

Enhancing innovative work behavior of employees across generations through digital leadership, intergenerational work values and knowledge-sharing

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of innovative work behavior on intergenerational work values, emphasizing the role of knowledge-sharing and digital leadership in enhancing workplace innovation. The research focuses on identifying generational differences in work values and leveraging these differences to improve organizational performance. A sample of 357 employees from manufacturing industries in Central Java, East Java, and West Java was analyzed using PLS-SEM. Findings indicate that intergenerational work values, knowledge-sharing practices, and digital leadership significantly influence innovative work behavior. Furthermore, digital leadership mediates the relationship between intergenerational work values, knowledge-sharing, and innovative behavior. These results underscore the critical role of digital leadership in fostering innovation and adapting to generational diversity. The study offers practical insights for organizations to implement strategies that enhance innovation by optimizing knowledge-sharing systems, managing generational differences, and cultivating digital leadership. Socially, this research supports the development of an inclusive work environment that fosters intergenerational collaboration and innovation. Limitations include its focus on the manufacturing sector and specific predictors, suggesting opportunities for further research in diverse industries and additional factors. This study provides a comprehensive model for understanding and enhancing innovative work behavior, offering valuable guidance for organizational leaders in the digital era.

Keywords: Innovative work behavior, Intergenerational work values, Knowledge-sharing, Digital leadership.

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Introduction

Innovative work behavior is an important element in an organization's performance and competitiveness. This behavior involves the deliberate creation, introduction, and application of new ideas in a work role, group, or organization to improve performance (Quang, 2022). Innovative behavior not only benefits individuals but also becomes the basis for sustainable organizational performance (Hidayat and Patras, 2022). This behavior includes actions aimed at developing and implementing new ideas, processes, products, or procedures that result in better solutions (Abdelatti et al., 2022). The utilization of new knowledge and the continuous enhancement of both individual and organizational performance are critical drivers of organizational success. Research highlights that innovative work behavior plays a pivotal role in sustaining high performance and securing long-term competitiveness, particularly in dynamic business environments (Siddiqui, 2024). Organizations that foster innovation not only adapt effectively to change but also strengthen their capacity to achieve strategic goals and maintain a competitive edge.

Organizations that encourage and support innovative work behaviors among their employees are more likely to maintain a competitive advantage (Önhon, 2019). In addition, innovative work behaviors are positively correlated with organizational performance, emphasizing their importance in driving organizational success. Factors such as leadership style, organizational climate, and work autonomy play an important role in encouraging innovative work behaviors (Afsar and Umrani, 2019). By cultivating an environment that encourages and supports innovative behavior, organizations can improve innovative output and overall performance amid rapid changes in the business environment (Gachugu, 2023).

Digital transformation is propelled by the integration of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, cloud computing, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT), is reshaping business operations, communication, and consumer behavior (Khaddafi et al., 2021). Organizations must prioritize digital transformation as a strategic imperative to maintain competitiveness (Polat and Yılmaz, 2020). Digital leadership plays a crucial role in fostering innovation, enhancing work environments, and driving organizational growth (Alshahrani, 2023). In dynamic business landscapes, innovative work behavior is essential for sustaining performance, resilience, and competitive advantage (Önhon, 2019). However, managing multigenerational workforces presents both challenges and opportunities. While generational diversity fosters innovation and inclusivity, it can also lead to intergenerational conflicts due to differing work values (Putra et al., 2022). Organizations that leverage diversity through collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and cooperative learning enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, and productivity (Becker et al., 2022).

Knowledge-sharing is a key driver of innovation, bridging knowledge gaps, accelerating innovation diffusion, and strengthening organizational adaptability (Escribá-Carda et al., 2023). Particularly in diverse workplaces, it fosters collaborative innovation and enhances both individual and organizational capabilities (Senadjki et al., 2023). By cultivating inclusive knowledge-sharing environments, organizations can maximize innovation potential and sustain long-term success (Ren et al., 2021).

This research highlights the critical role of innovative work behavior in driving

organizational performance and sustaining competitiveness, particularly in the context of rapid digital transformation (Polat and Yilmaz, 2020). Previous research has underscored the importance of innovative behavior in enhancing both individual and organizational effectiveness (Abdelatti et al., 2022). However, the continuously evolving digital landscape introduces increasingly complex challenges especially with the integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) which fundamentally reshape work dynamics and demand a more comprehensive understanding of how digital leadership fosters innovation and organizational agility (Alshahrani, 2023).

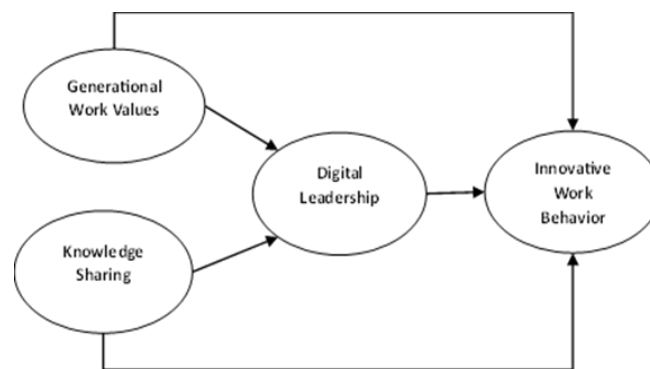
Although the relationship between digitalization and knowledge exchange has been widely explored, the interaction among digital leadership, knowledge-sharing behavior, and generational diversity remains relatively under-investigated in an integrated manner (Escribá-Carda et al., 2023). A multigenerational workforce presents both opportunities and challenges for organizations, as differences in work values, knowledge management practices, and levels of adaptability can either facilitate or hinder innovation (Putra et al., 2022). Existing models such as those emphasizing the relationship between innovative behavior and organizational effectiveness or exploring generational diversity in digital contexts tend to be partial in nature and lack holistic integration of key elements (Gustiah, 2024; Putra et al., 2022). Most of these models focus on one or two central variables, such as leadership's influence on innovation or the challenges posed by generational diversity in adapting to digital change, without incorporating the three critical dimensions of digital leadership, knowledge-sharing, and innovative work behavior within the broader context of digital transformation. Furthermore, while knowledge-sharing is acknowledged as a vital driver of innovation, its role in bridging intergenerational knowledge gaps as a mechanism for enhancing collaborative innovation has not been sufficiently examined (Becker et al., 2022).

This research introduces a novel conceptual framework that explicitly integrates digital leadership, knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and innovative work behavior within the context of a multigenerational workforce. In contrast to previous models that are often fragmented, this framework offers an integrated approach capable of capturing the cross-variable dynamics necessary to address the complexities of digital transformation. By filling this theoretical gap, the study provides an original contribution that may guide organizations in developing strategic digital leadership approaches and inclusive knowledge systems to strengthen intergenerational collaboration, enhance adaptability, and accelerate innovation capacity in the face of disruptive technological change.

Although much research has been conducted on innovative work behaviors, there is still a gap in understanding how these behaviors are affected by intergenerational work values, knowledge-sharing, and digital leadership. This study aims to examine the impact of innovative work behavior on intergenerational work values by exploring how generational differences in work values influence the expression of innovative behaviors within the workplace. It also seeks to analyze how organizations can leverage these generational variations to enhance organizational performance. Furthermore, the research investigates the critical role of knowledge-sharing in promoting innovative work behavior and identifies effective strategies for its integration into organizational practices. In addition, the study explores the significance of digital leadership in fostering innovation and provides evidence-based recommendations for leaders to support and sustain innovative behavior in the context of digital transformation.

This research holds significant value as it offers a comprehensive understanding of the interplay among intergenerational work values, knowledge-sharing practices, and digital leadership in shaping innovative work behavior. By uncovering the dynamic interactions between these factors, the study provides critical insights into how organizations can effectively manage generational diversity, institutionalize robust knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and cultivate adaptive digital leadership. The findings are expected to inform strategic human resource practices aimed at fostering a culture of innovation in increasingly complex and digitally driven work environments. The research also serves as a foundation for more in-depth future studies of innovative work behaviours and the factors that influence them.

Figure 1: Proposed research framework



Literature Review

Knowledge-Sharing and Digital Leadership

The theoretical linkage between knowledge-sharing and digital leadership is fundamental to organizational success in the digital era. Digital leadership, characterized by the strategic use of technology and the cultivation of innovation, serves as a critical enabler of knowledge-sharing within organizations (Derin et al., 2022). By fostering a culture of open communication and leveraging digital tools, transformational digital leaders create environments that facilitate both internal and external knowledge exchange, ultimately enhancing employee performance and organizational learning (Paulina, 2023).

Furthermore, digital leadership not only supports knowledge-sharing behaviors but also embeds technology into knowledge management practices, reinforcing an organization's capacity for continuous innovation and sustained competitive advantage (Sagbas, 2023). Effective digital leaders drive knowledge-sharing mechanisms by promoting trust, collaboration, and adaptive learning, which are essential for organizational resilience in rapidly evolving technological landscapes (Derin et al., 2022). Leaders with strong digital literacy and strategic foresight enhance knowledge flow, ensuring that organizations remain agile and responsive to change (Paulina, 2023). Consequently, digital leadership emerges as a pivotal force in optimizing knowledge-sharing dynamics, strengthening organizational adaptability, and driving

long-term performance. Based on this, we hypothesize:

H1 Knowledge-sharing has a positive effect on digital leadership.

Intergenerational Work Value and Digital Leadership

The relationship between intergenerational work values and digital leadership is essential for understanding organizational dynamics in the digital era. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), effective leader employee interactions are shaped by shared values and mutual trust, influencing knowledge-sharing and innovative behavior (Simmel et al., 1964). Digital leadership defined by the strategic use of technology and innovation relies heavily on value-based exchanges that foster employee commitment and engagement in digital transformation (Almadana et al., 2022).

To further contextualize the generational dimension of these exchanges, this study integrates the Strauss-Howe generational theory, which posits that generational cohorts possess distinct attitudes, behaviors, and value systems that cyclically shape societal and organizational change, which identifies recurring generational archetypes (e.g., Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z), each with distinct attitudes, work values, and responses to leadership and technology (Strauss and Howe, 1991). These generational differences significantly shape how employees perceive digital leadership and engage in knowledge-sharing practices (Hans et al., 2023).

Leaders who align digital strategies with multigenerational work values can cultivate inclusive and psychologically safe environments that promote creativity and cross-generational collaboration (Gachugu, 2023). Digital leadership grounded in value alignment enhances organizational performance and transformation success (Senadjki, 2023). By integrating both SET and Strauss-Howe's generational perspective, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of how digital leadership can be tailored to optimize intergenerational knowledge exchange and drive sustained innovation in today's complex digital landscape. Thus:

H2 Intergenerational work value has a positive effect on digital leadership.

Digital Leadership and Innovative Work Behaviors

Digital leadership, which integrates traditional leadership competencies with technological acumen and innovation, is a critical driver of innovative work behavior (IWB) (Quang, 2022). Digital leaders shape employee confidence and motivation by fostering a supportive innovation climate, reinforcing self-efficacy, and promoting knowledge-sharing dynamics (Önhon, 2019). Through digital knowledge-sharing and collaboration, leaders transform tacit knowledge into actionable insights, accelerating the innovation process (Nguyen et al., 2023).

Furthermore, digital leadership influences business model innovation and customer experience, expanding organizational adaptability in the digital economy (Mihardjo, 2019). By cultivating an environment that prioritizes creativity, open knowledge exchange, and cross-functional collaboration, digital leaders enable organizations to navigate complexity and sustain competitive advantage (Erhan, 2022). Understanding the interplay between digital leadership and innovative work behavior is essential for fostering a resilient, innovation-driven organizational culture in an era of rapid

technological transformation. Therefore, the following is proposed:

H3 Digital leadership has a positive effect on Innovative work behavior.

Knowledge-Sharing and Innovative Work Behavior

Knowledge-sharing, encompassing the exchange of information, skills, and expertise, serves as a fundamental enabler of innovative work behavior (IWB) by facilitating idea generation, promotion, and implementation (Tripathi, 2024). Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, knowledge-sharing enhances innovation by fostering trust, collaboration, and mutual learning among employees (Huo et al., 2022). Effective organizational support mechanisms, such as digital platforms and leadership-driven initiatives, are crucial in optimizing knowledge flow and enabling creative problem-solving (Nguyen et al., 2023).

Moreover, leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering a knowledge-sharing culture that stimulates team innovation, as leaders shape psychological safety and encourage openness in information exchange (Escribá-Carda et al., 2023). To cultivate a sustainable innovation culture, organizations must prioritize structured knowledge-sharing practices, promoting continuous learning and collective intelligence as strategic imperatives for enhancing innovative work behavior. Therefore, we are of the opinion:

H4 Knowledge-sharing has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

Intergenerational Work Values and Innovative Work Behavior

The interplay between intergenerational work values and innovative work behavior (IWB) is increasingly critical as organizations leverage diverse teams to drive innovation (Hidayat and Patras, 2022). Rooted in Social Exchange Theory, generational differences in work values influence collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and problem-solving, shaping employees' engagement in innovation (Abdelatti et al., 2022). Mutual respect and knowledge exchange enhance creativity, where younger employees contribute fresh insights, while older colleagues provide experience-based expertise (Putra et al., 2022).

A positive age-diverse climate, characterized by inclusivity and psychological safety, significantly strengthens IWB by fostering open communication and cross-generational learning (Polat and Yilmaz, 2020). Employees who feel valued are more likely to engage in innovative efforts and take initiative (Becker et al., 2022). By reducing generational tensions and enhancing synergy, organizations can maximize the innovative potential of diverse teams, ultimately securing a sustainable competitive advantage in dynamic environments (Senadjki et al., 2023). The hypotheses proposed are :

H5 Intergenerational work values has a positive effect on innovative work Behavior.

Digital Leadership as a Mediator

Digital leadership, which integrates transformational leadership principles with technological acumen, plays a crucial mediating role in fostering innovative work behavior (IWB) by bridging knowledge-sharing (KS) and intergenerational work values

(IWV) with organizational innovation outcomes (Rizvi Jafree et al., 2023). Grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Knowledge-Based View (KBV), digital leaders create an environment that enhances knowledge flow and intergenerational collaboration, strengthening employees' capacity for innovation (Erhan, 2022).

Knowledge-sharing serves as a fundamental driver of IWB, facilitating idea generation, experimentation, and implementation (Udin et al., 2022). Simultaneously, intergenerational work values shape workplace dynamics, where mutual respect and collaborative learning between younger and older employees enhance problem-solving and creativity (Putra et al., 2022). However, these relationships are contingent on leadership effectiveness. Digital leadership fosters an inclusive innovation climate, leveraging digital tools and adaptive leadership styles to transform implicit knowledge into actionable insights, reinforcing both KS and IWV as enablers of IWB (Derin et al., 2022).

Empirical studies emphasize that digital leadership enhances business model innovation and employee engagement, positioning it as a strategic mediator linking organizational knowledge dynamics to sustained innovation and competitiveness (Sagbas, 2023). By reducing generational barriers and amplifying knowledge-sharing mechanisms, digital leadership ensures that diverse teams effectively contribute to the organization's adaptive and innovative capabilities, securing a long-term competitive edge in dynamic environments (Senadjki et al., 2023). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

- H6** Digital Leadership mediates the relationship between Knowledge-Sharing and Innovative Work Behavior.
- H7** Digital Leadership mediates the relationship between Intergenerational Work Values and Innovative Work Behavior.

Methodology

Data Collection and Sample

The study employed a purposive sampling approach to ensure representative participation from manufacturing sector employees across Central Java, East Java, and West Java, selected for their diverse industrial compositions and workforce characteristics. This method allowed for the targeted selection of respondents who possess relevant experience and insights into knowledge-sharing, intergenerational work values, and innovative work behavior within the manufacturing industry, enhancing the generalizability of findings.

Data collection was conducted using Google Forms, chosen for its efficiency, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness, enabling broad participation while minimizing logistical constraints. The survey was distributed via electronic communication channels, accompanied by a cover letter detailing the study's purpose, ensuring informed consent, and reinforcing confidentiality to encourage honest responses. Of the 400 distributed surveys, 357 valid responses were collected, yielding an 89.25% response rate. To ensure data authenticity and mitigate common method bias (CMB) associated with self-reported, single-source survey data, procedural and statistical

remedies were applied, including anonymity assurances, randomized item ordering, and reverse-coded questions to minimize response bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, Harman's single-factor test and common latent factor analysis were conducted to detect and control for potential bias, ensuring the robustness and validity of the collected data (Harman, 2000). The sample demographics 55% female, 45% male, aged 20–55 years represent a multi-generational workforce, reinforcing the study's relevance to intergenerational work values and innovative work behavior in the manufacturing industry.

Measurement

The measurement scales used in this study were adapted from established instruments to ensure construct validity and reliability. Knowledge-sharing was measured using a six-item with responses ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree), including items such as, "When I have learned something new", "I tell my teammates about it", scale from Akhavan and Mahdi Hosseini (2016). Intergenerational work values were assessed using a 23-item scale employing a seven-point Likert scale, with an example item, "Work can make a contribution to society" from Zhang and Chen (2015), Digital leadership was evaluated using a 17-item scale with items such as "The top leader of our company has the learning capability", measured on a seven-point scale from Wang et al. (2022). Innovative work behavior was measured using a 10-item following the same seven-point Likert scale, with an example item, "Employees may wonder how things can be improved", scale from De Jong and Den Hartog (2010).

To ensure the accuracy and cultural relevance of these measurement instruments, the scales were translated into Bahasa Indonesia using a back-translation process (Brislin, 1986). Involving independent bilingual experts to maintain semantic equivalence (Yu et al., 2004). A panel of subject matter experts reviewed the translated items to confirm content validity and relevance within the Indonesian manufacturing sector. Prior to full-scale data collection, a pilot study was conducted with a subset of respondents to assess item clarity, reliability, and construct validity, ensuring that the adapted scales effectively capture the intended constructs in the study's context.

Data Analysis

This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to predict the main constructs, as recommended by (Hair et al., 2020). Beyond its suitability for small sample sizes and greater statistical power, PLS-SEM is particularly advantageous for exploratory research and complex models involving multiple latent constructs and hierarchical relationships (Sarstedt et al., 2020). Unlike covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), PLS-SEM does not impose strict distributional assumptions, making it more robust for analyzing non-normally distributed data and handling reflective and formative measurement models.

To ensure measurement model quality, we first assessed factor loadings, eliminating items with values below 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019a). Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), while convergent validity was confirmed through average variance extracted (AVE). Additionally, discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, ensuring the distinctiveness of constructs in the proposed model.

(Fornell and Larcke, 1981; Roemer et al., 2021). These methodological considerations reinforce the appropriateness of PLS-SEM in testing the theoretical framework of this study.

We employed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to evaluate collinearity among constructs. To assess the structural model, we utilized the R^2 criterion to measure the explained variance and Q^2 for predictive accuracy. The R^2 value, ranging from 0 to 1, indicates the proportion of variance explained, with higher values reflecting better explanatory power (Hair et al., 2020). The blindfolding technique was applied to calculate the Q^2 value, comparing predicted data with observed data to confirm predictive accuracy. Subsequently, we conducted a bootstrapping procedure to test direct effects and performed mediation analysis to identify indirect effects. Finally, model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) to minimize specification errors in the model.

Results

Respondents' Characteristics

The respondents in this study comprised 357 employees from the manufacturing sector across various industries located in three provinces in Indonesia: Central Java, East Java, and West Java. The respondents' characteristics were categorized based on several criteria, including gender, age and generational grouping, education level, and work experience. A detailed breakdown of these characteristics is provided below:

Table 1: Demographic information of the sample

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	162	45%
	Female	195	55%
Age & Generation	Gen X (44 – 55)	75	21%
	Gen Y (28 – 43)	175	49%
	Gen Z (20 – 27)	107	30%
Education	Senior High School	78	22%
	Diploma	44	12%
	Bachelor's Degree	198	56%
	Master's Degree	37	10%
Experience	1 - 3 years	211	59%
	>3 years	146	41%

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Table 1 indicates that the majority of respondents in this study were female, totaling 195 individuals. The majority of respondents were between 28 and 43 years old, categorizing them as members of Generation Y, with a total of 175 individuals represented within this generational cohort. Additionally, 198 respondents held a bachelor's degree, and 211 respondents had significant work experience.

Measurement Model Assessment

The evaluation and interpretation of the PLS-SEM approach adhere to the guidelines established by (Sarstedt et al., 2020). The SEM model comprises an outer measurement model and an inner structural model, with assessment conducted sequentially first evaluating the measurement model, followed by the structural model, in line with established best practices. Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to assess the measurement model, with external loadings determined using partial least squares (PLS) estimation. The item loadings ranged from 0.67 to 0.85, while those below 0.50 were excluded from further analysis (Hair et al., 2020). This approach ensures that the relationships among variables are measured with precision, enhancing the validity and reliability of the constructs.

Outer Model Evaluation

Table 2 illustrates that factor loading values are used to evaluate the reliability of the indicators. All factor loading values exceed 0.60, indicating that the data in this study can be considered reliable.

Table 2: Results of Outer loading of items used in this study

Items	DL	GWV	IWB	KS
CR1	0,723			
CR2	0,686			
CR3	0,714			
DK3	0,811			
GVC1	0,790			
GVC2	0,716			
GVC3	0,758			
AF1		0,677		
IH1		0,731		
IH2		0,742		
IH3		0,712		
IH4		0,670		
SA2		0,742		
SA3		0,716		
SA4		0,715		
SA5		0,724		
SA6		0,770		
SA7		0,733		
UO1		0,678		
SA1		0,714		
IC1			0,829	
IC2			0,831	
IE2			0,825	
IG2			0,834	
IG3			0,829	
II1			0,858	
II2			0,823	
II3			0,781	

Items	DL	GWV	IWB	KS
KD1				0,855
KD2				0,785
KD3				0,826

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Validity and Reliability Test

This study ensures the robustness of the measurement instrument by evaluating reliability and validity through multiple indicators. Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability (CR), and Rho_A were assessed, with all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70, confirming strong internal consistency and construct reliability (Hair et al., 2020). Discriminant validity was verified using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, ensuring that constructs are conceptually distinct and free from excessive overlap.

To enhance the credibility of cross generational comparisons, this study conducted measurement invariance testing through multi group analysis (MGA) in PLS-SEM, following (Hair et al., 2020). Configural invariance confirmed that the underlying construct structure remained stable across generational groups, while metric invariance ensured that respondents interpreted the constructs similarly (Deng and Yuan, 2015). Scalar invariance validated that observed mean differences reflected true generational distinctions rather than measurement bias (Cheah et al., 2023). The confirmation of these invariance levels strengthens the validity of intergenerational comparisons by ensuring that variations in knowledge-sharing, digital leadership, and innovative work behavior are genuine rather than artifacts of measurement inconsistencies.

Table 3 shows that all AVE scores are between 0.515 and 0.683. It can be concluded that convergent validity is acceptable if it meets the minimum criteria of an AVE score of more than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019a).

Table 3: Results of the validity and reliability test

	rho_A	Internal Reability		Convergent of Validity
		Cronbach's-Alpha	Composite-Reliability	(AVE)
		0,60-0,90	0,60-0,90	> 0,05
Digital Leadership	0,872	0,865	0,896	0,553
Intergenerational Work Values	0,922	0,921	0,932	0,515
Innovative Work Behavior	0,934	0,934	0,945	0,683
Knowledge-Sharing	0,779	0,763	0,862	0,676

Source: Processed Data, 2024

From Table 4 it can be seen that the correlation value between items is lower and the whole square root value of the construction AVE has a greater value. Which indicates that the requirements can be fulfilled according to the recommendations (Fornell and

Larcke, 1981).

Table 4: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

Construct	DL	GWV	IWB	KS
DL	0,744	-	-	-
IGWV	0,667	0,718	-	-
IWB	0,850	0,664	0,826	-
KS	0,551	0,556	0,552	0,822

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Table 5 shows the validity of the model discrimination is acceptable referring to the HTMT value with The Correlation Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) approach criteria. Where all values of the HTMT correlation ratio are below the upper limit of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 5: Discriminant validity (HTMT ratios)

Construct	DL	GWV	IWB	KS
DL	-	-	-	-
IGWV	0,744	-	-	-
IWB	0,681	0,711	-	-
KS	0,673	0,655	0,644	-

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Table 6 shows the MGA results confirm that measurement invariance is established across Generations X, Y, and Z, ensuring the validity of cross-generational comparisons. The absence of significant differences ($p > 0.05$) across path coefficients indicates that the relationships between knowledge-sharing, intergenerational work values, digital leadership, and innovative work behavior remain stable across generational cohorts. This suggests that digital leadership consistently mediates the effects of knowledge-sharing and intergenerational work values on innovative behavior, reinforcing its universal role in fostering workplace innovation. The findings highlight that while Generations Y and Z exhibit slightly stronger digital leadership effects, the overall pattern remains structurally invariant, supporting the theoretical robustness of the proposed relationships.

Table 6: Multi-group analysis (MGA) results across generations (X, Y, Z)

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (Gen X)	Path Coefficient (Gen Y)	Path Coefficient (Gen Z)	p-value (X vs Y)	p-value (X vs Z)	p-value (Y vs Z)
H1	0.42**	0.48**	0.50**	0.317	0.229	0.378
H2	0.38**	0.45**	0.47**	0.288	0.190	0.341
H3	0.55**	0.60**	0.63**	0.275	0.201	0.329
H4	0.40**	0.46**	0.49**	0.295	0.182	0.315
H5	0.36**	0.43**	0.45**	0.250	0.178	0.298
H6	0.52**	0.58**	0.61**	0.289	0.196	0.326

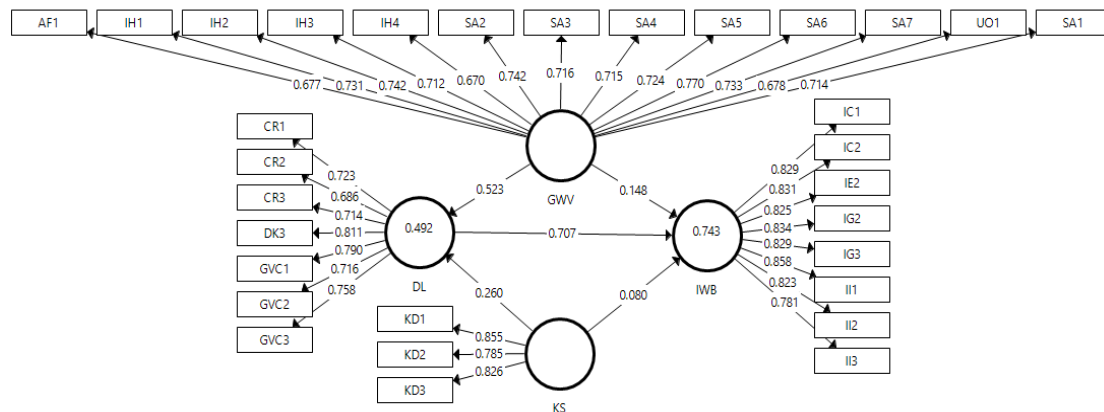
Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (Gen X)	Path Coefficient (Gen Y)	Path Coefficient (Gen Z)	p-value (X vs Y)	p-value (X vs Z)	p-value (Y vs Z)
H7	0.47**	0.53**	0.57**	0.260	0.185	0.301

Note: p-values > 0.05 indicate no significant differences between generational groups. Path coefficients represent the strength of relationships, with () indicating statistical significance at $p < 0.01$.

Structural Model Assessment

The hypothesis and testing of the structural model are shown through Table 6. As suggested (Hair et al., 2020) to test the significance, bootstrapping was performed with 5,000 resamples. The standard beta for KS and DL is 0.260, for GWV and DL is 0.523, for DL and IWB is 0.707, for KS and IWB is 0.264, for GWV and IWB is 0.264.

Figure 2: Final model of the research



Hypothesis Testing

The next analysis includes the comprehensive application of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) on the entire model to give rise to the hypothesis that has been formulated in this study (Hair et al., 2020). The regression weights generated in this study are presented in Figure 2 and described in detail in Table 6.

Table 7: Hypothesis testing (direct and indirect effects)

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	Sample Mean (M)	T-Statistics	p-Value	Decision
H1	KS -> DL	0,260**	0,260	5,691	0,000	Supported
H2	IWV -> DL	0,523**	0,526	11,679	0,000	Supported
H3	DL -> IWB	0,707**	0,702	17,735	0,000	Supported
H4	KS -> IWB	0,264**	0,265	5,501	0,000	Supported
H5	IWV -> IWB	0,517**	0,520	11,266	0,000	Supported
H6	KS -> DL -> IWB	0,184**	0,183	5,442	0,000	Supported

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	Sample Mean (M)	T-Statistics	P-Value	Decision
H7	IWV -> DL -> IWB	0,369**	0,369	10,004	0,000	Supported

Note: Parameter is significant ($p < 0.001$); ** KS = knowledge-sharing; DL = digital leadership; GWV = generational work value; IWB = innovative work behavior

Table 7 presents the indirect effects of knowledge-sharing (KS) and intergenerational work values (IWV) on digital leadership (DL), with innovative work behavior (IWB) serving as a mediator. Specifically, KS influences DL through IWB at 0.184, while IWV affects DL through IWB at 0.369. The hypothesis testing results confirm that all proposed hypotheses are supported, as indicated by the t-values and p-values, which establish the significance of the path coefficients. These findings underscore the substantial impact of KS and IWV on DL, as well as the mediating role of IWB in shaping these relationships. Moreover, DL significantly influences IWB, reinforcing its pivotal role in fostering innovative behaviors within organizations.

Determinant Coefficient

The determination coefficient (R^2) in this study is used to explain the amount of variance in the research model. This illustrates the power of exogenous variables (Hair et al., 2020). While the interpretation of the R^2 value varies with discipline and context, adjusting the existing general rule of R^2 values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 can be considered weak, moderate, and substantial under certain conditions (Hair et al., 2019b). In this study, Stone-Geissers Q^2 testing was also carried out. The measures of tolerance in the examination of changes in R^2 due to the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable were 0.02 (small effect); 0.15 (moderate effect); and 0.35 (large effect) (Cohen, 1988).

Table 8: Coefficient of determination (R^2) and Q^2

Endogenous variable	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Q-square
DL	0,492	0,489	0,270
IWB	0,743	0,741	0,503

Source: Processed Data, 2024

In this research model, table 8 shows that the R^2 score is 49.2% for digital leadership indicators and 74.3% for innovative work behavior indicators. Therefore, the R^2 value obtained is considered sufficient and acceptable. The Q^2 value of the study for digital leadership was 0.270, while the value for innovative work behavior was 0.503. These values can be analyzed to show various impacts of three small, medium, and large variables (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, significant independent constructions and generalizations of the results obtained are very likely to be developed in different contexts in the future.

Mediation Effect Test

Table 9 presents the indirect effects of knowledge-sharing and digital leadership on

innovative work behaviors, assessed through bootstrapping analysis. To determine the extent of mediation, this study employs the Variance Accounted For (VAF) method, which quantifies the proportion of the total effect that is mediated by an intervening variable (Hair et al., 2020). A VAF value above 80% indicates full mediation, suggesting that the independent variable influences the dependent variable entirely through the mediator. Conversely, a VAF below 20% suggests no mediation, implying that the mediator has an insignificant role in explaining the relationship. A VAF between 20% and 80% signifies partial mediation, meaning that both direct and indirect effects contribute to the relationship. The use of VAF in this study provides a robust assessment of the mediating role of digital leadership, offering deeper theoretical insights into how knowledge-sharing fosters innovative work behaviors (see Table 10).

Table 9: Size of indirect effects using VAF

Situation	No-Mediation	Partial-Mediation	Full-Mediation
VAF = indirect effect/total effect	$0 < \text{VAF}$	$0.2 \leq \text{VAF} \leq 0.8$	$\text{VAF} > 0.8$

Source: (Hair et al., 2019b)

Table 10 shows that in this study it was found significant indirect effect (KS→DL→IWB) with a t-value of 5.442 and the VAF value of this pathway was 59% and an indirect effect (IWB→DL→IWB) with a t-value, 10.004 also confirmed H7. The VAF score in this indirect relationship is 58% and it can be said that both relationships in this study are partial mediation, the above calculation score which shows results between 20% and 80% can be interpreted as digital leadership has mediated the relationship between generational work values and knowledge-sharing towards innovative work behaviors.

Table 10: Results of the mediation analysis (VAF)

Exogenous variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	VAF	Mediation
Knowledge-Sharing	0,264	0,184	0,448	0,590	Partial
Intergenerational Work Values	0,517	0,369	0,887	0,583	Partial

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Fitting The Model in Smart-PLS

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was utilized to assess model fit, aiding in the avoidance of model specification errors (Roemer et al., 2021). An SRMR value below 0.08 is considered acceptable, with this study recording an SRMR of 0.059, indicating a good fit for both the measurement and structural models. The results confirmed that all proposed hypotheses were supported, demonstrating significant relationships between the variables.

The study findings revealed that knowledge-sharing significantly correlates with digital

leadership (H1), as do intergenerational work values (H2). Furthermore, digital leadership (H3), knowledge-sharing (H4), and intergenerational work values (H5) were found to significantly influence innovative work behavior. Digital leadership also plays a mediating role in the relationships between knowledge-sharing (H6) and intergenerational work values (H7) with innovative work behavior. These results underscore the direct and mediating effects of the integrated variables, confirming the robustness of the proposed model and the acceptance of all hypotheses.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the intricate relationship between knowledge-sharing, intergenerational work values, and digital leadership in shaping innovative work behavior (IWB) among employees in the manufacturing sector. A workplace that fosters knowledge exchange across generational and hierarchical boundaries serves as a crucial enabler of creativity and innovation. However, employees' work values shaped by generational contexts significantly influence their engagement in innovation, necessitating strategic leadership to bridge these differences. Digital leadership emerges as a key mediating mechanism that not only amplifies the impact of knowledge-sharing and generational work values on IWB but also equips organizations with the agility needed to adapt to technological disruptions.

While prior research has established the significance of knowledge-sharing and intergenerational work values in driving innovation (Agustina et al., 2020; Erhan, 2022; Palumian et al., 2021), this study extends the existing body of knowledge by elucidating the mediating role of digital leadership in this relationship. Unlike previous studies that have primarily examined these constructs in isolation (Fangyu, 2023; Mihardjo, 2019; Sagbas, 2023), this research highlights how digitally competent leaders act as catalysts in transforming intergenerational knowledge exchange into actionable innovative practices. By doing so, this study advances theoretical discourse on leadership in digital transformation and underscores the necessity of leadership adaptation in multi-generational workplaces.

Crucially, this research validates its findings through multi-group analysis (MGA), confirming measurement invariance across Generations X, Y, and Z. The establishment of configural, metric, and scalar invariance ensures that observed relationships are not artifacts of generational measurement bias but instead reflect substantive differences in behavior. The results demonstrate that digital leadership consistently mediates the influence of knowledge-sharing and intergenerational work values on IWB, regardless of generational cohort, reinforcing its universal role in fostering workplace innovation. While Generations Y and Z exhibit slightly stronger digital leadership effects, the overall structural pattern remains invariant, suggesting that digital leadership principles remain applicable across different age groups. These findings not only enhance the theoretical robustness of digital leadership frameworks but also validate the generalizability of the proposed model.

From a practical perspective, organizations must foster a knowledge-sharing culture that embraces generational diversity while leveraging digital leadership to drive innovation. Given the relatively stable traits of generational cohorts, leadership development should emphasize digital fluency while remaining responsive to

generational differences in technology adoption and work values. Aligning leadership practices with these preferences can enhance the effectiveness of innovation initiatives across age groups.

This study deliberately excludes empirical testing of moderation effects such as generational cohort to maintain conceptual clarity in establishing the core relationships among digital leadership, knowledge-sharing, and innovative work behavior. Introducing moderation at this stage could risk analytical overcomplexity, detracting from the primary mechanisms under investigation. Nevertheless, generational cohort remains a theoretically meaningful and practically relevant moderator, as different age groups may respond to leadership styles in varied ways, influencing knowledge-sharing dynamics and innovation outcomes.

Future studies are encouraged to investigate these moderating effects to refine leadership strategies suited to multigenerational workforces. Such inquiry would deepen theoretical insights and inform more targeted, inclusive leadership approaches. Ultimately, organizations that integrate digital leadership with inclusive knowledge-sharing systems and intergenerational collaboration will be better equipped to navigate digital transformation, strengthen agility, and sustain long-term competitive advantage.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research has several limitations. First, because this research focuses on the manufacturing industry and uses the employee's point of view. Second, this study has measured perceptions of innovative work behaviors that may differ from other types of industries, regions, and between countries. Third, this study only focuses on knowledge-sharing behavior and work values between generations as a predictor of innovative work behavior. Additional variables that can represent other steps can be incorporated into the proposed model to reveal a broader picture of other aspects that can create employees' innovative work behaviors. Fourth, the model we propose may have national or even local characteristics or cultures, so it is advisable to imitate them in different countries or regions. Fifth, the influence of mediation variables such as intergenerational learning, and learning tenacity can also be explored further. Future research may focus on other important variables such as quality of work life and social capital that can help create an environment that is more supportive of the creation of innovative work behaviors of organizational employees by taking into account the needs of employees who may differ in different countries or geographic regions.

Implications

The company's competitive advantage in facing very rapid business and technological changes in the form of a work environment that encourages a climate of knowledge-sharing, the company's ability to manage and maximize the potential of employees across generations as well as employees who have capabilities in digital leadership can help companies compete in today's volatile and competitive business environment. The company is also expected to be adaptive regarding the condition of generational diversity employees, where each generation brings different values and characteristics and has the potential to help the company in dealing with business and technology

dynamics. This research can help companies in providing a point of view of urgency in managing employees who currently consist of cross-generations and how to behave with them and for researchers by providing additional literature and further references for research.

The company's role in creating a work environment, sharing knowledge that correlates with the values of employees across generations, and supporting the creation of leaders who are able to encourage and adapt in the context of digital technology and will be able to encourage and create innovative work behaviors, money is ultimately expected to be able to contribute to business sustainability, facing challenges and changes in the times, especially with the digitalization of the industry and technology. In addition, the results of this research are expected to help management in formulating policies based on the main potential of employees in improving innovative work behaviors.

Practical Implications for Asian Business

The findings of this research provide several key practical implications for businesses across Asia, particularly in the context of rapid industrialization, technological advancement, and a workforce characterized by generational diversity. First, Asian organizations must prioritize fostering an environment that facilitates open and continuous knowledge-sharing. This requires not only implementing technological tools and digital platforms to bridge communication gaps but also cultivating a culture of collaboration that transcends generational boundaries. Such an approach enables employees to exchange ideas, share expertise, and leverage diverse perspectives, thereby driving innovative work behaviors. In doing so, companies can harness the unique strengths of each generation, using them to address complex business challenges and improve organizational outcomes.

Second, managing and aligning intergenerational work values is essential in the Asian business context, where cultural diversity amplifies differences in generational expectations and attitudes. Companies should invest in comprehensive training and development programs that promote mutual respect and understanding among employees from various age groups. Team-building activities and mentorship programs, for example, can help bridge generational divides, allowing for better collaboration and integration of work values. By aligning these values with organizational goals, businesses can create a cohesive workforce that is both innovative and adaptable. This alignment not only enhances teamwork but also strengthens employee commitment to shared objectives, enabling a unified approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

Third, building digital leadership competence is critical for organizations seeking to navigate the rapid pace of technological change in Asia. Leaders play a pivotal role in mediating between technological advancements and the operational needs of their organizations. Developing leaders with strong digital literacy, effective change management skills, and the ability to engage employees across generations is therefore a strategic imperative. Companies should establish leadership development initiatives that focus on these competencies, ensuring that leaders are well-equipped to foster a culture of innovation while adapting to emerging technological trends. Such leadership is particularly important for driving digital transformation and ensuring that organizations remain competitive in an increasingly digitalized market.

Fourth, organizations in Asia must enhance their adaptability by institutionalizing innovative work behaviors across all levels of the workforce. This involves embedding innovation into core organizational processes, such as performance evaluations, reward structures, and strategic planning. Creating cross-functional teams that encourage collaboration between employees of different generations and expertise areas can further reinforce this adaptability. By prioritizing innovation as a strategic objective, companies can respond more effectively to evolving market demands and technological disruptions, thereby maintaining their relevance and competitiveness.

Finally, the findings emphasize the importance of sustainability through innovation. For businesses in Asia, particularly those in the manufacturing sector, innovative work behavior is a cornerstone of long-term organizational sustainability. Companies that successfully integrate knowledge-sharing, digital leadership, and intergenerational collaboration into their operational frameworks are better positioned to address the challenges posed by rapid industrial and technological changes. Furthermore, these practices enable organizations to capitalize on emerging opportunities in both local and global markets, ensuring their continued growth and success.

In conclusion, the practical implications derived from this research underscore the need for Asian businesses to embrace generational and technological diversity as strategic assets. By fostering knowledge-sharing, aligning work values, developing digital leadership, and institutionalizing innovative work behaviors, organizations can build a resilient workforce capable of driving innovation and adapting to the demands of a rapidly changing business environment. These findings provide valuable insights for management and policymakers in shaping organizational strategies that enhance competitive advantage, promote sustainability, and respond effectively to the dynamic challenges of modern industry.

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