

## A Systematic Literature Review: the Effect of Tacit Knowledge Sharing on Employee Innovation

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### Abstract

The rapid advancements in the industrial revolution 4.0 have reshaped business paradigms, prompting organizations to undergo transformative changes to maintain competitiveness. One critical factor for sustaining competitive advantage is innovation, which is closely tied to the effective utilization of knowledge resources, particularly tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge, derived from individual experiences, is considered a vital asset due to its unique and non-replicable characteristics. This study aims to investigate the role of tacit knowledge sharing in enhancing employee innovation across various industrial sectors. Using a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, this research synthesizes findings from numerous studies published between 2019 and 2024 to explore the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and employee innovation. The review addresses three primary questions: the development of research in this field, implementation strategies in specific industries, and factors influencing the effectiveness of tacit knowledge sharing. Results reveal that tacit knowledge sharing significantly boosts employee innovation through improved creativity and problem-solving capabilities. However, its effectiveness depends on factors such as organizational culture, employee motivation, and interaction opportunities. Practical recommendations are provided to optimize knowledge-sharing processes, ultimately supporting organizational innovation and competitiveness in an era of rapid technological change.

## Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has influenced a shift in global business paradigms, especially in the ever-evolving digital era, where organizations strive to undergo business transformation to adapt to competitive market dynamics (Valle et al., 2024; Kılıç & Atila, 2024; Agustian et al., 2023). Profound and rapid business transformation has become a necessity to ensure organizational competitiveness amid rapid technological advancements. Innovation is one of the most critical organizational capacities for gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage in response to emerging challenges. Innovation can thrive with the support of facilities such as advanced technology, adequate infrastructure, and the availability of economic resources. However, knowledge is considered one of the most vital resources for organizations (Gold et al., 2001; Pandey & Dutta, 2013; Sokoh et al., 2021).

Knowledge can be categorized into two types: explicit knowledge, which is documented and easily shared across contexts, and tacit knowledge, which originates from personal experience and is inherently undocumented (Hietaranta, 2025; Thomas, 2025; Sippel & Ucello, 2025). Tacit knowledge is especially valuable for organizations, as it constitutes a vital asset embedded in employees' daily activities. Emphasize that tacit knowledge is a source of competitive advantage because it is difficult for competitors to replicate. Accordingly,

organizations can systematically create and utilize knowledge to foster innovation and attain competitive edge. Tacit knowledge sharing plays a critical role in enhancing innovation capability due to its unique and hard-to-replicate nature (Zhang et al., 2025; Nishat & Haque, 2025; Soomro et al., 2025). Therefore, this study aims to investigate how tacit knowledge sharing can influence employee innovation across various industrial sectors.

By employing a systematic literature review (SLR) method, this research analyzes a range of literature focusing on the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and employee innovation. The primary objective is to provide deeper insights into the factors influencing the effectiveness of tacit knowledge sharing in fostering employee innovation. Through this approach, the study seeks to offer practical recommendations for organizations to optimize knowledge-sharing processes, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and employee innovation performance amid the rapid pace of technological change (Permana & Schouten, 2025; Yuzi et al., 2025; Chakma & Dhir, 2025).

## Methods

The method employed in this study is the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) (Kania & Kusumah, 2025; Siklafidou et al., 2025). SLR is a research approach that provides a comprehensive overview of current knowledge on a specific topic, including substantive findings, theoretical contributions, and methodological developments related to the subject matter. SLR serves to clarify, synthesize, review, and summarize all relevant research on a given topic, including addressing research questions and fulfilling specific research needs. The objective of this SLR on tacit knowledge sharing is to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How has the research on the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and employee innovation evolved across various industrial sectors?

RQ2: How is tacit knowledge sharing implemented in specific industry sectors to enhance employee innovation?

RQ3: What are the key factors influencing the effectiveness of tacit knowledge sharing in the process of employee innovation?

The systematic review process is documented transparently through the use of electronic databases, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, published research accessible via URLs, and other relevant sources. The researcher establishes specific criteria to select literature aligned with the objectives of the study in order to answer the SLR research questions. Firstly, the selected literature must come from peer-reviewed journals; thus, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings are excluded. The primary focus is on research that investigates the influence of tacit knowledge sharing on employee innovation.

Table 1. String dan Kata Kunci Pencarian Topic

Topic	Combination of Keyword & String
Tacit Knowledge Sharing	“Tacit Knowledge Sharing” OR “Tacit Knowledge” OR “Knowledge Sharing” OR “Knowledge Management”
Employee Innovation	“Employee Innovation” OR “Innovation” OR “Employee Innovation Behavior” OR “Innovation Behavior”
Additional	“Tacit Knowledge Sharing” AND “Employee Innovation” OR “Tacit Knowledge” AND “Employee Innovation” OR “Knowledge Sharing” AND

	“Employee Innovation” OR “Tacit Knowledge Sharing” AND “Innovation Behavior” OR “Tacit Knowledge” AND “Employee Innovation Behavior”
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A search string was established and applied in this review. The researchers identified and combined two main keywords: “tacit knowledge sharing” and “employee innovation”, along with their synonyms, as illustrated in Table 1. Based on previous studies, this selection is justified as such search criteria ensure the identification of the most relevant articles related to the research topic (Adriaanse & Rensleigh, 2013).

Second, the publication time frame was limited to the years 2019 through 2024. Accordingly, the search string was used to retrieve relevant articles published from the end of 2019 onward from the Emerald journal database using the ‘topic’ field (i.e., title, abstract, and keywords), and from the Scopus database using the ‘article title, abstract, and keywords’ fields. The subject areas included management, business, planning and development, economics, engineering (all fields), operations research, computer science, multidisciplinary sciences, and mathematical social sciences.

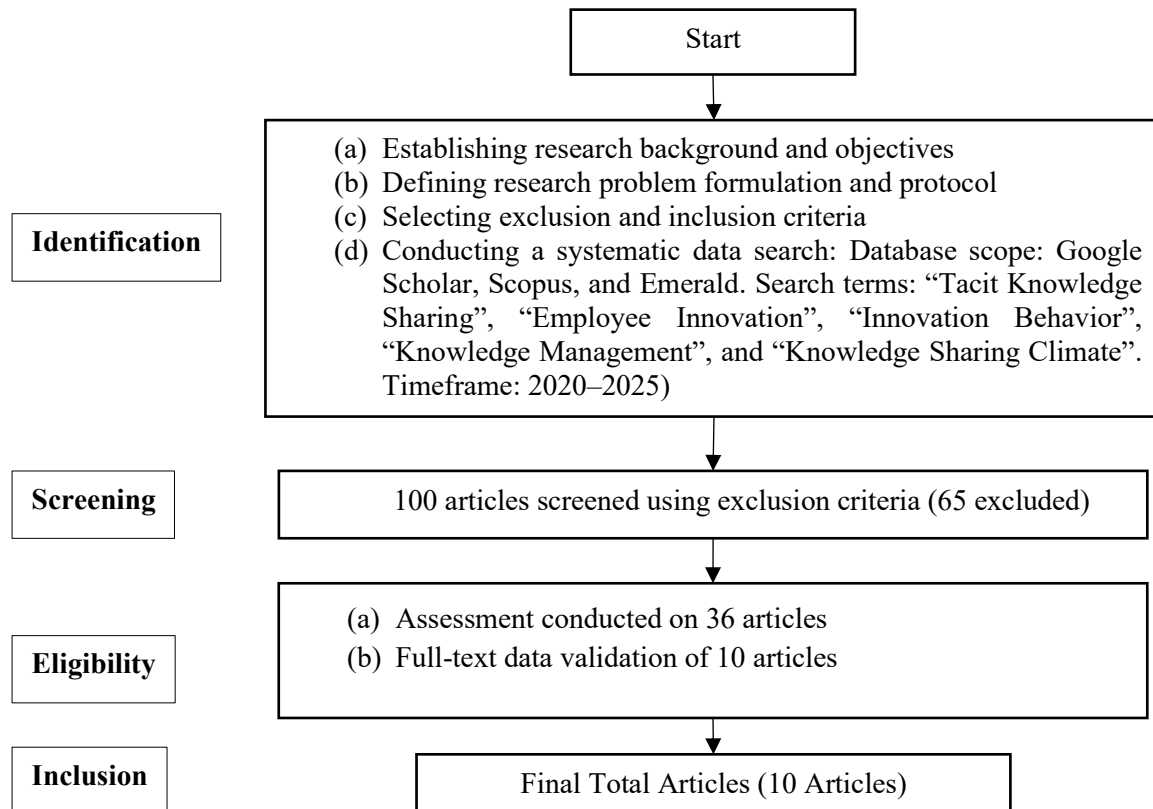
Third, eligible literature had to be published in English or Indonesian. The identified literature was thoroughly read and assessed based on inclusion criteria. Only literature that provided insight into the influence of tacit knowledge sharing on employee innovation across various industrial sectors, as well as other strengthening factors, was considered. Articles that failed to meet the three predefined criteria were excluded from the final review.

The literature selection process followed a systematic procedure based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol, comprising four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The dataset includes publications from the past five years (2020–2025), which is deemed sufficiently representative for mapping the research development on tacit knowledge sharing and employee innovation. The identification phase involved accessing academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Emerald, using a search string that combined the main keywords: “Tacit Knowledge Sharing”, “Employee Innovation”, “Innovation Behavior”, “Knowledge Management”, and “Knowledge Sharing Climate”.

Once the search results were collected, the files were exported in CSV format and managed using Mendeley as a reference manager. The screening stage applied exclusion criteria: (1) articles not written in English or Indonesian; (2) articles lacking the keywords in the title, abstract, or keyword sections; and (3) duplicate articles. This resulted in 65 articles remaining after excluding 34 non-English/Indonesian articles, 30 irrelevant papers, and 1 duplicate.

The eligibility stage involved applying two assessment criteria: (a) articles must be from reputable journals and published between 2020 and 2025; and (b) articles must explicitly discuss the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and employee innovation. Articles meeting all eligibility criteria were included in the final inclusion stage for in-depth analysis.

The eligible data were then used for bibliometric mapping using VOSviewer, as well as narrative analysis to address the SLR research questions. This process was designed to ensure traceability, transparency, and replicability in accordance with the methodological guidelines. Thus, the PRISMA approach in this study not only facilitated systematic filtering of literature but also ensured that only highly relevant and high-quality articles were included in the final analysis.



*Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram*

The flow diagram in Figure 1 provides a detailed summary of the SLR and bibliometric analysis process through the following steps: 1) Identification: First, the research objective is clearly defined. Subsequently, it is essential to develop a review protocol, followed by the determination of the conceptual boundaries of the study; 2) Screening: A total of 100 articles were extracted and screened using predefined exclusion criteria. As a result, 65 articles were excluded, and 36 articles proceeded to the next phase; 3) Eligibility: At this stage, the remaining articles were validated and assessed for completeness and relevance to the study objectives; 4) Inclusion: Finally, 10 full-text articles met all the eligibility criteria and were included for in-depth analysis.

## Literature Review

### Tacit Knowledge Sharing

Tacit knowledge refers to intuitive, unarticulated, and context-specific knowledge that is based on personal experience, making it difficult to formalize or transfer. Emphasize that although tacit knowledge is challenging to convert into explicit forms, it can be shared and learned through social practices and interaction. Knowledge sharing, particularly of tacit knowledge, plays a vital role in driving employee innovation. Tacit knowledge sharing involves the transfer of experience-based knowledge through informal networks and interpersonal interactions. Highlights that tacit knowledge sharing enhances an organization's knowledge resources, enabling employees to generate new ideas and strengthen the organization's innovation capabilities. Informal settings such as social networks, team collaboration, and mentoring programs are key channels for tacit knowledge. Suggest that motivation, opportunity, and contextual compatibility are prerequisites for effective knowledge sharing (Nhung et al., 2024; Dai et al., 2025; Alkhalaf & Al-Tabbaa, 2024).

However, several barriers often hinder the sharing of tacit knowledge, including organizational culture, individual reluctance, and structural limitations. Attempts to codify tacit knowledge frequently fail due to its inherently personal and hard-to-articulate nature. Tacit knowledge sharing significantly impacts employee innovation by facilitating idea generation, problem-solving, and creativity. the "learning by doing" effect enhances employees' innovation potential, particularly in environments where tacit

knowledge serves as a critical resource. diffusion of innovation theory supports this notion, suggesting that tacit knowledge transfer plays a vital role in disseminating innovative ideas throughout organizations. Affirm that a robust knowledge infrastructure including technology, organizational structure, and culture is essential to maximizing the benefits of tacit knowledge sharing. This infrastructure not only optimizes the sharing process but also enhances social capital, ultimately improving innovation and organizational performance (Ullah et al., 2025; Olaniyi et al., 2024; Duan et al., 2024).

## Employee Innovation

Employee innovation refers to behaviors that involve the creation and application of new ideas aimed at improving both individual and organizational performance. This type of innovation entails the practical application of new knowledge and the efficient implementation of ideas. Fostering innovative behavior in the workplace leads to a culture in which employees actively share ideas and contribute to innovation, ultimately enhancing overall performance and organizational growth. Innovative behavior in the workplace includes the identification and implementation of new ideas and processes. Argue that innovation driven by innovative behavior can increase employee engagement, which in turn boosts performance. Emphasize the importance of employee involvement throughout the innovation development process, from planning to execution. Employees who engage in innovative behavior tend to be more open to risk and change, which strengthens interpersonal relationships and promotes collaboration. Several factors support the successful sharing of tacit knowledge in fostering employee innovation. These include individual motivation to share knowledge, an organizational culture that encourages collaboration, and opportunities for direct interaction. Organizations that succeed in creating an environment conducive to tacit knowledge sharing can accelerate innovation processes and enhance employee creativity (Ononye, 2022; Zhao et al., 2021).

## Results and Discussion

The studies supporting this Systematic Literature Review consist of xxx articles that meet the predetermined criteria, as outlined in Table 2. The literature is classified based on the following components: title of the study, author(s), year of publication, country, industry, research method, independent variable(s) (X), mediating variable(s) (Z), moderating variable(s) (Z), and dependent variable(s) (Y), which represent the key findings of each study.

Table 2. Summary of Systematic Literature Review

Title	Source	Author(s)	Country	Industry	Method	Variable			
						Independent	Mediation	Moderation	Dependent
Unlocking Employee Innovative Behaviour: Exploring the Power of Transformational Leadership and Tacit Knowledge Sharing Among Indonesian White-Collar Workers	Scopus	Maria et al. (2024)	Indonesia	White – Collar Work (Various Sector)	Quantitative (PLS – SEM)	Transformational Leadership	Tacit Knowledge Sharing		Innovative Work Behaviour
Linking Employee Voice to Service Recovery Performance in the Hotel Sector: The Mediating Role of Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Employee Innovation	Scopus	Sultan et al. (2024)	Jordan	Hotel Sector	Quantitative (PLS – SEM)	Employee Voice	Tacit Knowledge Sharing & Employee Innovation		Service Recovery Performance

Linking Tacit Knowledge Sharing to Employee Innovation with Job Thriving as a Meditational Factor: A Public Sector Perspective	Scopus	Uzoma (2022)	Nigeria	Public Sector (Delta State Ministry of Health)	Quantitative (PLS)	Tacit Knowledge Sharing	Job Thriving		Employee Innovation
Local Ventures' Shared Leadership Persuasion: How Knowledge Sharing and Interactive Work Culture Influence Employees' Innovation	Scopus	Neneng et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Beverage (Local Beverage Companies)	Quantitative (SPSS)	Shared Leadership	Knowledge Sharing	Interactive Work Culture	Employee Innovation
Employee-Driven Innovation Capability: The Role of Knowledge, Creativity, and Time Sufficiency	Scopus	Arsawan et al. (2022)	Indonesia	SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises)	Quantitative (SEM)	Knowledge Network, Knowledge Quality, Knowledge Sharing	Individual Creativity	Time Sufficiency	Employee Innovation Capability
Innovation Behaviour Improvement Strategy through Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour Based on Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Knowledge-Sharing Climate	Scopus	Nurhidayati & Zaenuri (2023)	Indonesia	Education (Private Universities)	Quantitative (PLS)	Knowledge-Oriented Leadership, Knowledge-Sharing Climate	Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour		Innovation Behaviour
Emotional Intelligence and Innovative Work Behaviour in Knowledge-Intensive Organizations: How Tacit Knowledge Sharing Acts as a Mediator	Emerald	Malik (2022)	India	Knowledge-Intensive (High-Tech Organizations)	Quantitative (PLS – SEM)	Emotional Intelligence	Tacit Knowledge Sharing		Innovative Work Behaviour
Authentic Leadership – A Source of Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Career Competence in the Service Sector	Emerald	Yasin et al. (2024)	Pakistan	Banking (Service Sector)	Quantitative (SPSS)	Authentic Leadership	Tacit Knowledge Sharing		Career Competence, Employee Service Innovative Behavior
Promoting IT Professionals' Tacit Knowledge Sharing Through Social Capital and Web 2.0: The Moderating Role of Absorptive Capacity	Emerald	Thomas (2023)	Not specified	Information Technology (IT)	Quantitative (Smart PLS)	Social Capital (SC), Web 2.0		Absorptive Capacity (AC)	Tacit Knowledge Sharing (TKS), Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)

Do Mistakes Acceptance Foster Innovation? Polish and US Cross-Country Study of Tacit Knowledge Sharing in IT	Emerald	Kucharska (2023)	Poland, USA	Information Technology (IT)	Quantitative (SEM)	Mistake Acceptance, Learning Climate, Knowledge Culture	Learning Climate		Tacit Knowledge Awareness and Sharing, Innovation
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Based on the systematic review of 10 Scopus-and Emerald-indexed articles examining the influence of Tacit Knowledge Sharing (TKS) on Employee Innovation, it is evident that most studies employed quantitative approaches, particularly SEM and PLS-SEM methodologies. In general, tacit knowledge sharing which is difficult to transfer due to its experiential, intuitive, and personal nature has emerged as a key mediating variable in the relationship between various forms of leadership, social capital, and organizational climate with employees' innovative behaviors. For instance, Maria et al. (2024) and Malik (2022) demonstrated that transformational leadership and emotional intelligence enhance innovative work behavior through the mediation of tacit knowledge sharing in white-collar and high-tech sectors. Similarly, Yasin et al. (2024) emphasized the role of authentic leadership in facilitating TKS, which positively impacts career competencies and service innovation.

Furthermore, several studies positioned tacit knowledge sharing as an intermediary pathway toward employee innovation, highlighting its indirect role in transmitting organizational factors. Sultan et al. (2024) and Uzoma (2022) found that employee voice and job thriving significantly enhance the effect of TKS on service and individual innovation. These findings suggest that organizations must not only create a conducive environment for the exchange of tacit knowledge but also develop work dynamics such as voice behavior, shared leadership, and a climate for learning. Research by Kucharska (2023) also emphasized that a culture of error acceptance and a strong learning climate foster awareness and the sharing of tacit knowledge, which ultimately enhances innovation both in the United States and Poland.

Across various industries from public and educational sectors to IT and MSMEs the role of tacit knowledge sharing remains consistent as a driver of innovation. Thomas (2023) affirmed that social capital and the use of Web 2.0 platforms promote TKS among IT professionals, especially when moderated by absorptive capacity. Meanwhile, demonstrated that knowledge networks, a supportive knowledge-sharing climate, and time sufficiency contribute to employees' innovation capabilities in MSMEs and higher education institutions. These findings indicate that despite differences in organizational form, size, and structure, strategies that nurture collaborative environments and tacit knowledge exchange continue to serve as critical foundations for sustainable employee innovation.

## Conclusion

in supporting employee innovation across various industrial sectors. Based on the findings from multiple sources, several conclusions can be drawn in response to the research questions. Studies exploring the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and employee innovation have grown significantly in recent years, particularly within the information technology and

manufacturing sectors. However, research gaps remain in areas such as service and healthcare sectors, which have yet to be thoroughly explored. Previous studies indicate that tacit knowledge sharing plays a vital role in enhancing employee creativity and innovative behavior, ultimately contributing to improved organizational performance. The implementation of tacit knowledge sharing varies across industrial sectors. In the IT sector, for instance, tacit knowledge is often shared through informal social interactions and web-based platforms such as discussion forums and social networks. In the manufacturing sector, it typically occurs through mentoring and team collaboration. Findings suggest that sectors with a strong culture of collaboration are more successful in leveraging tacit knowledge sharing to foster employee innovation. Several factors influence the effectiveness of tacit knowledge sharing in driving employee innovation, including an organizational culture that supports collaboration, individual motivation to share knowledge, and opportunities for direct interaction. Barriers such as time constraints, rigid organizational structures, and cultures that do not promote knowledge sharing often hinder the effectiveness of tacit knowledge exchange. Therefore, organizations must create environments that facilitate open and unrestricted knowledge sharing. Overall, this study provides insights into the strategic importance of tacit knowledge sharing in promoting employee innovation and enhancing organizational performance. It also opens opportunities for further research, particularly in underexplored sectors, and for testing the influence of additional factors that may contribute to successful tacit knowledge sharing and innovation outcomes.

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