



Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Digital Knowledge Sharing and Public Service Motivation

Intan Windy Harlina*, Ika Nurul Qamari

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/bamj.v4i2.2437>

Article History:

Received: 04 June 2026

Revised: 11 August 2026

Accepted: 02 September 2026

Keywords:

Servant Leadership, Innovative Work Behavior, Digital Knowledge Sharing, Public Service Motivation

*Correspondence Address:

intan.windy.feb25@mail.umy.ac.id

Abstract:

This study aims to examine the effect of Servant Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior among State Civil Apparatus (SCA) by incorporating Digital Knowledge Sharing and Public Service Motivation as mediating variables. This research employed a quantitative approach using purposive sampling, involving 177 respondents. Data were collected using a 7-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that Servant Leadership has a significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior, while the effect of Public Service Motivation is not supported. Furthermore, Public Service Motivation does not mediate the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior. The integrated model explains 59.5% of the variance in Innovative Work Behavior. This study contributes to the literature on innovative behavior among public sector employees, particularly in the context of digital transformation. The findings suggest that public organizations should strengthen servant leadership practices and digital knowledge management to foster employee innovation and improve the effectiveness of public service.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations that successfully adopt innovation are more likely to survive in today's era than those with strong financial positions (Amin et al., 2024). Servant conduct, empowerment, empathy, and support for individual growth can all help inspire innovation. This results in a psychologically safe work environment that encourages people to submit new ideas, experiment, and contribute to the innovation process (Iqbal et al., 2020).

Servant leadership is a leadership style in which leaders prioritize employees' needs over their own (Canavesi & Minelli, 2022). According to the Social Exchange Theory (SET), when leaders show concern and support for their subordinates, employees would respond positively through extra-role behaviors such as Innovative Work Behavior (Iqbal et al., 2020).

However, the current level of innovation in the public sector remains suboptimal. Organizational hurdles to public sector innovation include rigid organizational structures, a lack of standardization, a lack of trust among employees, a lack of commitment to implementation, limits on innovation transition costs, and a lack of resource support (Cinar et al., 2021).

This statement implies that the public sector, which is characterized by a more formal, hierarchical, and regulatory-compliant bureaucracy, may use different processes than corporate companies to shape employee innovative behavior. According to a post on the bkn.go.id channel, Civil Apparatus Policy Brief No. 065, June 2025, concerning Innovative Work Behavior for Adaptive State Civil Apparatus (ASN), challenges to implementing innovative work behavior in the public sector include the high power distance culture that is typical of government bureaucracies. Superiors wield more power in this culture, and subordinates readily accept decisions. This power distance may impede the dissemination of innovation. Given this tendency, a study of innovative conduct in the public sector is required.

Furthermore, study findings on the impact of servant leadership on innovative work behavior remain inconsistent. Research indicates that Servant Leadership has a direct and considerable impact on Innovative Work Behavior (Khan et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Ekmekcioglu & Öner, 2024). However, research on Indonesian government officials by Amin et al. (2024) demonstrates that Servant Leadership has no significant influence on Innovative Work Behavior, implying the presence of other factors that explain this association.

Despite substantial studies on innovative work behavior, most studies continue to focus on the private sector (Ekmekcioglu & Öner, 2024; Khan et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2020). Research on innovative work behavior among State Civil Apparatus (ASN), notably in municipal administrations, is relatively limited. Furthermore, past research has mostly focused on the direct impact of leadership on creative Work Behavior, leaving the intermediate mechanisms explaining how Servant Leadership can foster creative activity among ASN unexplored.

In the context of digital bureaucratic transformation, Digital Knowledge Sharing is a relevant variable since it allows ASN to share knowledge, collaborate, and develop new ideas through digital platforms. Utilizing digital spaces is also critical for encouraging innovative work behavior by increasing possibilities to share knowledge, experiences, information, and solutions. Employees who actively share ideas, knowledge, and experiences are more likely to generate new ideas, experiment, and execute innovative solutions (Rahnjen et al., 2023). This indicates that servant leadership fosters a collaborative environment that promotes digital knowledge sharing, which in turn becomes a source of innovative behavior.

Public Service Motivation, on the other hand, serves as a mediator, since servant leadership is oriented toward service, individual development, and common interests, thereby increasing employees' intrinsic motivation to serve the public. This motivation is expected to encourage employees to make further contributions, especially through innovative behavior. Servant leadership influences employees' service values and motivation, thereby fostering innovative behavior. However, the role of Digital Knowledge Sharing and Public Service Motivation as concurrent mediators in the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior among Civil Servants remains understudied, particularly within public service agencies.

Previous studies have mostly focused on mediators such as psychological empowerment, job designing, job-relevant engagement, and psychological safety (Khan et al., 2021). As a result, this study is important for expanding the literature on the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior in the public sector by testing the mediating roles of Digital Knowledge Sharing and Public Service

Motivation, thereby allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that encourage ASN's innovative behavior.

This study aims to present an in-depth analysis of Innovative Work Behavior, using relevant empirical evidence, showing that Servant Leadership can improve Innovative Work Behavior when supported by Public Service Motivation and Digital Knowledge Sharing. The primary theoretical contribution of this study is the development of a new theoretical model that examines the roles of Digital Knowledge Sharing and Public Service Motivation as mediating variables in the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior. The study's findings are intended to help improve the quality of public services by better understanding the psychological and digital factors that influence employee innovation. Furthermore, these findings can inform policy recommendations to develop a culture of relevant digital knowledge sharing to improve the innovative performance of ASN, particularly during the period of government digital transformation.

The first hypothesis is based on Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that leaders who support and serve employees encourage reciprocal behaviors through greater engagement, innovation, and extra-role contributions. Servant Leadership creates a supportive environment that promotes employees' Innovative Work Behavior (Nguyen et al., 2023). Previous studies consistently confirm a positive relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior (Gelaidan et al., 2023; Yayuk Indriani, 2024). Furthermore, servant leadership enhances creativity through psychological safety and the proactive adoption of technology (Putra, 2025). Therefore, employees under servant leadership are more likely to generate and implement innovative ideas.

H1: Servant Leadership positively affects Innovative Work Behavior.

Servant Leadership also encourages Digital Knowledge Sharing by fostering a supportive, collaborative environment. Based on Social Learning Theory, employees learn from leaders who demonstrate openness and knowledge-sharing behaviors. Leaders who promote collaboration encourage employees to share knowledge through digital platforms (Lu et al., 2019; Roy & Islam, 2026). Thus, servant leadership strengthens a culture of knowledge exchange that supports innovation.

H2: Servant Leadership positively affects Digital Knowledge Sharing.

Servant Leadership may enhance Public Service Motivation by providing role models, empathy, and moral support. According to Social Learning Theory, servant leaders influence employees through exemplary behavior, while fulfilling employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Previous studies show that servant leadership improves service orientation and public motivation among employees (Liu & Zhao, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024).

H3: Servant Leadership positively affects Public Service Motivation.

Digital Knowledge Sharing facilitates access to information, ideas, and expertise, which enhances Innovative Work Behavior. Based on the Knowledge-Based View and Social Exchange Theory, employees who exchange knowledge are more likely to develop innovative solutions and contribute positively to organizational outcomes (Linh et al., 2019; Binsaeed et al., 2023). Therefore, digital knowledge sharing supports creativity and problem-solving.

H4: Digital Knowledge Sharing positively affects Innovative Work Behavior.

Public Service Motivation encourages employees to improve public services through proactive and innovative actions. According to Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation drives employees to contribute beyond their formal responsibilities (Potipiroon & Ford, 2017; Byantara, 2023). Employees with high public service motivation are more concerned with societal needs and seek innovative approaches to improve service quality (Rafique et al., 2021; Pham et al., 2024).

H5: Public Service Motivation positively affects Innovative Work Behavior.

Servant Leadership promotes openness, collaboration, and employee participation, which facilitate Digital Knowledge Sharing. This knowledge exchange serves as a mechanism by which leadership influences innovation. Previous research shows that leadership styles can indirectly affect Innovative Work Behavior through knowledge sharing (Asmoro & Handoyo, 2021; Ba et al., 2025).

H6: Digital Knowledge Sharing mediates the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

Public Service Motivation may strengthen the effect of servant leadership on innovation by encouraging employees to share knowledge and seek improvements in public services. Employees with high public service motivation are more committed to enhancing service quality and developing innovative solutions (Nguyen et al., 2023). Vuong (2023) also found that Public Service Motivation strengthens the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior among civil servants.

H7: Public Service Motivation mediates the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

Various studies have been conducted regarding the relationship between the variables Servant Leadership, Digital Knowledge Sharing, Public Service Motivation, and Innovative Work Behavior, allowing the following model to be conceptualized:

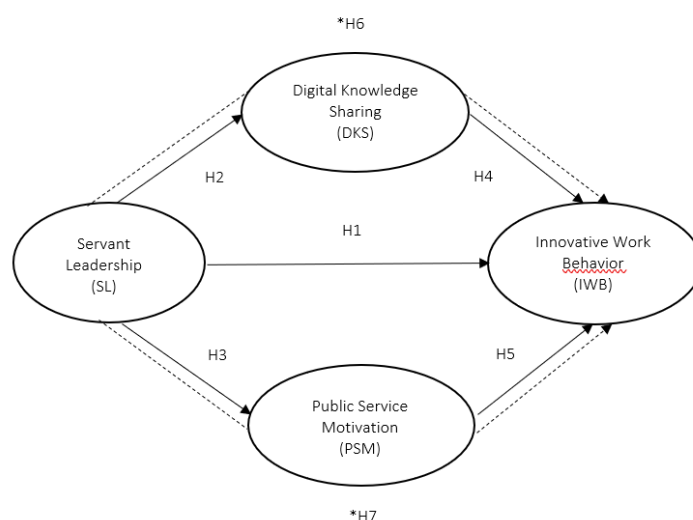


Figure 1. Hypothesis Framework

Description:

————— : Direct effect
 ----- : Mediation effect

RESEARCH METHODS

This study took a quantitative approach with an explanatory design. This study focused on the Population and Civil Registration Offices of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). The subjects were public employees, primarily state civil apparatus employed in Population and Civil Registration Offices throughout the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). As a result, the State Civil Apparatus from the Population and Civil Registration Offices of Sleman, Kulon Progo, Bantul, Gunung Kidul, and Yogyakarta City regencies took part. This study included a total of 177 respondents.

Purposive sampling was used in this study, a sampling technique based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. This technique was used because the research objective was to examine the relationships among latent constructs using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which required respondents with relevant experience and characteristics related to the variables under study. According to research by Ghozali & Latan (2012), the SEM method generally uses a sample size of 100–200 respondents, although PLS-SEM is more tolerant of smaller sample sizes. Therefore, this study used a sample size of 100- 200 respondents.

Respondents in this study included State Civil Apparatus (ASN) with Civil Servant (PNS) status and Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) who worked at the Population and Civil Registration Office in five regencies/cities across the Special Region of Yogyakarta and had at least one year of service. These criteria ensured that respondents had sufficient experience to assess the practices of Servant Leadership, Digital Knowledge Sharing, Public Service Motivation, and Innovative Work Behavior in an organizational setting. Furthermore, the sample size across all Population and Civil Registration Offices in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) provided sufficient representation of the target population's characteristics.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a 7-point Likert scale (1-7). This study used primary data collected directly from respondents. The analysis was divided into two stages: (1) assessing the measurement model to determine reliability and construct validity, and (2) assessing the structural model to test the proposed hypotheses using path coefficients and statistical significance (p-value or t-statistic) (Hair et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondents' Profile

The respondent profile provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants in this study. The data include age, gender, years of service, and organizational affiliation. A total of 177 State Civil Apparatus respondents participated in this study, representing several Population and Civil Registration Offices in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The detailed characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Characteristics	Criteria	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age	< 35 years	53	29.9 %
	36 – 40 years	39	22.0 %
	41 – 45 years	35	19.8 %

	46 – 50 years	23	13.0 %
	51 – 55 years	18	10.2 %
	56 – 60 years	9	5.1 %
Total Number		177	100
Gender	Female	111	62.7 %
	Male	66	37.3 %
Total Number		177	100
Years of service	1 – 5 years	42	24.9 %
	6 – 10 years	45	25.4 %
	> 10 years	88	49.7 %
Total Number		177	100
Agency	Sleman Population and Civil Registration Office	50	28.2 %
	Kulon Progo Population and Civil Registration Office	25	14.1 %
	Bantul Population and Civil Registration Office	40	22.6 %
	Gunung Kidul Population and Civil Registration Office	30	16.9 %
	Yogyakarta Population and Civil Registration Office	32	18.1 %
Total Number		177	100

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

The respondent profile table shows that the majority of respondents are aged 35 (53 respondents, 29.9%). Furthermore, 39 respondents are aged 36-40 (22.0%), 35 are aged 41-45 (19.8%), 23 are aged 46-50 (13.0%), 18 are aged 51-55 (10.2%), and 9 are aged 56-60 (5.1%). This distribution indicates that the majority of Civil Servants in the Civil Registration Offices are of productive age. This suggests that respondents are capable of adapting well to organizational change and digital technology, thereby promoting digital knowledge-sharing practices and the development of innovative work behaviors in public services.

By gender, 111 respondents (62.7%) are female, while 66 (37.3%) are male. The majority of respondents are female, indicating a relatively high level of female employee involvement in population administration services. This composition represents the human resource conditions in public service, which require precision, interpersonal communication, and a public service orientation, all of which are important for implementing a servant leadership style.

In terms of tenure, 88 respondents (49.7%) had more than ten years of service. There are 45 respondents (25.4%) with 6-10 years of service and 42 (24.9%) with 1-5 years of service. These findings show that the majority of respondents have extensive work experience in the public sector bureaucracy. Employees with extensive work experience have a better understanding of service procedures and organizational culture, and can share knowledge digitally, which supports innovation in work.

Based on agency origin, respondents came from five Population and Civil Registration Offices in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The largest number of respondents came from the Sleman Population and Civil Registration Offices (50 respondents) (28.2%), followed by the Bantul Population and Civil Registration Offices (40 respondents) (22.6%), the Yogyakarta City Civil Registration Offices (32 respondents) (18.1%), the Gunung Kidul Population and Civil Registration Offices (30 respondents) (16.9%), and the Kulon Progo Population and Civil Registration Offices (25 respondents) (14.1%). This study provides a more comprehensive overview of the conditions of civil servants at the Population and Civil Registration Office in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), as evidenced by the relatively even distribution of respondents across regions. In general, the respondent profile reveals that the study was dominated by female civil

servants of productive age, with extensive work experience, who worked for several Population and Civil Registration Offices in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. These characteristics contribute to the study's significance in examining how Servant Leadership can enhance Innovative Work Behavior in the public sector by mediating the effects of Digital Knowledge Sharing and Public Service Motivation.

Validity and Reliability

Data analysis in this study began with model measurements and was carried out using SmartPLS. A loading factor > 0.60 is still considered sufficient, and the indicator is considered to have convergent validity. Several indicators in Table 2 above fail to meet the validity criteria, including SL7, PSM20, PSM5, PSM7, PSM9, PSM11, and DKS6. To optimize the model, the researcher was required to remove these indicators.

The researcher then examined the measurement model convergent validity using the AVE parameter. A construct has convergent validity if the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is ≥ 0.50 , indicating it can explain more than 50% of the variance in its indicator. The instrument validity measurements in this study yielded the following results:

Table 2. Results of Instrument Validity Measurement

Indicator	SL	PSM	DKS	IWB
SL1	0.623			
SL2	0.784			
SL3	0.807			
SL4	0.695			
SL5	0.734			
SL6	0.803			
SL7	-0.565			
PSM1		0.619		
PSM2		0.620		
PSM3		0.725		
PSM4		0.697		
PSM5		0.588		
PSM6		0.636		
PSM7		0.595		
PSM8		0.678		
PSM9		0.574		
PSM10		0.674		
PSM11		0.576		
PSM12		0.612		
PSM13		0.766		
PSM14		0.738		
PSM15		0.680		
PSM16		0.781		
PSM17		0.726		
PSM18		0.632		
PSM19		0.634		
PSM20		0.598		
DKS1			0.844	
DKS2			0.836	
DKS3			0.854	
DKS4			0.788	
DKS5			0.714	
DKS6			0.408	

IWB1	0.889
IWB2	0.911
IWB3	0.915
IWB4	0.827
IWB5	0.917
IWB6	0.815
IWB7	0.918
IWB8	0.912
IWB9	0.910

Source: Processed data, 2026

Table 3 presents the AVE estimate results. A variable is considered valid if its AVE value is ≥ 0.5 .

Table 3. AVE Results of Convergent Validity Test

	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Description
SL	0.553	Valid
PSM	0.500	Valid
DKS	0.668	Valid
IWB	0.794	Valid

Source: Processed data, 2026

The AVE values for each variable are SL 0.553, PSM 0.500, DKS 0.668, and IWB 0.794. These four variables have values ≥ 0.50 , indicating they are categorized as valid.

Next, the researchers conducted a reliability test, assessing it using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. A construct is considered reliable if it has a Cronbach's alpha > 0.70 . The reliability test in this study yielded the following results:

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Description
SL	0.838	0.880	Reliable
PSM	0.920	0.930	Reliable
DKS	0.875	0.909	Reliable
IWB	0.967	0.972	Reliable

Source: Processed data, 2026

The results of the analysis based on Table 4 show that all Cronbach's Alpha values are > 0.70 . Thus, all variables have good reliability.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The following are the R-Square values in this analysis.

Table 5. Results of the R Square Test (R²)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
IWB	0.595	0.588

Source: Processed data, 2026

According to the analysis results, the IWB has an R-Square value of 0.595, indicating that the independent variables in the model explain 59.5% of the variation, with the remaining 40.5% attributable to factors outside the model. As a result, the relationship between the independent variables and IWB is classified as moderate. This means that the model is sufficiently accurate.

Direct and Indirect Effect (Hypotheses Testing)

Next, the researchers conducted a significance test in PLS-SEM to determine whether the relationships among the model's latent variables were statistically significant. The following are the bootstrapping results for the direct- and indirect-effect study models.

Table 6. Results of the Significance Test of the Relationship

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Description
H1: SL -> IWB	0.309	0.304	0.089	3.461	0.000	Accepted
H2: SL -> DKS	0.493	0.502	0.079	6.252	0.000	Accepted
H3: SL -> PSM	0.563	0.577	0.063	8.904	0.000	Accepted
H4: DKS -> IWB	0.451	0.454	0.081	5.554	0.000	Accepted
H5: PSM -> IWB	0.147	0.157	0.138	1.068	0.143	Rejected
H6: SL -> DKS -> IWB	0.222	0.228	0.055	4.064	0.000	Accepted
H7: SL -> PSM -> IWB	0.083	0.093	0.082	1.006	0.157	Rejected

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

A correlation is considered significant if the p-value is less than the predetermined significance level (in this study, 0.05). Based on the results of hypothesis testing (Table 6), five of the seven hypotheses are supported with p-values < 0.05 and t-values > 1.96, while two are not. H2 and H3 show the most decisive influence with coefficients of 0.493 and 0.563, respectively, and t-values of 6.252 and 8.904, respectively (p-value = 0.000). These findings indicate a significant positive impact of Servant Leadership on Digital Knowledge Sharing and Public Service Motivation. H1 and H4 show a moderate influence with coefficients of 0.309 and 0.451, respectively, and t-values of 3.461 and 5.554, respectively (p-value = 0.000). These results prove a significant positive impact of Servant Leadership and Digital Knowledge Sharing on Innovative Work Behavior. Meanwhile, H5 is also rejected because it has a low coefficient value (0.133) with a t-value below 1.96 (0.166), indicating no significant direct influence of Public Service Motivation on Innovative Work Behavior.

The test results for the indirect effect through Digital Knowledge Sharing (SL → DKS → IWB) are also significant, with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.222$, a t-value of 4.064, and a p-value of 0.000. Because both direct and indirect effects were significant, Digital Knowledge Sharing acted as a partial mediator in the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

These findings show that Servant Leadership not only boosts innovative work behavior but also enhances digital knowledge-sharing practices within the organization. In other words, some of Servant Leadership's influence on Innovative Work Behavior is transmitted through Digital Knowledge Sharing, while others are mediated directly.

In theory, this mechanism can be explained by the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), which holds that knowledge is a strategic organizational resource that underpins innovation. Leaders who follow servant leadership principles promote openness, empowerment, trust, and collaboration among employees, fostering a culture of knowledge sharing through digital platforms. This shared knowledge then broadens views, improves problem-solving skills, and accelerates the emergence of new ideas, which are manifested in Innovative Work Behavior.

Empirically, the findings of this study show that the success of servant leadership in enhancing Innovative Work Behavior is determined not only by the quality of the relationship between leaders and employees, but also by the organization's ability to build an effective Digital Knowledge Sharing ecosystem. Thus, Digital Knowledge Sharing is an important mechanism that enhances the influence of servant leadership on employee innovative behavior, even though servant leadership still has a direct effect on Innovative Work Behavior.

Furthermore, the indirect effect of Public Service Motivation ($SL \rightarrow PSM \rightarrow IWB$) is insignificant, with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.083$, $t = 1.006$, and $p = 0.157$. Moreover, the direct relationship between Public Service Motivation and Innovative Work Behavior is also insignificant ($\beta = 0.147$; $t = 1.068$; $p = 0.143$).

According to these findings, Public Service Motivation does not serve as a mediator (i.e., no mediation) in the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior. Although servant leadership has been found to improve public service motivation, it has not resulted in more innovative work behavior.

In theory, this mechanism suggests that Service Motivation reflects employees' intrinsic orientation to providing public service rather than the drive to innovate in their work. Employees who are highly motivated to serve the public typically prioritize regulatory compliance, fairness of service, accountability, and quality of service in accordance with established procedures. This perspective does not necessarily foster a willingness to take risks, experiment, or develop new work methods, all of which are key characteristics of Innovative Work Behavior.

In the context of public sector organizations, relatively formal, bureaucratic, and heavily regulated bureaucracies can also impede the transformation of service motivation into innovative behavior. As a result, improving Public Service Motivation alone is insufficient to generate Innovative Work Behavior in the absence of other factors, such as an innovative culture, psychological safety, job autonomy, organizational support, and a Digital Knowledge Sharing system that enables the sharing of ideas and collaboration.

Empirically, these findings show that the influence of Servant Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior is mediated more by knowledge-based mechanisms than by public service-motivated mechanisms. As a result, Public Service Motivation cannot yet be considered a psychological mechanism that explains the relationship between servant leadership and innovative work behavior in the civil service.

Discussion

The findings indicate that Servant Leadership significantly influences Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) ($\beta = 0.309$; $t = 3.461$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This result confirms the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, which explains that employees tend to reciprocate leaders' support, trust, and attention through behaviors that contribute to organizational improvement, including innovation. Servant leadership practices characterized by empowerment, employee development, and psychological safety encourage ASN to express new ideas, develop creative solutions, and implement service innovations (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2014). However, the moderate effect size suggests that leadership alone is insufficient to fully explain IWB, as other organizational factors, such as innovation culture, digital resources, job characteristics, and reward systems, may also influence IWB.

Furthermore, Servant Leadership was found to affect Digital Knowledge Sharing (DKS) significantly ($\beta = 0.493$; $t = 6.252$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. This finding supports the Knowledge-Based View (Grant, 1996), which emphasizes knowledge as a strategic organizational resource and highlights leadership's role in creating an environment that facilitates knowledge exchange. Servant leaders encourage openness, trust, and collaboration, enabling employees to share information, experiences, and work practices through digital platforms. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of DKS may depend on organizational digital readiness, including digital literacy, information system quality, and digital collaboration policies. This result is consistent with Roy and Islam (2026), who found that servant leadership increases employees' willingness to share knowledge.

The results also demonstrate that Servant Leadership positively influences Public Service Motivation (PSM) ($\beta = 0.563$; $t = 8.904$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. This finding aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2010), which suggests that leaders who fulfill employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness can strengthen intrinsic motivation. Through empathy, integrity, and service-oriented behavior, servant leaders enhance ASN's commitment to public service values. This result supports Schwarz et al. (2016), who found that servant leadership increases PSM among government employees. However, PSM may also be shaped by individual values, organizational culture, work experience, and bureaucratic systems, in addition to leadership factors.

The analysis further shows that Digital Knowledge Sharing has a significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.451$; $t = 5.554$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H4. This finding reinforces the Knowledge-Based View, which argues that innovation depends on the ability to acquire, integrate, and utilize knowledge. Through digital knowledge exchange, employees gain access to experiences, best practices, and problem-solving approaches that stimulate new ideas. However, the relationship between DKS and IWB may also reflect broader organizational characteristics, such as collaborative culture and digital transformation readiness. Previous studies confirm that knowledge sharing improves access to knowledge and competencies, thereby strengthening innovative behavior (Linh et al., 2019; Gao et al., 2025).

In contrast, Public Service Motivation did not significantly influence Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.147$; $t = 1.068$; $p = 0.143$), leading to the rejection of H5. This finding indicates that a strong desire to serve the public does not necessarily encourage employees to engage in innovation. Within bureaucratic environments, ASN may prioritize regulatory compliance, accountability, and service consistency rather than experimentation and risk-taking. Therefore, the influence of PSM on innovation may depend on contextual factors such as innovation climate, psychological safety, organizational support, and job autonomy. This finding is consistent with Lee and Kim (2024), who noted that administrative controls and strict regulations may limit innovative behavior in public organizations.

The mediation analysis confirms that Digital Knowledge Sharing significantly mediates the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.222$; $t = 4.064$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H6. This finding suggests that servant leadership promotes innovation by establishing a knowledge-sharing environment that facilitates collaboration, learning, and idea development. DKS acts as a partial mediator because Servant Leadership also directly influences IWB. These findings extend the Knowledge-

Based View by demonstrating that leadership enables knowledge processes that support innovation. The result is consistent with Ba et al. (2025), who found that servant leadership encourages digital knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior, and with Khattak et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of organizational learning and workplace relationships in fostering innovation.

Meanwhile, Public Service Motivation was found not to mediate the relationship between Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.083$; $t = 1.006$; $p = 0.157$), leading to the rejection of H7. Although servant leadership increases employees' motivation to serve the public, this motivation does not automatically translate into innovative behavior. In the ASN context, PSM appears to be more strongly associated with service responsibility, administrative compliance, and the maintenance of service quality than with encouraging experimentation and new ideas. However, PSM may become a stronger mechanism for innovation when supported by an innovation-oriented culture, greater autonomy, and reward systems that encourage creativity.

Overall, the findings reveal that the knowledge-based pathway through Digital Knowledge Sharing is more effective than the motivation-based pathway through Public Service Motivation in explaining how Servant Leadership enhances Innovative Work Behavior among ASN. This study contributes to public sector innovation literature by demonstrating that servant leadership requires support from digital knowledge-sharing practices to generate innovative outcomes. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design and single-source perceptual data limit causal interpretation and may introduce common method bias. Future research should consider longitudinal designs, multi-source data, and additional contextual variables such as innovation climate, psychological safety, and organizational support to provide a more comprehensive explanation of innovative work behavior in the public sector.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Servant Leadership is a significant determinant of Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) among State Civil Apparatus (ASN), both directly and indirectly through Digital Knowledge Sharing (DKS). The findings confirm that DKS serves as an effective mediating mechanism in translating servant leadership practices into innovative behaviors. In contrast, Public Service Motivation (PSM) does not significantly influence IWB and fails to mediate the relationship between PSM and IWB. These results highlight that fostering ASN innovation requires not only intrinsic motivation to serve the public but also supportive leadership and a culture of digital knowledge sharing that facilitates collaboration and idea exchange. This study contributes to the public sector innovation literature by providing an integrated model that examines the mediating roles of DKS and PSM and demonstrates the stronger explanatory role of DKS in the bureaucratic context. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design and limited research setting within Population and Civil Registration Offices in the Special Region of Yogyakarta restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are encouraged to adopt longitudinal approaches, broaden research contexts, and examine additional factors, such as psychological safety, innovation climate, digital leadership, and organizational learning, to explain better the determinants of innovative work behavior in the public sector.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to thank Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta for its academic support and research facilities. We also express our deepest appreciation to the respondents who participated and contributed to this research.

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