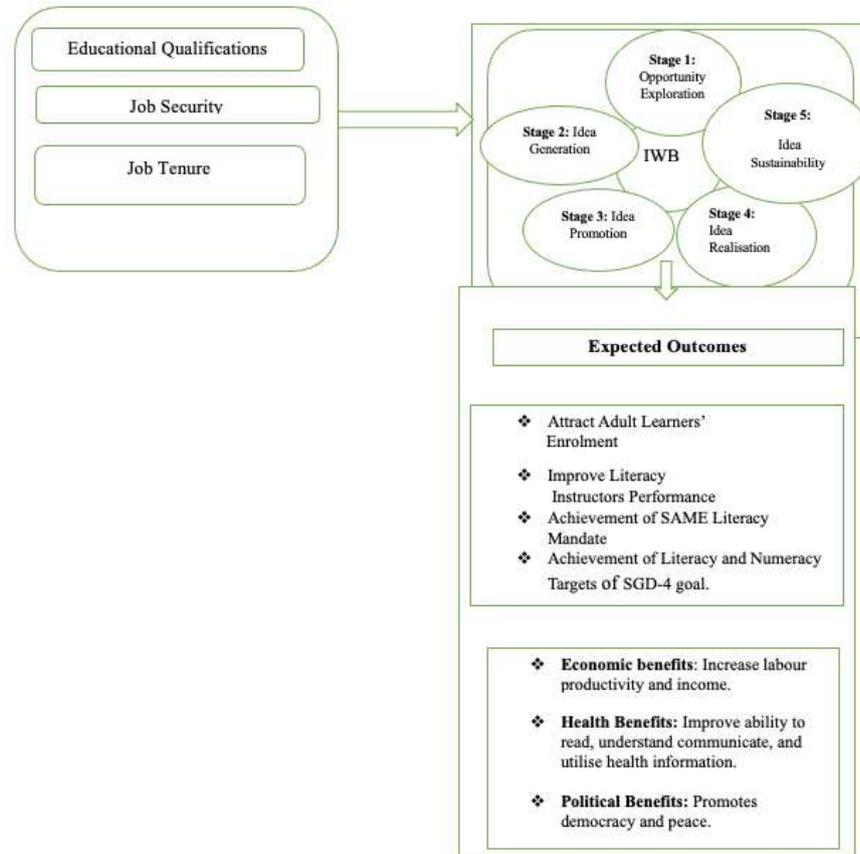
Employees seek employment security, whereas employers want to hire new people or keep their current staff (Domfeh and Hunsaker, 2020). The number of employment losses will rise correspondingly as the

number of available jobs decreases. "Job security" refers to the assumption of a worker that their employment would be consistent and stable. Job security may be seen by workers as an indication that their bosses are concerned about their welfare, which might result in more constructive interactions and better working relationships (Du, 2022). Most people agree that employment assurance is a good measure of job satisfaction. Job security, according to Kumar (2019), is the possibility that an individual will continue to work. However, work satisfaction is often lower for employees who feel less secure than for those who feel safer. Wang, Lu, and Siu (2015) identified an inverse relationship between heightened work insecurity and job performance. Shouvik, Hisam, and Baomar (2018) assert that the various facets of job security significantly affect employee satisfaction and performance. In addition, they argued that employees' perception of security at work is also influenced by their position in the labor market, namely the kind of job they have. Compared to temporary workers, permanent employees had more job security. Sverke and Hellgren (2001) agreed that employees who experience job uncertainty are more motivated to enhance their performance in order to secure their position within the business. In addition, they discovered that job instability impairs workers' overall well-being, attitudes, and participation at work as well as their faith in management.

Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, and Ashley (2014) discovered that older age, residing in rural areas, having poorer physical function, earning higher salaries, experiencing a stronger sense of autonomy in the workplace, and having less frequent sentiments of personal success are factors that contribute to longer employment duration among home care aides.

Cheng and Chan (2008) discovered a direct correlation between work uncertainty and the desire to leave a job, as well as the detrimental impact of instability on one's health. Their results showed that workers who had been with the organization for a shorter time had a stronger association between job security and turnover than those who had been there for a longer time. Furthermore, this association was more pronounced among younger workers than among older ones. Conversely, individuals who had worked for the firm longer saw a greater negative effect on health outcomes from job insecurity than those who had been there for a shorter amount of time. In addition, this negative impact was more severe among older employees compared to younger ones.

## Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework exhibits the interplay between dependent variable (IWB) and independent variables comprised educational qualifications, job security and job tenure. From the framework, employee educational qualifications can have a dual impact on innovative work behavior. With respect to positive direction, higher education may enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills thereby fostering innovation. On the part of negative impact, higher qualifications may lead to rigid thinking patterns or overemphasis on established practices, hence, leading to stifling creativity among employees.

Job security can have both positive and negative effects on innovative work behavior. On the positive side, secure employees are more likely to take risks, suggest new ideas, and engage in creative problem-solving. On the negative side, job security may lead to complacency, reducing motivation to innovate and improve processes. Job tenure has

a complex relationship with innovative work behaviour. On one hand, longer tenure can bring expertise and organizational knowledge, enhancing innovation. On the other hand, it may lead to stagnation and resistance to change, hindering innovation. However, Enhanced innovation in State Agency for Mass Education leads to improved adult learner enrolment, instructor performance, and achievement of literacy goals, directly resulting in economic, health, and political benefits for individuals and society.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. This design enables the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies for data gathering and interpretation within a single study subject. This design is considered invaluable because the data collected from the instrument's qualitative section (Key Informant Interview, KII) was utilized to complement and better clarify the empirical results of the quantitative instrument (questionnaire).

### **Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The target population comprised all two hundred and thirty-five (235) permanent employees of the SAME in the five southwestern states, Nigeria.

The study's sample size was two hundred and eight (208) SAME employees of the officer cadres and above (Level 8 and above). This sample was taken from five southwestern states of Nigeria using multi-stage and purposive sampling procedures. Lagos State was not included in the sample states since it was utilized to evaluate the instrument's reliability.

The SAME employees were selected from officer cadres and above using the purposive sampling approach. The reason being that the SAME employees of the officer cadres and above are saddled with the responsibilities of direct evaluation, monitoring, and implementation of literacy-oriented programmes of the agency. Two stages were created in each of the five states used. The first stage consisted of the respondents scheduled for the questionnaire, while the second stage contained the participants for the Key Informant Interview (KII).

Two hundred and three (203) SAME employees of the officer cadres and above, excluding the executive secretaries or coordinating directors of the agency were enumerated for the questionnaire. This consisted of forty-nine (49), twenty-six (26), thirty-four (34), sixty-four (64) and thirty (30) sampled respondents from Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti, Ogun and Osun States, respectively. Five SAME executive

secretaries/coordinating directors were purposively enumerated for Key Informant Interviews. Executive secretaries, coordinating directors, and literacy unit directors are responsible for managing human and material resources to achieve the agency's mandate.

### **Instruments**

The study employed the IWB Questionnaire (IWBQ), and Job Security Questionnaire (JSQ), while educational qualification and job tenure surfaced under demographic characteristics of the instrument. The Key Informant Interview guide was used to collect information for the qualitative section. These instruments are discussed as thus:

#### **Innovative Work Behaviour Questionnaire (IWBQ)**

The IWB of SAME employees was proxied using a modified version of the multi-dimensional IWB construct created by Lambriex-Schmitz *et al.*, (2020). This instrument consisted of forty-four question items that were utilized by academic and non-academic staff members in the Netherlands' vocational education system. Four items for opportunity exploration, seven for idea generation, seven items for idea promotion, nine items for idea realization, and seventeen items for idea sustainability made up the construct, which was separated into five dimensions. Consequently, twenty-five of the forty-four elements deemed important were refined and put to use. Each of the following areas was covered by five components: opportunity exploration, idea generation, promotion, realization, and sustainability. The Likert scale employed are: 5 = Very High Extent (VHE), 4 = High Extent (HE), 3 = Moderate Extent (ME), 2 = Low Extent (LE), and 1 = Very Low Extent (VLE).

#### **Job Security Questionnaire (JSQ) Subscale**

The self-designed Job security Questionnaire (JSQ) of seven items was used to measure job security. The scale has a Likert rating comprising 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), and 3 = Agree (A), and 4 = Strongly Agree (SA).

#### **Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

The instruments were subjected to face and content validity. The items were presented in a straightforward and clear manner on the surface, using basic and unambiguous English language. The input from the educational measurement and evaluation expert was explored with respect to content validity. Twenty-five (25) SAME staff from Lagos State were given the questionnaire to test its reliability. The Cronbach

Alpha reliability produced 0.86 and 0.87 for innovative work behavior and job security subscales, respectively.

### **Methods of Data Administration and Analyses**

The researchers, two trained research assistants and staff members of the agency used in each of the sampled states involved in the administration of the questionnaire. The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) sessions were conducted by one of the researchers. The data collected via questionnaire were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The responses from the sessions of the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were content analyzed.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The University of Ibadan Social Sciences Ethics Committee gave its approval with the assigned number UI/SSHREC/2023/0144. This study adhered to anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation. There was no room for inducement before, during and after their participation in the research.

### **Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of job security maintained by SAME employees in Southwestern, Nigeria?

**Table 1:** presents the level job security maintained among same employees in southwest, Nigeria.

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>
<b>Interpretation/Decision</b>			
Job Security	201	2.22	0.73
Low			

### **Interpretation and Discussion**

The findings revealed that the employees of the SAME maintained low degree of job security ( $\bar{x}= 2.22$ ) at the agency level. This would make them feel anxious, stressed, or demotivated, thereby leading to decreased productivity, absenteeism, or turnover. However, these employees cannot be disengaged unexpectedly from their employer without committing a punishable offense. But they could be nursing a mindset of switching from their current workplace to another which they feel is better than SAME.

This is to say that insecurity can undermine intrinsic motivation, limit creativity-relevant processes, and hinder domain-relevant skills development. Feeling unstable or threatened can lead to stress, anxiety,

and decreased creative thinking, ultimately impacting employee innovation and performance. Job insecurity can stifle employees' willingness to take risks, experiment, and generate novel ideas.

In agreement, Lee and Whitford (2022) found that tenured government employees experienced low job security due to political polarization, budget cuts, and changes in leadership. Despite having tenure, these employees felt uncertain about their job stability which highlighting the impact of external factors on their feeling of job security. Zhu (2023) submitted that low job security can hinder employees' personal and professional planning, reducing their investment in work and opportunities for growth and development. Baldwin and Chronister (2022) similarly discovered that tenured faculty members faced increased job insecurity due to budget cuts, changes in leadership, and shifts in institutional priorities. This suggests that tenure may not be the guarantee of job security it once was and that academic employees are also vulnerable to external factors affecting their job stability. An informant r strengthened the essence of job security among employees by reiterating that: job security can significantly boost IWB by fostering creativity among employees which in turn would promote growth and competitiveness. It fosters trust and collaboration among employees as well as enables them to share ideas and work together to solve problems.

**(KII/Ekiti/Executive Secretary/Female/2023).**

**Research Question 2:** What are the differences in SAME employees' IWB on the basis of job tenure, and educational qualifications in Southwestern, Nigeria?

**Table 2a: Difference in SAME Employees' IWB on the Basis of Educational Qualifications**

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups 2.542	1271.377	2	635.688	0.081
Within Groups	49514.842	198	250.075	
Total	50786.219	200		

**Table 2b: Difference in SAME Employees' IWB on the Basis of Job Tenure**

F	Sig	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Square

Between Groups	4943.249	3	1647.750	7.081
0.000*				
Within Groups	45842.969	197	232.705	
Total	50786.219	200		

**Table 2c: Results of Post Hoc Comparisons Dunnett T3 on Age and Job Tenure**

IWB			Mean Difference (I-J)	S. E	Sig.	
95% Confidence Interval						
						Lo wer Bo und Up per Bo und
<b>Job Tenure</b>						
	6-10 Yrs.	12.856*	3.393	.001		
4.95	20.76					
	11-15Yrs.	15.023*	3.565	.000		
1-5 Yrs.						
6.72	23.33					
	16 Yrs. and Above	13.646*	3.393	.000		
5.74						

The results in table 2a revealed that the IWB of the SAME personnel did not vary statistically significantly based on their educational background ( $F_{2, 198} = 2.542$ ;  $p_{0.081} > 0.05$ ). The probability value of .05 was less than the sig. value of 0.081. This means that IWB among SAME employees did not differ significantly on the basis of the educational qualifications of the employees under investigation. The findings indicated that a greater level of education does not always translate into a noticeably higher IWB among workers. Thus, IWB may be more significantly influenced by other variables

Sari and Adi (2021) reported no significant difference in educational level and employees' IWB during the global pandemic which was in tandem with the findings of this research work. This study's findings are in line with those of Leong and Rasli (2014), who suggested that workers' IWB may not be impacted by their educational attainment. On the contrary, Bekele and Singh (2022) reported that an employee's educational background significantly influences how innovatively they perform in Ethiopian institutes of research.

An informant concurred that *Higher levels of education can only provide a foundation for critical thinking and problem-solving but may not guarantee IWB (KII/Ekiti/Executive Secretary/Female/2023).*

Another informant expressed the premium his agency placed on the relevancy of the educational certificate by stating:

- As far as our appointment of employees into the Adult and Mass Literacy Officers (AMLOS) is concerned, the premium is in most cases placed on those who possess adult-education-oriented qualifications regardless of sex. This is working perfectly for the agency to always monitor, evaluate and implement the agency's policies and programmes **(KII/Oyo/Director/Male/ 2023).**
- In the same vein, an informant stated that educational background influences a person's belief in their creativity and innovation capacity. Possessing the required credentials can inspire intrinsic motivation and encourage novel initiative. Ensuring qualifications fit the position's demands can encourage IWB by providing workers with autonomy, drive, and accountability **(IDI/Ondo/Director/Male/2023).**

Table 2b indicated a statistically significant difference in the SAME employees' IWB on the basis of their job tenure  $F(3, 197) = 7.081$  ( $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ ). This is because sig. value of 0.000 was lesser than the probability value of .05. This, according to post-hoc results of table 2c, indicated that SAME employees' IWB differed in favor of those who had spent 6 years and above compared with their counterparts that did not. This suggested that there is a critical threshold of job tenure (6 years) beyond which employees' IWB tends to improve. Employees with longer tenure may have developed a stronger sense of commitment, loyalty and engagement with the agency leading to more favorable IWB.

Huang and Hsieh (2020) and Bekele and Singh (2022) have shown that longer employment length is associated with improved work behavior, including organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and organizational commitment. They corroborated the finding that workers who have been on the job for six years or longer typically have better IWB than those who have worked there for less time.

An informant corroborated that experience is considered the best teacher, and an employee's years of service significantly influence their ability to complete agency-level assignments, as they learn and improve the fundamentals of the agency's activities **(KII/Ogun/Director/ Female/2023).**

This study suggests a nexus between employees' job tenure and creativity, as longer tenure can enhance domain-relevant skills and expertise. Experienced employees may possess deeper knowledge, enabling more innovative solutions. However, tenure can also lead to complacency or rigid thinking, potentially stifling creativity.

### **Conclusion**

Employees maintained low orientation towards job security. A greater level of education does not translate into a noticeably higher IWB among workers. SAME employees' IWB differed on the basis of job tenure but in favor of those who had spent 6 years and above compared with their counterparts that did not.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are raised.

- (i) On the basis of educational qualifications, SAME heads should establish a clear innovation framework, outlining goals, expectations, and resources available to support innovative tasks. This framework should be communicated across all levels and departments regardless of educational qualifications. They should establish partnerships with external organisations, such as educational institutions or private firms to access new ideas, technologies, and expertise. This would provide employees with opportunities to learn from others and bring new perspectives back to their work.
- (ii) For SAME employees to leverage job security, they must focus on building a strong foundation of trust and stability in their role, prioritise responsibilities, meet deadlines, and consistently deliver high-quality work to demonstrate their value to the organisation. In addition to feeling free to express their creative ideas with no fear of reprisal or losing their job, they should research the permanence and security that come with having a profession.
- (iii) Government and another concerned stakeholder should prioritise job security by providing employees with a sense of stability and permanence. They should introduce programmes that prioritise employee retention, recognising that high turnover rates can negatively impact innovation and creativity. Creating

opportunities for professional development, providing competitive compensation and benefits, and fostering a positive and supportive work environment are some strategies to do this.

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