

## The Effect of Knowledge Sharing and Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior with Thriving at Work as an Intervening Variable Among Echelon II Officials in West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Government

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### **Abstract**

**Keywords:** Knowledge Sharing, Digital Competence, Innovative Work Behavior, Thriving At Work, Public Sector, SEM-PLS

*In the context of accelerating digital transformation, understanding the psychological mechanisms that translate knowledge resources and technological capability into innovative work behaviour among senior public officials is increasingly critical. This study investigates the influence of knowledge sharing and digital competence on innovative work behaviour, with thriving at work as an intervening variable, among Echelon II officials of the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Government. A quantitative causal design was employed using a census of all 41 heads of regional apparatus organisations, and data were analysed through structural equation modelling with partial least squares. The findings indicate that knowledge sharing does not directly affect innovative work behaviour, whereas digital competence exerts a direct and significant positive influence. Both knowledge sharing and digital competence significantly enhance thriving at work. Furthermore, thriving at work fully mediates the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour, but it does not mediate the relationship between digital competence and innovative work behaviour. These results reveal two distinct pathways to innovation: knowledge sharing fosters innovative behaviour solely through psychological flourishing, while digital competence serves as an immediate operational driver. Consequently, regional governments should invest in strategic digital leadership development and transform knowledge-sharing forums into reflective, collaborative learning environments that nurture vitality and continuous growth.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The accelerating pace of digital transformation has compelled public organizations across Indonesia to adapt governance models, competencies, and organizational cultures. Regional governments face mounting pressure to deliver efficient, innovative, and accountable public services amidst increasing public expectations and rapid technological disruption. Mariani and Bianchi (2023) argue that digital transformation in the public sector must encompass not only technology but also human competencies, organizational culture, and flexible work processes. In this context, innovative work behavior (IWB) the voluntary initiation, promotion, and implementation of novel ideas within an organization (Janssen, 2000) has become a critical determinant of public sector effectiveness. Innovative work behavior is not solely a product of individual creativity; rather, it emerges from the dynamic interaction between individual capabilities, organizational support, and conducive environmental conditions (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

Among Echelon II officials (heads of Regional Apparatus Organizations/OPD) in the West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Provincial Government, the imperative for innovation is particularly

pronounced. These officials serve as strategic decision-makers and policy architects across 41 OPDs under Governor Regulation No. 32/2025. The NTB Provincial Government has recorded a remarkable innovation trajectory over the past six years, as documented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Innovations Produced by the NTB Provincial Government**

No	Year	Total Innovations	Type of Innovation		Innovation Level
			Digital	Non Digital	
1	2020	3	1	2	Not Innovative
2	2021	80	26	54	Most Innovative
3	2022	129	25	104	Most Innovative
4	2023	134	44	90	Most Innovative
5	2024	141	28	113	Highly Innovative
6	2025	139	51	88	Highly Innovative

Source: Regional Research and Innovation Agency of NTB Province (2026)

Table 1 reveals a striking paradox in NTB's innovation development. Quantitatively, total innovations grew from only 3 in 2020 ranked last in the "Not Innovative" category among Indonesia's 34 provinces to 141 in 2024, earning the "Highly Innovative" designation and Most Innovative Region recognition directly from the President of Indonesia (Badan Riset dan Inovasi Daerah Provinsi NTB, 2026). However, a structural imbalance persists: non-digital innovations consistently and overwhelmingly dominate across all years, peaking at 113 of 141 innovations (80.1%) in 2024 and 88 of 139 (63.3%) in 2025. Digital innovations remain the minority despite growing from 1 (2020) to 51 (2025). This pattern suggests that while the quantity of innovative work behavior has expanded dramatically among NTB's Echelon II officials, its quality specifically the digitalization dimension remains structurally constrained. This gap raises critical questions about the roles of digital competence and knowledge sharing in sustaining and deepening innovation in this public sector context.

These empirical conditions motivate a closer examination of the individual-level antecedents that drive innovative work behavior among senior public officials. Research consistently identifies knowledge sharing (KS) and digital competence (DC) as key antecedents of IWB. Knowledge sharing defined as the voluntary exchange of information, experience, and skills among organizational members to create new knowledge (Hooff & Ridder, 2004) has been shown to stimulate collective learning and accelerate the diffusion of innovative ideas (Chen, Li, & Liu, 2024; Wang, 2025). Digital competence, conceptualized as the integrated knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to use digital technologies effectively, critically, and ethically (Ferrari, 2013), enables officials to leverage data systems and implement technology-based solutions. However, empirical evidence remains inconsistent: some studies find no direct KS IWB relationship (Meidawati et al., 2023; Mutafanin & Muzakki, 2025), while others show that digital skills do not always directly drive IWB (Suhada et al., 2024; Wahyuni & Rahman, 2025), suggesting the potential role of psychological mediating mechanisms.

These inconsistencies point to the relevance of thriving at work the joint experience of vitality and learning (Spreitzer et al., 2005) as a psychological bridge between organizational resources and innovative behavior. Yet empirical evidence situating this model within Indonesian regional bureaucracy at the Echelon II level remains absent. The present study addresses this gap

by examining: (1) direct effects of KS and DC on IWB; (2) effects of KS and DC on thriving at work; (3) effect of thriving at work on IWB; and (4) the mediating role of thriving at work. The novelty of this study lies in its exclusive focus on Echelon II officials as a strategic leadership cohort, its application of a multi-variable psychological mediation model in Indonesian regional government, and its use of the DigComp 2.2 digital competence framework alongside a five-dimensional knowledge sharing instrument.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative causal research design. The research was conducted within the West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Provincial Government, which comprises 41 Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) under Governor Regulation No. 32/2025. The population and sample consisted of all 41 Echelon II officials (Pejabat Pimpinan Tinggi Pratama), applying a census method. Data were collected in 2026 through structured self-administered questionnaires distributed directly to each respondent.

Four constructs were measured using 5-point Likert scales. Innovative Work Behavior (IWB, Y) was operationalized through 12 items across four indicators: Opportunity Exploration, Idea Generation, Championing, and Application, adapted from Jong and Den Hartog (2010). Knowledge Sharing (KS, X1) was assessed via 20 items spanning five dimensions Embrained, Embodied, Encultured, Embedded, and Encoded Knowledge based on Matzler et al. (2008). Digital Competence (DC, X2) was measured by 15 items across five indicators aligned with DigComp 2.2 (Ferrari, 2013): Information and Data Literacy, Communication and Collaboration, Digital Content Creation, Safety, and Problem Solving and Innovation. Thriving at Work (TAW, Z) was captured through 8 items on two dimensions Vitality and Learning adapted from Spreitzer and Porath (2014) and Prem et al. (2023). Scale anchors were: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Data analysis used SEM-PLS via SmartPLS in two stages. The outer model (measurement model) was evaluated through: (1) convergent validity via outer loadings ( $\geq 0.70$ ) and AVE ( $\geq 0.50$ ); (2) discriminant validity via HTMT ( $< 0.90$ ); and (3) internal consistency reliability via Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability ( $\geq 0.70$ ). The inner model (structural model) was assessed via VIF ( $< 5.0$ ),  $R^2$ ,  $Q^2$ ,  $f^2$ , and path coefficients. Hypothesis testing for direct and indirect (mediation) effects used bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples (significance:  $p < 0.05$ ).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results Research

**Table 2. Respondent Characteristics**

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	37	90.2
	Female	4	9.8
Age	41–45 years	2	4.88
	46–50 years	8	19.5
	51–55 years	14	34.15
	56–60 years	17	41.47

Education	Bachelor (S1)	5	12.2
	Master (S2)	26	63.4
	Doctoral (S3)	10	24.4
Rank / Grade	Senior Supervisor, Grade IV/b	7	17.1
	Junior Chief Supervisor, Grade IV/c	15	36.6
	Intermediate Chief Supervisor, Grade IV/d	19	46.3
	Chief Supervisor, Grade IV/e	0	0
Tenure	20–25 years	5	12.2
	26–30 years	15	36.6
	31–35 years	11	26.8
	> 35 years	10	24.4

Source: Processed data (2026)

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the 41 respondents. The majority were male (90.2%), aged 56–60 years (41.47%), held a master's degree (63.4%), were ranked at Intermediate Chief Supervisor/Grade IV/d (46.3%), and had a working tenure of 26–30 years (36.6%). This profile reflects the typical structure of senior bureaucratic leadership in Indonesian regional government, characterized by experienced, highly educated male officials at peak career maturity. The dominance of respondents above 50 years of age and with more than 26 years of tenure indicates a cohort with extensive bureaucratic experience, which is relevant for interpreting knowledge sharing, digital competence, and innovative behavior dynamics.

### Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

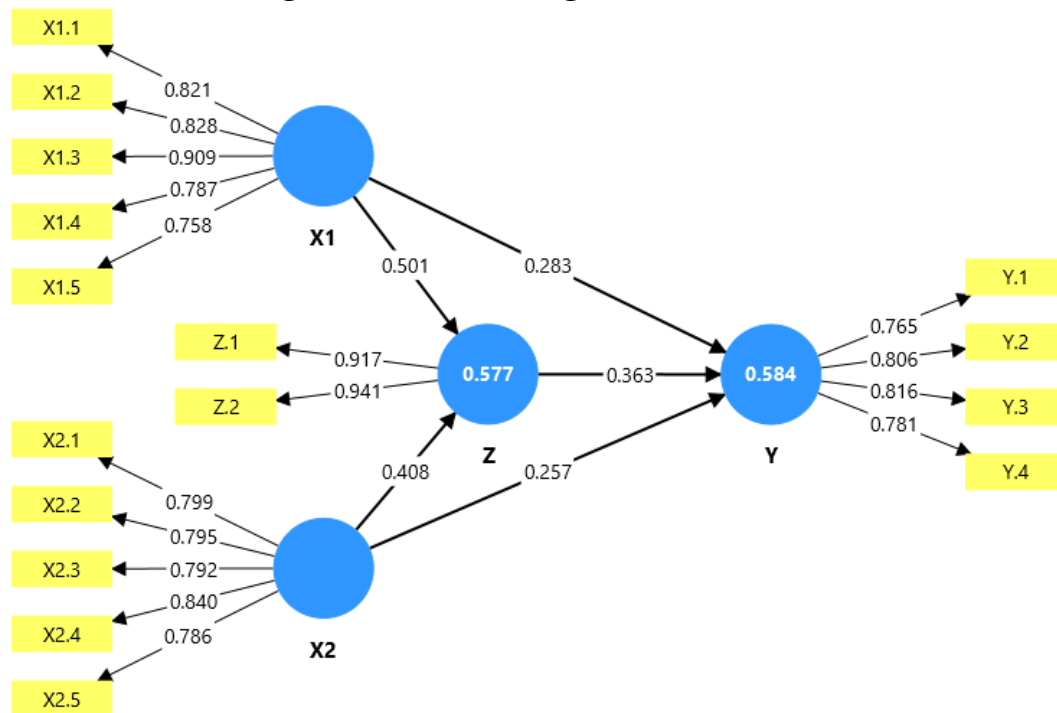
The measurement model referred to as the outer model in PLS-SEM defines the relationships between latent constructs and their observed indicators. The primary purpose of outer model evaluation is to provide empirical evidence that the measurement instruments accurately and consistently capture the theoretical dimensions they were designed to measure, and that each indicator reflects its intended construct exclusively. This validation stage is a prerequisite that must be completed before structural hypothesis testing can proceed with confidence.

### Validity Test

#### Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed through outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). An indicator is valid if outer loading  $\geq 0.70$ , and a construct meets the criterion if AVE  $\geq 0.50$ . (Hair et al., 2010).

Figure 1. Outer Loadings of All Constructs



Source: Processed data (2026)

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE	Conclusion
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.628	Valid (AVE > 0.50)
Knowledge Sharing (X1)	0.676	Valid (AVE > 0.50)
Digital Competence (X2)	0.645	Valid (AVE > 0.50)
Thriving at Work (Z)	0.863	Valid (AVE > 0.50)

Source: Processed data (2026)

Based on Table 3 and 4, all outer loadings exceeded 0.70 and all AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming convergent validity across all four constructs. Thriving at Work recorded the highest AVE (0.863), reflecting the strong explanatory power of its two indicators (Vitality and Learning).

**Discriminant Validity**

Discriminant validity was assessed using the HTMT ratio. A value below 0.90 indicates adequate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

Variable	X1 (KS)	X2 (DC)	Y (IWB)	Z (TAW)
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Knowledge Sharing (X1)	—			
Digital Competence (X2)	0.432	—		
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.720	0.689	—	
Thriving at Work (Z)	0.743	0.697	0.851	—

Source: Data Processed (2026)

All HTMT' values remained below 0.90, with the highest value between Thriving at Work and Innovative Work Behavior (0.851). Discriminant validity is thus confirmed for all constructs.

### Internal Consistency Reliability

**Table 5 . Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_a	rho_c (CR)	Conclusion
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.880	0.894	0.912	Reliable
Knowledge Sharing (X1)	0.863	0.872	0.901	Reliable
Digital Competence (X2)	0.803	0.806	0.871	Reliable
Thriving at Work (Z)	0.842	0.858	0.926	Reliable

Source: Data Processed (2026)

All Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeded 0.70, confirming strong internal consistency reliability for all constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The measurement model satisfies all validity and reliability criteria, permitting structural hypothesis testing.

### Inner Model (Structural Model)

The structural model evaluation began with a multicollinearity check using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), followed by assessment of model fit ( $R^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), effect sizes ( $f^2$ ), and hypothesis testing.

**Table 6. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)**

Path	VIF	Conclusion
Knowledge Sharing → Innovative Work Behavior	1.773	No Multicollinearity
Digital Competence → Innovative Work Behavior	1.574	No Multicollinearity
Knowledge Sharing → Thriving at Work	1.180	No Multicollinearity
Digital Competence → Thriving at Work	1.180	No Multicollinearity
Thriving at Work → Innovative Work Behavior	2.364	No Multicollinearity

Source: Data Processed (2026)

All VIF values ranged between 1.180 and 2.364, well below the threshold of 5.0, confirming the absence of multicollinearity among predictor constructs.

**Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

Endogenous Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Category
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.584	Moderate
Thriving at Work (Z)	0.577	Moderate

Source: Data Processed (2026)

The model explains 58.4% of the variance in Innovative Work Behavior and 57.7% of the variance in Thriving at Work. Both values fall within the moderate category (0.50–0.75), indicating satisfactory predictive explanatory power (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 8. Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)**

Endogenous Variable	Q <sup>2</sup>	Conclusion	
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.462	Predictive Confirmed	Relevance
Thriving at Work (Z)	0.510	Predictive Confirmed	Relevance

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Q<sup>2</sup> values for both endogenous constructs exceed zero (IWB = 0.462; TAW = 0.510), confirming that the model possesses predictive relevance and is not merely descriptive of observed relationships (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 9. Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>)**

Path	f <sup>2</sup>	Effect Category
Knowledge Sharing → Innovative Work Behavior	0.108	Small
Digital Competence → Innovative Work Behavior	0.101	Small
Knowledge Sharing → Thriving at Work	0.503	Large
Digital Competence → Thriving at Work	0.334	Medium
Thriving at Work → Innovative Work Behavior	0.134	Small

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Knowledge sharing exerts a large effect on thriving at work (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.503), while digital competence exerts a medium effect on thriving (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.334). Both KS and DC have small direct effects on IWB (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.108 and 0.101 respectively), as does thriving at work (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.134). These f<sup>2</sup> values are consistent with the expected mediated (for KS) and direct (for DC) pathways revealed in hypothesis testing.

## Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) to obtain path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Results for direct and indirect effects are presented in Tables 11 and 12 respectively.

**Table 10. Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing Results**

Path	$\beta$	p-value	Conclusion
H1: Knowledge Sharing $\rightarrow$ Innovative Work Behavior	0.283	0.054	Not Significant
H2: Digital Competence $\rightarrow$ Innovative Work Behavior	0.257	0.039	Significant
H3: Knowledge Sharing $\rightarrow$ Thriving at Work	0.501	0.000	Significant
H4: Digital Competence $\rightarrow$ Thriving at Work	0.408	0.000	Significant
H5: Thriving at Work $\rightarrow$ Innovative Work Behavior	0.363	0.021	Significant

Source: Data Processed (2026)

**Table 11. Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing Results**

Path	$\beta$	p-value	Conclusion	Mediation Type
H6: KS $\rightarrow$ TAW $\rightarrow$ IWB	0.182	0.045	Significant	Full Mediation
H7: DC $\rightarrow$ TAW $\rightarrow$ IWB	0.148	0.053	Not Significant	No Mediation

Source: Data Processed (2026)

The following is an explanation based on the results of hypothesis testing presented in Tables 11 and 12 above:

### **H1: Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Innovative Work Behavior**

Knowledge Sharing does not exert a significant direct effect on Innovative Work Behavior ( $\beta = 0.283$ ,  $p = 0.054$ ), thus H1 is not supported. Although the path coefficient is positive, knowledge exchange among Echelon II officials does not autonomously translate into innovative action without intervening psychological conditions, reflecting the structural inertia inherent to a mature bureaucratic environment.

### **H2: Effect of Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior**

Digital Competence positively and significantly influences Innovative Work Behavior ( $\beta = 0.257$ ,  $p = 0.039$ ), supporting H2. Officials who strategically leverage digital technologies possess both the cognitive toolkit and the implementation capacity to identify opportunities and apply technology-based solutions, confirming digital competence as a direct driver of public sector innovation, though with a small effect size.

### **H3: Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Thriving at Work**

Knowledge Sharing exerts a strong and significant positive effect on Thriving at Work ( $\beta = 0.501$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $f^2 = 0.503$ ), supporting H3. Inter-official knowledge exchange simultaneously reinforces vitality and continuous learning—the two constitutive dimensions of thriving—making cross-

organizational knowledge-sharing forums the primary psychological energizer among Echelon II officials.

#### **H4: Effect of Digital Competence on Thriving at Work**

Digital Competence positively and significantly influences Thriving at Work ( $\beta = 0.408$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $f^2 = 0.334$ ), supporting H4. Officials with greater digital mastery experience reduced cognitive burden and heightened sense of control over their work, generating both increased vitality and perceived competence growth the constitutive dimensions of thriving with a medium effect size.

#### **H5: Effect of Thriving at Work on Innovative Work Behavior**

Thriving at Work positively and significantly affects Innovative Work Behavior ( $\beta = 0.363$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ), supporting H5. Officials simultaneously experiencing high vitality and continuous learning are psychologically equipped to generate, champion, and implement novel ideas across bureaucratic structures, confirming thriving as the enabling psychological state for sustained innovative engagement.

#### **H6: Mediating Role of Thriving at Work in the Knowledge Sharing–IWB Relationship**

Thriving at work fully mediates the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior (indirect  $\beta = 0.182$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ), supporting H6. Because the direct KS–IWB path is non-significant ( $p = 0.054$ ) while the indirect path is significant ( $p = 0.045$ ), full mediation is confirmed following Hair et al.'s (2017) criteria. The indirect path ( $\beta = 0.182$ ) constitutes the exclusive transmission mechanism, indicating that knowledge sharing generates innovative behavior only through psychological flourishing and not through a direct behavioral route.

#### **H7: Mediating Role of Thriving at Work in the Digital Competence–IWB Relationship**

Thriving at work does not mediate the relationship between digital competence and innovative work behavior (indirect  $\beta = 0.148$ ,  $p = 0.053$ ), thus H7 is not supported. Because the indirect effect is non-significant while the direct DC–IWB path remains significant (H2:  $p = 0.039$ ), no mediation is confirmed following Hair et al.'s (2017) and Solimun's (2017) criteria. Digital competence therefore operates through an immediate operational pathway that does not require psychological flourishing as an intervening mechanism.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Innovative Work Behavior**

Knowledge sharing did not directly influence innovative work behavior ( $\beta = 0.283$ ,  $p = 0.054$ ), failing to support H1. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which stipulates that knowledge does not automatically translate into action; individuals require prerequisite psychological conditions such as energy, sense of growth, self-efficacy, and risk-taking propensity before converting knowledge into innovative acts. Among Echelon II officials, who operate within highly institutionalized bureaucratic environments, the mere possession or exchange of knowledge does not automatically override structural inertia or administrative risk-aversion. This pattern is consistent with Meidawati et al. (2023) and Mutafanin and Muzakki (2025), who similarly found no significant direct relationship between KS and IWB in Indonesian public sector contexts. Rather than negating the importance of knowledge sharing, this finding repositions its role as a precondition that generates psychological readiness for innovation, rather than a direct behavioral driver. The finding implies that in mature bureaucratic settings, knowledge-sharing forums must be qualitatively transformed from information relay channels into reflective, collaborative learning spaces that cultivate vitality and growth the psychological preconditions for innovation.

### **The Effect of Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior**

Digital competence significantly and positively influenced innovative work behavior ( $\beta = 0.257$ ,  $p = 0.039$ ), supporting H2. This finding confirms that the capacity of Echelon II officials to strategically understand, leverage, and direct digital technologies constitutes a direct driver of innovative action. Unlike knowledge sharing, which enriches awareness, digital competence provides both the cognitive toolkit and the implementation mechanism for innovation simultaneously. Ferrari's (2013) DigComp framework conceptualizes digital competence as encompassing not only technical proficiency but also critical strategic dimensions precisely the competence profile that enables officials to read performance dashboards, interpret real-time data, and translate insights into policy reforms without organizational intermediaries. This is consistent with De Jong and Den Hartog's (2010) conceptualization of IWB as encompassing opportunity exploration, idea generation, championing, and application—all of which are accelerated by digital capability. The finding corroborates Sary (2023), Carvalho et al. (2023), and Criado and Gil-Garcia (2019), who collectively affirm that digital capability is a direct enabler of innovation in both educational and governmental contexts. Practically, this finding underscores that digital leadership development programs rather than simple application training—represent the most impactful investment for driving public sector innovation in NTB.

### **The Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Thriving at Work**

Knowledge sharing exerted a significant and large positive effect on thriving at work ( $\beta = 0.501$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $f^2 = 0.503$ ), supporting H3. This finding confirms that inter-official knowledge exchange through cross-organizational discussions, policy consultations, and best-practice forums functions as a primary mechanism for cultivating the vitality and learning dimensions of thriving. In line with Spreitzer et al. (2005), when officials receive new perspectives, validate their competencies through sharing, and experience recognition from peers, both vitality and learning are simultaneously reinforced. Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) knowledge creation theory further supports this: socialization and externalization processes convert tacit experiential knowledge into shared organizational understanding, reducing ambiguity and elevating officials' sense of role competence a direct precursor to thriving. The effect is particularly pronounced among Echelon II officials with long tenure (modal group: 26–30 years), for whom accumulated tacit knowledge becomes a valued social resource. This is consistent with Wang (2025) and Ononye and Ikechukwu (2024), both of whom confirm significant KS thriving relationships across public sector samples.

### **The Effect of Digital Competence on Thriving at Work**

Digital competence significantly influenced thriving at work ( $\beta = 0.408$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $f^2 = 0.334$ ), supporting H4. This finding reveals that officials who strategically master digital systems—comprehending electronic performance reports, managing integrated information systems, and directing digital transformation—experience reduced cognitive burden, heightened sense of control, and elevated confidence in decision-making. These conditions collectively produce both vitality (increased energy and enthusiasm) and learning (perceived competence growth), which are the constitutive dimensions of thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Despite the modal age group of 56–60 years an age cohort often associated with technology resistance the significant result suggests that mandatory SPBE (Electronic Government System) implementation demands have catalyzed adaptive digital engagement among senior officials. This pattern is consistent with Masyhuri, Prabandari, and Kurniawati (2024) and Li et al. (2023), who confirm that digital competence reduces technological anxiety and fosters work-related well-being.

### **The Effect of Thriving at Work on Innovative Work Behavior**

Thriving at work significantly and positively affected innovative work behavior ( $\beta = 0.363$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ), supporting H5. Officials who simultaneously experience high vitality and continuous

learning are psychologically equipped to generate novel ideas, champion those ideas through bureaucratic channels, and implement them as operational or policy changes. Fredrickson's (2001) broaden and build theory provides the theoretical grounding: positive emotional states expand cognitive repertoires, making individuals more adaptive, creative, and risk tolerant prerequisites for sustained innovative engagement. In the context of Echelon II officials who bear strategic leadership responsibilities, thriving functions as the enabling psychological state that converts organizational resources into creative organizational outputs. This is consistent with Alwahabi, Dukhaykh, and Alonazi (2023), Arofah et al. (2024), and Kark and Carmeli (2009), all of whom identify thriving as a significant positive predictor of innovative behavior across diverse organizational contexts.

### **The Mediating Role of Thriving at Work in the Knowledge Sharing–IWB Relationship**

Thriving at work fully mediated the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior (indirect  $\beta = 0.182$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ; direct effect non-significant at  $p = 0.054$ ), supporting H6. This full mediation pattern confirms that knowledge sharing generates innovative behavior exclusively through the pathway of psychological flourishing: inter-official knowledge exchange cultivates vitality and learning (H3), which in turn activates innovative action (H5). The absence of a direct KS–IWB pathway, combined with a significant indirect pathway, indicates that knowledge without psychological flourishing remains inert in a bureaucratic context. This finding extends Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) knowledge creation theory by empirically demonstrating that the pathway from socialized knowledge to organizational innovation is mediated by psychological readiness a mechanism not fully articulated in the original framework. It also supports Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), which holds that intrinsic behavioral motivation emerges when core psychological needs (competence, autonomy, relatedness) are fulfilled precisely the conditions cultivated by meaningful knowledge-sharing interactions. This resonates with Cetin and Aydin (2024) and Wang (2025), who similarly report thriving as a full or strong mediator between social learning conditions and innovative behavior.

### **The Non-Mediating Role of Thriving at Work in the Digital Competence–IWB Relationship**

Contrary to H7, thriving at work did not mediate the digital competence–innovative work behavior relationship (indirect  $\beta = 0.148$ ,  $p = 0.053$ ), indicating that digital competence operates through a direct rather than psychologically mediated pathway. This finding reveals the fundamentally different nature of digital competence as an innovation driver: whereas knowledge sharing requires psychological internalization before translating into behavioral change, digital competence provides an immediate operational capacity to perceive, diagnose, and rectify organizational problems through technology. Teece's (2007) dynamic capabilities framework supports this interpretation: digital competence constitutes an operational capability enabling Sensing, Seizing, and Transforming simultaneously, without requiring prior psychological re-energization. The homogeneity of the respondent sample uniformly senior (modal age 56–60), highly educated (63.4% master's degree), and long-tenured (modal 26–30 years) further explains the non-significant mediation. Psychological variability in thriving is restricted by the relative stability of this cohort, attenuating the statistical power of mediation. These findings converge with Van Laar et al. (2020) and Criado and Gil-Garcia (2019), who confirm that digital capability directly drives public sector innovation independently of psychological mediating states.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined This study reveals two fundamentally distinct pathways through which knowledge sharing and digital competence drive innovative work behavior among Echelon II officials. Knowledge sharing does not directly influence innovative behavior; instead, it operates

entirely through thriving at work, which fully mediates the relationship. In contrast, digital competence exerts a direct and significant effect on innovative work behavior, without requiring psychological re-energization. Both knowledge sharing and digital competence substantially enhance thriving at work, which in turn positively predicts innovative behavior.

These findings advance theoretical understanding in several important respects. First, they extend the thriving at work framework by demonstrating that vitality and learning constitute the exclusive transmission mechanism linking knowledge sharing to innovation within a bureaucratic hierarchy a psychological mediation role not previously specified in knowledge creation theory. Second, they confirm that digital competence functions as a direct operational capability, aligning with dynamic capabilities theory, and operates through a pathway that bypasses the need for psychological mediation. Third, the study supports self-determination theory by showing that meaningful knowledge exchange fulfills core psychological needs, thereby generating the psychological resources required for innovative action. Importantly, this research is the first to test a psychologically mediated model of innovation among Echelon II officials in an Indonesian regional government, thereby filling an empirical gap at the intersection of public sector leadership, knowledge management, and digital transformation.

Practically, these distinct pathways call for differentiated interventions. To leverage the knowledge sharing–thriving–innovation chain, the NTB Provincial Government should transform routine cross-agency meetings into reflective, collaborative learning spaces that cultivate vitality and continuous growth. Simultaneously, because digital competence drives innovation directly, investment should target strategic digital leadership programs emphasizing data-driven policy analysis, digital transformation management, and the strategic use of electronic governance systems rather than basic technical training.

Several limitations warrant consideration. The study was conducted in a single provincial government with a homogeneous sample of senior officials, which may limit generalizability and attenuate certain mediation effects. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, and all measures were self-reported. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs, expand sampling to multiple provinces or ministries, incorporate objective innovation output indicators, and examine contextual moderators such as organizational innovation climate, transformational leadership, creative self-efficacy, and digital anxiety.

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