

# **Influence of Locus Control and Work Environment on Job Innovativeness during Covid-19 Pandemic among Hospital Employees in Ogun State, Nigeria.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Job innovation in organization is important and its role in maximizing employee and organizational productivity in wealth creation and economic development could not be downplayed especially during COVID-19 pandemic. This knowledge fostered the need to carry out this research which was aimed to study the influence of work locus of control and work environment on job innovativeness among employees of some state hospitals in Ogun State, Nigeria. Using stratified random sampling a total of 233 participants responded to three standardized psychological scales; namely work locus of control scale to measure work locus of control, work environment scale to measure work environment and job innovativeness scale to measure job innovativeness. Linear Regression and the t-Test for independent samples statistics were utilized to analyze collected data. The data assembled was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings of this research revealed that employees with the internal locus of control have significantly higher job innovativeness than employees with external locus of control ( $P < .05$ ).

The work environment of the employee contributed 4.6% variance to job innovativeness. The implication of this study was discussed in line with economic development and sustainability in the economic realities in Nigeria. It is recommended that in the new normal, organizations should explore job innovativeness through related transformations in individual disposition of internal locus of control and changes in work environment in the context of health care services.

**Keywords:** Job innovativeness, COVID-19, Economic reality, Work environment, Locus of control

## **INTRODUCTION**

The role of innovation in organization is indubitably maximizing employee and organizational productivity (Kylliäinen, 2019) in wealth creation and economic development. Innovation is the key to ensure success, future growth (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012) and survival of organization especially for healthcare in the era of COVID-19 pandemic. Innovation can be applied to the development of products, methods of management, ways of doing works, the readiness of employees within the organization to adopt innovativeness for diagnostic and therapeutic options. True innovation could create added value for the organization, other stakeholders as well as the community (Schumpeter, 1934).

Specifically, job innovativeness in hospitals is basically the implementation of anything new to the health care organization. Damanpour (1991) expressed innovation as the generation, development and adaptation of novel ideas or behavior. This novel idea, in a hospital context as stated by Salge and Vera (2009), consists of new products such as medical technology, novel services such as clinical procedures, new processes such as therapeutic strategy or novel organizational structures such as organizational form. This novel idea is required especially in the era of COVID-19 pandemic which necessitates new processes, new normal and therefore new future.

Link the above paragraph with covid-19 pandemic

Hitherto, the World Health Organization (WHO) explained that ‘health innovation’ improves the efficiency, effectiveness, quality, sustainability, safety, and or affordability of healthcare (World Health Organization [WHO], 2016). This description includes ‘new or improved’ health policies, practices, systems, products and technologies, services, and delivery methods that result in improved healthcare, patient satisfaction, education, access to care and improvements in research (McSherry & Douglas, 2011). The ultimate goal of health innovation is to improve healthcare worker’s ability to meet public and personal healthcare needs and demands by optimizing the performance of the health system (Wutzke, Benton, & Verma, 2016).

In reaction to COVID-19 pandemic invasion of the world in 2019, the Director General of World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) gave an insight for the new realities. He explained that people actually want to return to their normal lives but it is not feasible because there is a new normal. New normal include new behavior such as, use of face mask and social distancing to prevent infections and make the world healthier, safer and prepared for the future. COVID-19 obstructed every facet of life, health, human management, ranging from commerce to trade, business, services, employment, sports, education to transportation (Olanipekun, 2021). In the current era of COVID-19 that has invaded the world by surprise, US Center for Disease Control and Prevention since February 2020 endorsed that health care providers offer clinical services through virtual means (De Bode, 2021).

### **Locus of control on Job innovativeness**

Job innovativeness rests on the employees (both medical & non-medical) in the organization who are constantly working towards the achievement of the organization’s goal (Amabile & Khaire, 2008). Major attributes of personality could likely have influence on organizational behavior such as job innovativeness and job performance (Woods, Anderson, Mustafa & Sayer, 2018). One of such major personality attributes is locus of control (Shannak & Ammer, 2012). Locus of control may enhance performance, level of innovation and ultimately sustainability (McMurray & Simmers, 2019).

Locus of control developed by Rotter in 1954 refers to the degree to which people believe they have control over situations and experiences or over the outcome of events in their lives as opposed to external forces (Rotter, 1966). According to Rotter (1966), locus of control represents two continuums, internal locus of control and external locus of control; an individual with external locus of control believes that the outcome of events in their life is being controlled by external forces beyond ones influence while an individual with an internal locus of control believes that the outcome of events in their life can only be determined and influenced by their own self and the efforts or lack of effort they add to it (Rotter, 1966).

Specifically, when the outcome of events is related to one’s work, Spector (1988) termed it Work Locus of Control (WLOC); a contemporary prevailing individual-oriented personality construct and likely determinant of job innovation. The individuals with internal locus of control are likely to be more innovative than individuals with external locus of control. The work locus of control concept originated from Spector and is an employee’s disposition to control work events. Work locus of control is not different from the original locus of control concept, it basically refers to how employees believe that they can control work events (Spector, 1988). Employees who are rated to have external locus of control are called Externals, while employees rated as having low locus of control are regarded as Internals. The work locus of control is believed to significantly influence organizational behavior generally, which involves job innovativeness and performance (Chen & Silverthones, 2008; Gangai, Mahakud & Sharma, 2016). During the COVID-19 pandemic, there is unprecedented demand on hospital employees; As the first contact of patients, personality of hospital employee such as work locus of control is abruptly brought to bear. While the Internals will nippily control work events and be innovative; the Externals will await others to control events and proffer solutions.

Link your above literature with Covid-19 pandemic. Remember you are studying your variables of your study in the context of covid-19 pandemic!

### **Work environment on job innovativeness**

The work environment which surrounds an employee's job could encourage and contribute to employee's innovative activities (Lee, Wong, Foo, & Leung, 2011). The work environment is duly noted by Haynes (2008), as a probable key determinant of the quality of an employee's work as well as their level of performance which includes innovativeness. Kohun (2002) describes the work environment as a total of relationships between multiple things that exists within employees and the environment they work in. Kyko (2005) outlined two basic forms of work environment to be conducive and toxic environment. Generally, the influence a work environment has on the employees is based on how conducive or toxic the work environment is. A conducive work environment would accelerate employee's performance and productivity, which could in turn boost their innovativeness, while a toxic work environment will do the reverse (Kyko, 2005). Specially, a more conducive and employee considerate hospital organization may achieve more than other hospital organizations with toxic environment.

Kyko (2005) believed that the self-actualizing traits in employees could to a large extent be estimated by how toxic or conducive the work environment is. Kyko stated that a conducive workplace environment would rightly impact and change irresponsible employees to be responsible whilst giving pleasurable experiences to these employees thereby helping them actualise goals effectively. Whereas the opposite would be the case for a toxic workplace environment as it would mostly and only give painful experiences rather than pleasurable experiences, which in turn would only de-actualize employee's behavior (Kyko, 2005). A healthy and conducive workplace environment supports employee to create a high-performance culture that encourages innovation and creativity (Kohun, 2002). COVID-19 barged into the world uninvited then again it was unprepared for. Even the world's best health facilities were overwhelmed by its surge of human casualties needing admission and treatment. Moreover, employees in hospital organization conducive work environment may probably exhibit job innovativeness while employees in hospital organizations with toxic work environment may not.

Link the above literature with covid-19 pandemic

### **Literature Review**

The person-environment correspondence theory was proposed by Rene Dawis and Lloyd Lofquist in the mid 1960's in their attempts to develop concepts of a trait and factor matching model; their major focus was on work adjustment. According to them work adjustment is the process of achieving and maintaining correspondence and can be indicated by the satisfaction of an employee with the work environment and the satisfaction of the work environment with the employee (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). What this means is that for an employee to be effectively comfortable, be highly productive and likewise innovative in a work place, there must be a stable, suitable and healthy relationship with the work environment and one's satisfaction. The work environment must be able to effectively meet the needs of the employees respectively and relatively and the employees must also on the other hand effectively meet the standards of the working environment and working conditions in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives; once this is attained work adjustment has taken place.

This theory focuses on an individual employee's development, continual process and needs. The underlying basic assumption of this theory is that every employee must find and maintain a positive relationship with their work environment to be successful. Every employee searches for work environment that provides their essential needs and values; while the environment is in turn searching for employees who are capable of

meeting the organization's set of requirements. Both the employee and work environment bring their own set of requirements, therefore, every employee must maintain a certain level of congruence and correspondence with their work environment to survive. This means that the work environment must meet the requirement of the individual and the individual must meet the job requirements. A continuous deliberate maintenance of correspondence with the work environment can be achieved through work adjustment which is further divided into two: active and reactive. The active mode is characterised by the worker attempting to change the work environment. While the reactive mode is characterised by the worker attempting to correspond better with the work environment. When employee's satisfaction with work place are high, correspondence occurs which will lead to innovativeness (Cronin, 2015).

Christensen, Ojomo and Dillion (2019) opined that innovation plays game changing role. The right kind of innovation not only builds organizations but also builds countries especially countries with some of the world's most desperate or distressed economies. Innovation revolution that can lead to prosperity, whereby leading to creation of new products and services that can open up new markets. Christensen offers a new framework for economic growth based on market-creating innovation. Especially, in relation to healthcare organizations and hospitals, innovation is becoming a crucial trend in developed markets, emerging markets (Ehrbeck, Henke, & Kibasi, 2020) that should also apply to Africa in general and Nigeria too. This application is germane in the COVID-19 pandemic era. The active hospital employee changes the work environment by exhibiting job innovativeness. Thus, in the new normal, through new processes, creative healthcare services and products for an expectant adaptive patients and populace; these may restore health and economies.

Link the discussion of the theory with covid-19 pandemic

Several researchers have attempted investigating the variables in this study. Job innovativeness of employees in any organization is important in determining and accelerating the effectiveness and the productivity of such organization. For instance a study by McMurray and Simmers (2019), investigating the relationship between locus of control and workplace innovation found that internal locus of control had a positive and significant effect on innovation while external locus of control had a negative impact on innovation. Another study by Dawwas and Haddad (2018) indicated that there is a significant impact of entrepreneur's locus of control on their innovativeness and entrepreneurs with internal locus of control has significantly higher innovativeness than entrepreneurs with external locus of control. Furthermore, Lumpkin and Erdogan (1999) predicted the possibility of a positive relationship to exist between locus of control and innovativeness.

The study by Casimiro and Escoval (2013) to analyze the relationship between innovation and performance revealed that innovation is a strategic lever to enhance performance by hospital administrators. Albaity, Zeffane, and Jamal (2017) found that work environment is a significant determinant of employees' innovative behavior. Also, a study done by Dul and Ceylan (2011), has revealed that work environment is positively and significantly related to employee's creative performance; thereby indicating that an employee's work environment significantly predicts their job innovativeness. In an empirical study, Awang, Sapie, Hussain, Ishak and Yusof (2019) showed that work environment have a significant influence on the formation of innovative work behavior.

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The aforementioned literature looked at either the influence of work locus of control on job innovativeness or the influence of work environment on job innovativeness; however scarcely any study had considered the influence of these variables during COVID-19 pandemic.

This lacuna of the influence of work locus of control and work environment on job innovativeness during

COVID-19 pandemic need to be addressed since there has been persistence in the occurrence of the pandemic in the world.

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COVID-19 is a global pandemic an aftermath of outbreak of corona virus which started in China in 2019 (WHO, 2019) and reached Nigeria shores on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 (Akinbobola & Ogunwole 2021; NCDC, 2020). WHO affirmed on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020 a public health emergency (WHO, 2020) to which various nations including Nigeria declared lockdown. During the lockdown, there was neither human and nor vehicular movement. In essence, there was no flow of productive resources and no flow of goods and money in the system. Olanipekun (2021), using Inegbedion (2021) circular flow of income model opined that no movement means there is no any form of interaction; while no flow means stagnation in the economic system.

However, by the end of the third quarter of 2020, restriction on movement was eased in Nigeria. The World Bank (2021) economic update showed that Nigeria was able to exit from its deepest recession in four decades. Consequently, oil prices recovered, and the government implemented sensible and timely policies to counter the economic shock on Nigeria's welfare and created new fiscal space. Concomitantly, these are short lived as World Bank (2021) warned that activity in the economic sector will not fully normalize unless COVID-19 is contained. Knowing fully well that poverty increased in 2020 due to the combined effects of COVID-19 and rising prices of oil products.

Understandably, Nigeria is not as well established to and may not officially accommodate pandemic disruptions as the developed countries are well equipped to. There is need for her to sustain resilience through reforms as there still exist decline in demand for oil products and constrained economic activities (Olanipekun, 2021). Moreover, Fatunke (2021) discoursed that Nigeria practices money-driven ideology as against an ideology that is based on individuals' need to create and transform innovative desires. Money-driven ideology lacks the individual's rights to access one's mind for creative innovation as well as tap into the genius of others, promote human participation and developments. Remarkably, innovation brings about wealth creation and sustainability. The current economic realities in Nigeria, is the imminent likelihood of the country facing continued devaluation of the naira, deregulation of the downstream of the oil sector and unemployment.

In healthcare industry, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed incomparable burden on modern healthcare systems (Jansen, Furstenthal & Cohen; 2020), the industry's response has vividly demonstrated its resilience and ability to bring innovations to market quickly. Nevertheless, the crisis is likely yet over and the sector's innovation capabilities should continue to rise. Work environment may be an element auspicious or otherwise to the development of innovative activity, performance and productivity of the employee in healthcare. Hospitals are vital for the progress of any country; the COVID-19 global pandemic has evidently demonstrated so. Hospitals are exception to lockdown, hospitals are the first port of call or haven for the patients and the hospital employees are in the frontline of response.

Consideration of work environment and the individual factor, such as the employee personality which has the potential to influence the employee's job innovativeness is apt. There is dearth of empirical work on the influence of the variables being studied, work locus of control and work environment on job innovativeness among employees in state hospitals in Ogun State, Nigeria, as there are fewer studies of such done in Nigeria, especially during COVID-19 pandemic. The gap in literature can be better addressed through this study.

The following hypotheses were generated from the literature review.

1. Employees with internal locus of control will score significantly higher in job innovativeness than those with external locus of control among hospital employees in Ogun State.
2. Work environment will significantly predict job innovativeness among hospital employees in Ogun State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study is a cross-sectional survey utilized to examine the influence of work locus of control and work environment on job innovativeness among medical and non-medical employees of state hospitals in Ogun state, Nigeria. There are two independent variables which are work locus of control and work environment; and one dependent variable which is job innovativeness.

### **The Study Area**

This study was conducted in Ogun State, it was focused specifically on State Hospitals. Ogun State was selected for this study because of its relative closeness to Lagos State which is the commercial capital of Nigeria. Ogun State's boundaries with Lagos State are not defined by space and so parts of Ogun State are actually indwelled by people who work in Lagos State and drive home to those parts of Ogun State as do fellow Lagosian. Several of the participants surveyed actually live in Lagos State and a bulk of their patients also live in Lagos State.

### **The Study Population**

The study population was medical and non-medical employees in state hospitals in Ogun state. According to Digest of Medical and Health Statistics (2017) the population of employees engaged in medical and health services in the state owned hospitals are 1561. The sample includes 233 male and female medical and non-medical employees from state hospitals within Ogun State.

### **Research Instruments**

A battery of tests comprising of three psychological tests and a section for demographic data was used for data collection.

The Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS) measures employee's locus of control, by assessing their belief on whether or not they can control events at work. The instrument is a 16-item scale designed by Spector (1988), with a format rated on a 6-point response choice: 1-Disagree very much, 2-Disagree moderately, 3-Disagree slightly, 4-Agree slightly, 5-Agree moderately, and lastly 6-Agree very much. The scale's total score is the sum of all the items, which ranges from 16 to 96, based on the lowest a respondent can score and the highest. The scale is designed to be scored such that externals score high on the test, while internals score low on the test. The scale has been used in Nigeria by researchers e.g. Akinbobola and Akinwale (2017). The author reported an Internal Consistency (coefficient alpha) that ranges from .80 to .85 in the English Language version.

The Job Innovativeness Scale developed by Hurt, Joseph and Cook (1977) was designed to measure individuals' orientations towards innovation. It provides researchers with a systematic method for evaluating the connection between innovativeness and firm performance. The job innovativeness scale has 20 items,

the response format is a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 5-Strongly agree' to 1-Strongly disagree. This scale has been used in Nigeria by a number of researchers e.g. Akinbobola and Teluwo (2018) Obunike and Udu (2019). Internal reliability was assessed by means of Cronbach alpha scores and item-to-total corrections.

The Work Environment Scale developed by Friis (1981) measures the social environment of all types of work settings. The WES-10 can be used to describe the workplace social environments, contrast employees' and managers' views of their work groups, and compare actual and preferred work environments. This instrument has 10 items with four subscales: (self-realisation, workload, conflict & nervousness). The workload and conflict subscales focus on the work environment, the self-realisation subscale focuses on personal growth, support and achievement value and the nervousness subscale aims to measure how nervous or tense the staff members feel in their organization (Rossberg, Eiring and Friis, 2004). The response format has Likert scales ranging from 'frequency scale', 'importance scale' and 'quality scale' all assessing the respondent's general view and opinion of the quality of their work environment and the satisfaction they derive from it. The psychometric properties of the subscales were developed by Rossberg, Eiring, and Friis, (2004). The scale has been used in Nigeria by several researchers Akinyele (2007); Akinbobola and Ogunwole (2021).

### Sampling Procedure

Utilizing stratified random sampling technique, a total of three states hospitals and 233 participants were randomly selected. Stratified sampling involves the selection of participants according to how they are distributed in the population by strata such as sex and some relevant demographic variables (Balogun, 2005).

### Data Collection Technique

A proposal was first written to the Ogun State Hospitals Management Board to obtain approval so as to share the research instrument which was used to collect data. Once permission was given, the researcher set out to distribute the research instrument to the participants. Participants were first briefed on the aim of the study and were told approximately how long it will take them to complete the test. The participants were informed of the reason for the research. Participants were requested to participate voluntarily. They were assured that the data and results gotten from this research were used for academic purposes. The participants were required to answer the questionnaires completely; after which they were collected back from them and the participants were thanked for their cooperation as well as their time.

### Data Analysis

The data assembled was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Hypothesis 1 was analyzed with t-Test for independent samples while hypothesis 2 was analyzed with linear regression statistics.

## RESULTS

### Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables		No	%		SD
Gender	Male	104	44.6	68.76	14.50
	Female	129	55.4	67.94	12.37

Marital Status	Married	170	72.6	69.21	13.14
	Single	61	26.1	65.72	13.91
	Divorced	3	1.3	67.66	0.57
Job Status	Medical	120	51.5	70.84	12.03
	Non-Medical	113	48.3	65.58	14.17

There were 233 participants from 3 state hospitals in Ogun State, Nigeria surveyed on this study. From Table 1, the gender distribution shows that 104(44.6%) of the participants are male and 129(55.4%) of them are female and they have an average 68.76 and 67.94 respectively on their job innovativeness scores with a standard deviation of 14.50 and 12.37 respectively. The marital status bracket distribution shows that 170(72.6%) of the participants are married, 61(26.1%) are single and 3(1.3%) are divorced while they have an average of 69.21, 65.72 and 67.66 respectively on their job innovativeness scores with standard deviations of 13.14, 13.91 and 0.57 respectively. The job status distribution shows that 120(70.84%) of the participants are medical staff and 113(65.58%) are non-medical staff. They have on average of 70.84 and 65.58 respectively on their job innovativeness scores with a standard deviation of 12.03 and 14.17 respectively.

### Hypotheses Testing

#### Hypothesis One

Employees with internal locus of control will score significantly higher in job innovativeness than those with external locus of control among hospital employees in Ogun State.

**Table 2:** t-Test Table for the Job Innovativeness scores of employees based on Locus of Control

LOCUS OF CONTROL	N		SD	T	P
INTERNAL LOC	35	69.14	17.72	.414	<.05
EXTERNAL LOC	199	68.1	12.43		

The t-Test result in Table 2 revealed a statistically significantly reliable difference [t (232) = 0.414, P<.05] between the mean of the job innovativeness scores obtained by employees with internal work locus of control (M = 69.14, SD = 17.72) and mean of the job innovativeness scores obtained by employees with external work locus of control (M = 68.13, SD = 12.43). It can be therefore concluded that the job innovativeness of the employees that exhibited internal work locus of control is significantly higher than that of the employees that exhibited external work locus of control at the state hospitals in Ogun State, Nigeria. The hypothesis was therefore accepted.

#### Hypothesis Two

Work environment will significantly predict job innovativeness among hospital workers in Ogun State.



**Table 3:** Summary of simple linear regression showing prediction of Work Environment on Job Innovativeness

MODEL	SS	df	Mean Sq	F	Pvalue	R	R2	Adj R2
<b>Regression</b>	1864.073	1	1864.073	10.964	.001	.215	.046	.042
<b>Residual</b>	38594.783	222	170.021					
<b>Total</b>	40458.856	223						

**Predictors: (constant) Work Environment**

The result in Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.215 which is a good level of prediction on the dependent variable. The R square (0.46), shows that work environment accounts for 4.6% of the total variation in job innovativeness. The table also reveals that analysis of variance of the simple linear regression data produced a statistically significant F-ratio value at  $[F(1,223) = 1.964, P<.05]$ . The result indicates that work environment does significantly predict job innovativeness. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings that employees with internal locus of control score significantly higher in their job innovativeness than those with external locus of control is consistent with the result of a study by McMurray and Simmers (2019). McMurray and Simmers (2019) found that there is a significant relationship between locus of control and workplace innovation, with the internal locus of control having a positive and significant effect on innovation and the external locus of control on the other hand having a negative impact on innovation. This also goes in line with the findings of another study by Dawwas and Haddad (2018), where it was found that locus of control impacted innovativeness as the employees with internal locus of control had higher innovativeness while employees with external locus of control had low innovativeness. In this present study therefore hospital employees who are Internals are better able to exhibit job innovativeness because they believe that they have control, influence and determination to the outcome of life and work events by their own self and hardwork. Internals believe in their effort to trail the blaze with new ideas, to be creative and be innovative on the job. Internals operate on the individual based ideology that depends on individuals’ needs and rights to access one’s mind for creativity through job innovation that brings about wealth creation and sustainability.

The findings that the work environment of the hospital employees will significantly predict their job innovativeness is coherent with the studies of Albaity et al (2017); Awang et al., (2019); Dul and Ceylan (2011) which revealed that work environment have significant influence on formation of innovative behaviour. Highlighting the person-environment correspondence theory, the work environment must meet the requirement of the individual and the individual must meet the job requirements. Every employee have various needs including rights to access one’s mind for creativity; employees therefore quest for work environment that meets their essential needs and values. There must be congruence between the employee and their work environment in order to accelerate employee’s performance and productivity. Moreover, a conducive work environment will encourage creativity and innovation. In the COVID-19 era, the hospitals require work environment that is equipped to manage pandemic disruptions. The hospitals are the clearing house for patients, the hospital employees are the frontline responders; thus creativity and innovation that has characterised healthcare industry since the inception of the COVID-19 pandemic is not negotiable. Making mention of such laudable innovations like launching COVID-19 vaccine and clinical services through virtual means. The requirements of both the hospital and the employees in the new normal are huge

and urgent for consideration so as to contain COVID-19. If COVID-19 is not contained, the economy realities of the nation is looming deregulation, devaluation and unemployment.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Employees with internal locus of control have higher job innovativeness than those with external locus of control also work environment predicts job innovativeness. A conducive hospital work environment increases the performance of the employees which includes their innovativeness. Hospital employees' exhibiting job innovativeness in healthcare services act as creating force in the nation's economy, for creation of wealth and economic development. COVID-19 pandemic hardship drains the healthcare industry including hospital facilities, hospital employees and the nation's economy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The hospital organizations should recruit employees with disposition for internal locus of control while current employees are trained towards exhibiting internal locus of control. In the new normal, hospital organisations should explore job innovativeness through related transformations in individual disposition of internal locus of control and related changes in work environment in the context of health care services.

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