
CULTIVATING CREATIVITY: STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

Purpose. Scholars have extensively researched SMEs. However, the mechanisms behind their low innovative behavior have yet to be fully uncovered. Governments and other institutions have made various efforts to empower SME innovations. This study investigates factors that can enhance innovative behavior, including knowledge sharing and absorptive capacity.

Design/methodology/approach. This study employed a saturated sampling technique, focusing on export-oriented SMEs in the weaving and handicraft sectors. A total of 163 questionnaires were administered, generating 100 valid answers. SEM-PLS analysis was used with the assistance of Warp-PLS.7 software to test the research hypotheses.

Findings. The findings reveal that absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing significantly enhance innovative behavior. Specifically, potential absorptive capacity and realized absorptive capacity are critical. The study also finds that knowledge sharing mediates the effect of potential absorptive capacity on realized absorptive capacity, realized absorptive capacity mediates the influence of knowledge sharing on innovative behavior, and knowledge sharing mediates the influence of potential absorptive capacity on innovative behavior. This research reinforces the dynamic capabilities theory, highlighting that companies must complement internal capabilities by absorbing external knowledge.

Originality. This study provides new insights to SME practitioners, emphasizing that potential absorptive capacity should be a management focus and shared through a knowledge-sharing culture. It would lead to the realized as an absorptive capacity and thus drive innovative behavior.

Practical implications. SME management should strategically utilize potential absorptive capacity and collaborate with internal knowledge through knowledge-sharing activities. Potential absorptive capacity becomes a source that can be realized as an absorptive capacity to stimulate innovative behavior.

Keywords: absorptive capacity, knowledge sharing, innovative behavior, SMEs

JEL Codes: C31, D81, D83, O53

1. Introduction

In many countries worldwide, governments have high hopes that SMEs will progress to become medium-sized enterprises and even large companies. SMEs drive the national economy and are considered paramount and strategic (Enaifoghe et al., 2023). It is significant in several aspects, i.e., creating job opportunities, ensuring income distribution, and enhancing economic development in rural communities. In Indonesia, developing SMEs is a strategic step because one of the government's policy instruments is to address economic

and social issues, although their contribution is still relatively small (Tambunan, 2022). The government and other institutions have made various efforts to empower SMEs, but they have not shown convincing impacts on their performance (Kumar and Singh, 2023). Often, these empowerment efforts do not address the substantive issues SME operators encounter. Generally, SMEs encounter various resource limitations, i.e., financial, human, or technological, which can hinder their ability to compete, innovate, or expand their operations (Nugroho, 2023).

Limited resource capabilities are ongoing challenges SMEs encounter (Indrawati et al., 2023). Thus, many SMEs struggle with business development, fail to grow effectively, and even go bankrupt. According to Agustina and Arganata (2023), the weak business development capability is due to a lack of knowledge in business management related to innovation. The literature explains that innovation is an instrument to yield original products, processes, and systems crucial for contesting and augmenting adaptability to changing market environments (Tuksatit and Rajiani, 2020; Srirahayu et al., 2024). Innovation is a prevalent topic in organizational activities but is relatively challenging to realize, especially in SMEs. Various limitations make SMEs struggle to compete during disruption and high uncertainty (Riana et al., 2023). Researchers (Knezović and Drkić, 2021) have tried to identify the root causes of the challenges that prevent SMEs from growing effectively and sustainably; one of the causes is SME owners' low innovative behavior. Innovative behavior is a personal's attitude to applying new ideas and creative solutions to solve problems and create innovation.

According to Musneh and Roslin (2021), creativity and risk-taking are two dimensions underlying innovative behavior. Creativity fosters novel ideas, i.e., expertise, accommodating and inventive thinking, and internal motivation (Afsar and Umrani, 2020). The innovation process requires employees with creative ideas driven by imaginative thinking and supported by high internal motivation (Fatmawaty et al., 2023). However, the innovation process often stops at the stage of generating creative ideas and, thus, cannot be categorized as innovative behavior (Yasir et al., 2023). These ideas can emerge from flexible, imaginative thinking and openness to new concepts (Yousaf and Palazzo, 2023). Additionally, high internal motivation is crucial in encouraging the emergence of innovative ideas (Bhatta et al., 2024). Once these creative ideas emerge, the next step is to develop them into concrete solutions that provide added value for SMEs.

Innovative behavior reflects one's ability to adapt, create, and innovate in the work environment to attain organizational targets (Phung and Hawryszkiewicz, 2019). Researchers believe innovative behavior can be enhanced through a culture of knowledge sharing (Javed et al., 2019). Moreover, Anser et al. (2022) emphasize that knowledge sharing increases innovative behavior in the workplace because an open, collaborative knowledge sharing culture is crucial for fostering innovation. Several studies indicate that absorptive capacity improves innovative behavior (Engelman et al., 2017). Furthermore, knowledge sharing enhances employees' desire to acquire external knowledge (Curado et al., 2017). Knowledge sharing permits individuals and groups within SMEs to exchange information

and experiences, thereby increasing access to a broader and more diverse range of knowledge, which helps them learn and adapt more quickly (Ali et al., 2018). This study fills the gap in comprehending how SMEs develop innovative behavior to sustain growth and development.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

Dynamic capabilities (Teece and Pisano, 1994) refer to SMEs' proficiency to learn, adapt, and evolve in response to a dynamic setting. It highlights how firms can adapt to rapidly changing environments by developing abilities to incorporate, shape, and reconstitute internal and external proficiencies to address volatile settings. This capability enables SMEs to continuously innovate and create customer value (Rihayana et al., 2023). Creativity is one of the drivers of innovation, and individuals with innovative behavior can generate. Knowledge sharing, absorptive capacity, and innovative behavior are interconnected conceptions that mutually reinforce each other (Khraishi et al., 2023; Kang and Lee, 2017). Knowledge sharing helps enhance absorptive capacity by providing access to new knowledge and increasing understanding (Riana et al., 2019). Absorptive capacity helps improve innovative behavior by enabling organizations to leverage external knowledge and adapt to changes. Innovative behavior helps boost knowledge sharing by generating creative ideas and solutions (Anser et al., 2021). Absorptive capacity is an organization's adeptness to comprehend, incorporate, and utilize novel knowledge from the external setting. This concept, introduced by Cohen and Levinthal (1990) and further explored by Zhang et al. (2023), is part of organizational learning theory. Thus, absorptive capacity is crucial to acquiring a competitive advantage through innovation, adaptation, and continuous learning from the external environment (Song et al., 2020). Organizations with advanced absorptive capacity are responsive to change and develop new solutions to address challenges and seize opportunities. Absorptive capacity has two components: potential and realized absorptive capacity. However, researchers have yet to extensively explore how knowledge sharing and absorptive capacity interrelate to impact innovative behavior in SMEs.

Researchers state that knowledge sharing is a progression and practice of substituting information, comprehension, and experiences between persons or groups within an organization or community (Michna, 2018). Knowledge sharing is crucial because it can enhance organizational performance, facilitate innovation, accelerate learning, and build a collaborative work culture (Islam et al., 2024). Effective knowledge sharing helps organizations become more adaptive, innovative, and efficient in addressing challenges and leveraging emerging opportunities in a constantly fluctuating business setting (Budur et al., 2024; Boamah et al., 2021). Innovative behavior reflects the attitudes, actions, and habits of individuals in the workplace that support the innovation process. This behavior includes seeking new solutions, generating creative ideas, taking risks, collaborating with others, and being open to change (Afsar et al., 2020). Such behavior is essential for SMEs

to become more adaptive and competitive in response to environmental changes. SMEs encourage and support innovative behavior by producing new commodities and assistance, enhancing operative adeptness, and generating enlarged value for customers and other stakeholders (Budur et al., 2024). These concepts mutually support each other in creating a dynamic, adaptive, and innovative work environment.

Innovation is a fundamental enabler for business advancement in a constantly competitive setting, coupled with rapid globalization and technical disturbance. Innovation is vital for companies to win markets and achieve sustainable growth objectives (Kumar et al., 2024). Shanker et al. (2017) argue that failure to foster innovative behavior can decrease competitive ability and amplify the probability of operational malfunction. However, if organizations can encourage and boost innovative behavior among employees, it will drive the achievement of operational activities (Ogbonnaya, 2018).

The emergence of innovative behavior is achieved by configuring internal and external knowledge. Absorptive capacity enables organizations to access new knowledge from external sources. Meanwhile, knowledge sharing facilitates the knowledge exchange to support innovation through continuous learning, fostering innovative behavior, and developing new ideas. Absorptive capacity absorbs external knowledge sources and significantly aids innovation (Kafouros et al., 2020). It indicates that leveraging external knowledge is a critical component driving innovation capability. The ability to grasp external knowledge refers to acquiring and assimilating existing information and the SMEs' capacity to utilize it. Therefore, it depends on barriers in the external environment and the knowledge to enrich internal interaction. According to Yildis et al. (2024), the capacity to captivate external knowledge entails learning, engrossing, and applying new knowledge and disseminating it within the internal environment.

The diverse knowledge structure of SMEs can significantly impact the learning process for problem-solving and generating innovation (Al-Abrrow et al., 2023). However, external knowledge is necessary for companies to do things differently, allowing them to identify and exploit business opportunities (Dzhengiz and Niesten, 2020). Absorptive capacity is categorized into potential and realized absorptive capacity (Kang and Lee, 2017). These two absorptive capacity concepts will be tested separately to analyze their impact on promoting innovative behavior. Knowledge is a fundamental resource that strengthens a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace (Khraishi et al., 2023). Knowledge can be managed within an organization by implementing knowledge management (Amirato et al., 2021), which emerged in the early 1990s due to the challenges of dealing with the complexity of competition resulting from technological advancements and customer demands. Knowledge management is beneficial for managers in advancing principal proficiencies and knowledge transference and ensuring that material within the organization is well-managed and evenly distributed (De Bem Machado et al., 2022). Knowledge sharing is central for knowledge management to enhance innovation performance and diminish learning expenses (Riana et al., 2023). Therefore, small businesses must pursue and distribute knowledge, integrate existing information, reprocess, and pertain it as a foundation of

novel knowledge.

Ammirato et al. (2021) explain that knowledge sharing is related to communication to build a shared understanding of knowledge. Knowledge and information are a volatile amalgamation of experience, significance, and background information because they are created from data as interpreted and remembered. Sharing is a process in which resources are provided by one party and received by another. It assists comprehension needed by the receiver and enables the promotion of solutions to problems (Cillo et al., 2021). Knowledge sharing activities aim to attain, establish, reprocess, and convey experiences based on organizational insight and provide information for the organization (Phung et al., 2019). Several findings (Kmieciak, 2021; Arsawan et al., 2022) indicate that knowledge sharing can help create innovative behavior.

Currently, SMEs need to understand employees' innovative behavior, including production, endorsement, and realization of ideas as components of such behavior. Specifically, encouraging innovation development and creation and triggering innovative endeavors is crucial for marketing and implementation in task execution (Messmann et al., 2010). Innovation development requires significant contributions from every individual in SMEs, making it pivotal to understand activities that can foster innovation. Various innovation activities within organizations can stimulate employees to exhibit innovative behavior. Employees' activities in finding new ideas to address challenges and issues in the workplace play a significant role and are necessary in solving current problems (Messmann et al., 2010). Being innovative refers to individuals' efforts to leverage their thoughts, imaginative abilities, and various stimuli to create new products for themselves or the environment. Anser et al. (2022) state that innovative behavior is individual behavior aimed at achieving recognition or introducing new notions, progressions, commodities, or systems that benefit employment, groups, or organizations. Innovative behavior is the formation, overview, and enactment of new ideas or concepts in work, groups, or organizations to enhance the operation of individuals, groups, or organizations (Budur et al., 2024).

Innovative behavior incorporates individual behaviors directed towards producing, commencing, and applying new beneficial elements across various organizational levels (Phung and Hawryszkiewicz, 2019), often called shop-floor innovation. Dziallas and Blind (2019) state that innovation is successful implementation utilizing creative ideas. According to Musneh and Roslin (2021), creativity and risk-taking are two dimensions underlying innovative behavior. Similarly, Phung and Hawryszkiewicz (2019) suggest that all innovations start from creative ideas. Creativity fosters novel ideas using proficiency, adaptability, inventive thinking, and internal motivation (Bhatta et al., 2024). Individuals with novel ideas and inventive thinking are reinforced by significant internal motivation (Hughes et al., 2018). Researchers agree that innovative behavior is formed and can be created through knowledge sharing (Pian et al., 2019; Budur et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2024; Anser et al., 2021). Therefore, the hypotheses are:

H1. Potential absorptive capacity significantly affects innovative behavior.

H2. Potential absorptive capacity significantly affects knowledge sharing.

- H3. Knowledge sharing significantly influences innovative behavior.
- H4. Knowledge sharing significantly influences realized absorptive capacity.
- H5. Realized absorptive capacity significantly affects innovative behavior.
- H6. Knowledge sharing mediates the effect of potential absorptive capacity on innovative behavior.
- H7. Knowledge sharing mediates the effect of potential absorptive capacity on Realized absorptive capacity.
- H8. Realized absorptive capacity mediates the effect of knowledge sharing on innovative behavior.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design and Measurement

This study design utilized a quantitative causal approach following the principles of empirical rationality. The type was explanatory causality, testing the influence among variables in the model. It utilized qualitative and quantitative data, i.e., respondents' perceptions of statements in the questionnaire, the number of industries used in the study, and various information obtained through direct interviews. The qualitative and quantitative data were acquired from primary and secondary bases through surveys aided by questionnaires and interviews. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis. After meeting several assumptions, the results were interpreted according to the proposed hypotheses, followed by drawing conclusions and recommendations.

This study employed two types of variables: one exogenous variable, which is the potential absorptive capacity (X), and three endogenous variables, i.e., knowledge sharing ($Y1$), realized absorptive capacity ($Y2$), and innovative behavior ($Y3$). Innovative behavior ($Y3$) refers to SME actors' perception of their ability to learn and explore opportunities, discuss and communicate ideas, and implement them in organizational activities. The innovative behavior variable uses four indicators based on research by Phung and Hawryszkiewicz (2019) and Budur et al. (2024): idea exploration ($Y3.1$), idea generation ($Y3.2$), idea championing ($Y3.3$), and idea implementation ($Y3.4$). Absorptive capacity is SME owners' perception of organizational routines for attaining, incorporating, converting, and utilizing external knowledge. The absorptive capacity variable refers to studies by Kang and Lee (2017), divided into two concepts: Potential absorptive capacity (X) as the exogenous variable consisting of two indicators: acquisition ($X1$) and assimilation ($X2$). Meanwhile, realized absorptive capacity ($Y2$) is used as an endogenous variable with two indicators: transformation ($Y2.1$) and exploitation ($Y2.2$). Knowledge sharing ($Y1$) is SMEs owners' perception of exchanging information, knowledge, and skills within the organization, including giving and collecting information for employee sharing. The knowledge sharing variable ($Y1$) refers to studies by Riana et al. (2019) and Song et al. (2020): knowledge

collecting (Y1.1) and knowledge donating (Y1.2).

3.2. Populations, Samples, and Analysis

The population entailed SMEs operating in the textile and weaving industry in Bali Province. This industry was chosen because it requires rapid adaptation to fashion trends, unique consumer demands, and the need for high-quality and sustainable products. Using the population criteria of employing a minimum of 6 employees, the total population of the study is 163 textile and weaving SMEs. The sampling technique employed is nonprobability sampling, specifically using the entire population as the sample (census sampling), which amounts to 163 SMEs. Subsequently, most population members were given online questionnaires, and some were sent directly to the SMEs' locations. The questionnaires distributed contained statements related to the research variables. After 3 weeks, the distributed questionnaires were evaluated, resulting in 100 valid responses. The analysis unit was SME owners. Before distributing the questionnaires, validity and reliability tests were conducted on the research instruments, indicating that all instruments used in the study were valid (product-moment correlation value > 0.30) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.6). Thus, all instruments in the questionnaire measure respondents' perceptions of the variables used in the model. The assembled data were examined using descriptive analysis to understand respondents' descriptions of the research variables. Inferential analysis using Partial Least Square (PLS) software Warp-PLS.7 was performed to examine the hypotheses. PLS analysis was chosen for its ability to analyze complex structural models (Hair et al., 2017) and to test predictive relationships as well as new theory validation, with a primary focus on the variance explained by the model (Hair et al., 2019).

4. Results

4.1. Respondent Profile

Table 1 illustrates that most textile and weaving SMEs are operated by males (73 %). However, some SMEs are operated by females (27 %), i.e., textile confectionery and other accessories. The majority are aged 41-50 years old (55 %). It also indicates that textile and weaving SMEs have been engaged in these businesses for a considerable period, categorizing them as experienced in their operations. Furthermore, in terms of education level, the majority have completed senior high school education (80 %), indicating that one of the weaknesses of SMEs is the lack of human resource skills in terms of education. Regarding their operational duration, most SMEs have been operating for more than 9 years.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Respondent profile	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	73	73
Female	27	27
Age		
21 - 30 years	6	6
31 - 40 years	25	25
41 - 50 years	55	55
≥ 50 years	14	14
Education		
Senior High School	80	80
Diploma	14	14
Bachelor (S1)	6	6
Duration of operation		
1 - 4 years	8	8
5 - 9 years	37	37
> 9 years	55	55

4.2. Descriptive Analysis

The overall results indicate that SMEs perceive the variables modeled in this study quite well (Table 2).

Table 2. Description of Research Variables

No.	Variables / Dimensions / Indicators	Mean
X	Potential absorptive capacity	3,75
X1	Acquisition	3,81
	The organization equips employees with good knowledge of the job.	4,04
	The organization studies with other companies to acquire new knowledge.	3,63
	The organization holds meetings with customers to acquire new knowledge.	3,77
X2	Assimilation	3,70
	The organization always follows the changing demands of the market.	3,69

	The organization can grasp new opportunities to fulfill customer desires.	3,74
	The organization can understand changes in market demand well.	3,67
Y1	Knowledge sharing	3,55
Y11	Knowledge donating	3,35
	When I learn something new, I share it with my employees.	3,11
	I always share my experiences with employees.	3,57
	I feel employees must know what I am doing.	3,38
Y12	Knowledge collecting	3,76
	I ask employees to collect helpful knowledge.	3,82
	I discuss knowledge with employees when learning something new.	3,49
	I do not hesitate to ask employees to teach me something if necessary.	3,96
Y2	Realized absorptive capacity	4,03
Y21	Transformation	4,06
	The organization regularly responds to the consequences of changing market demands.	4,47
	The organization recognizes the critical benefits of external knowledge in complementing internal knowledge.	3,46
	Employees at my organization are always asked to share practical experiences when available.	4,26
Y22	Exploitation	4,00
	Employees clearly understand the activities performed in the organization.	4,16
	Customer complaints are always handled with care.	3,60
	The organization always pays attention to how employees exploit knowledge.	4,25
Y3	Innovative behavior	3,83
Y31	Idea Exploration	3,73
	I always try to create new things to improve the quality of my work.	3,32
	I always think of new ideas at work.	3,86
	I can always solve work problems well.	4,02
Y32	Idea Generation	3,84
	I always discuss new ideas with employees.	4,04
	I always look for new ways to get the job done.	4,04
	I always share creative ideas with employees.	3,44

Y33	Idea Championing	3,99
	I use complete equipment to support my work.	4,04
	I cooperate with other organizations.	3,95
	I like to seek support so that new ideas can be accepted.	3,99
Y34	Idea Implementation	3,79
	I use the insights (lectures, training) I have at work.	3,97
	I submit new ideas for the organization's progress.	3,53
	I always think of new ideas so the organization can achieve its targets.	3,88

Table 2 shows that the variable perceived to be the highest is the realized absorptive capacity (4.03), indicating that they feel that realized absorptive capacity contributes the most to the formation of innovative behavior. It also shows that the realized absorptive capacity is the most essential variable in shaping innovative behavior in the workplace. Additionally, textile and weaving artisans perceive that the organization has regularly responded to market demand changes by absorbing and transforming external knowledge. Learning through external knowledge is also a crucial aspect consistently adopted by textile and weaving artisans, paying attention to how employees exploit knowledge. On the other hand, the respondents perceive the potential absorptive capacity variable quite well (3.75), and innovative behavior is also perceived quite well by textile and weaving artisans (3.83). However, artisans must improve potential absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing to support increased innovative behavior and be more competitive in a constantly changing market environment.

The variable perceived to contribute the least to building innovative behavior is knowledge sharing (3.55). It indicates the need for textile and weaving artisans to always discuss with fellow employees whether new knowledge can be adapted to complete tasks. Additionally, artisans are expected to convey something to other employees when learning something new. Thus, knowledge can be evenly distributed throughout the organization. Furthermore, the variable of innovative behavior is perceived quite highly. The indicator perceived to be the lowest in innovative behavior is idea exploration, with an average of 3.73. Respondents who are less inclined to create new ideas indicate the need to improve their ability to adopt ideas from competitors (absorptive capacity) or elsewhere in innovating.

Before interpreting the analysis results using Warp-PLS, it is pivotal to ensure that the model's validity and reliability requirements, including convergent validity, composite reliability, and discriminant validity, are met. Table 3 presents a more detailed convergent validity test.

Table 3. Convergent Validity

Dimensions	Loading Factor	Remarks	P -Values
X <- Acquisition	0.884	Reflect 0.079	<0.001
X <- Assimilation	0.884	Reflect 0.079	<0.001
Y1 <- Donating	0.839	Reflect 0.080	<0.001
Y1 <- Collecting	0.839	Reflect 0.076	<0.001
Y2 <- Transformation	1.000	Reflect 0.076	<0.001
Y2 <- Exploitation.	1.000	Reflect 0.081	<0.001
Y3 <- Exploration.	0.737	Reflect 0.082	<0.001
Y3 <- Generation	0.852	Reflect 0.079	<0.001
Y3 <- Championing	0.758	Reflect 0.081	<0.001
Y3 <- Implementation	0.799	Reflect 0.080	<0.001

Table 3 shows that all loading factor (LF) values for the indicator variables in the research are above 0.50 ($LF > 0.50$). It indicates that the conceptual model has met the criteria for good convergent validity. Furthermore, discriminant validity is tested using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion (FLC), comparing the square root of AVE with the correlations between variables and ensuring that the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds 0.50. Discriminant validity is analyzed by comparing the square root of AVE with the correlations between variables in the model, as further displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. AVE and Fornell - Larcker Criterion

No	Variables	AVE	Correlation between variables			
			X	Y1	Y2	Y3
1	Potential absorptive capacity (X)	0.782	0,884			
2	Knowledge sharing (Y1)	0.704	0.485	0,839		
3	Realized absorptive capacity (Y2)	1.000	0,494	0,379	1,000	
4	Innovative Behavior (Y3)	0.620	0.613	0.636	0,596	0,788

Table 4 shows that the evaluation of the correlation values between variables in the model is smaller than the square root of AVE. This indicates that the model has good discriminant validity. Meanwhile, composite reliability, VIF values, and R-squared values are displayed in Table 5.

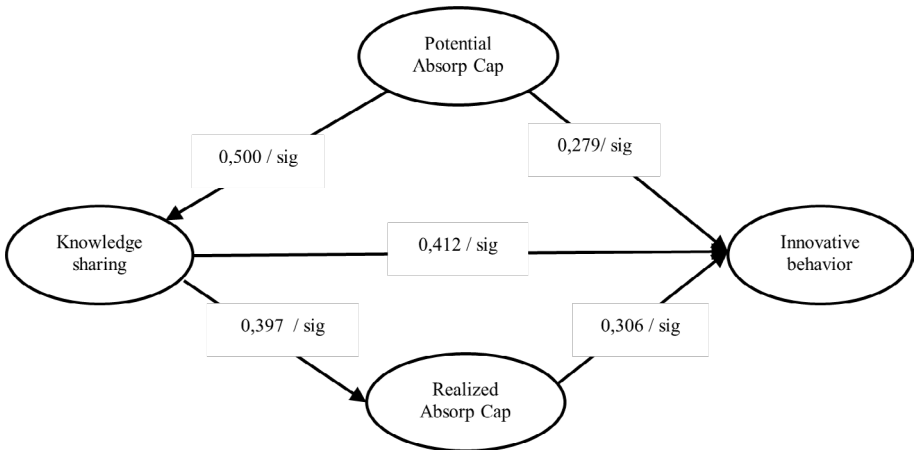
Table 5. Composite Reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha, VIF’s, and R-square

Variables	Composite reliability	Cronbach’s Alpha	VIF.s	R-square
Potential absorptive capacity (X)	0.877	0.721	1,707	-
Knowledge sharing (Y1)	0.826	1.000	1,796	0.250
Realized absorptive capacity (Y2)	1.000	0.579	1,622	0.168
Innovative behavior (Y3)	0,867	0,795	2,603	0,637

Table 5 shows that the model has also met the criteria for composite reliability (CR > 0.7), and based on the magnitude of the Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs), the model is also free from multicollinearity. Next, the goodness of fit of the structural model (inner model) is calculated, which can be explained through the magnitude of the predictive relevance (Q²) value. The magnitude of the predictive relevance (Q²) can be calculated using the following formula.

$$\begin{aligned}
 Q^2 &= 1 - [(1 - R1^2) (1 - R2^2) (1 - R3^2)] \\
 &= 1 - [(0,750) (0,832) (0,363)] = 1 - 0,2265 \\
 &= 0,7735
 \end{aligned}$$

The calculation results show that the Q² value is positive at 0.7735, indicating that the model has good predictive relevance. It also implies that the model can explain 77.35 % of the variation in the endogenous variable, i.e., innovative behavior. Other variables outside the model explain the remaining 22.65 %. Next, the analysis results and output of model fit and quality indices using Warp-PLS are displayed in Figure 1.



Note. Absorp cap: Absorptive capacity

Figure 1. Full Model Warp-PLS

Furthermore, hypothesis testing based on the Warp-PLS analysis results (Figure 1) can be summarized in Table 6, displayed as follows.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Direct effect	Path -Coefficient	P-Values	Remarks
(H1) PAC → IB	0.279	0.002	Accepted
(H2) PAC → KS	0.500	< 0.001	Accepted
(H3) KS → IB	0.412	< 0.001	Accepted
(H4) KS → RAC	0.397	< 0.001	Accepted
(H5) RAC → IB	0.306	< 0.001	Accepted
Indirect effect			
(H6) PAC → KS → IB	0.206	0,001	Accepted
(H7) PAC → KS → RAC	0.199	0,002	Accepted
(H8) KS → RAC → IB	0.122	0,039	Accepted

Note. PAC: Potential absorptive capacity; KS: Knowledge Sharing; RAC: Realized Absorptive Capacity; IB: Innovative Behavior

The testing results (Figure 1 and Table 6) indicate that all proposed hypotheses in the research model are deemed significant (accepted) with p-values lower than 0,05 (<0,05). These hypotheses include 5 hypotheses regarding direct influences among variables and 3 hypotheses testing for mediation in the research model.

5. Discussion

Table 6 explains hypotheses testing, indicating potential absorptive capacity significantly affects knowledge sharing with a coefficient of 0.500 and p-values <0.001, meaning that potential absorptive capacity can enhance knowledge sharing implementation. The analysis results inform that knowledge sharing significantly influences innovative behavior, as shown by a coefficient of 0.412 with p-values <0.001, indicating that knowledge sharing implementation can enhance innovative behavior. The findings also indicate that knowledge sharing significantly influences realized absorptive capacity, consistent with the analysis results showing a coefficient of 0.397 with p-values <0.001, meaning that a knowledge sharing culture can enhance realized absorptive capacity. Furthermore, Potential absorptive capacity significantly influences innovative behavior with a coefficient of 0.279 and p-values of 0.002, meaning that potential absorptive capacity can enhance innovative behavior. Additionally, realized absorptive capacity influences innovative behavior with a coefficient of 0.306 and p-values <0.001. Potential absorptive capacity influences realized

absorptive capacity through knowledge sharing, with a coefficient of 0.199 and p-values of 0.002, thus concluding that knowledge sharing partially mediates complementary. Potential absorptive capacity significantly influences innovative behavior through knowledge sharing with a coefficient of 0.206 and p-values of 0.001, indicating a significant partial complementary effect. Meanwhile, the influence of knowledge sharing on innovative behavior through realized absorptive capacity shows a coefficient of 0.122 with p-values of 0.039, meaning that this influence is significantly mediating partially complementary.

The findings indicate that potential absorptive capacity can directly enhance a knowledge sharing culture and innovative behavior. SMEs with high absorptive capacity encourage employees to share knowledge and ideas, creating an environment conducive to innovation and developing innovative products and services. Absorptive capacity is an organization's proficiency to learn and understand novel information and implement new knowledge into practice (Riana et al., 2023). Additionally, organizations with high absorptive capacity have open and collaborative cultures and solid knowledge sharing systems. They are committed to learning and development and adapt to change. When employees feel comfortable sharing knowledge and ideas, it can trigger innovation (Khraishi et al., 2023). Employees can learn from each other and develop new solutions to existing problems. SMEs can also quickly identify and implement new technologies with a solid knowledge sharing system. Potential absorptive capacity enhances knowledge sharing and innovative behavior. By developing absorptive capacity, organizations can create an environment conducive to collaboration, learning, and developing new ideas, ultimately driving long-term success.

Knowledge sharing entails collecting and donating knowledge, a fundamental activity in enhancing innovative behavior in the work setting (Zhao et al., 2021; Arsawan et al., 2022). Knowledge sharing occurs when individuals or groups exchange information, ideas, and experiences. Knowledge sharing can occur formally or informally in the workplace, involving various methods, i.e., discussions, team meetings, and written documents. Employees with access to more information and ideas generate new and innovative solutions to resolve problems (Pian et al., 2019). SMEs with more knowledge about their organization and industry can make better decisions. Knowledge sharing can help employees avoid duplicating efforts and learn from other organizations' mistakes (Phung et al., 2019). Employees who feel their knowledge is valued are engaged and satisfied with their jobs. Innovative behavior is individuals' or organizations' proficiency to generate new and creative ideas to resolve problems or improve performance. Employees who have access to more information and ideas produce innovative solutions. Learning from each other's experiences and knowledge also helps develop new ideas. When knowledge sharing is valued in an organization, employees feel comfortable taking risks and trying new ideas (Song et al., 2020). The findings of this study highlight the ability to enhance innovative behavior in the workplace through knowledge sharing. By promoting knowledge sharing, organizations can create a more conducive environment for creativity, problem-solving, and developing new ideas. It can help SMEs achieve their goals and become more successful in the long

run.

The indirect influence of potential absorptive capacity on realized absorptive capacity through knowledge sharing presents valuable insights for SMEs seeking to enhance their proficiency to engross and elevate new knowledge. Potential and realized absorptive capacity are closely interrelated, with potential absorptive capacity being a prerequisite for realized absorptive capacity because organizations need to acquire and understand new knowledge before applying it. Knowledge sharing acts as a mediator between potential absorptive capacity and realized absorptive capacity. When employees share knowledge, they facilitate the transfer of knowledge from those who possess it to those who need it. It enables SMEs to apply and leverage the knowledge they have acquired effectively. These findings emphasize the prominence of generating a knowledge sharing culture. Employees who feel comfortable sharing knowledge and ideas can drive innovation and improve organizational performance (Alviolenta and Parimita, 2022). This study contributes valuable insights into the linkage between potential absorptive capacity, realized absorptive capacity, knowledge sharing, and innovative behavior. By understanding the reciprocal linkage and the mediating role of knowledge sharing and realized absorptive capacity, SMEs can develop more effective strategies to enhance their ability to engross and elevate new knowledge, ultimately leading to increased innovation, performance, and long-term success as employees exhibit innovative behavior (Zhao et al., 2021).

6. Managerial Implication

The implications of this study emphasize the significance of implementing knowledge sharing practices supported by absorptive capacity within SMEs. Integrating knowledge sharing, absorptive capacity, and innovative behavior effectively supports dynamic capability theory, emphasizing how organizations adapt and evolve by leveraging external knowledge to enhance internal innovation and competitive advantage. SMEs can enhance employees' innovative behavior to create more competitive export products in the global market by maximizing the ability to absorb and share knowledge. It is crucial given the increasingly intense competition across various industries. SMEs are expected to consistently apply absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing culture to enhance innovative behavior significantly. Additionally, acquiring knowledge from external sources through absorptive capacity can inspire and create new ideas for innovation. A collaborative knowledge sharing culture and external knowledge acquisition is crucial for driving innovation. Successfully seeking and acquiring external knowledge expands insights to monitor trends and developments in the industry, business environment, and technology. SMEs actively engaging in knowledge and idea sharing tend to leverage absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing to enhance innovative behavior. SMEs must also consider several external factors influencing innovative behavior, such as managerial support, organizational culture, competitive environment, professional networks, and access to the latest knowledge and technology.

7. Conclusion and Limitation

It is undeniable that SME owners are highly creative when running their businesses. However, they do not fully understand the mechanism of fostering innovative behavior. This study offers an overview of how knowledge sharing and absorptive capacity mechanisms interact to enhance innovative behavior in SMEs. Knowledge from outside the organization (absorptive capacity) incentivizes organizations to share knowledge, thus stimulating innovative behavior. Knowledge sharing helps organization members have balanced knowledge, encouraging them to behave innovatively. Knowledge sharing is a partial complementary mediation between potential and realized absorptive capacity. Potential absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing enhance innovative behavior, and potential absorptive capacity can complementarily enhance realized absorptive capacity. This study reveals that absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing significantly enhance innovative behavior. To promote innovation, SMEs must consider implementing absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing effectively. By creating an open knowledge sharing culture and leveraging external knowledge, SMEs can enhance their ability to innovate and achieve long-term success. Absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing are two fundamental tools that SMEs can use to promote employees' innovative behavior. This study is limited to SMEs engaged in global transactions (exports). Consequently, findings can only be generalized to SMEs that predominantly conduct cross-border transactions. It limits the application of the study results to SMEs with local or domestic-scale transactions. Future researchers are encouraged to involve all SMEs operating in domestic and international markets. Accordingly, the findings can be more comprehensive and generalized to all SMEs beyond exports.

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