

From Innovative Leadership and Growth Mindset to Creative Performance: A Moderated Mediation Model of Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Support

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of innovative leadership and growth mindset on creative employee performance through knowledge sharing while considering the moderating role of perceived organizational support in the food manufacturing sector of Pakistan. This study builds a moderate mediation framework of leadership, individual mindset, knowledge-sharing behavior, organizational support and employee creativity based on social cognitive theory and organizational support theory. Data is collected from 340 employees of food manufacturing organizations in Pakistan. The results show that the growth of mindset and innovative leadership have a positive effect on knowledge sharing which enhances creative employee performance in the workplace. Knowledge sharing also mediates the impacts of innovative leadership and growth mindset on creative performance. Moreover, perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between innovative leadership and knowledge sharing as well as strengthening the indirect effect of innovative leadership on creative employee performance. The study contributes to the literature by explicating how leadership, employee mindset and organizational support together influence

creativity through knowledge sharing processes. It also provides practical implications for the managers who want to stimulate creativity through promoting innovative leadership, growth-oriented employees, knowledge exchange and supportive organizational environment.

Keywords: Innovative Leadership, Growth Mindset, Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Support, Creative Performance

1. Introduction

Innovation and creativity are the key drivers of company performance, competitiveness and long-term sustainability in today's business environment (Souto 2022). As technology changes rapidly, consumer preferences shift and market competition increases, organizations must constantly come up with new ideas, improve existing processes and respond effectively to new challenges (Hitt, Keats, and DeMarie 1998). This need is especially relevant for food manufacturing companies in developing economies like Pakistan where firms are confronted with mounting competitive pressure, resource scarcity, changing customer expectations and the need to improve product and process innovation (Tran 2025). In this context, employees become an important source of organizational creativity, as their ability to generate novel and useful ideas can lead to improved products, processes and organizational practices (Cummings and Oldham 1997; Anderson, Potočník, and Zhou 2014). Consequently, the understanding of the factors that enhance creative employee performance has become increasingly important to both researchers and practitioners (Joo, McLean, and Yang 2013). Previous studies have shown that leadership practices and individual psychological characteristics are the main factors influencing employee creativity (Cummings and Oldham 1997; Tierney, Farmer, and Graen 1999; Egan 2005). In particular, innovative leadership can create an environment that values innovation and learning, encouraging employees to challenge traditional approaches, experiment with new solutions, and express new ideas (Oke, Munshi, and Walumbwa 2009; Kremer, Villamor, and Aguinis 2019). At the same time, growth mindset, that is, the belief that abilities and competencies can be developed through effort, learning and experience, may encourage employees to face challenges, learn from setbacks and continue with creative activities (Krskova and Breyer 2023; Shet 2024). Innovative leadership is an important environmental influence and a growth mindset is an important individual cognitive orientation but their effects on creative employee performance may not be automatic (Liu, Shah,

and Shoaib 2024). Employees frequently need opportunities to share information, experiences, and expertise with their colleagues before leadership support and individual learning orientations can be translated into creative outcomes (Gong et al. 2013; Kremer et al. 2019). In this regard, knowledge sharing represents an important behavioral mechanism (Bock et al. 2005). Through knowledge sharing activities, employees can gain access to alternative perspectives, integrate different sources of expertise, and forge new understandings of work-related problems, thus improving their capability to generate useful and original ideas (Bosua and Scheepers 2007; Akhavan et al. 2015). On the other hand, it all depends on the willingness of employees to share the knowledge they have in the organization (Lam and Lambermont-Ford 2010). If organizations support the employees in terms of care, motivation, wellbeing, work life balance, they share their knowledge with others more cooperatively (Rogers and Ashforth 2017). Therefore, perceived organizational support (POS) may strengthen the effectiveness of innovative leadership in promoting knowledge-sharing behavior (Tao, Liu, and Su 2025).

Despite the increasing scholarly interest in leadership, mindset, knowledge sharing and employee creativity, there are still important gaps in understanding how these factors work together in one explanatory framework (Cai et al. 2020). Most existing research has focused on the direct effects of leadership or individual characteristics on creativity, but relatively little attention has been given to the behavioral mechanisms and organizational conditions through which these effects operate (Lee et al. 2020). In particular, there is a need to better understand the role of knowledge sharing as a mechanism through which innovative leadership and growth mindset are related to creative employee performance and whether the effect of innovative leadership on knowledge sharing varies depending on employees' perceptions of organizational support. This is especially true in the case of food manufacturing firms in Pakistan where improvement in employees' knowledge sharing and creativity generation capacity can enable firms to meet challenges of competition and operations. Thus, this study examines a moderated mediation model, where knowledge sharing mediates the relationships of innovative leadership and growth mindset with creative employee performance, and perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between innovative leadership and knowledge sharing. Based mainly on social cognitive theory, the study regards growth mindset as a personal cognitive factor, innovative leadership and perceived organizational support as environmental influences, knowledge sharing as a behavioral mechanism, and creative employee performance as an important work outcome (Ahsan 2025). Organizational support

theory further helps to explain about the employees why they respond more strongly to innovative leadership, upon the perception of greater organizational support (Qi et al. 2019). Henceforth, after the incorporation of these aspects, this research contributes to the literature after explaining that innovative leadership and growth mindset are not only the contributors in creative performance. There is another aspect which is organizational conditions which have strong impact on the relationship between them. Findings of this study will provide practical strategies for managers who are working in food manufacturing organizations in Pakistan. This study will highlight the significance of innovative leadership, growth mindset, knowledge sharing environments and perceived organizational support for the support of employee's creative performance at workplace.

2. Literature Review

The present study is mainly focused on Social Cognitive Theory- SCT which explains human behavior as a function of the interaction of individual variables, contextual surroundings and behavioral mechanisms (Bandura 1999). So, this theoretical concept is particularly suitable for the current framework which integrates growth mindset (Han and Stieha 2020), environmental influences called innovative leadership (Corzo Morales and Contreras Pacheco 2024), perceived organizational support (Ergun et al. 2025), knowledge sharing (Peng et al. 2023) and creative employee performance at workplace (Zhao, Tan, and Wong 2020). SCT discuss the beliefs and behaviors of the employees that employees do not respond to workplace conditions in isolation, they always interact with their peers and teams in social and organizational environment (Malik, Sinha, and Goel 2020). Organizational Support Theory also complements this perspective by explaining how employees' perceptions of the organization valuing their contributions and caring about their well-being influence their attitudes and behaviors (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Together these theories provide a useful basis for comprehending the joint contribution of innovative leadership, growth mindset, knowledge sharing behavior and perceived organizational support to employee creativity at workplace.

Creative employee performance at workplace refers to the ability of an employee to generate creative and useful ideas, solutions, and approaches which contribute to improvement and innovation (Cummings and Oldham 1997). Creativity and innovation both are very important nowadays because organizations operate under stressed environments which is characterized by competition, rapid change in technological and change in customer demands (Tushman and Nadler

1986). Employees are an important source of new ideas but creative performance does not depend only on individual ability, It is shaped by leadership practices, psychological orientations, access to knowledge and the wider organizational environment (Millar, Chen, and Waller 2017). Knowledge sharing is particularly important for creativity because employees often generate new ideas by combining different experiences, information and perspectives (Lam and Lambermont-Ford 2010). Therefore organizational conditions that encourage employees to exchange knowledge can play an important role in enhancing creative performance (Kremer et al. 2019).

Innovative leadership has an important influence on the environment on the process and innovative leaders encourage employees to challenge current procedures, experience new things by thinking out of box, share new ideas with the team and experts. Such innovative leaders create a workplace environment of openness, new learning and collaboration (Ageli et al. 2025). From SCT perspective leaders provide important environmental keys which influence employee behavior from static to dynamic and innovative (Tu, Li, and Zuo 2023). So when leaders demonstrate openness toward new ideas and encourage communication then employees will become more willing to exchange their expertise and information with colleagues (Khassawneh, Mohammad, and Ben-Abdallah 2022). Knowledge sharing often requires employees to invest time and effort and may involve concerns about criticism or loss of individual advantage (Rajhi and Aljuhmani 2026). A supportive and innovation-oriented leader will reduce such concerns by signaling that information exchange and collaboration are valued (Rajhi and Aljuhmani 2026). Therefore, innovative leadership is expected to promote employees' knowledge-sharing behavior. Accordingly, **H1 proposes that innovative leadership has a positive effect on knowledge sharing.**

In addition to leadership, personal beliefs of employees can impact their willingness for the sharing of knowledge. Growth mindset is the belief that your abilities and competencies can be developed through learning, effort and experience (Dweck 2017). Employees with growth mindset always see difficulties and roadblock as an opportunity for the improvement and creative outcome rather than as threats to their competence. These type of employees are more willing to learn from others and seek new information, discuss problems and share their experiences with colleagues (Keating and Heslin 2015). Knowledge sharing is an important learning opportunity because it involves information transfer and feedback, alternative perspectives and new understanding (Akhavan et al.

2015). SCT suggests that the cognitive beliefs of employees influence their behavioral choices. Thus, it is anticipated that those having a growth orientation will be more active participants in knowledge sharing. Therefore, **H2 proposes that growth mindset has a positive effect on knowledge sharing.**

Knowledge sharing is the main behavioral mechanism of this proposed study model. It refers to the passing of the information, skills, expertise, experiences and ideas between employees of an organization (Khassawneh et al. 2022). Sharing knowledge at workplace helps employees to access information which is beyond their own experience and exposes them to different perspectives and approaches. Interaction can stimulate creative thinking because creativity often derives from the combination and recombination of existing knowledge in new ways (Lam and Lambermont-Ford 2010). Those employees who exchange knowledge with colleagues are more likely to identify problems, evaluate alternative solutions, and generate new ideas (Song and Ma 2025). Knowledge sharing further enables employees to question existing assumptions and expand their understanding of work-related issues. Therefore, knowledge sharing should contribute to the employee creative performance at workplace. Accordingly, **H3 proposes that knowledge sharing has a positive effect on creative employee performance.**

Knowledge sharing may also explain how innovative leadership contributes to creative employee performance. Although innovative leaders encourage experimentation and new ideas and their influence on creativity which may occur through employees' behavioral responses (Saif et al. 2024). It is the direct effect of leaders promotion on collaboration and open communication which may lead to exchange of knowledge. Sharing also provides access to a diversity of expertise and perspectives that can later support creative problem solving. Hence, innovative leadership is an environmental stimulus, knowledge sharing is a behavioral response, and creative employee performance is the outcome of this process (Carmeli, Gelbard, and Reiter-Palmon 2013; Kremer et al. 2019). This logic is consistent with SCT where it emphasizes the environmental conditions that can influence the result through behavioral mechanisms. Thus, **H4 proposes that knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between innovative leadership and creative employee performance.**

Same mechanism is applied for growth mindset. Employees who believe in development of skills and abilities are more likely to engage in learning activities which includes seeking, receiving and

sharing knowledge (Carmeli et al. 2013; Han and Stieha 2020). To increase the cognitive ability and support to new ideas, interaction with colleagues and employees can gain access to new information and perspectives (Song and Ma 2025; Zhao et al. 2020). Therefore, a growth mindset is contribute for employees creative performance because it encourages knowledge sharing behavior (Bock et al. 2005). Growth mindset is not only an internal psychological trait affecting creativity but can be translated into performance through employee involvement in knowledge exchange. Consequently, **H5 proposes that knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between growth mindset and creative employee performance.**

Innovative leadership is effective in encouraging knowledge sharing which depends on the wider organizational context. In this dynamic environment, perception of the employee for organizational support is critical. (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Organizational Support Theory suggests that employees will develop positive attitudes toward the organization and engage in behaviors that further the organization's goals when they perceive high organizational support (Kurtessis et al. 2017). Employees feel secure in expressing ideas, knowledge and responding positively to leadership, when they valued and supported (Kouzes and Posner 1999). In contrast, employees who perceive low organizational support may be less willing to engage in knowledge sharing even when their leaders encourage innovation and collaboration (Le and Lei 2019). Therefore, perceived organizational support is expected to strengthen the positive relationship between innovative leadership and knowledge sharing.

The moderating role of perceived organizational support has implications for employee's creative employee performance at workplace. If perceived organizational support strengthens the effect of innovative leadership on knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing subsequently enhances creative performance then the indirect influence of innovative leadership on creative employee performance should become stronger when perceived organizational support is high. This represents a first stage moderated mediation process in which the leadership and knowledge sharing relationship depends on the level of organizational support. Accordingly, **H6 proposes that perceived organizational support positively moderates the indirect relationship between innovative leadership and creative employee performance through knowledge sharing.**

Overall, the proposed framework integrates innovative leadership, growth mindset, knowledge sharing, and perceived organizational support in explaining creative employee performance.

Innovative leadership and growth mindset are expected to encourage knowledge sharing, while knowledge sharing is expected to enhance creative performance and transmit the effects of both antecedents. Perceived organizational support further provides an important contextual condition that strengthens the influence of innovative leadership on knowledge sharing and consequently on creative employee performance. By combining Social Cognitive Theory with Organizational Support Theory, the framework provides an integrated explanation of how and under what organizational conditions employees are more likely to engage in knowledge sharing and demonstrate creative performance.

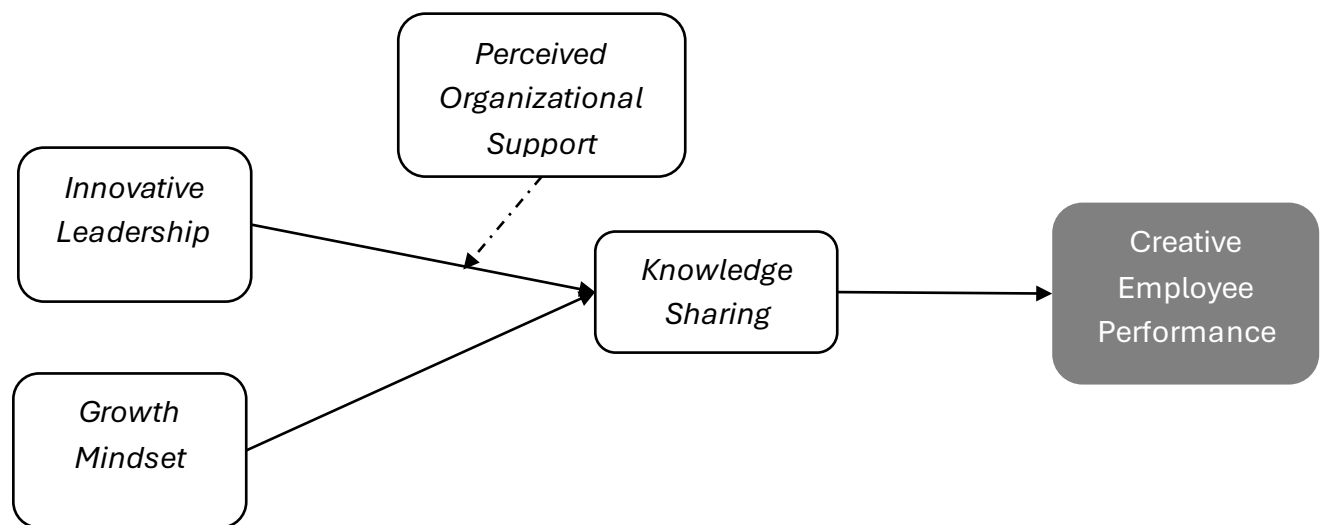


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of employees working in Pakistan's food manufacturing sector. Data was collected from a sample of 340 employees using a self-administered structured survey questionnaire. This sample size is sufficient for robust analysis using structural equation modeling.

3.2. Measurement Instruments

This study used and adapted pre-established measurement scales to measure the key constructs. Innovative leadership is adapted from Khalili (2017) using scale consisting eight items. Growth mindset is adapted from Sigmundsson and Haga (2024) and assessed with eight items scale. Knowledge sharing scale is measured by eight items scale developed by Yi (2009). Perceived organizational support is adapted from Chen & Eyoun (2021) with eight items scale. Creative employee performance at work place is adapted from McMurray et al. (2023) using a six items scale.

4. Data Analysis

Data is analyzed by using SPSS 23 for descriptive and SmartPLS 4.1.18 for structural equation modeling. PLS-SEM was chosen for its ability to handle complex moderated mediation models and its suitability for confirmatory research (Ringle, Da Silva, and Bido 2015).

4.1. Demographic Analysis

The demographic profiles of the 340 respondents shows that the sample was predominantly male with 60% male respondents and 32% female respondents and 8% preferred not to disclose gender. Regarding the age most of the respondents were in the 31-40 years age group, which is 40%, followed by the 40-49 years age group which is 30% while 15% of the respondents aged 30 years or below, 10% aged 50-59 years and 4% aged 60 years or above. In educational qualification, 60% of respondents were masters degree holders and the next level was graduates which is 30% and 5% of respondents had MPhil and PhD qualification. The results suggest that the sample was mainly made up of mature and well-educated professionals.

The largest group in terms of designation level was the assistant managers, which is 40%, followed by managers, which is 25%, general managers, which is 20%, and deputy managers, which is 15%. The respondents also had a considerable professional experience includes 35% had 6–10 years, 25% had 11–15 years, 20% had 1–5 years, 15% had 16–20 years and 5% had more than 20 years. Overall, the demographic distribution of the respondents indicates that the respondents covered different levels of management, age groups, educational backgrounds and experience categories

with a large proportion of experienced and academically qualified professionals thus providing an appropriate base of respondents for the study.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Demographic Variable		Demographic Variable	Category	Valid Responses	Percentage
Gender	Male	Gender	Male	204	60.00%
	Female		Female	109	32.00%
	Shemale		Shemale	0	0
	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say	27	8.00%
			Total	340	100.00%
Age (In Years)	30 or Under 30	Age (In Years)	30 or Under 30	51	15.00%
	31-40		31-40	136	40.00%
	40-49		40-49	102	30.00%
	50-59		50-59	34	10.00%
	60 or above 60		60 or above 60	14	4.00%
			Total	340	99.00%
Education	Graduation	Education	Graduation	102	30.00%
	Masters		Masters	204	60.00%
	MPhil		MPhil	17	5.00%
	PhD		PhD	17	5.00%
			Total	340	100.00%
Designation Level	Assistant Manager	Designation Level	Assistant Manager	136	40.00%
	Deputy Manager		Deputy Manager	51	15.00%
	Manager		Manager	85	25.00%
	General Manager		General Manager	68	20.00%
			Total	340	100.00%
Experience (in Years)	1-5	Experience (in Years)	1-5	68	20.00%
	6-10		6-10	119	35.00%
	11-15		11-15	85	25.00%

	16-20		16–20	51	15.00%
	Above 20		Above 20	17	5.00%
			Total	340	100.00%

4.2. Descriptive Analysis

In descriptive of all 38 measurement items showed that there is no missing values and the mean scores ranged from 3.312 to 3.971 which indicates that respondents generally expressed moderate to positive agreement with the study items. Most median values were either 3 or 4 and the standard deviations ranged from 0.922 to 1.260, which suggests a reasonable level of variation in respondents' opinions. Although the Cramér–von Mises test indicated statistically significant departures from normality and the skewness and kurtosis values remained within moderate ranges which is showing that there is not severe distributional problems. The correlation analysis further revealed that most items were positively associated with one another with stronger relationships which are generally observed among items belonging to the same constructs. Several moderates to strong correlations were found, such as CEP5–CEP6 ($r = .610$), KS4–KS5 ($r = .618$), GM6–GM8 ($r = .615$), and POS1–POS2 ($r = .756$). Overall, the findings indicate acceptable response patterns and meaningful positive associations among the measurement items which is providing preliminary support for proceeding with further reliability, validity and structural analyses.

4.3. Measurement Model Analysis

The reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted.

4.3.1. Construct Reliability

The measurement model was assessed in terms of indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and collinearity. The results indicate that the factor loading are ranged from 0.601 to 0.815. Although several indicators exhibited loadings below the recommended value of approximately 0.70 and their loadings remained above 0.60. Such indicators may be retained when their exclusion does not substantially improve construct reliability or average variance extracted (AVE) and when their retention is theoretically important for maintaining content validity (Hair et al. 2022).

The internal consistency and reliability of all constructs were satisfactory. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.815 to 0.896, rho_A values ranged from 0.803 to 0.899 and composite reliability (rho_C) values ranged from 0.861 to 0.916 are in acceptable ranges. All reliability coefficients therefore exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 which is showing adequate internal consistency among the indicators. Growth Mindset exhibited the highest reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.896, rho_A of 0.899 and composite reliability of 0.916.

Convergent validity was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE values for Creative Employee Performance (0.515), Growth Mindset (0.579), Innovative Leadership (0.558), Knowledge Sharing (0.510), and Perceived Organizational Support (0.540) were all above the recommended threshold of 0.50. These findings indicate that each construct explained more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators and, therefore, provided evidence of satisfactory convergent validity.

Furthermore, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.252 to 2.470. Since all VIF values were below the conservative threshold of 3.00, the results indicate that multicollinearity was not a concern among the indicators. Overall, the findings provide support for the reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model and indicate that the constructs were measured with satisfactory psychometric properties.

Table 2: Reliability and Consistency of Variables

Variables	Factor Loadings	Alpha	rho_a	rho_c	AVE	VIF
Creative Employee Performance		0.815	0.825	0.864	0.515	
CEP1	0.716					1.780
CEP2	0.660					1.474
CEP3	0.758					1.792
CEP4	0.702					1.532
CEP5	0.730					1.741
CEP6	0.737					1.705
Growth Mindset		0.896	0.899	0.916	0.579	
GM1	0.784					2.036
GM2	0.722					1.791
GM3	0.701					1.678

GM4	0.757					1.916
GM5	0.782					2.075
GM6	0.804					2.306
GM7	0.741					1.815
GM8	0.789					2.039
Innovative Leadership		0.884	0.893	0.909	0.558	
IL1	0.647					1.309
IL2	0.815					2.282
IL3	0.792					2.019
IL4	0.795					2.199
IL5	0.748					1.904
IL6	0.765					1.925
IL7	0.741					1.838
IL8	0.735					1.861
Knowledge Sharing		0.837	0.871	0.865	0.510	
KS1	0.739					1.808
KS2	0.738					1.820
KS3	0.784					1.962
KS4	0.638					2.281
KS5	0.601					1.897
KS6	0.663					2.405
KS7	0.636					1.950
KS8	0.623					1.685
Perceived Organizational Support		0.817	0.803	0.861	0.540	
POS1	0.707					2.470
POS2	0.767					2.270
POS3	0.714					2.167
POS4	0.730					2.105
POS5	0.621					1.252
POS6	0.680					1.665
POS7	0.603					1.620
POS8	0.644					1.544

4.3.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). According to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct should exceed its correlations with

the other constructs. The results generally supported discriminant validity across the constructs. Specifically, the diagonal values for Creative Employee Performance (0.718), Growth Mindset (0.795), Knowledge Sharing (0.670), and Perceived Organizational Support (0.664) exceeded their respective correlations with most other constructs.

Discriminant validity was further evaluated using the HTMT criterion. The HTMT values ranged from 0.291 to 0.891. All relationships were below the threshold of 0.90, indicating acceptable discriminant validity when the less restrictive HTMT criterion was applied. Nevertheless, the HTMT value between growth mindset and innovative leadership was 0.891, which exceeded the more conservative threshold of 0.85 and was close to the upper threshold of 0.90.

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variables	CEP	GM	IL	KS	POS
CEP	0.718				
GM	0.410	0.795			
IL	0.573	0.761	0.747		
KS	0.309	0.472	0.458	0.670	
POS	0.305	0.372	0.296	0.256	0.664

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

Variables	CEP	GM	IL	KS	POS
CEP					
GM	0.474				
IL	0.678	0.891			
KS	0.338	0.446	0.451		
POS	0.353	0.413	0.331	0.291	

5. Findings

5.1. Structural Model and Results

The structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships. The structural model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships among innovative leadership, growth mindset, knowledge sharing, perceived organizational support, and creative employee

performance. The model explained 26.2% of the variance in knowledge sharing ($R^2 = 0.262$) and 9.6% of the variance in creative employee performance ($R^2 = 0.096$).

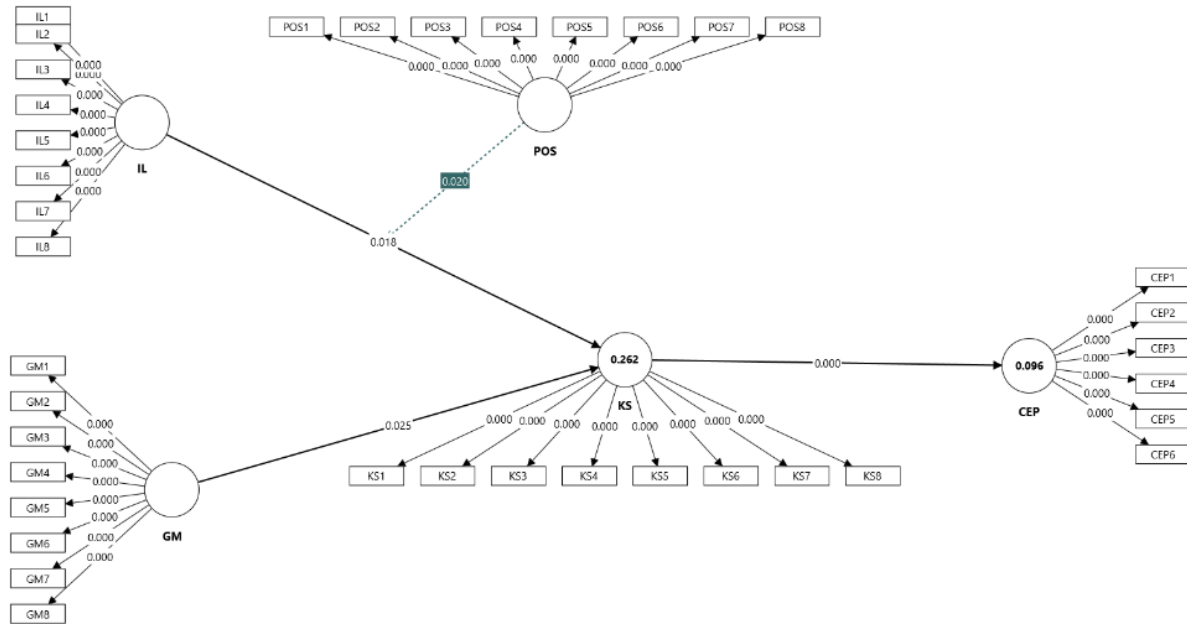


Figure 2: Structural Model

The results of this research indicated that innovative leadership had a positive impact on knowledge sharing and was statistically significant with value of $\beta = 0.23$, $t = 2.36$, $p = 0.02$ and with 95% of confidence intervals LLCI 0.04 and ULCI 0.41 with no zero value between them. Henceforth H1 is supported. Similarly, growth mindset exerted a significant and positive effect on knowledge sharing with value of $\beta = 0.25$, $t = 2.23$, $p = 0.03$ and with 95% of confidence intervals LLCI 0.03 and ULCI 0.45 with no zero value between them which is providing support to accept H2. Knowledge sharing is demonstrated a positive and highly significant relationship with creative employee performance with value of $\beta = 0.31$, $t = 6.33$, $p < 0.001$ and with 95% Confidence intervals LLCI 0.23 and ULCI 0.41 with no value of zero between them to support H3.

The analysis further revealed significant indirect effects through knowledge sharing. The indirect effect of innovative leadership on creative employee performance through knowledge sharing was positive and statistically significant with values of $\beta = 0.07$, $t = 1.96$, $p = 0.05$ and 95% of confidence interval LLCI 0.01 and ULCI 0.15 with no value of zero between them which is providing support for H4. Likewise, the indirect effect of growth mindset on creative employee

performance through knowledge sharing was significant with values of $\beta = 0.08$, $t = 2.14$, $p = 0.03$ with 95% of confidence interval LLCI 0.01 and ULCI 0.15 with no value for zero between them supporting H5. These results suggest that knowledge sharing represents an important mechanism through which innovative leadership and growth mindset contribute to creative employee performance.

The moderating effect of perceived organizational support was also examined. Perceived organizational support and innovative leadership interaction significantly predicted knowledge sharing. The interaction plot indicated that the relationship between innovative leadership and knowledge sharing was more positive at higher levels of perceived organizational support. Specifically, the slope was steepest at one standard deviation above the mean of perceived organizational support and weakest at one standard deviation below the mean of perceived organizational support. Therefore, organizational support strengthens the positive effect of innovative leadership on employees' knowledge sharing behavior.

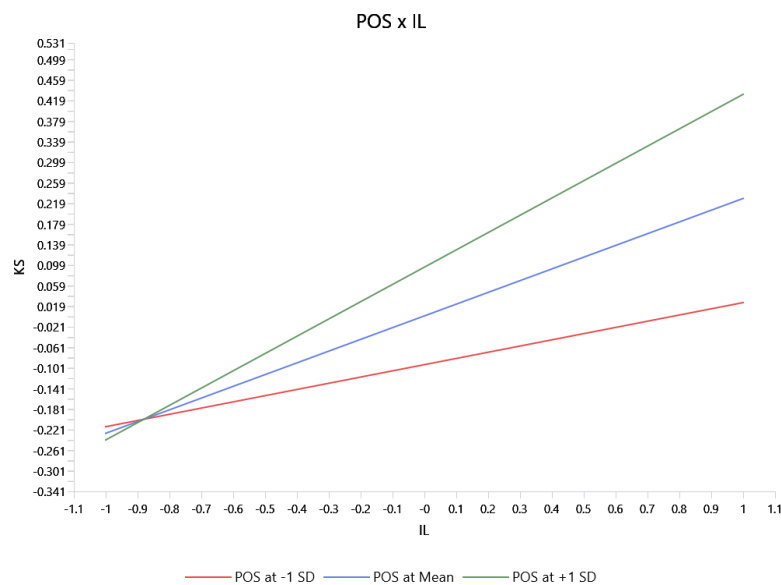


Figure 3: Interaction Term

Furthermore, the moderated indirect effect of innovative leadership on creative employee performance through knowledge sharing was statistically significant with values of $\beta = 0.03$, $t = 2.19$, $p = 0.03$ with 95% of confidence interval LLCI 0.00 and ULCI 0.06 with no zero value between them. This finding supports H6 and indicates a moderate mediation mechanism in the

first stage. Specifically, perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between innovative leadership and knowledge sharing, which in turn enhances the indirect positive relationship between innovative leadership and creative employee performance. So, innovative leadership has positive and significant effect on employee's creative performance through knowledge sharing, especially when employees perceive organizational support.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study provide overall support for the proposed model which shows that innovative leadership, growth mindset, knowledge sharing, perceived organizational support, and creative employee performance are correlated. The structural equation model explains 26.2% of the variance in knowledge sharing and 9.6% of the variance in employees' creative employee performance. No doubt the explained variance in creative employee performance is relatively modest but the results still indicate that knowledge sharing plays an important role in translating innovative leadership into creative performances of employees. All six hypotheses were supported and suggesting that both personal and organizational factors contribute to employee creativity through knowledge sharing.

The first hypothesis proposed was that innovative leadership has a positive effect on knowledge sharing. The findings are consistent with this association, which suggests a positive and significant influence of innovative leadership on knowledge sharing. Thus, innovative leaders who foster new ideas, experimentation, openness and innovative thinking, create an environment in which employees are more likely to share knowledge. Innovative leaders may also create an environment where employees feel free to share ideas and engage in collective problem solving (Madanchian 2025). Therefore, it could be that employees are more inclined to share knowledge instead of hoarding valuable information to themselves (Kremer et al. 2019). The finding points out the value of leadership in determining knowledge-sharing behavior, and implies that innovative leadership can help create a more collaborative and knowledge-focused work environment.

The results of the study support the hypothesis that growth mindset has a positive influence on knowledge sharing. The employees who have this mindset, who believe that they can grow with learning and experience, tend to take the exchange of knowledge as an opportunity for improvement. This perspective allows them to be more open to feedback and collaboration and

thus enhances their willingness to share knowledge. The findings show that personal attitudes to learning are important for knowledge-sharing behavior, even a little more so than the effect of innovative leadership (Chen and Eyoun 2021; Dweck 2017; Tao et al. 2025).

The findings also show that employees who participate in knowledge sharing activities tend to have higher creative performance. New ideas are generated by employees sharing information and different viewpoints. The study also confirms the assumption that the effect of innovative leadership on employees' creativity is mediated by knowledge sharing behaviors. It implies that leaders not only encourage creativity directly but also create environments in which knowledge can be exchanged, which helps in the development of ideas. While the indirect effect is modest, it points out the importance of knowledge sharing in the relationship between innovative leadership and employee creativity (Cabrera and Cabrera 2002; George 2007).

The fifth hypothesis emphasizes the positive indirect effect of growth mindset on creative performance through knowledge sharing. People with a growth mindset are more likely to share knowledge, which in turn promotes creativity by gaining new insights. H6. Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between innovative leadership and creative performance through knowledge sharing. The results suggest that innovative leadership will improve knowledge sharing if employees perceive their organization to value and support them and thus improve the performance of employees in creative jobs.

Table 5: Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	(M)	STDEV	T	P	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
H1	IL -> KS	0.23	0.23	0.10	2.36	0.02	0.04	0.41	Accepted
H2	GM -> KS	0.25	0.25	0.11	2.23	0.03	0.03	0.45	Accepted
H3	KS -> CEP	0.31	0.32	0.05	6.33	0.00	0.23	0.41	Accepted
H4	IL -> KS -> CEP	0.07	0.07	0.04	1.96	0.05	0.01	0.15	Accepted
H5	GM -> KS -> CEP	0.08	0.08	0.04	2.14	0.03	0.01	0.15	Accepted

H6	POS x IL -> KS -> CEP	0.03	0.03	0.02	2.19	0.03	0.00	0.06	Accepted
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6.1. Theoretical Implications

The present study has extended the literature by integrating innovative leadership, growth mindset and POS in one moderated mediation framework in food manufacturing sector of Pakistan. It confirms the significance of knowledge sharing as a transmission mechanism of leadership influence and psychological traits.

6.2. Practical Implications

The results suggest a two-pronged strategy for managers in the food manufacturing industry to improve creativity:

1. Leadership Development: Invest in developing innovative leadership behaviors that encourage initiative and experimentation.
2. Supportive Culture: Cultivate an organizational culture in which employees feel valued. A high POS not only improves well-being but also amplifies the impact of leadership on knowledge-sharing behaviors.
3. Mindset Development: Recruitment and training programs should be focused on growing mindset and grit to develop a resilient and creative workforce.

6.3. Limitations and Future Directions

The limitation of this study is that it focuses on one sector i.e. food manufacturing and on one country i.e. Pakistan. Results may not be generalizable to other manufacturing domains and other cultural contexts. The model can be extended in future research by adding other moderators such as digital leadership and specific innovation strategies. Longitudinal studies might also help to gain a better insight into the causal nature of these relations.

7. Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between innovative leadership, growth mindset, knowledge sharing, perceived organizational support and creative employee performance in the food

manufacturing sector of Pakistan. The results have confirmed that innovative leadership and growth mindset positively affected knowledge sharing, and knowledge sharing positively affected creative employee performance. The results also suggest that the knowledge sharing is an important mechanism by which innovative leadership and growth mindset can lead to creative outcomes. Furthermore, perceived organizational support reinforces the positive association between innovative leadership and knowledge sharing, as well as the indirect effect of innovative leadership on creative employee performance. The findings support the view that leadership, individual psychological orientation, knowledge sharing behavior and organizational context interact to influence employee creativity. In general, the study adds to the literature by including these factors in one moderated mediation model based on the Social Cognitive Theory and the Organizational Support Theory.

The findings also provide practical implications for managers especially in food manufacturing organizations by highlighting the significance of developing innovative leadership behaviors, developing employees' growth mindset, enabling knowledge sharing and providing supportive organizational climate. Companies that successfully implement these practices are likely to create a more fertile ground for employees to share ideas, learn from each other and develop creative solutions. Therefore, to improve the creative performance of employees, not only capable and motivated employees are needed but also leadership and organizational systems that support learning, collaboration and innovation.

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