Knowledge Management and Emotional Intelligence Toward Workforce Productivity: The Mediating Role of Employee Innovation

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly competitive organizational environment, firms must leverage knowledge resources and employees' emotional capabilities to stimulate innovative actions that enhance productivity. This study examines the effects of knowledge management and emotional intelligence on workforce productivity through innovative work behavior in the clothing industry in West Java. A quantitative survey approach was applied by distributing questionnaires to employees over a three-month period from November 2023 to January 2024. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. The findings demonstrate that knowledge management and emotional intelligence significantly promote innovative work behavior. Furthermore, innovative work behavior has a significant positive effect on workforce productivity and acts as a mediating mechanism linking the antecedent variables to productivity outcomes. These results indicate that productivity improvement is more effectively achieved when organizations convert knowledge assets and emotional competencies into innovative work practices. The study emphasizes the strategic role of innovative work behavior in translating organizational resources into measurable productivity gains within the clothing industry context.

Keywords*: Clothing Industry, Emotional Intelligence, Innovative Work Behavior, Knowledge Management, Workforce Productivity.*

INTRODUCTION

The clothing industry is among the most crucial economic sectors in Indonesia, employing millions of workers and making a substantial contribution to national economic growth. Despite its strategic role, the industry faces a range of challenges, including intense global competition, shortages of skilled labor, and limited innovation capacity. These challenges adversely affect product quality and production efficiency, underscoring the critical importance of effective human resource management and workforce development. To continue being competitive in the global market, clothing companies must build sustainable competitive advantages through high-quality, innovative, and productive human resources. Employee performance is influenced not just by technical skills but also by emotional and spiritual intelligence, which enhances self-regulation, strengthens the sense of meaning at work, and improves decision-making quality within organizations (Johari et al., 2025). In addition, recent advances in generative artificial intelligence have transformed the knowledge management paradigm from simple information processing to the dynamic creation and utilization of knowledge,

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thereby driving innovation and performance improvement within organizations (Kaczorowska-Spychalska et al., 2024).

Human resources play a central role in organizational success, functioning not only as planners and implementers but also as key drivers of innovation and productivity (Hasibuan & Malayu, 2020). Productivity reflects the balance between outputs and inputs, including land, raw materials, technology, and human resources (Afandi, 2018). Enhancing productivity, therefore, requires more than effective leadership and equitable compensation; it also demands the development of innovative capabilities that enable organizations to adapt to the demands of the digital economy. Organizations with strong knowledge management capabilities, supported by effective leadership, are better positioned to transform knowledge into process innovations that improve efficiency and productivity (Alo et al., 2025). Recent international studies further highlight that knowledge management and emotional intelligence are critical enablers of innovative work behavior and employee performance. Empirical evidence suggests that emotional intelligence strengthens knowledge sharing and creativity, which subsequently enhances innovation and productivity (Bahagia et al., 2024; Zhang, 2024). Likewise, knowledge management practices supported by a conducive work environment significantly improve employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness (Mirawati et al., 2024; Yusof et al., 2025). These findings emphasize the importance of integrating cognitive, emotional, and organizational resources to sustain competitiveness in labor-intensive industries, where innovation plays a vital role in enabling employees to generate creative solutions and respond effectively to dynamic market conditions.

Previous studies have consistently underscored that knowledge management and emotional intelligence have significance in shaping innovation and productivity. Knowledge management facilitates knowledge sharing and prevents knowledge loss, enabling organizations to accumulate and sustain innovative capacity (Sauid et al., 2018; Kristanti et al., 2023; Purdiarini & Tanuwijaya, 2023). Through knowledge sharing, employees exchange experiences, skills, and expertise, transforming individual knowledge into collective organizational assets that foster innovative work behavior and enhance performance (Nguyen et al., 2019). Empirical research further demonstrates that knowledge-sharing practices strengthen collaboration, stimulate creativity, and improve organizational performance (Khraishi et al., 2023; Lin, 2023).

In parallel, emotional intelligence has been shown to enhance workplace communication, collaboration, and adaptability. According to Goleman (2016), people with emotional intelligence can identify and efficiently control their emotions, contributing to a positive work environment and improved performance. Supporting evidence indicates that emotionally intelligent employees are better able to regulate emotions, build constructive relationships, and adapt to change, thereby enhancing individual and organizational outcomes (Alblas & Wijsman, 2021; Dewianawati et al., 2022). When supported by an appropriate organizational climate, knowledge sharing further encourages employees to actively contribute ideas and apply knowledge in innovative ways (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Despite the growing body of literature, limited research has simultaneously examined the roles of knowledge management and emotional intelligence in driving both innovation and productivity, particularly within the context of the clothing industry. Most prior studies have focused on either knowledge management or emotional intelligence in isolation or have examined other sectors such as services or large-scale corporations. Moreover, the role of innovation as a mediating mechanism linking knowledge management and emotional intelligence to productivity remains insufficiently explored.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of knowledge management and emotional intelligence on innovation and productivity in the clothing industry in West Java. By integrating these key variables, this research provides deeper insights into how organizations can foster innovative capacity and enhance workforce productivity. The study contributes theoretically by extending the literature on knowledge management, emotional intelligence, and innovation in labor-intensive industries, and

practically by offering evidence-based strategies to improve competitiveness in Indonesia's clothing sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Effect of Knowledge Management and Innovative Work Behavior

Knowledge Management (KM) refers to organizational efforts to create, store, share, and utilize knowledge to achieve competitive advantage and superior performance (Intezari et al., 2017; Gardeazabal et al., 2023). KM involves both formal systems and informal human practices that facilitate learning, collaboration, and informed decision-making through cognitive processes (Cong, 2023). When knowledge is accessible and continuously exchanged among employees, organizations create an environment that supports learning from past experiences and encourages the generation of new ideas.

The availability of shared knowledge broadens employees' perspectives, enabling them to identify problems, explore alternative solutions, and improve work processes. Through structured knowledge-sharing mechanisms and collaborative learning, employees develop the capacity to engage in innovative work behavior. Empirical findings confirm that KM capability enhances employees' innovative capacity by improving information accessibility and collective learning (Mirawati et al., 2024). Furthermore, recent evidence shows that knowledge-sharing practices mediate creative work practices and organizational innovation (Bahagia et al., 2024). Research by Wahyudi and Sunarsi (2025) also indicates that knowledge management innovation significantly contributes to work motivation and organizational performance, emphasizing its strategic role in fostering innovative activities among employees. Therefore, effective KM practices are essential in shaping employees' ability to engage in innovative work behavior.

H1: Knowledge management has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence and Innovative Work Behavior

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others, and to use these emotions effectively in social interactions (Goleman, 2020). EI influences how employees respond to workplace stress, maintain interpersonal relationships, and adapt to organizational challenges (Triana et al., 2016; Arifudin et al., 2020). Employees with high EI tend to create positive social environments that encourage collaboration and knowledge exchange. Innovation often requires openness, risk-taking, and the willingness to share ideas. EI supports these behaviors by fostering psychological safety, emotional stability, and constructive interpersonal communication. Empirical studies show that effective emotional regulation and positive social interaction significantly contribute to innovative outcomes (Supomo, 2024). When employees can manage stress and maintain strong relationships, knowledge sharing becomes more effective, creating favorable conditions for experimentation and idea implementation.

International evidence further supports this relationship. Yusof et al. (2025) demonstrate that emotionally intelligent employees show superior performance due to their adaptability and emotional regulation, while Zhang (2024) demonstrates that EI strengthens organizational commitment and knowledge sharing, both of which contribute to innovation. Research by Rasyid et al. (2025) and Rizki et al. (2025) also confirms that EI significantly improves employee performance and job satisfaction through enhanced work ability and social interaction.

H2: Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on innovative work behavior.

The Effect of Innovative Work Behavior and Workforce Productivity

Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) describes employees' intentional efforts to generate, promote, and implement new ideas that improve work effectiveness (Jain & Mnjama, 2016; Dasuki, 2021). Employees who exhibit IWB actively seek better methods, propose

creative solutions, and mobilize support to apply these ideas in daily operations (Doepgen et al., 2024). These behaviors go beyond routine task performance and contribute directly to organizational improvement.

Workforce productivity refers to the ratio between input and output and reflects the efficient use of human resources in achieving performance outcomes (Yuniarsih & Suwatno, 2016; Khaeruman, 2021). Since labor-intensive industries depend heavily on human performance, innovative employees who continuously improve work processes contribute significantly to productivity enhancement (Bukit et al., 2017). Employees who engage in IWB tend to identify inefficiencies, develop improved procedures, and generate value-added outcomes. This continuous improvement process leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness, ultimately increasing workforce productivity.

H3: Innovative work behavior has a positive effect on workforce productivity.

The Mediating Role of Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) functions as a pivotal behavioral bridge that converts organizational knowledge resources and individual emotional capabilities into enhanced workforce productivity. In the context of the clothing industry, where operational efficiency depends heavily on continuous process refinement and creative problem-solving, effective knowledge management provides employees with accessible information, shared experiences, and collaborative learning opportunities that stimulate the generation, promotion, and implementation of new ideas (Nguyen et al., 2019). Without this translation into actual innovative actions, knowledge assets remain underutilized and fail to produce measurable productivity gains. Similarly, emotional intelligence equips employees with the self-regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills needed to handle work-related stress, maintain constructive relationships, and sustain motivation during experimentation, thereby creating favorable psychological conditions for IWB to emerge (Bahagia et al., 2024; Zhang, 2024). Empirical studies across various sectors consistently demonstrate that IWB mediates the influence of both knowledge-related practices and emotional competencies on performance outcomes, highlighting its essential role in operationalizing cognitive and affective inputs into tangible efficiency improvements (Yusof et al., 2025).

The mediating mechanism becomes particularly relevant in labor-intensive environments like West Java's clothing sector, where incremental innovations in workflows, coordination, and quality control directly impact output per worker (Mirawati et al., 2024). When employees actively engage in IWB as a result of strong knowledge-sharing routines and high emotional intelligence, they contribute to reduced operational errors, faster adaptation to production demands, and better utilization of resources, ultimately driving higher workforce productivity. This indirect pathway explains why interventions focused solely on knowledge systems or emotional training may yield limited results unless accompanied by deliberate efforts to encourage and reward innovative behaviors. Recent research reinforces that IWB fully or partially mediates such relationships by serving as the critical action-oriented link between antecedents and productivity, offering organizations a clear behavioral target for maximizing returns on human capital investments (Khraishi et al., 2023; Doepgen et al., 2024).

H4: Innovative work behavior mediates the effect of knowledge management on workforce productivity.
H5: Innovative work behavior mediates the effect of emotional intelligence on workforce productivity.

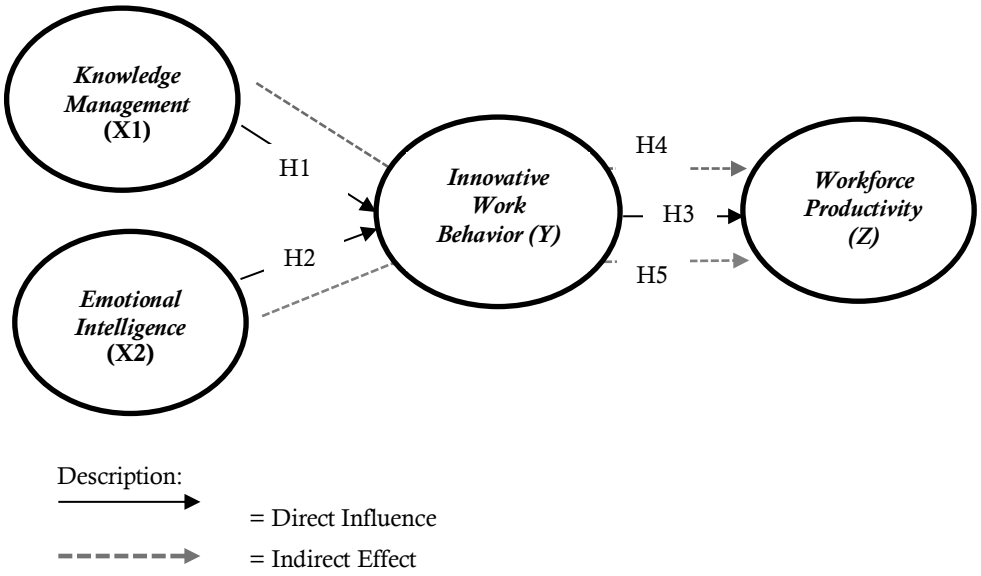

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 shows the structure of the relationship between variables in this study. This model applies knowledge management and emotional intelligence as independent variables, with workforce productivity as the dependent variable. Additionally, innovative work behavior is positioned as a mediating variable. This study aims to analyze the partial influence of both independent variables on innovative work behavior, as well as to examine the role of innovative work behavior in mediating the influence on workforce productivity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applied a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the causal relationships among Knowledge Management (KM), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), and Workforce Productivity (WP). A quantitative survey design is appropriate for testing theoretical relationships among latent variables through statistical modeling. The analysis employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS software, which enables simultaneous testing of measurement and structural models and is widely used to analyze complex relationships between constructs (Hair et al., 2021).

The population of this study consisted of employees working in the clothing industry in West Java. Respondents were selected based on active involvement in operational work activities. The sampling size followed SEM requirements, where the minimum number of samples should be 5–10 times the number of measurement indicators (Hair et al., 2021). With 34 measurement items, the sample size met the recommended threshold for SEM analysis. This study examined four variables: KM and EI as exogenous variables, IWB as a mediating variable, and WP as the endogenous variable. The measurement dimensions were adapted from established theories, including KM from Khaeruman (2021), EI from Goleman (2016), IWB from Doepgen et al. (2024), and WP from Sutrisno (2016). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Data collection was conducted over three months from November 2023 to January 2024 through online questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. Instrument validity and reliability were assessed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2021). The data analysis procedure included evaluation of the measurement model, assessment of goodness-of-fit indices, structural model testing, and mediation analysis using the Sobel

test. This procedure provides a comprehensive evaluation of how knowledge, practices, and emotional capabilities influence innovative work behavior and ultimately improve workforce productivity in the clothing industry context.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of data analysis conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships among Knowledge Management (KM), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), and Workforce Productivity (WP). The analysis begins with the evaluation of the measurement model, followed by the assessment of the structural model and hypothesis testing. The measurement model was first evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the validity of all indicators representing their respective latent constructs.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Test

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Remark
Knowledge Management	KM1	0.941	Valid
	KM2	0.805	Valid
	KM3	0.857	Valid
Emotional Intelligence	EI1	0.823	Valid
	EI2	0.827	Valid
	EI3	0.742	Valid
	EI4	0.750	Valid
	EI5	0.815	Valid
Innovative Work Behavior	IWB1	0.848	Valid
	IWB2	0.717	Valid
	IWB3	0.755	Valid
	IWB4	0.766	Valid
Workforce Productivity	WP1	0.620	Valid
	WP2	0.869	Valid
	WP3	0.617	Valid
	WP4	0.734	Valid
	WP5	0.774	Valid
	WP6	0.746	Valid

The results of the CFA presented in Table 1 demonstrate that all measurement indicators have loading factor values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. For the KM construct, the loading factors range from 0.805 to 0.941, showing that all indicators strongly represent the latent variable. Similarly, the EI indicators exhibit loading values between 0.712 and 0.827, confirming that the items adequately reflect the construct. The IWB indicators also show acceptable loading values ranging from 0.717 to 0.848, indicating that the construct is well represented by its indicators. Furthermore, the WP construct demonstrates loading factors between 0.617 and 0.860, which meet the validity criteria. These findings confirm that all measurement items are valid representations of their respective latent variables and are appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis.

Following the CFA results, construct reliability and convergent validity were further evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to ensure the internal consistency and stability of the measurement model.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Test

Variable	CR	AVE
Knowledge Management	0.989	0.969
Emotional Intelligence	0.991	0.956
Innovative Work Behavior	0.986	0.948
Workforce Productivity	0.989	0.936

As summarized in Table 2, the CR values exceeding 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50 indicate that all constructs, namely KM, EI, IWB, and WP, meet the recommended

reliability and convergent validity criteria. These results confirm that the measurement model is statistically reliable and suitable for further structural model analysis and hypothesis testing.

The goodness-of-fit statistic level illustrates the conformity test between theoretical models and empirical data; a model is considered fit if its covariance matches the covariance of the data matrix (observed). Model fit can be assessed based on testing various index fits obtained from AMOS, based on the evaluation of the fulfillment of SEM measurement model assumptions, full structural equation model analysis, and goodness of fit criteria. At this point, a review of different goodness-of-fit criteria is used to test the adequacy of the model. determine if a model can be approved or refused, use these conformance indices and cut-off values.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit Index Test

No	Goodness of Fit Index	Cut of Value	Model Results	Decision
1.	Chi-square (P-value)	>0.05	0.000	Marginal Fit
2.	CMIN/df	2.000	1.935	Good Fit
3.	RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.067	Good Fit
4.	GFI	≥ 0.90	0.913	Good Fit
5.	AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.882	Marginal Fit
6.	NFI	≥ 0.90	0.940	Good Fit
7.	TLI	≥ 0.90	0.952	Good Fit
8.	CFI	≥ 0.90	0.961	Good Fit
9.	RMR	<0.05	0.034	Good Fit

As presented in Table 3, most goodness-of-fit indices indicate a good model fit, while the AGFI value falls within the marginal fit category. Hair et al. (2021) explain that if the results are close to the recommended values, then the model is still worth continuing. It is not necessary for a researcher to satisfy every goodness-of-fit criterion in an empirical study. Instead, each researcher's judgment is used. After confirming that the measurement and structural models met the required criteria, hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the regression weights among KM, EI, IWB, and WP. The results of the direct effect analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test

Structural			Estimate	H.E.	CR.	p-value	Information
KM	→	IWB	0.019	0.009	2.111	0.021	Accepted
EI	→	IWB	0.842	0.066	12.748	0.000	Accepted
IWB	→	WP	0.888	0.064	13.813	0.000	Accepted

Based on the data in Table 4, it can be observed that KM has a positive and significant effect on IWB (Estimate = 0.019; CR = 2.111; p = 0.021). This finding indicates that effective knowledge management practices contribute to the improvement of employees' innovative work behavior. EI also demonstrates a strong positive and significant effect on IWB (Estimate = 0.842; CR = 12.748; p < 0.001). This result suggests that employees with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to demonstrate innovative behavior in the workplace. Furthermore, IWB has a positive and significant effect on WP (Estimate = 0.888; CR = 13.813; p < 0.001). This confirms that innovative work behavior plays an important role in enhancing workforce productivity. These results indicate that all proposed hypotheses are empirically supported and highlight the important roles of KM and EI in fostering IWB, which subsequently contributes to improved WP, especially in the Clothing Industry in West Java. The mediation effect was further examined using the Sobel test to evaluate the indirect influence of KM and EI on WP through IWB. The results of the indirect effect analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Sobel Test (Indirect Effect)

Structural	C.R.	p-value	Decision
KM → IWB → WP	2.087	0.018	Accepted
EI → IWB → WP	9.391	0.000	Accepted

The data in Table 5 reveal that KM has a significant indirect effect on WP through IWB (CR = 2.087; p = 0.018). This finding indicates that the impact of KM on workforce productivity occurs not only directly but also through the enhancement of innovative work behavior. Similarly, EI demonstrates a highly significant indirect effect on WP through IWB (CR = 9.391; p < 0.001). This result confirms that employees' emotional intelligence contributes to productivity improvement by fostering stronger innovative behavior in the workplace. These findings verify the mediating role of IWB in strengthening the relationships between KM, EI, and WP, highlighting that innovative work behavior serves as a key mechanism linking organizational knowledge practices and emotional capabilities to higher workforce productivity.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into how Knowledge Management (KM) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) contribute to Workforce Productivity (WP) through the mechanism of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), particularly within the clothing industry in West Java. These results support recent perspectives emphasizing that productivity in labor-intensive industries is influenced not only by technical efficiency but also by behavioral and cognitive capabilities embedded in daily work practices (Bahagia et al., 2024; Doepgen et al., 2024).

The significant effect of KM on IWB confirms that knowledge accessibility, structured sharing routines, and collaborative learning environments create favorable conditions for innovation (Bahagia et al., 2024; Mirawati et al., 2024). In clothing industry operations, where production relies heavily on tacit knowledge and experiential learning, effective KM enables employees to exchange practical solutions and continuously refine work methods. This finding is consistent with recent arguments that KM facilitates creativity by allowing individuals to recombine existing knowledge into new solutions and operational improvements (Cong, 2023; Gardeazabal et al., 2023).

The strong influence of EI on IWB highlights the critical role of emotional and interpersonal capabilities in fostering innovative behavior. Employees with higher levels of EI are better able to regulate emotions, maintain constructive communication, and adapt to work pressures, all of which are essential for experimenting with new ideas (Zhang, 2024; Yusof et al., 2025). Within clothing industry settings characterized by teamwork and tight production deadlines, emotional regulation and empathy support collaborative problem-solving and creative thinking. This finding aligns with recent studies indicating that EI contributes significantly to innovation by improving communication quality and social interaction in the workplace (Supomo, 2024).

Furthermore, the significant effect of IWB on WP confirms that innovative behavior is a key determinant of productivity. Employees who generate, promote, and implement new ideas tend to enhance efficiency, reduce operational errors, and improve workflow effectiveness (Maulana & Arli, 2022; Marcelina et al., 2023). Evidence from quality-intensive industries also suggests that innovation-driven practices are strongly associated with improved performance outcomes (Yudistria et al., 2025).

The mediation analysis strengthens the argument that IWB serves as the behavioral pathway through which KM and EI influence WP. Organizational knowledge, practices, and emotional capabilities do not automatically produce performance gains unless they are translated into innovative actions (Elburdah et al., 2020; Khraishi et al., 2023). This mechanism is particularly evident in the clothing industry in West Java, where incremental improvements in work methods and coordination have a substantial impact on productivity.

Taken together, the findings of this study contribute to recent literature by demonstrating that KM and EI enhance workforce productivity primarily through fostering innovative work behavior. These results emphasize the importance of behavioral mechanisms in improving performance within labor-intensive industrial environments and provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to strengthen productivity through innovation-driven human resource practices.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that knowledge management and emotional intelligence play significant roles in enhancing innovative work behavior, which subsequently leads to higher workforce productivity in the clothing industry in West Java. The findings demonstrate that effective knowledge management improves employees' access to information and collaborative learning processes that stimulate innovation in daily work practices. Similarly, emotional intelligence strengthens employees' ability to regulate emotions, maintain constructive interpersonal relationships, and create a work climate that supports idea generation and experimentation. From a practical perspective, the results suggest that clothing industry firms should not only emphasize operational efficiency and technical skills but also prioritize structured knowledge-sharing systems and emotional capability development. Establishing collaborative work environments, implementing effective knowledge management practices, and fostering emotionally supportive leadership can enhance innovative behavior and ultimately improve workforce productivity.

This study has several limitations. The focus on clothing industry employees in West Java may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries or regions. In addition, the cross-sectional research design does not capture changes in innovative behavior and productivity over time, and the use of self-reported data may introduce response bias. Future research is encouraged to apply this model across different industrial sectors and geographical contexts, employ longitudinal designs, and incorporate additional variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, or technological capability to provide a more comprehensive understanding of workforce productivity.

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