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Article

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Cogent Business & Management

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Suggested Citation: Jabid, Abdullah W.; Abdurrahman, Ahmad Yani; Amarullah, Dudi (2023): Empowering leadership and innovative behaviour in the context of the hotel industry: Knowledge sharing as mediator and generational differences as moderator, Cogent Business & Management, ISSN 2331-1975, Taylor & Francis, Abingdon, Vol. 10, Iss. 3, pp. 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2281707>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/294736>

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To cite this article: Abdullah W. Jabid, Ahmad Yani Abdurrahman & Dudi Amarullah (2023) Empowering leadership and innovative behaviour in the context of the hotel industry: Knowledge sharing as mediator and generational differences as moderator, Cogent Business & Management, 10:3, 2281707, DOI: [10.1080/23311975.2023.2281707](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2281707)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2281707>



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Received: 16 August 2023
Accepted: 06 November 2023

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Reviewing editor:
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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Empowering leadership and innovative behaviour in the context of the hotel industry: Knowledge sharing as mediator and generational differences as moderator

Abdullah W. Jabid^{1*}, Ahmad Yani Abdurrahman¹ and Dudi Amarullah¹

Abstract: Establishing employee innovative behaviour (IB) is essential to achieve competitive advantage. Thus, in the context of Indonesia's hotel industry, this study examines generational differences in the relationship between empowering leadership (EL) and IB, with knowledge sharing (KS) as the mediator. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to hotel employees in Indonesia through purposive sampling. A total of 186 responses were obtained. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was then employed to test each hypothesis. Results demonstrate that all hypotheses were confirmed. EL positively determines KS and IB. In addition, IB was positively determined using KS. This study also confirmed the importance of KS as a mediator in the relationship between EL and IB. Additionally, the results identified generational differences (Gen X and Gen Y) in these relationships. A significant difference was observed in the effect of EL on KS and IB between Gen X and Gen Y. The difference between Gen X and Gen Y was also confirmed in the relationship between KS and IB, and the mediating role of KS in the relationship between EL and IB.

Subjects: Human Resource Management; Organizational Studies; Leadership

Keywords: empowering leadership; knowledge sharing; innovative behaviour; Generation X; Generation Y

1. Introduction

The hotel industry is a rapidly growing business sector that is vital to support tourism (Nababan et al., 2023). For countries with high tourism potential, the development of the hotel industry must be bolstered to support a country's tourism performance (Prayag et al., 2010). Indonesia, for example, is one of the countries with the highest Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI), ranking 32nd out of 117 countries worldwide (World Economic Forum, 2022); thus, innovative services of the hotel industry must be enhanced to improve tourism performance (Arifin et al., 2019). Furthermore, the hotel industry contributes significantly to the Indonesian economy by creating jobs, generating income, and providing foreign exchange earnings (Japutra & Situmorang, 2021). According to Bani-Melhem et al. (2020), one of the keys to success in the hotel industry is hiring employees with creative and innovative service delivery ideas.

Along with today's increasingly complex business competition, encouraging employee innovative behaviour (IB) in the hotel industry is imperative as it can create customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as strengthen organisational competitive advantage (Karatepe et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2023). IB is a crucial aspect of the hotel industry's long-term success. Organisational failure in establishing an IB can negatively affect an organisation, such as increasing the risk of work failure and decreasing competitiveness (Hoang et al., 2022; Pelit & Katircioglu, 2023). Eid and Agag (2020) stated that hiring hotel employees with strong IB is vital to improve service quality and meet rapidly changing consumer expectations. Furthermore, Chen (2023) claimed that IB plays a much larger crucial role in the hotel industry than in other industries, as it is a labour-intensive industry that requires employees to possess strong working skills. Thus, the factors that drive IB in the hotel industry warrant in-depth exploration.

Over the last decade, various studies that have explored the driving factors of employee IB have revealed the significance of empowering leadership (EL). The reason is because EL strongly emphasises employee engagement in decision making, eliminates bureaucratic obstacles, and delegates work authority to employees (Vuong & Hieu, 2022). Furthermore, a literature review by Hoang et al. (2021) revealed that EL is an effective leadership strategy owing to its unique characteristics, in which employees receive a transfer of authority and autonomy from leaders so that they can freely find innovative solutions to complete work tasks. However, few studies have investigated the role of EL in IB in the hotel industry. Therefore, this study aims to clarify the mechanism of EL in determining employee IB by considering knowledge sharing (KS) as a mediator. KS is considered a mediator in this study because KS is an essential factor that can determine the success of collaboration in a company (Arsawan et al., 2023b). Apart from that, KS sharing is also believed to be one of the main factors in shaping job performance (Arsawan et al., 2018) and IB (Khan et al., 2023).

In addition, although various studies have investigated the mediation and moderation mechanisms in determining employee IB (Aldabbas et al., 2021; Arsawan et al., 2022; Montani & Staglianò, 2022; Rafique et al., 2022), they have only tested the mediation and moderation mechanisms separately. Consequently, no study has explored the extent to which employee IB is shaped across generations, especially in the context of the hotel industry. Thus, given the complexity of an individual's behaviour, which allows various factors to play a role in the formation of innovative behaviour—conditional and connecting—generational differences must be examined to provide important insights into how employee IB is shaped across generations. Thus, this study uses generational differences (Gen X and Gen Y) as moderators to observe direct and indirect differences in the influence of EL on IB through KS. Gen X and Gen Y were selected for the following two reasons. On the one hand, Gen X currently holds the most senior or middle management positions in the majority of organisations (Weeraratne et al., 2023). On the other hand, Gen Y is the largest workforce today (Fuchs, 2022). Overall, Gen X and Gen Y constitute the main workforce in many countries (Rattanapon et al., 2023).

Based on these gaps, this study investigates the role of EL in determining hotel employees' IB, with KS serving as a mediator and generations (Gen X and Gen Y) as moderators. This study applies moderated mediation or conditional mediation (CoMe) analysis to investigate the extent to which EL drives IB. Considering the complexity of IB (Sulistiawan et al., 2017), CoMe analysis enables us to comprehend how the relationship between EL and IB, as mediated by KS, differs by generation (Gen X and Gen Y). Social exchange theory (SET) has been widely used as a theoretical lens to understand organisational behaviour (Chung & Anh, 2022; Lai et al., 2020). In addition, SET is extremely useful for justifying exchanges between leaders and employees and exchanged between one employee and another in an organisation (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2020; Zhang & Liu, 2022). Thus, this study employs social exchange theory (SET) as a framework to better understand the relationship between EL and IB. Specifically, this study aims to provide answers to various research topics. Firstly, how does EL play a role in determining employee IB? Secondly, what is the mechanism of KS in mediating the relationship between EL and IB? Last, what is the mechanism of generation (Gen X and Gen Y) in moderating the effect of EL on IB—directly and through KS?

2. Literature review

2.1. Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory (SET) refers to a relationship between two parties in which one party provides assistance or resources to the other in exchange for uncertain future benefits (Cho et al., 2021). Furthermore, SET explains how interactions between individuals in an organisation produce obligations (van Tonder et al., 2020). From the SET perspective, organisations are complex networks comprising exchange relationships that occur constantly (Zhang & Liu, 2022). SET has two main premises: social and utilitarian rewards, where the social exchange process is mutually beneficial to all parties (Luo et al., 2021).

2.2. Innovative behaviour (IB)

Innovative behaviour (IB) is a significant factor that can affect organisational success (Mubarak et al., 2022). IB is an employee's ability to generate new and useful ideas and implement them in the workplace (Fatemi et al., 2022). IB can also be defined as the tendency of employees to implement, develop, and generate new ideas in the work environment and positively influence individual, team, and organisational performances (Malik, 2022). Akram et al. (2020) unveiled three basic elements in IB: consideration of various ways to improve organisational services and practices (idea generation); strengthening ideas and removing organisational barriers to bring about change (idea recognition); and realising ideas into forms, such as developing new services and work procedures (realisation of ideas).

2.3. Empowering leadership (EL)

Studies related to the role of leadership in determining positive employee outcomes have become the focus of many researchers (Khan et al., 2023; Wu & Lee, 2017). For example, several studies reported that types of leadership, such as servant leadership, promote internal social capital (Zoghbi-Manrique de Lara & Ruiz-Palomino, 2019) and innovativeness (Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2021). On the other hand, the study by (Lee et al., 2020) reported that empowering leadership (EL), which is the focus of this study, is a type of leadership with the most critical role in determining employee creativity and innovation compared to other types of leadership. EL is a strategy in which a leader exercises and delegates authority to subordinates (Dahleez et al., 2022; Hendryadi et al., 2019). EL can also be described as a leadership approach that creates a learning culture to strengthen employee learning and provides examples of actions that motivate employees (Na-Nan & Arunyaphum, 2021). According to Lee et al. (2019), a leader with an EL approach exhibits several characteristics, such as tending to participate in decision making, having a high level of concern for subordinates, conducting coaching, sharing information with employees, and positioning himself as a role model. According to Jada et al. (2019), empowering leaders motivate employees to become independent individuals who assume responsibility, take the initiative to start tasks, and achieve higher goals by coordinating activities.

From the SET perspective, when a leader provides positive things, such as support and necessary resources, employees feel obligated to return the favour by exhibiting positive workplace behaviour (Iqbal & Piwowar-Sulej, 2023). Furthermore, SET suggested that when employees obtain information or knowledge from leaders, employees tend to be willing to share information and knowledge with other organizational members, thereby potentially strengthening individual and group performance (Wu & Lee, 2017). In the context of this study, the relevance of SET is perceived when leaders, through specific behaviours, such as providing motivation and support to employees, reciprocate by forming IB and KS (Coun et al., 2019; Vuong & Hieu, 2022). EL, such as KS (Chiang & Chen, 2021; Joo et al., 2022; Singh, 2023) and IB (Hassi et al., 2022; Jada et al., 2019; Vuong & Hieu, 2022), play an important role in determining positive results. Thus, the first and second hypotheses are proposed.

H1: EL positively affects KS.

H2: EL positively affects IB.

2.4. Knowledge sharing (KS)

Knowledge sharing (KS) is a mechanism for exchanging information and expertise amongst organisation members (AlQudah et al., 2023; Anser et al., 2022). KS can also be interpreted as mutually beneficial communication and interaction between employees in an organisation, where employees exchange valuable ideas and information (Anser et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2021). Ye et al. (2022) indicated that KS is a social asset that will significantly affect the future success of organisations, where knowledge sharing enables organisations to run effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, Perotti et al. (2022) KS allows each employee to learn whilst collecting and sharing knowledge by communicating and consulting with one another.

Knowledge sharing has been recognised as a driver of positive outcomes, such as IB (Abualoush et al., 2022; Abukhait et al., 2019; Munir & Beh, 2019). Effective KS within an organisation allows employees to improve their innovation and creativity (Ha & Wickramaratne, 2021; Vandavasi et al., 2020). According to SET, social interactions between employees in organisations are based on norms of reciprocity, where employees who receive knowledge believe that reciprocating with kindness is important. Thus, a continuous exchange of science and knowledge leads to the formation of IB (Noerchoidah Eliyana et al., 2020). From a SET point of view, KS reflects the exchange of knowledge between organizational members at both individual and collective levels to create new ideas or knowledge to strengthen competitive advantage and innovation in the organization (Arsawan et al., 2020). Furthermore, KS is believed to be formed from existing leadership approaches within the organisation, including KS (Cui & Yu, 2021). Thus, this study also investigates the extent of KS's role in bridging the relationship between EL and IB. The following hypotheses are proposed.

H3: KS positively affects IB.

H4: KS mediates the effect of EL on IB.

2.5. Moderating effect of generational differences

Salvosa and Hechanova (2021) suggested some differences between generations related to organisational behaviour, including motivation and work values. Generations are a group of people born within the same period and share demographic characteristics (Rahman et al., 2017). Gen x refers to people born between 1965 and 1979, whereas Gen Y refers to those born between 1980 and 1995 (Yawson & Yamoah, 2020). Gen X people prefer harmonious and flexible work environments; they also have a strong preference for establishing good working relationships with colleagues and a strong belief that personal goals take precedence over work-related goals (Kim et al., 2016). Meanwhile, Gen Y prefers a participatory leadership approach and tends to dislike hierarchical organisational structures (Torsello, 2019). According to the cohort theory, differences exist in attitudes and beliefs amongst various generational groups depending on the journey and life experiences of each generation (Herrando et al., 2019). Each generation goes through different political and social conditions in the early stages of its development; thus, each generation develops a unique system of values and beliefs (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

H5a: The effect of EL on KS varies between Gen X and Gen Y, where the relationship between EL and KS is stronger among Gen Y compared to Gen X.

H5b: The effect of KS on IB varies between Gen X and Gen Y, where the relationship between KS and IB is stronger among Gen X compared to Gen Y.

H5c: The effect of EL on IB varies between Gen X and Gen Y, where the relationship between EL and IB is stronger among Gen Y compared to Gen X.

H5d: The indirect effect of EL on IB through KS varies between Gen X and Gen Y, where the indirect effect of EL on IB through KS is stronger among Gen X compared to Gen Y.

The conceptual framework in this study is shown in [Figure 1](#).

3. Research methodology

The current study aims to investigate the role of EL in determining IB with KS as a mediator and generational differences as a moderator. To achieve this goal, the current study uses a quantitative approach to test and assess hypotheses or relationships between constructs in the research model (Appolloni et al., 2023; Arsawan et al., 2023a). According to Sovacool et al. (2018), the quantitative approach is a methodology that has been widely used in the social sciences, but a precise definition of the field of analysis is still needed.

3.1. Data and sampling method

This study is a causality research intended to investigate the relationship between variables in the conceptual model. Data were collected from June to July 2023 by distributing electronic questionnaires via Google Forms to hotel employees using a purposive sampling method. The questionnaire was designed by first answering questions regarding the respondents' demographic data. The respondents were then asked to answer questions regarding the variables studied. Data were collected in Indonesia, North Maluku, one of the regions with the greatest increase in tourist visits. Hotel managers were contacted via telephone and e-mail to request their availability for distributing questionnaires to their employees. Of the 11 hotels contacted, only nine were willing to participate in this study. A total of 186 valid responses were obtained. Based on ten times the number of reflective indicator rules from Hair et al. (2019), and given that this study contains 14 reflective indicators, the total sample of 186 can be regarded as representative.

3.2. Measurement

This study adapted the measurement items for each variable from several previous studies using a 5-point Likert scale. Specifically, five items for the EL variable were derived from Rescalvo-Martin et al. (2022), four items for the KS variable were derived from Pian et al. (2019), and five items for the IB variable were adapted from Pian et al. (2019).

This study uses Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) as a data analysis technique to assess the reliability of the measurement and structural models and to test the hypotheses in the model. According to Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM allows researchers to estimate complex models with many constructs, indicator variables, and structural paths without imposing distributional assumptions on the data. PLS-SEM is a causal-predictive approach to SEM that emphasises prediction when estimating statistical models, the structure of which is designed to provide causal explanations.

4. Analysis and results

4.1. Demographic data of respondents

Table 1 presents the respondents' demographic characteristics. A total of 186 responses were obtained, most of which were female (57.5%). In addition, Gen X and Gen Y respondents had the same proportion of 50 percent each ([Figure 1](#)). The similarity of proportions between subgroups was intended to meet the sample size standards in the MGA, according to Matthews (2017), which stipulate that the sample size between subgroups must be identical to prevent errors. Furthermore, the data reveal that most respondents (44.1 percent) had a high school education. Finally, most respondents had worked for three to six years (49.5%).

4.2. Measurement model evaluations

Based on Hair et al. (2019), the measurement model was assessed based on loadings, convergent validity (AVE), discriminant validity (HTMT), and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha and

Table 1. Demographic profiles of respondents

Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	79	42.5
Female	107	57.5
Generation		
Gex X	93	50
Gen Y	93	50
Education		
High school	82	44.1
Diploma	44	23.7
Bachelor	49	26.3
Master	11	5.9
Length of work		
1 to less than 3 years	57	30.6
3 to less than 6 years	92	49.5
6 to less than 9 years	24	12.9
More than 9 years	13	7.0

composite reliability). As shown in Table 2, the indicator loading values range from 0.728 to 0.910, indicating that each construct can explain the variance of its indicators. The results also demonstrate that the average variance extracted (AVE) value is above 0.50, reflecting acceptable convergent validity. Furthermore, the internal consistency reliability of the measurement model is greater than 0.70, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values.

The results of discriminant validity based on the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio are exhibited in Table 3. The results indicate acceptable discriminant validity in the measurement model, which is reflected in the HTMT correlation ratio of less than 0.85.

4.3. Structural model evaluations

Based on Hair et al. (2019), the structural model was evaluated according to collinearity assessment, the significance of the path coefficient in each hypothesis, and the in-sample predictive power (R^2). Collinearity is assessed based on the variance inflation factor (VIF), which must be less than or equal to 3.3. According to Kock (2015), the VIF value can be used as a benchmark to assess the common

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

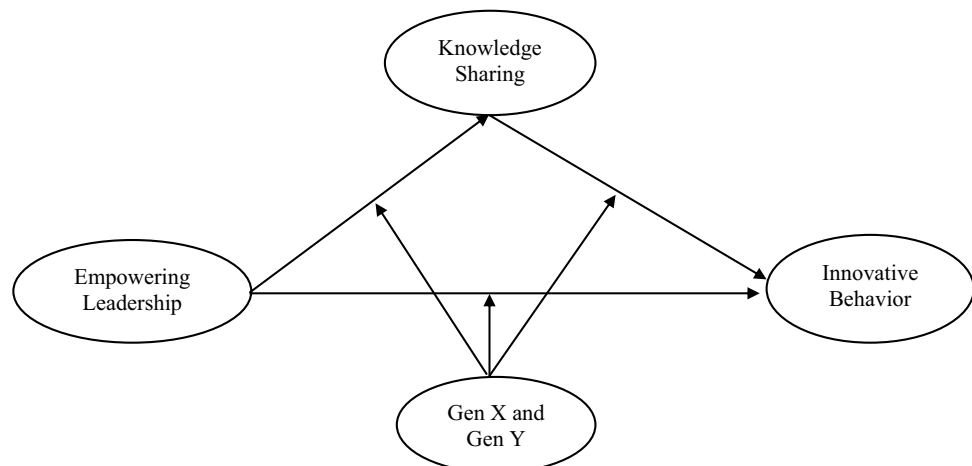


Table 2. Convergent validity and reliability results

Items	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Empowering Leadership				
EL1: My supervisor explains the overall goals we are trying to achieve	0.864	0.732	0.908	0.932
EL2: My supervisor gives employees the freedom to work on their own	0.870			
EL3: My supervisor shares important responsibilities with the employees	0.816			
EL4: My supervisor gives employees the freedom to work on their own	0.900			
EL5: My supervisor lets employees make important decisions	0.827			
Innovative Behaviour				
IB1: I often generate some creative ideas or thoughts at work	0.843	0.731	0.907	0.931
IB2: I market my new ideas to colleagues or leaders to get their support and recognition	0.910			
IB3: To realize my ideas or innovations, I try my best to obtain the resources I need	0.889			
IB4: I actively formulate appropriate plans or projects to implement my innovative ideas	0.847			
IB5: I always provide recommendations to help my colleagues realize their innovative ideas	0.779			
Knowledge Sharing				
KS1: I share my experience and knowledge with colleagues	0.851	0.601	0.782	0.857
KS2: I share my knowledge to complete my own work or that of a colleague	0.781			
KS3: I exchange and share knowledge that is conducive to completing a certain task of myself or my colleagues	0.728			
KS4: I spread and share knowledge through non-public channels such as chats, discussions, etc.	0.734			

Table 3. Discriminant validity results (HTMT)

Constructs	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Empowering Leadership	-	-	-
(2) Innovative Behaviour	0.558	-	-
(3) Knowledge Sharing	0.621	0.806	-

method bias in the PLS-SEM model. A model can avoid common method bias if the VIF value is equal to or below 3.3. As shown in Table 4, all relationships had VIF values below 3.3, indicating no collinearity problem in this study. These results also found no common method bias in the model.

For the direct effect, Table 5 exhibits that EL positively affects KS ($\beta = 0.549$, $p = 0.000$) and IB ($\beta = 0.184$, $p = 0.002$), thus confirming H1 and H2. In addition, KS positively affects IB ($\beta = 0.612$, $p = 0.000$), thereby confirming H3. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that KS and IB have R^2 values of 0.302, indicating weak in-sample predictive power and 0.533, indicating moderate in-sample predictive power.

Table 6 displays that KS positively mediates the relationship between EL and IB ($\beta = 0.336$, $p = 0.000$), thereby confirming H4.

Before performing MGA, we assessed measurement invariance using the MICOM procedure guided by Henseler et al. (2016) to ensure dissimilar group-specific model estimations do not result from distinctive content and the meanings of the latent variables across groups (Gen X and Gen Y). There are three stages in the MICOM procedure, namely configural invariance assessment, compositional invariance assessment, and composites' equality of mean values and variances across groups assessment. Table 7 presents the results of the MICOM procedure in this study. First, this study concludes that Step 1 has met the requirements because both groups (Gen X and Gen Y) have the same model, data treatment, and algorithm settings (Henseler et al., 2016). Next, using 5000 permutations, Step 2 is carried out to assess compositional invariance. Table 7 (Step 2) shows that all composites have c values very close to 1, and none of the c values are significantly different from 1. Thus, the study confirms the compositional invariance of the model (Henseler et al., 2016). Finally, Step 3 is carried out to assess composites' equality of mean values and variances across groups. Table 7 (Steps 3a and 3b) confirms full measurement invariance where the mean value and the variance of a composite in the Gen X group do not significantly differ from the results in the Gen Y group (Henseler et al., 2016). Thus, MGA can be carried out to compare the path coefficients between Gen X and Gen Y.

After ensuring that all MICOM procedures have been fulfilled, MGA is carried out to assess H5a–H5d. Table 8 reveals a substantial difference between Gen X and Gen Y in the influence of EL on KS (path differences = -0.193 , $p = 0.017$), thereby confirming H5a. The effect of EL on IB between Gen X and Gen Y also showed a significant difference (path differences = -0.583 , $p = 0.000$), thus confirming H5b. Furthermore, a significant difference was identified in the effect of KS on IB between Gen X and Gen Y (path differences = 0.570 , $p = 0.000$), thus confirming H5c. Finally, the mediating effect of KS on the relationship between EL and IB demonstrates a significant difference between Gen X and Gen Y (path differences = 0.177 , $p = 0.023$), thereby accepting H5d.

5. Discussion

This study examines the impact of EL on IB using KS as a mediator and generations (Gen X and Gen Y) as moderators in the hotel industry. Overall, this study succeeded in responding to the research questions, as evidenced by the confirmation of all hypotheses.

For H1, the results reveal that EL is a significant driver of KS. The findings of this study reinforce previous studies, which also unveiled that EL is key to strengthening KS (Chiang & Chen, 2021; Joo

Table 4. Collinearity assesment

Path	VIF
EL -> IB	1.432
EL -> KS	1.000
KS -> IB	1.432

Table 5. Direct effects

Hypothesis	Path coefficients	T statistics	P values	Result	R2
(H1) EL -> KS	0.549	10.620	0.000	Supported	0.302
(H2) EL -> IB	0.184	2.824	0.002	Supported	0.533
(H3) KS -> IB	0.612	10.870	0.000	Supported	

et al., 2022; Singh, 2023). Empowering leaders can cultivate participative decision making and share pertinent information with their employees (Lee et al., 2019). These findings indicate that the application of EL triggers KS amongst employees. Thus, the better the application of the EL approach, the more effective KS is within the organisation. Supporting the SET lens (Iqbal & Piwowar-Sulej, 2023), the findings of this study illustrate the exchange relationship between leaders and subordinates: when leaders provide motivation and share useful information, employees feel called to return kindness in the form of good work behaviour, including KS.

For H2, the outcomes of this study reveal that EL is an important determinant of IB. The findings of this study are consistent with those of a previous study, which found that empowering leaders play a significant role in fostering IB (Hassi et al., 2022; Jada et al., 2019; Vuong & Hieu, 2022). In the context of this study, EL is important in forming employee IB, given that empowering leaders motivate employees to continue developing themselves and encourage them to take the initiative to complete work (Jada et al., 2019). Conclusively, EL is one of the best methods for enhancing IB. Thus, employees' IB will be stronger if empowering leaders provide motivation and concern to employees. From a SET perspective (Vuong & Hieu, 2022), this study indicates that EL promotes IB through social exchange relationships between leaders and employees. Employee IB is an implication of the empowering behaviour of leaders who provide valuable resources to employees, who are then responded to by employees in the form of IB.

Furthermore, for H3, the results support the importance of KS in encouraging IB. The outcomes of this study reinforce those of previous studies, which also revealed the importance of KS in enhancing IB (Abualoush et al., 2022; Abukhait et al., 2019; Munir & Beh, 2019). When employees share knowledge, it allows them to consult and learn together, thus opening opportunities for them to create innovative ideas (Perotti et al., 2022). The outcomes of this study show that employees' IB in an organisation is highly dependent on effective KS. The more effective the KS, the better the employee's IB. KS allows interaction between organizational members to share, explore, and combine each other's knowledge so that it can strengthen employee IB (Arsawan et al., 2023a; Khan et al., 2023). In line with SET (Noerchoidah Eliyana et al., 2020), this study reveals that employees with knowledge are more likely to share knowledge with other organisational members. This condition occurs repeatedly, where employees who receive knowledge will

Table 6. Indirect effects

Hypothesis	Path coefficients	T statistics	P values	Result
(H4) EL -> KS -> IB	0.336	7.680	0.000	Supported

Table 7. MICOM results

Composite (Step 2)	c-value (= 1)	95% confidence interval	Compositional invariance?
Empowering Leadership	0.999	[0.993; 1.000]	Yes
Innovative Behaviour	0.999	[0.998; 1.000]	Yes
Knowledge Sharing	0.993	[0.989; 1.000]	Yes
Composite (Step 3a)	Difference of the composite's mean value (= 0)	95% confidence interval	Equal mean values?
Empowering Leadership	−0.071	[−0.248; 0.242]	Yes
Innovative Behaviour	−0.198	[−0.237; 0.234]	Yes
Knowledge Sharing	−0.103	[−0.243; 0.238]	Yes
Composite (Step 3b)	Logarithm of the composite's variances ratio (= 0)	95% confidence interval	Equal variances?
Empowering Leadership	0.170	[−0.282; 0.280]	Yes
Innovative Behaviour	−0.057	[−0.259; 0.272]	Yes
Knowledge Sharing	0.153	[−0.308; 0.327]	Yes

reciprocate the gift in either the same or different forms, which ultimately provides opportunities for employees to form an IB.

For H4, the results confirmed the importance of KS as a mediator in the association between EL and IB. The findings expand on those of previous studies on the mediating role of KS (Cui & Yu, 2021; Vandavasi et al., 2020). This study indicates that KS is an asset that must be maintained and cultivated by leaders because it plays an important role in building organisational effectiveness and efficiency (Ye et al., 2022). Through KS, employees can strengthen relationships by exchanging ideas with each other to increase innovation and creativity in facing business challenges (Arsawan et al., 2020). Furthermore, the findings of this study reveal that an empowering leader will foster, motivate, and become a role model for employees, creating the ideal KS within the organisation, which will ultimately trigger IB formation. Expanding on the SET perspective (Chen et al., 2022), this study reveals how exchange relationships between leaders and employees promote employee-to-employee relationships. Employees tend to establish a give-and-take balance between leaders and others. Thus, when employees exhibit positive behaviour from empowering leaders, they reciprocate this gift by sharing their knowledge with other employees, which ultimately builds employee creativity and IB.

For H5a–H5d, the outcomes of this study confirmed an overall difference in the relationship between Gen X and Gen Y constructs. This finding supports the cohort theory, in which differences exist between generations related to organisational behaviour given that each generation undergoes a different journey and life experience (Herrando et al., 2019; Salvosa & Hechanova, 2021). Specifically, the study findings reveal that, compared to Gen X, Gen Y build KS and IB primarily because of empowering leaders. EL is effective in applying to Gen Y to create effective KS and IB for employees. In addition, the results reveal that, compared to Gen Y, Gen X builds IB primarily based on KS that occurs within the organisation. Thus, Gen X prioritises effective KS within the organisation to shape the IB. Finally, the outcomes of this study revealed that the mediating role of KS in the relationship between EL and IB was stronger for Gen X than for Gen Y. These findings indicate that, compared with Gen Y, Gen X is more sensitive to EL approaches in their efforts to build IB through effective KS.

Table 8. Multi-groups analysis

Hypothesis	Gen X			Gen Y			Path coefficients diff (Gen X–Gen Y)	P values (Gen X vs Gen Y)	Result
	Path coefficients	T statistics	P values	Path coefficients	T statistics	P values			
(H5a) EL -> KS	0.382	5.140	0.000	0.575	10.555	0.000	-0.193	0.017	Supported
(H5b) EL -> IB	-0.066	0.881	0.189	0.517	5.372	0.000	-0.583	0.000	Supported
(H5c) KS -> IB	0.777	14.701	0.000	0.208	0.000	0.014	0.570	0.000	Supported
(H5d) EL -> KS -> IB	0.297	4.602	0.000	0.119	2.005	0.023	0.177	0.023	Supported

6. Conclusion and implications

This research aimed to investigate the differences between Gen X and Gen Y in the relationship between EL and IB, with KS as a mediator. The results of this study succeeded in demonstrating a meaningful relationship between EL and IB, directly and through KS as a mediator. In addition, this study confirms the existence of generational differences in the relationship between EL and IB, directly and through KS as a mediator.

This study makes three theoretical contributions. Firstly, this study expands the human resource literature by confirming the importance of EL in determining IB directly and indirectly through KS as a mediator in the hotel industry, which remains relatively limited. Secondly, this study confirmed the role of EL in KS and IB. In addition, this study succeeded in demonstrating the important role of KS in driving IB. These findings contribute to the development of the body of knowledge from SET in explaining social exchanges in organisations, vertically (between leaders and employees) and horizontally (between employees). Vertically, this study strengthens SET by demonstrating how exchange relationships between leaders and employees can lead to employee KS behavior. Horizontally, this study strengthens SET by providing empirical evidence of how exchange relationships between employees in an organization can create employee IB. Thirdly, the outcomes of this study provide new insights into the development of cohort theory, particularly in the field of human resource management. This study provides fresh insights into generational differences in organisations, where Gen X and Gen Y have different organisational behaviours. Although many studies have examined the relationship between EL and IB—directly and through KS as a mediator—this study is novel in that it confirms the differences between Gen X and Gen Y in these relationships.

Furthermore, this study has several practical implications that managers should consider to strengthen innovative behaviour. Firstly, this study indicates that EL is a key determinant in the development of IB. Thus, managers should apply an EL approach by creating a learning culture, building participatory decision making, and acting as role models for employees to form IB. To meet these goals, managers must provide consultation to subordinates to help them continue learning and equip them with the ability to think critically and work independently. Organisations can apply psychological evaluations to obtain an overview of leaders' personalities and create empowering leaders. Secondly, this study indicated that KS acts as a bridge between EL and IB. Thus, leaders should stimulate employee KS through empowering behaviours, such as establishing trusting relationships and self-efficacy. Furthermore, efforts, such as building a co-operative work climate, promoting teamwork, building tolerance for employee mistakes, and encouraging employees to undertake trial and error can be considered by managers to facilitate and encourage employees to share and exchange knowledge. These efforts are predicted to trigger the formation of the IB. Thirdly, this study indicates that Gen Y employees are more motivated than Gen X employees to form IB and KS given that they are empowering leaders. Gen Y individuals prefer participatory leadership, avoid hierarchical organisational structures, and are likely to accept empowering leaders. Meanwhile, this study indicates that the formation of IB through KS and IB through EL with KS as a bridge is more likely to occur in Gen X than in Gen Y. Gen X employees have a strong preference for developing strong working relationships with colleagues to share knowledge and experience with one another. Thus, managers must approach Gen X and Gen Y differently to create KS and IB. Managers must also create a collaborative and communicative work environment that allows Gen X employees to exchange knowledge and experience to shape IB. For Gen Y employees, managers must apply empowering behaviours by providing care, coaching, and building participatory decision making to create effective KS and IB.

7. Limitations and future research

This study holds some limitations. Firstly, a cross-sectional method was employed in this study; therefore, the causality between the constructs was not established. In addition, the passage of time may alter the respondents' assessment of the measurement of each variable. Further research must apply a longitudinal method to determine the extent to which changes in time

affect respondents' judgments of variable measurements. Secondly, only employee self-perceptions were used to measure innovative employee behaviour. Future studies should apply more objective measurements, such as assessments by leaders or supervisors. Finally, this study was conducted on Indonesia's hotel industry; thus the findings cannot be generalised to other contexts and geographical areas. Future research should address this limitation by confirming the study findings in other regions and contexts.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank all subjects who have helped a lot during the preparation of this article.

Funding

This research is sponsored by Institute for Research and Community Service, Khairun University, Ternate, Indonesia

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Disclosure statement

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Citation information

Cite this article as: Empowering leadership and innovative behaviour in the context of the hotel industry: Knowledge sharing as mediator and generational differences as moderator, Abdullah W. Jabid, Ahmad Yani Abdurrahman & Dudi Amarullah, *Cogent Business & Management* (2023), 10: 2281707.

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