TAZKIYA (Journal of Psychology)
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15408/tazkiya.v14i1.40585
http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/tazkiya

The Role of Intercultural Sensitivity and Organizational Climate on Innovative Work Behavior

Okky Kania[1], Rostiana[2]
Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta, Indonesia[1,2]

okkykania.id@gmail.com

Abstract

In the context of a nation such as Indonesia, Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)—defined as employees' deliberate creation, promotion, and implementation of novel ideas, processes, or products intended to benefit the organization—assumes particularly high strategic relevance. This study examines the simultaneous effects of intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate on innovative work behavior (IWB), a relationship rarely explored in the Indonesian context. Using a cross-sectional quantitative design, data were collected from 102 employees of a multinational IT company. Measurement instruments included the Innovative Work Behavior Scale (IWBS), Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), and Organizational Climate Scale (CLIOR). Results show that intercultural sensitivity (t = 2.509) and organizational climate (t = 4.231) significantly predict IWB, jointly explaining 39.4% of its variance. This moderate level of explanation indicates that while these factors play an important role in fostering innovation, other variables may also contribute. The findings suggest that employees with higher intercultural sensitivity tend to generate and implement ideas more effectively, especially when supported by a positive organizational climate. The study contributes theoretically by integrating individual and organizational determinants of innovation into a unified framework, and practically by offering insights for building culturally inclusive workplaces that enhance creativity. This study fills the gap by examining the joint effect of intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate in a multicultural IT setting, an area less explored in prior studies.

Keywords: innovative work behavior, intercultural sensitivity, organizational climate

Abstrak

Dalam konteks sebuah negara seperti Indonesia, Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) — yang didefinisikan sebagai upaya disengaja karyawan dalam menciptakan, mempromosikan, serta mengimplementasikan ide, proses, atau produk baru yang bertujuan memberikan manfaat bagi organisasi — senantiasa memiliki relevansi strategis yang sangat tinggi. Penelitian ini menguji pengaruh simultan sensitivitas antarbudaya dan iklim organisasi terhadap perilaku kerja inovatif (IWB), hubungan yang masih jarang diteliti dalam konteks Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif potong lintang, data dikumpulkan dari 102 karyawan perusahaan TI multinasional. Instrumen pengukuran meliputi Innovative Work Behavior Scale (IWBS), Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), dan Organizational Climate Scale (CLIOR). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sensitivitas antarbudaya (t = 2,509) dan iklim organisasi (t = 4,231) berpengaruh signifikan terhadap IWB, dengan kontribusi bersama sebesar 39,4% terhadap varians perilaku kerja inovatif. Nilai R^2 yang moderat ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kedua faktor tersebut berperan penting dalam mendorong inovasi, masih terdapat faktor lain yang turut memengaruhi. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa karyawan dengan sensitivitas antarbudaya yang tinggi lebih mampu menghasilkan dan menerapkan ide baru, terutama ketika didukung oleh iklim organisasi yang positif. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berkontribusi melalui integrasi faktor individual dan organisasional dalam satu kerangka terpadu, serta secara praktis memberikan wawasan bagi organisasi dalam membangun lingkungan kerja yang inklusif dan inovatif.

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Penelitian ini mengisi kesenjangan dengan menguji pengaruh gabungan sensitivitas antarbudaya dan iklim organisasi dalam konteks perusahaan TI multikultural, area yang masih jarang dieksplorasi dalam penelitian sebelumnya.

Kata kunci: *iklim organisasi, perilaku kerja inovatif, sensitivitas antarbudaya*

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology and the growing influence of globalization have compelled organizations to foster high levels of innovative work behavior (IWB). In today's dynamic and competitive landscape, companies must continuously adapt and innovate to remain relevant. In Indonesia, many firms collaborate with multinational information technology (IT) companies to support digital transformation and adopt new technological developments. These collaborations are designed not only to facilitate knowledge transfer and strengthen competitiveness but also to build sustainable innovation capacity in the local IT sector. As digitalization accelerates, innovation is no longer viewed as optional, but as a critical component of organizational survival and long-term growth.

To achieve these objectives, employees are expected to demonstrate strong innovative work behavior. IWB refers to the generation, promotion, and implementation of new ideas that contribute to improved organizational performance (Thurlings et al., 2015; Baidun et al., 2024; Athifah et al., 2025; Etikariena et al., 2025). Middelkoop (2016) emphasized that IWB positively influences individual performance, underscoring its strategic role in organizational success. Employees who engage in innovation are more likely to introduce creative solutions, improve work processes, and enhance service delivery. However, fostering innovation in a multicultural environment requires more than technical expertise. It also demands interpersonal awareness and contextual support. Li and Zheng (2014) further noted that innovative work behavior is shaped by both individual and organizational factors, suggesting that innovation is not merely a cognitive process, but also a social one that depends on how employees interact within their work environment.

Although multinational collaboration is often expected to accelerate learning and knowledge exchange, its success depends largely on employees' ability to adapt culturally and communicate effectively. Cultural diversity can encourage creativity but may also generate misunderstanding and tension when poorly managed (Bogilović et al., 2021; Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). In multicultural teams, misinterpretation of intentions, communication style mismatches, and implicit biases can disrupt cooperation. In this context, intercultural sensitivity becomes a key competence. Defined as the ability to recognize, respect, and respond to cultural differences (Ahadi, 2017), intercultural sensitivity facilitates trust, reduces communication barriers, and enables diverse ideas to be converted into creative output (Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019). These findings suggest that diversity alone does not guarantee innovation. Rather, cultural competence and supportive conditions determine whether diversity strengthens collaboration or becomes a barrier to performance.

At the organizational level, climate plays a vital role in shaping how employees engage with innovation. Organizational climate reflects shared perceptions of leadership, communication, and support systems that influence employees' motivation and creativity (Setiawan, 2016). A positive climate encourages openness and psychological safety, motivating employees to take risks and share ideas (Ratnasari & Sutjahjo, 2017; Önhon, 2019). Employees are more likely to experiment, give feedback, and challenge outdated procedures when they feel safe from judgment or punishment. A climate characterized by excessive control, unclear communication, or limited trust tends to suppress creativity and discourage initiative. Within multinational IT projects that often operate under tight deadlines and demanding service level agreements (SLAs) (Irawati & Rostiana, 2021), a supportive and inclusive climate becomes even more essential. The pressure to meet technical and operational targets can lead employees to avoid risk-taking unless the organization explicitly encourages innovation and learning.

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Although intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate have been widely studied in relation to innovation, most prior research has examined them independently. However, previous studies rarely examined how intercultural sensitivity among local employees, not only expatriates, relates to innovative work behavior in the Indonesian IT industry. This gap is important because innovation in multicultural organizations depends on how individual cultural competence interacts with collective organizational conditions. Local employees in multinational projects often work side-by-side with expatriates, encounter varied communication styles, and adapt to different work norms, making their innovative behavior highly relevant to project success.

According to Blau's Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964, as cited in Rajâa & Mekkaoui, 2025), the relationship between employees and organizations is built on reciprocal exchanges. When employees perceive that the organization values and supports them through fairness, recognition, and a positive climate, they tend to reciprocate with engagement, creativity, and innovative behavior. From this perspective, employees with higher intercultural sensitivity are more likely to contribute innovative ideas when they experience a supportive climate that encourages mutual respect and collaboration. Intercultural competence allows employees to navigate cross-cultural interactions more effectively, reducing uncertainty and helping them feel confident in suggesting new approaches.

Recent research also emphasizes the central role of an innovation-supportive climate in stimulating IWB across diverse organizational contexts (Hassi et al., 2025). An environment that supports experimentation, constructive feedback, and continuous learning is more likely to turn cultural diversity into a competitive advantage. However, overlooking the interaction between intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate creates a critical blind spot in the literature. Without considering both factors simultaneously, organizations may miss opportunities to understand how multicultural teams can most effectively leverage diversity to drive innovation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the simultaneous influence of intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate on innovative work behavior among employees in a multinational IT company in Indonesia. By addressing this gap, the study contributes to both theoretical and practical discussions by integrating individual (intercultural sensitivity) and organizational (climate) determinants of innovation within a single empirical framework. This integrated approach enhances theoretical understanding of innovation in multicultural contexts while providing practical guidance for organizations seeking to foster inclusive and innovation-driven workplaces.

The growing demands of globalization highlight the need for a workforce capable of operating effectively in culturally diverse environments. Intercultural sensitivity is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and respect cultural differences is essential for facilitating collaboration and fostering innovation within multicultural teams. However, the impact of diversity on innovation remains complex. Bogilović et al. (2021) found that when diversity is not properly managed, it can lead to intergroup bias and disrupt innovative processes. In contrast, Lee et al. (2020) demonstrated that expatriates with high levels of cross-cultural competence tend to display stronger innovative work behavior. This apparent divergence in findings underscores the need for further research into the role of intercultural sensitivity as a potential moderating factor in the relationship between workplace diversity and innovation. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of intercultural sensitivity on innovative work behavior within multicultural organizational settings.

H1: Innovative work behavior is influenced by intercultural sensitivity.

The organizational environment, which includes both the overall atmosphere and specific cultural attributes of a company, plays a critical role in fostering innovative work behavior. Önhon (2019) demonstrated that a positive and innovation-oriented climate significantly enhances employee innovation, while a negative climate can have adverse effects. Supporting this, Pee and Min (2017) found that a collaborative and innovation-friendly organizational climate promotes knowledge and skill sharing among employees, which in turn supports individual growth and creativity. To further explore these

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

dynamics, this study aims to examine how organizational climate influences innovative work behavior, aiming to gain deeper insights into the ways environmental factors shape employee innovation.

H2: Innovative work behavior is influenced by organizational climate.

The rapid pace of globalization and technological advancement requires innovative work behavior, particularly in multinational IT companies where cross-cultural collaboration is essential. Intercultural sensitivity, defined as the willingness to understand and accept cultural differences, plays a critical role in this context (Ahadi, 2017). Lee et al. (2020) found that expatriates with higher cross-cultural competence demonstrate better innovative work behavior, performance, and job satisfaction. Organizational climate encompasses the shared experiences of employees and the collective characteristics arising from the work environment, individual behaviors, leadership styles, informal systems, and other organizational elements. It also includes the motivation, values, attitudes, and beliefs that influence organizational members (Setiawan, 2016). Research by Önhon (2019) highlights that fostering a positive innovative climate significantly enhances employees' innovative work behavior. This study aims to investigate the interplay between intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate in shaping innovative work behavior (**Figure 1.**).

H3: Intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate significantly contribute to influencing innovative work behavior.

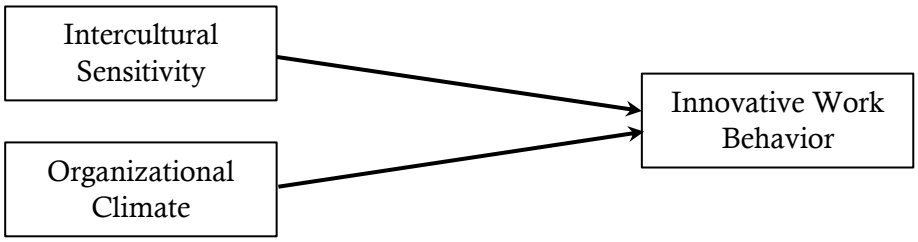

Figure 1. Research Model

This study draws on theoretical perspectives that explain how social interaction and workplace contexts shape innovative work behavior. One of the core perspectives is Social Exchange Theory, which argues that employees tend to reciprocate positive treatment from their organization with constructive attitudes and behaviors. When employees perceive fairness, support, and trust from management and colleagues, they feel responsible to repay these benefits by engaging in actions that help the organization, including idea generation, knowledge sharing, and innovation. Intercultural sensitivity becomes part of this reciprocal process because employees who respect cultural differences are more capable of maintaining harmonious relationships, reducing uncertainty, and sustaining effective collaboration in multicultural teams.

The concept of psychological safety further strengthens this theoretical foundation. Psychological safety proposes that employees are more willing to take interpersonal risks, such as proposing new ideas, questioning existing routines, or challenging authority, when they believe their opinions will not lead to embarrassment, punishment, or negative evaluation. Recent empirical findings show that teams with greater psychological safety report stronger learning behavior, problem-solving, and creative idea sharing (Jin & Peng, 2024). This suggests that a supportive organizational climate does not merely motivate innovation, but also provides the psychological conditions that enable employees to express ideas freely and experiment without fear of negative consequences.

Integrating both perspectives, innovative work behavior is most likely to occur when employees possess the interpersonal capacity to navigate cultural differences and when the work environment reinforces trust, inclusion, and open communication. Without these conditions, even technically skilled employees may hesitate to participate in innovation due to fear of conflict or rejection. Therefore,

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license
(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate are expected to jointly influence innovative work behavior, particularly in multicultural work settings where diverse perspectives must be integrated.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, non-experimental survey design. The research was conducted at a multinational IT company engaged in a large-scale digitalization project in Indonesia. Approximately 26% of the project workforce consisted of expatriates assigned by the company's headquarters as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), while the remaining 74% were Indonesian employees recruited during project execution. At the time of data collection, project personnel were divided between those working onsite at the client's office in Central Jakarta and those working remotely offsite.

The target population comprised employees working at selected IT companies, totaling 182 individuals. Given the relatively small population size, a census sampling method was employed. Inclusion criteria required participants to have been employed at PT. Y for at least three months. Based on these criteria, the target sample size was 168 participants. Ultimately, data were collected from 102 respondents.

Although the response rate did not reach the full target population, representativeness was assessed by comparing respondents' demographic distributions with the overall population. This approach reduces, though does not eliminate, the potential for non-response bias. This census approach helped minimize sampling bias by ensuring that all eligible employees were included. These measures aim to ensure that the sample sufficiently reflects the overall population, supporting the generalizability of the findings.

Participants ranged in age from 21 to 59 years, with the largest age group being 21–30 years old (51%). Male participants outnumbered female participants, accounting for 67% and 33% respectively. In terms of nationality, participants were primarily Indonesian (80%), followed by South Korean (12%), Austrian (4%), and other nationalities (4%). Most participants reported work experience of less than 10 years.

Three self-report instruments were used to measure the key research variables. All instruments employed a Guttman-type dichotomous format ("Yes/No") instead of the more common Likert scale. This decision was based on Heine's (2015) recommendation for cross-cultural research, which suggests that dichotomous formats can reduce moderation and extremity biases commonly observed in collectivistic cultures. In the Indonesian context, respondents often prefer neutral or middle responses to maintain social harmony and avoid confrontation. Therefore, using a binary response structure was considered more culturally appropriate, as it encourages respondents to take a clear stance while minimizing social desirability bias.

To measure innovative work behavior, the study used the Innovative Work Behavior Scale (IWBS) developed by Janssen (2000). This scale consists of nine positively phrased items across three indicators: idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. Kheng et al. (2013) reported strong psychometric properties for this scale, with factor loadings exceeding 0.6 for all items and an internal consistency reliability starting at 0.676.

Intercultural sensitivity was assessed using the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) by Chen and Starosta (2000). The ISS comprises 24 items covering five dimensions: Interaction Enjoyment, Interaction Engagement, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Confidence, and Interaction Attentiveness. Validation studies (Chen & Starosta, as cited in Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019) indicate that the ISS exhibits strong reliability and adequate concurrent and predictive validity. Similarly, Portalla et al. (2010) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.82 in their application of the scale, further confirming its robustness.

Organizational climate was measured with the short form of the Organizational Climate Scale (CLIOR) developed by Suárez et al. (2013). This instrument consists of 15 items that capture overall

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

perceptions of organizational climate without further sub-dimensions. Previous validation studies reported good factor loadings (≥ 0.40) and high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94, confirming its reliability and validity.

Nevertheless, the use of a Guttman scale can reduce data sensitivity and variance due to its limited response range. To address this limitation, rigorous validity and reliability analyses were conducted to ensure the robustness of the instruments. During the preliminary testing, several items with low factor loadings were removed three items from the IWB scale, seventeen from the ISS, and ten from the CLIOR. Although this refinement improved construct validity, it also indicates that certain dimensions of intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate may require further cultural adaptation for Indonesian respondents.

The study began by identifying the research problem, defining the topic, and selecting participants who met the inclusion criteria. Prior to data collection, participants received an information sheet and an informed consent form outlining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality procedures, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. No personal identifying information was collected, and responses were kept strictly confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Primary data were obtained directly from participants through questionnaires, while secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, and official organizational documents. The survey was administered in English from November 28, 2022 to December 16, 2022, and distributed via email, WhatsApp, and printed posters at the project site. The decision to use English was based on two considerations. First, English was the primary working language in the multinational project, used for daily communication, documentation, and technical coordination. Second, translating the instruments into Indonesian risked altering conceptual meanings and reducing measurement accuracy, particularly for psychological constructs. To minimize misunderstanding, a small pilot test was conducted prior to data collection, and no major comprehension issues were reported.

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS version 3.2.7 (2018). The use of Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was based on methodological and practical considerations. According to Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for studies involving relatively small sample sizes, non-normal data, and complex models with multiple constructs and indicators. With only 102 respondents and three latent variables, PLS-SEM offered a more robust approach than covariance-based SEM or traditional regression techniques. The analysis followed the two-step procedure recommended by Hair et al. (2019). The outer model evaluated convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and multicollinearity. The inner model assessed path coefficients, effect sizes (f^2), and the coefficients of determination (R^2 and adjusted R^2) to determine the strength of the structural relationships.

Results and Discussion

Results

A descriptive analysis was conducted to examine participants' scores across the three research variables. Categorization using SPSS version 26 indicated that innovative work behavior (M = 16.43), intercultural sensitivity (M = 43.85), and organizational climate (M = 26.32) were all classified in the moderate category. These results suggest that employees demonstrate consistent engagement in generating and applying ideas, openness toward cultural differences, and perceptions of a generally supportive work environment. Considering that more than half of the respondents were aged 21–30 and relatively early in their careers, these moderate levels may reflect a constructive developmental stage, with potential for further enhancement as employees gain more experience in multicultural collaboration.

To ensure measurement accuracy, an outer model evaluation was performed in SmartPLS 3.2.7, including Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Composite Reliability. Convergent validity

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

was assessed by examining factor loadings, and indicators with loadings below 0.60 were removed from the model. This refinement led to the elimination of three items from the IWB scale, seventeen from the ISS, and ten from the CLIOR. Although a substantial number of items were dropped, this process strengthened construct validity and suggests that some scale items may require contextual or cultural adaptation for Indonesian respondents.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, ensuring that the correlation between a variable and its remaining valid indicators was stronger than its correlation with other variables in the model. By refining the model through these assessments, the researcher established confidence in the measurement instruments' ability to accurately capture the intended constructs, paving the way for reliable and interpretable results.

Table 1. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	IS	***OC***	***IWB***
IS	**.830**		
OC	.259	**.795**	
IWB	.432	.552	**.792**

Table 1. demonstrates that the research successfully established discriminant validity for all latent variables. This means each variable's measurement indicators exhibit stronger correlations with their respective construct than they do with any other variables in the model. Larger loading indicators compared to cross-loading values and the AVE (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) values exceeding the correlations with other variables provide clear evidence of discriminant validity.

The researcher employed composite reliability to assess the reliability of the measurement instruments. As depicted in **Table 2.**, all variables exhibit composite reliability values exceeding 0.8 and Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.8. These findings indicate that the overall research variables demonstrate satisfactory reliability or are considered reliable.

Table 2. Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	**Composite Reliability**
IS	.925	.939
OC	.853	.895
IWB	.880	.910

To evaluate the potential presence of multicollinearity, the researcher employed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). As shown in **Table 3.**, none of the VIF values exceed 10. This finding indicates that there is no significant multicollinearity issue among the research variables.

Table 3. Variance Inflation Factor

	IS	**OC**	**IWB**
IS			1.072
OC			1.072
IWB			

After evaluating the model and confirming that each variable meets the criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability, the next step involves structural model testing. This encompasses analysis of path coefficients, F-Square, and the coefficient of determination. To test hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2, the researcher utilized path coefficient results. These coefficients were

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

evaluated through calculations performed using SmartPLS bootstrapping. The results, which describe the strength of the relationships between constructs/variables, are presented in **Figure 2.** below.

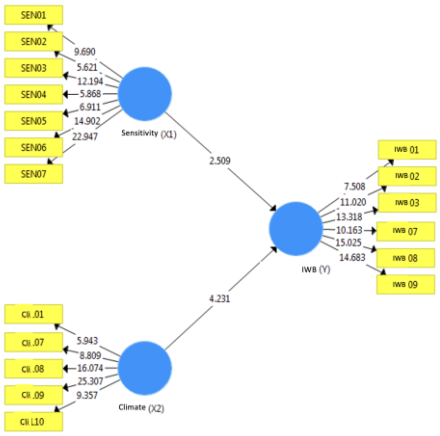

Figure 2. Inner Model Bootstrapping Calculation Results

Table 4. Path Coefficient Test Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
IS -> IWB	.309	.316	.123	2.509	.012
OC -> IWB	.472	.482	.111	4.231	.000

The **Table 4.** above shows the strength of the direct effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable. For the first hypothesis regarding the role of intercultural sensitivity on innovative work behavior, the path coefficient results indicate that the intercultural sensitivity variable has a significant direct relationship (t-value 2.509 > t-table 1.96) with the innovative work behavior variable. Therefore, H1 is supported. This indicates that employees with greater intercultural sensitivity are more likely to engage in behaviors that generate, promote, and implement new ideas.

The second hypothesis test regarding the role of organizational climate on innovative work behavior produced path coefficient output showing that the organizational climate variable has a significant direct relationship (t-value 4.231 > t-table 1.96) with the innovative work behavior variable. Therefore, H2 is supported. The stronger path coefficient for organizational climate suggests that a supportive, open, and psychologically safe work environment plays a more dominant role in encouraging innovation.

This research also assessed the strength of the relationships between variables using effect size (f-square). As shown in the (**Table 5.**), cultural sensitivity has a small effect (F^2 = .147) on innovative work behavior, while organizational climate has a medium effect (F^2 = .342) on innovative work behavior. These findings imply that both individual competence and environmental support contribute to innovation, although organizational conditions exert a relatively greater influence.

Table 5. F-Square

	IS	OC	IWB
IS			.147
OC			.342
IWB			

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Table 6. R Square dan Adjusted R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
IWB	.394	.382

To test hypothesis three, the researcher also conducted a coefficient of determination test to examine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Based on the Table 6 above, the coefficient of determination for innovative work behavior is moderate (R^2 = .394; Adjusted R^2 = .382), indicating that intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate jointly explain 38.2% of the variance in innovative work behavior. This demonstrates that both cultural competence and organizational conditions meaningfully shape employees' innovative actions, while additional psychological or structural factors may account for the remaining variance.

The results contribute theoretically by demonstrating that personal cultural competence and the broader work climate operate together in supporting innovation. In contrast to many previous studies that examined these variables separately or focused only on expatriates, this research highlights the experience of local employees within a multicultural collaboration. In doing so, it extends existing knowledge in the Indonesian context, where empirical studies on cross-cultural innovation in IT environments remain limited.

Discussion

Innovation has become a crucial capability for employees in multinational organizations, particularly as technological advancement accelerates and workplace collaboration increasingly spans cultural boundaries. Middelkoop (2016) emphasized that innovative work behavior contributes positively to individual performance, highlighting the need for both personal competence and organizational support. In line with this perspective, the present study examined two key predictors of innovative work behavior: intercultural sensitivity as an individual-based factor and organizational climate as a condition shaped by the work environment.

The descriptive findings showed that intercultural sensitivity, organizational climate, and innovative work behavior were all at moderate levels. This is understandable given that more than half of the respondents were between 21 and 30 years old and relatively early in their careers. Employees in this age group may possess the motivation and creativity necessary to generate ideas, but they are often still developing assertiveness, confidence, and political skill in the workplace. As a result, they might be willing to contribute ideas but more hesitant to actively promote or implement them, especially in multicultural settings where communication dynamics are complex and interpersonal risks are perceived to be higher.

The structural model demonstrated a significant positive relationship between intercultural sensitivity and innovative work behavior. This finding is consistent with Moradi and Ghabanchi (2019), who argued that intercultural sensitivity reduces misunderstandings and enhances collaborative interaction in diverse teams. Similarly, Groyecka et al. (2020) reported that individuals with greater intercultural openness tend to show stronger creative output. The present results indicate that employees who are able to interpret diverse viewpoints accurately, listen actively, and respond without stereotyping are more likely to communicate ideas confidently and transform differences into creative contributions. Mechanisms such as empathy, trust-building, and adaptability appear to play a central role. In this sense, intercultural sensitivity acts as a protective factor in multicultural teams, enabling diversity to become a source of

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

innovation rather than conflict. This contrasts with the concerns raised by Bogilović et al. (2021), who noted that unmanaged cultural differences may hinder innovative behavior.

The relationship between organizational climate and innovative work behavior can also be explained through psychological safety. Edmondson's early work conceptualized psychological safety as a shared belief that it is safe to express ideas and take interpersonal risks. More recent empirical findings provide updated support for this mechanism. Jin and Peng (2024) demonstrated that psychological safety enhances innovative behavior by facilitating open communication, collaborative problem-solving, and knowledge sharing. Their findings suggest that a supportive climate does not merely encourage innovation directly, but creates the psychological conditions that allow employees, especially those who are younger or less experienced, to voice suggestions, experiment, and challenge existing routines without fear of negative consequences.

The results of this study contribute to the literature by jointly examining intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate in a single model. Most previous research has assessed these variables separately, and much of the work on intercultural competence has focused on expatriates rather than local employees in multinational projects. The present findings show that innovation emerges through the interaction between individual capability and the surrounding social environment. The moderate explanatory power also suggests that other factors, such as psychological capital, job autonomy, leadership style, or digital collaboration practices, may further influence innovative work behavior. Recent studies have noted the importance of these variables, indicating potential avenues for future research.

From a practical standpoint, organizations may strengthen intercultural sensitivity by offering structured intercultural training, mentoring programs between expatriates and local staff, and team-building activities that encourage cross-cultural interaction. Regular knowledge-sharing sessions may also reduce communication barriers and stimulate collaborative problem-solving in multicultural teams. For organizational climate, managers can foster psychological safety by recognizing innovative efforts, providing constructive feedback, and avoiding punitive responses when new ideas fail. Recent evidence shows that psychological safety promotes innovation by improving open communication and knowledge sharing among team members (Jin & Peng, 2024). Leaders who demonstrate inclusive behaviors, such as listening to diverse viewpoints, encouraging participation, and acknowledging different perspectives, can significantly enhance team confidence and creativity, especially in culturally diverse work settings.

Overall, the results demonstrate that multicultural workplaces can strengthen innovation when employees are culturally competent and work in an environment that encourages participation, respect, and open communication. The interaction of intercultural sensitivity and supportive climate creates conditions for constructive collaboration, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement, which are essential for global teams to remain competitive.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The exclusive use of self-report measures may introduce response bias, and the sample was limited to one multinational IT project, which may restrict generalization to other industries or organizational structures. Future research could include larger and more diverse samples, multi-source assessments, or longitudinal designs to capture changes in innovative behavior over time. The moderate coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.394$) also indicates that innovation may be influenced by additional psychological or organizational factors. Further studies could incorporate variables such as leadership style, job autonomy, psychological capital, psychological safety, resilience, or creativity self-efficacy. Research could also compare multinational teams with domestic-only teams to examine whether intercultural sensitivity has the same relevance in more homogeneous environments. Qualitative approaches, such as interviews or workplace observations, may also reveal communication dynamics and cultural challenges that are not easily detected through survey data.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide several implications for organizational policy and human resource development. Companies can strengthen intercultural sensitivity by offering structured training, cross-cultural workshops, or mentoring programs that connect expatriates and local employees.

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Knowledge-sharing forums and collaborative team activities may reduce communication barriers and encourage learning. To enhance organizational climate, leaders can recognize innovative efforts, encourage constructive dialogue, and create psychological safety by avoiding punitive responses to failure. Evidence from recent studies suggests that inclusive leadership and open communication help employees feel confident in proposing ideas and challenging existing routines. When these practices are applied consistently, organizations are more likely to benefit from cultural diversity rather than be constrained by it.

Overall, the study emphasizes that multicultural workplaces are well-positioned to generate innovation when individual competence and organizational context operate in harmony. By nurturing cultural awareness, promoting psychological safety, and encouraging continuous learning, organizations can enhance creativity, strengthen team cohesion, and develop a workforce capable of adapting to rapid technological and global changes. These capabilities are essential not only for short-term performance, but also for sustainable innovation and long-term competitiveness in an increasingly global market.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that intercultural sensitivity and organizational climate jointly play a meaningful role in shaping innovative work behavior in multinational IT settings. Employees who are able to recognize, respect, and adapt to cultural differences are more capable of generating novel ideas, engaging in constructive dialogue, and transforming diversity into creative solutions. At the same time, a supportive climate characterized by trust, open communication, and psychological safety encourages employees to voice suggestions and experiment without fear of negative consequences. These findings reinforce the notion that innovation in multicultural environments is both a social and cognitive process. Innovation does not arise from technical expertise alone, but from the interplay between cultural competence, interpersonal communication, and organizational support.

As workplaces become more culturally diverse, organizations also carry an ethical responsibility to create environments that respect differences, minimize cultural bias, and prevent exclusionary practices. Policies that ensure transparent communication, equitable access to development opportunities, and fair recognition can help employees from various cultural backgrounds feel valued and empowered to participate. Strengthening intercultural sensitivity is therefore beneficial not only for innovation, but also for dignity, fairness, and psychological well-being in the workplace. When organizations adopt inclusive policies and protect employees from discrimination or interpersonal conflict, they cultivate a climate in which creativity, collaboration, and continuous improvement can thrive. These conditions enhance organizational performance while supporting a healthier and more humane work environment.

References

Ahadi, M. N. (2017). Hubungan antara sensitifitas antarbudaya, pengetahuan antarbudaya, dan efektivitas antarbudaya pada komunitas multietnis. *Interaksi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, 5*(1), 24–32. https://doi.org/10.14710/interaksi.5.1.24-32

Athifah, M. R., Gumelar, G., & Yufiarti. (2025). Innovative work behavior in start-ups: Mediation and moderation analysis of job insecurity, transformational leadership, and subjective well-being. *TAZKIYA Jounal of Psychology*, *13*(2). https://doi.org/10.15408/tazkiya.v13i2.47338

Baidun, A., Murniasih, F., Lubis, R. H., Ghina, A., Latifa, R., & Irvan, M. (2024). Innovative work behavior of Santri: The Influence of proactive personality and boarding school climate. *TAZKIYA Jounal of Psychology*, *12*(1), 17-26. https://doi.org/10.15408/tazkiya.v12i1.37945

Blau, P. M. (1964). Justice in social exchange. *Sociological Inquiry*, 34, 193-206. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1964.tb00583.x

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Bogilović, S., Bortoluzzi, G., Černe, M., Ghasemzadeh, K., & Žnidaršič, J. (2021). Diversity, climate and innovative work behavior. *European Journal of Innovation Management, 24*(5), 1502–1524. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-03-2020-0100

Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2000). The development and validation of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. *Human Communication, 3*, 1–15. https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/com_facpubs/36

Etikariena, A., Kusuma, A. H., Dewi, A. A. I. R., Shabrina, D. N., Hafizhah, R., Seno, Z. R. (2025). Measuring the intention for innovative work behavior: Scale development for indonesian employees. (2025). *JP3I (Jurnal Pengukuran Psikologi Dan Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 14(1), 116-131. https://doi.org/10.15408/jp3i.v14i1.38023

Groyecka, A., Gajda, A., Jankowska, D. M., Sorokowski, P., & Karwowski, K. (2020). On the benefits of thinking creatively: Why does creativity training strengthen intercultural competence? *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 38*, Article 100693. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100693

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2018). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review, 31*(1), 2–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203

Hassi, A., Rohlfer, S., & Jebsen, J. (2025). Organizational climate for initiative and innovative work behavior: A moderated mediation model. *Evidence-based HRM: A Global Forum for Empirical Scholarship.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBHRM-03-2024-0097

Heine, S. J. (2015). *Cultural psychology* (3rd ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.

Irawati, L., & Rostiana, R. (2021). Grit, persepsi dukungan organisasi, karakteristik pekerjaan dan pengaruhnya terhadap kualitas hidup. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Organisasi, 12*(2), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.29244/jmo.v12i2.33109

Janssen, O. (2000). Job demands, perceptions of effort-reward fairness, and innovative work behavior. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 73*, 287–302. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317900167038

Jin, H., & Peng, Y. (2024). The impact of team psychological safety on employee innovative performance: A study with communication behavior as a mediator variable. *PLoS ONE, 19*(10), e0306629. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0306629

Kheng, K. Y., June, S., & Mahmood, R. (2013). The determinants of innovative work behavior in the knowledge intensive business services sector in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science, 9*(15), 47–59. https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v9n15p47

Lee, L. Y., Nguyen, P. T., & Vu, M. Q. (2020). The influence of social capital on expatriates' adjustment: The moderating effects of work-role demand and work-family conflict. *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Entrepreneurship and Business Management (ICEBM 2020)*. Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.210507.012

Li, X. Y., & Zheng, Y. S. (2014). The influential factors of employees' innovative behavior and the management advices. *Journal of Service Science and Management, 7*, 446–450. https://doi.org/10.4236/jssm.2014.76042

Middelkoop, C. C. (2016). How does innovative work behaviour of employees affect their individual job performance?(Master's thesis, University of Twente). https://purl.utwente.nl/essays/70337

Moradi, E., & Ghabanchi, Z. (2019). Intercultural sensitivity: A comparative study among business English undergraduate learners in Iran and China. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies, 6*(3), 134–146. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/278

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Önhon, Ö. (2019). The relationship between organizational climate for innovation and employees' innovative work behavior: ICT sector in Turkey. *Vezetéstudomány – Budapest Management Review, 50*(11), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2019.11.04

Pee, L. G., & Min, J. (2017). Employees' online knowledge sharing: The effects of person-environment fit. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 21*(2), 432–453. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-10-2016-0437

Portalla, T., & Chen, G. M. (2010). The development and validation of the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale. *Intercultural Communication Studies, 19*(3), 21–37. https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/com_facpubs/36

Rajâa, O., & Mekkaoui, A. (2025). Revealing the impact of social exchange theory on financial performance: A systematic review of the mediating role of human resource performance. *Cogent Business & Management, 12*(1), Article 2475983. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2475983

Ratnasari, S. L., & Sutjahjo, G. (2017). Pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasional dan lingkungan kerja terhadap semangat kerja tenaga kependidikan. *Jurnal Inspirasi Bisnis dan Manajemen, 1*(2), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.33603/jibm.v1i2.665

Setiawan, K. (2016). Pengaruh iklim organisasi terhadap kinerja karyawan level pelaksana di Divisi Operasi PT Pusri Palembang. *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami, 1*(1), 23–32. https://doi.org/10.19109/psikis.v1i1.554

Stahl, G. K., & Maznevski, M. (2021). Unraveling the effects of cultural diversity in teams: A retrospective of research on multicultural work groups and an agenda for future research. *Journal of International Business Studies, 52*(1), 4–22. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-020-00389-9

Thurlings, M., Evers, A. T., & Vermeulen, M. (2015). Toward a model of explaining teachers' innovative behavior: A literature review. *Review of Educational Research, 85*(3), 430–471. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654314557949

This is an open-access article under CC-BY-SA license

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)