

Abstract Submission Form

First Speaker and Main Contact

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| --- | --- |
| Title: | Miss |
| First Name: | Lyndsey |
| Surname/Family Name: | Jenkins |
| Institution: | Edinburgh Napier University |
| Job Title: | PhD Student  |
| Postal Address: | Centre for Social InformaticsEdinburgh Napier University 10 Colinton Road |
| City: | Edinburgh |
| Postal or ZIP Code: | EH10 5DT |
| Country: | Scotland, United Kingdom |
| Telephone Number (Inc. Country Code): | 07736 562 560 |
| Email address: | L.Jenkins@napier.ac.uk |
| Co-authors: | Professors Hazel Hall and Robert Raeside, Edinburgh Napier University |

Second Speaker

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title: |  |
| First Name: |  |
| Surname/Family Name: |  |
| Institution: |  |
| Job Title: |  |
| Email address: |  |

Submission Details

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| Title of Abstract | The application of Social Cognitive Theory in Information Science research on workplace learning and innovative work behaviours |
| Type of Submission (please select ONE): | Full Paper | X |
| Short Paper |  |
| Round Table Discussion |  |
| Themes (please select all that apply): | Information Literacies |  |
| Information Behaviour  | X |
| Impact | X |
| Information as agent of change | X |
| Methodological Paper  |  |
| Abstract (Please check Call for Papers for requirements): | **Introduction**This paper introduces an ESRC-funded research project on the theme of workplace learning and innovative work behaviours. The work explores the determinants of successful employee-led workplace learning - including those related to information behaviours and use - to support and enhance organisational innovation. The first part of the paper discusses the value of conducting a study on workplace learning and innovative work behaviours from an Information Science perspective. The application of Social Cognitive Theory in Information Science research – both in general, and with specific reference to this piece of work – is then introduced. An account of the empirical work conducted to date for this project follows. The paper concludes with an evaluation of the anticipated contributions of this research to theory and practice.**The value of studying workplace learning and innovative work behaviours from an Information Science perspective**Learning to innovate is valuable on multiple levels, especially for national growth and sustainability (e.g. OECD, 2005), sectoral competitive advantage (Lee, Hallak & Sardeshmukh, 2016, p.126), and increasing organisational performance delivered by a trained and motivated workforce (e.g Chan, 2016; Hsu, Hou & Fan, 2011, p.260). Such improvement relies heavily on innovative performance and understanding of the development of individuals (e.g. Anderson, Potočnik & Zhou, 2014). A workforce that exhibits innovative work behaviours is more able to successfully generate and implement new ideas (Battisteli, Montani & Odardi, 2013, p.27). Prior research, much of which is reported in the Organisational Studies literature, also identifies a number of determinants of such innovative work behaviours. These include the provision of training (Mamaqi, 2015, p.812), the use of digital tools (e.g. Ferincz & Hortoványi, 2014) and the presence of supportive leaders to foster learning in the workplace (e.g. Ellinger & Cseh, 2007). These themes remain under-explored from an Information Science perspective. While the relationship between information behaviour and *innovation per se* has been reported elsewhere (see Hauschildt, 1996), the influence of information behaviours on the *learning* ofinnovative work *behaviours* is yet to be established. This might be considered surprising given that a number of themes within the domain have been identified as having a close alignment with workplace learning. These include, for example, Information Literacy (for example, Crawford & Irving, 2009; Head, Van Hoeck, Eschler & Fullerton 2013; Kirton, Barham & Smith, 2008) and Knowledge Management (for example, Liao & Wu, 2010). The ability to recognise information needs, and seek, evaluate and use information allows for individuals to fill gaps in their knowledge and solve problems at work (e.g. Sayyad Abdi & Bruce, 2015). In doing so, workers develop the skills and competencies required for their roles. An important set of these underpins a capability to innovate. Thus the means by which individuals interact and engage with information to support their own learning of behaviours in the workplace is the focus of this study. It has been designed to enlarge understanding of the factors that underpin successful workplace learning of innovative work behaviours from an Information Science perspective. **The application of Social Cognitive Theory in a study of workplace learning and innovative work behaviours**The empiricalwork for the study introduced here is underpinned by Social Cognitive Theory[[1]](#footnote-1) (Bandura, 1977). This theory focuses on the interactions between the social and cognitive factors of learning, and their role in the learning process (Pálasdóttir, 2013). Emphasis is placed on the environment in which individuals are located (for example employees in the workplace) and associated relationships. Relationships can include behaviours as a direct consequence of the social factors, or relationships that follow behaviours presented.Social Cognitive Theory has been used extensively in Information Science, particularly in studies of information seeking and knowledge sharing, and their facilitation (Pálasdóttir, 2013). It has also underpinned much Information Systems research, as reviewed by Carillo (2010). It has been used in information behaviour research in a variety of ways due to the multi-disciplinary nature of such research projects. This is the first study, however to apply Social Cognitive Theory in the context of workplace learning. **Empirical work to June 2017**By June 2017 a large component of the empirical work for this study will be complete. Stage 1 of the empirical work has involved taking secondary data collected from 28 European Union countries and made available in official publications such as the *Community Innovation Survey* (Eurostat, n.d), and subjecting it to statistical analysis to establish the relative strength of factors that contribute to the development of innovation, or influence the proportion of innovative enterprises at national level. Preliminary findings from this exercise indicate that factors relating directly to individual employees (such as training given to employees and whether employees have access to a computer and internet at work) influence innovation, whereas factors relating to the overall organisation do not. Stage 2 of the empirical work, which comprises the collection and analysis of interview data with approximately 20 workers at different levels in two case study organisations, will be in the latter stages by June 2017. The main considerations of methodological choice for the on-going empirical work, as well as preliminary findings, will be reported as part of the paper. This account will take into account the appropriateness of deploying Social Cognitive Theory to underpin work on workplace learning and innovative work behaviours from an Information Science perspective.**Conclusion: contributions to theory and practice**The anticipated outcomes of the full study[[2]](#footnote-2) include the creation of a model that explains the role of workplace learning in the development of innovative work behaviours. This will identify *specific* determinants of successful workplace learning, with a focus on those related to information behaviours, and their applicability across different contexts. As well as extending Information Science research, the model will also be of value to practitioners, particularly those based in national skills agencies such as Skills Development Scotland[[3]](#footnote-3). In addition, the application of Social Cognitive Theory in this work is expected to add to the understanding of its value in Information Science research. Progress to meeting these goals will be considered as part of the full paper.**References**Anderson, N., Potočnik, K., & Zhou, J. (2014). Innovation and creativity in organizations: A state-of- the-science review, prospective commentary, and guiding framework. *Journal of Management*, *40*(5), 1297–1333.Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191-215.Battistelli, A., Montani, F., & Odoardi, C. (2013). The impact of feedback from job and task autonomy in the relationship between dispositional resistance to change and innovative work behaviour. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *22*(1), 26–41. http://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2011.616653Carillo, K.D. (2010). 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| Additional Information: |  |

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1. Social Cognitive Theory originates in Psychology, but like many theories it has often been applied to research domains beyond its theoretical origins (Wilson & Walsh, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Due for completion in summer 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A co-sponsor of the research. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)