

Employee Experience in the AI Era: How Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence Shape Innovative Work Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior, with Employee Experience as a mediating variable, in organizations in Banjarmasin City that have adopted digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI). The study used a quantitative approach with a purposive sampling technique on 357 respondents working in ten organizational sectors, including banking, government, hospitals, universities, technology companies, modern retail, logistics, telecommunications, hospitality, and professional services sectors. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression and PROCESS Macro Hayes Model 4 with a bootstrap technique of 5,000 samples. The results showed that Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence had a positive and significant effect on Employee Experience, and Employee Experience had a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior. Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence also had a direct effect on Innovative Work Behavior. Furthermore, Employee Experience partially mediated the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior. These findings confirm that the success of AI transformation in human resource management depends not only on technological readiness but also on humanistic leadership, employee digital competence, and the perceived quality of the work experience. This study provides theoretical and practical contributions to the development of adaptive human resource strategies in the era of artificial intelligence, particularly in the context of Indonesia's collectivist culture.

Keywords: Human-Centered Leadership, Digital Competence, Employee Experience, Innovative Work Behavior, Artificial Intelligence

INTRODUCTION

The era of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought about fundamental changes in the human resource management (HRM) landscape. The digital transformation accelerated by AI adoption is not only changing how organizations operate but also redefining employee experience, leadership roles, and the competencies needed to survive in a dynamic environment. Amidst ongoing technological disruption, there is a growing realization that an organization's ultimate strength lies not in technology alone, but in the people who drive it. Human-centered leadership, a leadership style that places humans at the center of transformation, is becoming increasingly crucial to ensure that technology adoption does not sacrifice the values of humanity, empathy, and creativity, which are the key differentiators of humans from machines.

In the Indonesian context, AI-based HR transformation presents unique challenges and opportunities. Diverse digital literacy levels, infrastructure gaps between urban and rural areas, and strong collectivist cultural values shape the dynamics of technology adoption in Indonesian organizations. The government has established a national artificial intelligence strategy for 2020-2045 as part of its efforts to accelerate digital transformation. However, the success of this transformation is determined not only by infrastructure readiness but also by the readiness of human resources and leadership to bridge the gap between technological advancement and employee engagement.

Banjarmasin, as one of the economic and educational centers in South Kalimantan, presents a relevant local context for this study. Previous studies involving institutions in Banjarmasin, such as the Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari Islamic University of Kalimantan (UNISKA MAB) and Lambung Mangkurat University (ULM),

have begun to highlight the importance of digital transformation and human-centered AI in HR. Studies on the implementation of talent management in companies operating in South Kalimantan also show that technological approaches to employee recruitment and retention have had a positive impact, despite challenges such as employee resistance to technology and data security issues. This local context provides unique insights into how employee experience, leadership, and work behavior innovation are shaped by AI transformation.

The urgency of this research stems from three key factors. First, although the adoption of AI in HRM is accelerating, the literature on how the human elements of leadership, employee experience, and competency interact with technology in developing countries remains limited. Second, the digital and cultural divide in Indonesia creates unique challenges that cannot be addressed by theories developed in the Western context. Third, research on innovative work behavior in the AI era is still predominantly conducted in the manufacturing and technology sectors, while the service sector and educational institutions, the backbone of Banjarmasin's economy, remain understudied.

The identified research gaps include: (1) a lack of studies that integrate human-centered leadership, digital competence, and employee experience into a single framework to predict innovative work behavior; (2) limited research on the role of humanistic leadership in the context of AI adoption in Indonesian organizations; and (3) the absence of a map of how organizations in Banjarmasin respond to AI transformation from an HR perspective.

The novelty of this study lies in several aspects. First, it offers a conceptual framework that integrates human-centered leadership and digital competence as predictors of employee experience and innovative work behavior in a single model that is contextualized for organizations in Banjarmasin City. Second, it fills a gap in the literature on how local cultural values, including mutual cooperation and kinship, moderate the relationship between leadership and employee experience in the AI era. Third, it employs a multidisciplinary approach that combines perspectives from human resource management, organizational psychology, and technology studies to provide a holistic understanding of the AI transformation in HRM.

Based on the background, empirical phenomena, and research gaps outlined above, this study addresses several key issues related to human resource management in the era of artificial intelligence (AI). Specifically, this study aims to examine how human-centered leadership influences employee experience in organizations in Banjarmasin City and how employees' digital competence contributes to positive work experiences amidst the digital transformation process. Furthermore, this study attempts to analyze the influence of employee experience on innovative work behavior, given that positive work experiences are believed to encourage employees to generate, develop, and implement innovative ideas at the workplace. Furthermore, this study examines whether employee experience acts as a mediating variable that explains the mechanism of influence of human-centered leadership and digital competence on innovative work behavior, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between variables in the context of organizations adapting to the development of AI technology.

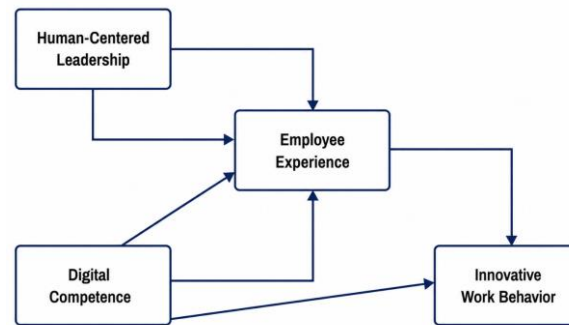
In line with the problem formulation, this study aims to analyze the influence of human-centered leadership on employee experience in organizations in Banjarmasin City in the AI era. This study also aims to analyze the influence of digital competence on employee experience to determine the extent to which employees' digital capabilities contribute to shaping a positive work experience. Furthermore, this study aims to examine the influence of employee experience on innovative work behavior, a form of work behavior that is increasingly needed to face rapid and dynamic organizational changes. Finally, this study aims to examine the mediating role of employee experience in the relationship between human-centered leadership and digital competence in innovative work behavior. By achieving these objectives, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Human Resource Management literature, particularly in the study of human-oriented leadership, digital competence, employee work experience, and innovative work behavior in the context of AI transformation. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide a basis for organizations in Banjarmasin City to formulate human resource development strategies that are more adaptive, innovative, and oriented towards improving the quality of employee work experience in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

Conceptual Model

Based on the theoretical framework established in the introduction, this research conceptual model was designed to examine the relationships between variables. This model illustrates the direct and indirect influences between Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence as independent variables, Employee Experience as a mediating variable, and Innovative Work Behavior as a dependent variable.

Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model



The conceptual model in this study illustrates that human-centered leadership and digital competence are directly related to innovative work behavior. Human-centered leadership is believed to create a supportive work environment, instill trust, empower employees, and encourage active participation in decision-making. This environment allows employees to be more confident in proposing new ideas, exploring creative solutions, and implementing innovations in their daily work processes. Furthermore, digital competence is also expected to have a direct influence on innovative work behavior, as mastery of digital technology, AI literacy, information management skills, and collaboration skills through digital platforms will increase employees' capacity to generate innovative ideas and adapt to changes in an increasingly digitalized work environment. In addition to the direct influence, this study also develops an indirect (mediation) relationship through the employee experience variable. In this model, human-centered leadership is expected to influence innovative work behavior directly and indirectly through employee work experiences. Leadership that prioritizes employee well-being, career development, open communication, and appreciation of individual contributions fosters a positive employee experience. This positive work experience increases intrinsic motivation, organizational engagement, and employees' willingness to generate and implement innovations in their work. Thus, employee experience serves as a psychological mechanism that explains how human-centered leadership fosters innovative work behavior.

Furthermore, this study assumes that employee experience mediates the relationship between digital competence and innovative work behavior. Employees with high digital competence tend to utilize technology more easily, adapt to AI-based work systems, and experience a more effective, efficient, and meaningful work experience. These positive experiences can increase self-confidence, job satisfaction, and readiness to explore new approaches to completing organizational tasks. Therefore, employee experience is considered a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of digital competence on innovative work behavior, so that the relationship between digital capabilities and innovative work behavior occurs not only directly but also through the quality of work experience perceived by employees. This conceptual model is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that encourage the creation of innovative work behavior in organizations in Banjarmasin City in facing the transformation towards the Artificial Intelligence era.

Research Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework developed, this study proposes seven hypotheses to explain the relationship between the variables in the research model.

H1: Human-centered leadership positively influences the employee experience. Human-centered leadership positions employees as the organization's primary asset through the application of values such as empathy, empowerment, trust, open communication, appreciation, competency development, and support for psychological well-being. In the era of AI transformation, this leadership style is believed to create a safe, inclusive, and adaptive work environment for technological change, thereby improving the quality of the employee work experience.

H2: Digital competence has a positive impact on the employee experience. Digital competence reflects an individual's ability to effectively utilize digital technology, including AI literacy, information management, digital communication, virtual collaboration, cyber security, and technology-based problem-solving. Employees with strong digital competence adapt more easily to changes in digital work systems, enabling them to perform their tasks more effectively, efficiently, and confidently.

H3: Employee experience positively affects work behavior. Positive work experiences include employee perceptions of the work environment, organizational support, learning opportunities, work flexibility, performance recognition, and meaning of their work. When employees have enjoyable work experiences that

support self-development, they tend to be more motivated to generate new ideas, seek creative solutions, and implement innovations in their work processes.

H4: Human-centered leadership positively affects work behavior. Leadership that prioritizes human values not only improves the quality of the relationship between leaders and employees but also creates an organizational climate that supports creativity, learning, courage to take initiative, and experimenting with new ideas. A work environment that provides a sense of psychological safety allows employees to express their innovative ideas without fear of failure or negative judgment.

H5: Digital competence positively affects work behavior. Employees with high digital competence are better able to utilize various technologies, including AI-based applications, to identify opportunities, develop creative solutions, accelerate work processes, and generate valuable organizational innovations. Mastery of digital technology is a strategic resource that enables individuals to adapt to changes in the business environment while enhancing their innovative capabilities in completing work.

H6: Employee experience mediates the relationship between human-centered leadership and innovative work behavior. Human-centered leadership is expected to improve the quality of employees' work experiences by creating a supportive, inclusive, and development-oriented work environment. This positive work experience encourages innovative behavior in the form of creating, promoting, and implementing new ideas.

H7: Employee experience mediates the relationship between digital competence and innovative work behavior. High digital competence does not necessarily result in innovative behavior if it is not accompanied by supportive work experiences. Conversely, when organizations create positive work experiences by providing adequate technology, learning opportunities, organizational support, and an adaptive work culture, employees' digital competence can be optimized to generate innovation.

Research Population

The population in this study was all employees working in organizations in Banjarmasin City that have utilized digital technology or artificial intelligence (AI) in their work processes. Banjarmasin City was chosen as the research location because it is the center of the economy, education, and public services in South Kalimantan, which has experienced accelerated digital transformation following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The organizational sectors that are the target population include:

Table 1. Organizational Sectors that are the Target Population of the Research

No.	Organizational Sector	Characteristics of Organization
1	Banking	Conventional banks and Islamic banks have implemented digital banking services, mobile banking, internet banking, chatbots, and AI technology in their operations and customer services.
2	Government	Regional government agencies (OPD), city and provincial government agencies that have implemented e-government systems, digital public services, integrated information systems, and AI technology in administration and decision-making.
3	Hospital	Government and private hospitals use electronic medical records (EMR), hospital information systems, telemedicine, and AI technology to support diagnosis, patient care, and health management.
4	College	Universities, institutes, colleges, and polytechnics that have adopted Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital-based learning, learning analytics, and the use of AI in academic and administrative processes.
5	Technology Company	Information technology companies, software houses, digital companies, and startups that develop or utilize digital technology, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and data analytics in business operations.
6	Modern Retail	Minimarkets, supermarkets, shopping centers, and modern retail chains have used Point of Sales (POS) systems, customer relationship management (CRM), customer analytics, and AI to support operations and marketing.

No.	Organizational Sector	Characteristics of Organization
7	Logistics	A shipping, expedition, warehousing, and logistics service company that utilizes digital systems, tracking systems, route optimization, and AI to increase the efficiency of goods distribution.
8	Telecommunication	A telecommunications and internet service provider that implements digital systems, customer analytics, service automation, chatbots, and AI technology in network management and customer service.
9	Hospitality	Both star-rated and non-star-rated hotels use property management systems (Property Management Systems), online reservations, digital customer service, and AI technology to improve the quality of guest service.
10	Professional Services	Public accounting firms, consulting firms, law firms, architectural firms, design firms, and other professional service providers that leverage AI, data analytics, and digital applications to support professional services and decision-making.

Source: Compiled by researchers based on the characteristics of organizations that have adopted digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), 2026.

The population of this study includes all employees working in organizations in Banjarmasin City that have implemented digital transformation and begun adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in their operational activities and decision-making. These ten organizational sectors were selected based on their level of digital maturity and the intensity of AI technology utilization in supporting business processes, public services, and organizational innovation. With this cross-sectoral coverage, the study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership, Digital Competence, Employee Experience, and Innovative Work Behavior in various types of organizations in Banjarmasin City.

Research Sample

This study used purposive sampling with a sample size of 350–450. This number was chosen because it met the requirements for multiple regression analysis and mediation testing using PROCESS Macro Hayes with bootstrapping techniques, while also meeting the standards for quantitative research in reputable international journals. Furthermore, the sample size also considered the possibility of incomplete data (missing data) and outliers that must be excluded from the analysis process. Respondents were selected based on several criteria, namely being at least 18 years old, having worked for at least one year, using digital systems in their work activities, and having previously utilized Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technology or applications, such as generative AI, chatbots, recommendation systems, intelligent analytics, business process automation, or AI features integrated into work applications.

Research Variables

This study involves four main variables: Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence as independent variables, Employee Experience as a mediating variable, and Innovative Work Behavior as a dependent variable. Human-Centered Leadership is defined as employee perceptions of leadership that prioritize individual well-being, empowerment, and development amidst the AI transformation. Digital Competence is the ability of employees to utilize digital technology and AI effectively, critically, and safely. Employee Experience describes the overall work experience felt by employees while interacting with the organization, both from the physical, digital, and psychological aspects, while Innovative Work Behavior is employee behavior in generating, developing, promoting, and implementing new ideas that provide added value to the organization.

Variable Indicator

Variable measurements were conducted using indicators adapted from previous studies that were tested for validity and reliability. Human-Centered Leadership was measured using eight indicators: empathy, empowerment, respect, inclusion, trust, coaching, employee growth, and psychological support. Digital Competence was measured using eight indicators: AI literacy, digital skills, data literacy, cybersecurity awareness, digital collaboration, information management, problem solving, and digital communication. Furthermore, Employee Experience was measured using ten indicators: recognition, well-being, career

development, digital workplace satisfaction, organizational support, learning opportunities, work flexibility, communication, inclusion, and meaningful work. Innovative Work Behavior was measured using nine indicators: idea generation, idea exploration, idea promotion, idea implementation, creative problem solving, experimentation, knowledge sharing, initiative, and continuous improvement.

Research Instruments

The research data were collected using a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The research instrument consisted of five sections: respondent demographic data, Human-Centered Leadership (eight items), Digital Competence (eight items), Employee Experience (ten items), and Innovative Work Behavior (nine items). The entire questionnaire contained 40 statements. All items were adapted from previous research instruments, translated using the forward-backward translation method, validated by experts, and tested on respondents with characteristics similar to the research population before being used for the main data collection.

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26 or a later version. The analysis stages included descriptive statistics to describe the characteristics of respondents and research variables, validity testing using Corrected Item–Total Correlation, and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha. Next, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, before multiple regression analysis was conducted. The relationship between variables was analyzed using Pearson's correlation, multiple linear regression, coefficient of determination (R^2), F-test, and t-test to test the direct effect hypothesis. The indirect effect was tested using PROCESS Macro Hayes Model 4 with a bootstrap technique of 5,000 samples at a 95% confidence level. The mediation effect was declared significant if the confidence interval (BootLLCI–BootULCI) did not cross the zero value, thus determining whether Employee Experience acts as a full or partial mediator in the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership, Digital Competence, and Innovative Work Behavior.

RESEARCH RESULT

The results section presents the findings from the data analysis conducted according to the research methods described previously. This study involved respondents from various organizational sectors in Banjarmasin City who utilized digital technology and artificial intelligence in their work processes. The results presentation begins with a respondent profile, followed by instrument testing, classical assumption testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, and concludes with a mediation test using the PROCESS Macro Hayes.

A. Respondent Profile

A.1 Questionnaire Return Rate

Questionnaires were distributed to 400 respondents who met the purposive sampling criteria for this study. Of these, 375 questionnaires were returned (return rate of 93.75%). After screening, 18 questionnaires were declared incomplete or had inconsistent answers, resulting in 357 respondents being analyzed (effective response rate of 89.25%). This number meets the minimum sample size recommended for multiple regression analysis and mediation testing using the PROCESS Macro Hayes with a bootstrap of 5,000 samples.

A.2 Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	192	53.8
	Woman	165	46.2
Age	18–25 years	64	17.9
	26–35 years	148	41.5
	36–45 years	98	27.5
	>45 years	47	13.2
Education	High School/Equivalent	42	11.8
	D3	38	10.6
	S1	198	55.5

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	S2	64	17.9
	S3	15	4.2
Job Sector	Banking	52	14.6
	Government	48	13.4
	Hospital	35	9.8
	College	46	12.9
	Technology Company	32	9.0
	Modern Retail	31	8.7
	Logistics	28	7.8
	Telecommunication	27	7.6
	Hotel	26	7.3
	Professional Services	32	9.0
Years of service	1–3 years	96	26.9
	4–7 years	134	37.5
	8–12 years	78	21.8
	>12 years	49	13.7

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents were male (53.8%), with a dominant age range of 26–35 years (41.5%). Most respondents had a bachelor's degree (55.5%) and 4–7 years of work experience (37.5%). The banking sector had the largest number of respondents (14.6%), followed by government (13.4%), and higher education (12.9%). This composition reflects the sectors in Banjarmasin City that are most active in adopting digital transformation and AI technology.

B. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Descriptive statistics for each variable are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Human-Centered Leadership	357	1.88	5.00	4.12	0.67
Digital Competence	357	1.75	5.00	3.98	0.72
Employee Experience	357	1.70	5.00	3.85	0.78
Innovative Work Behavior	357	1.78	5.00	3.92	0.74

Descriptive statistics show that the average score for all variables is high (mean > 3.5). The Human-Centered Leadership variable had the highest mean (4.12), indicating that employees in Banjarmasin City perceive a human-centered leadership style to be implemented quite well. The standard deviation, which ranged from 0.67 to 0.78, indicated a relatively moderate variation in respondents' answers.

C. Validity and Reliability Test

C.1 Validity Test

Instrument validity testing was conducted using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation. The results of the validity test for all the items are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Instrument Validity Test

Variables	Number of Items	Range Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Valid Items	Dropped Items
Human-Centered Leadership	8	0.512 – 0.741	8	0

Variables	Number of Items	Range Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Valid Items	Dropped Items
Digital Competence	8	0.489 – 0.728	8	0
Employee Experience	10	0.467 – 0.756	10	0
Innovative Work Behavior	9	0.503 – 0.769	9	0

All statement items had a Corrected Item-Total Correlation value > 0.30 ; therefore, they were declared valid, and all items could be used in further analysis.

C.2 Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Instrument Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Human-Centered Leadership	0.872	Reliable (High)
Digital Competence	0.854	Reliable (High)
Employee Experience	0.891	Reliable (High)
Innovative Work Behavior	0.883	Reliable (High)

All variables had a Cronbach's alpha value > 0.70 , with a range of 0.854 to 0.891, indicating that the research instrument had good reliability (high category).

D. Classical Assumption Test

D.1 Normality Test

Normality tests were performed using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test on the residual values. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Normality Test Results

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Information
Residual (Model 1)	0.876	0.426	Normal
Residual (Model 2)	0.912	0.378	Normal

The significance value in both models was > 0.05 ; therefore, it can be concluded that the data were normally distributed and that the regression model met the normality assumption.

D.2 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity testing was performed by examining the tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variables	Tolerance	VIF	Information
Human-Centered Leadership	0.623	1,605	There is no multicollinearity
Digital Competence	0.578	1,730	There is no multicollinearity
Employee Experience	0.512	1,953	There is no multicollinearity

All variables had a tolerance value > 0.10 and $VIF < 10$; therefore, it can be concluded that there was no multicollinearity between the independent variables.

D.3 Heteroscedasticity Test

A heteroscedasticity test was performed using the Glejser test. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Results of Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser Test)

Variables	t	Sig.	Information
Human-Centered Leadership	1,234	0.218	There is no heteroscedasticity
Digital Competence	1,567	0.119	There is no heteroscedasticity

Variables	t	Sig.	Information
Employee Experience	0.987	0.324	There is no heteroscedasticity

All variables had a significance value > 0.05 ; therefore, it can be concluded that there was no heteroscedasticity in the regression model.

E. Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was used to determine the relationships between variables. The results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Human-Centered Leadership	1	–	–	–
2. Digital Competence	0.428	1	–	–
3. Employee Experience	0.536	0.491	1	–
4. Innovative Work Behavior	0.462	0.473	0.554	1

Note: $p < 0.01$ (significant at the 1% level)

The results of the correlation analysis showed that all variables had a positive and significant relationship at the 99% confidence level ($p < 0.01$). The strongest relationship was between Employee Experience and Innovative Work Behavior ($r = 0.554$), followed by Human-Centered Leadership and Employee Experience ($r = 0.536$). These findings indicate that an increase in one variable tends to be followed by an increase in the other variables.

F. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

F.1 Model 1: The Influence of Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Experience

Model 1 multiple regression analysis aimed to test the influence of Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Experience (H1 and H2). The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Results of Regression Analysis of Model 1

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.845	0.203	–	4,162	0,000
Human-Centered Leadership	0.384	0.062	0.328	6,194	0,000
Digital Competence	0.341	0.058	0.316	5,879	0,000

$R = 0.612$; $R^2 = 0.374$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.371$; $F = 105.834$; Sig. $F = 0.000$

Interpretation of Model 1:

F Test (Model Feasibility): F value = 105.834 with a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that the regression model is suitable for predicting the Employee Experience. Coefficient of Determination (R^2): The R^2 value = 0.374, meaning that Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence are simultaneously able to explain 37.4% of the variation in Employee Experience, while the remaining 62.6% is explained by other variables outside the model. t-Test (Partial Effect): Human-Centered Leadership → Employee Experience: $\beta = 0.328$; $t = 6.194$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, so H1 is accepted. Digital Competence → Employee Experience: $\beta = 0.316$; $t = 5.879$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, so H2 is accepted. These results indicate that Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence have a positive and significant influence on Employee Experience. Of the two variables, Human-Centered Leadership had a slightly greater influence (Beta = 0.328) than Digital Competence (Beta = 0.316).

F.2 Model 2: The Influence of Human-Centered Leadership, Digital Competence, and Employee Experience on Innovative Work Behavior

Model 2 multiple regression analysis aims to test the influence of Human-Centered Leadership (H4), Digital Competence (H5), and Employee Experience (H3) on Innovative Work Behavior. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Results of Regression Analysis of Model 2

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.628	0.186	–	3,376	0.001
Human-Centered Leadership	0.196	0.058	0.178	3,379	0.001
Digital Competence	0.215	0.054	0.210	3,981	0,000
Employee Experience	0.356	0.051	0.376	6,980	0,000

$R = 0.643$; $R^2 = 0.413$; $Adjusted\ R^2 = 0.408$; $F = 82.947$; $Sig.\ F = 0.000$

Interpretation of Model 2:

F Test (Model Feasibility): F value = 82.947 with a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that the regression model is suitable for predicting Innovative Work Behavior. Coefficient of Determination (R^2): The R^2 value = 0.413, meaning that Human-Centered Leadership, Digital Competence, and Employee Experience are simultaneously able to explain 41.3% of the variation in Innovative Work Behavior. t-Test (Partial Effect): Human-Centered Leadership → Innovative Work Behavior: $\beta = 0.178$; $t = 3.379$; $p = 0.001 < 0.05$, therefore H4 is accepted. Digital Competence → Innovative Work Behavior: $\beta = 0.210$; $t = 3.981$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, therefore H5 is accepted. Employee Experience → Innovative Work Behavior: $\beta = 0.376$; $t = 6.980$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, therefore H3 is accepted. These results indicate that all three variables have a positive and significant influence on Innovative Work Behavior. Employee Experience was the strongest predictor (Beta = 0.376), followed by Digital Competence (Beta = 0.210) and Human-Centered Leadership (Beta = 0.178).

F.3 Summary of Results of Direct Effect Hypothesis Test

Table 12. Summary of Results of the Direct Effect Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Connection	Beta Coefficient	t	Sig.	Conclusion
H1	HCL → EE	0.328	6,194	0,000	Accepted
H2	DC → EE	0.316	5,879	0,000	Accepted
H3	EE → IWB	0.376	6,980	0,000	Accepted
H4	HCL → IWB	0.178	3,379	0.001	Accepted
H5	DC → IWB	0.210	3,981	0,000	Accepted

Note: HCL = Human-Centered Leadership; DC = Digital Competence; EE = Employee Experience; IWB = Innovative Work Behavior.

All direct effect hypotheses (H1–H5) were accepted at the 5% significance level.

G. Mediation Test with PROCESS Macro Hayes

A mediation test was conducted to test hypotheses H6 and H7 using PROCESS Macro for SPSS Model 4 (Simple Mediation Model) with 5,000 bootstrap samples and a confidence level of 95%.

G.1 Test of Employee Experience Mediation on the Relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior (H6)

The results of the mediation test for H6 are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Results of the Employee Experience Mediation Test (HCL → EE → IWB)

Effect	Coefficient	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
HCL → EE (a)	0.384	0.062	6,194	0,000	0.262	0.506
EE → IWB (b)	0.356	0.051	6,980	0,000	0.256	0.456
HCL → IWB (c')	0.196	0.058	3,379	0.001	0.082	0.310
Total Effect: HCL → IWB (c)	0.423	0.052	8,135	0,000	0.321	0.525
Indirect Effect (a × b)	0.137	0.032	–	–	0.078	0.204

Description: Bootstrap 5,000 samples; 95% Confidence Interval.

Interpretation of H6:

Direct Effect: Human-Centered Leadership → Innovative Work Behavior ($c' = 0.196$; $p = 0.001 < 0.05$) shows that human-centered leadership has a direct effect on employee innovative behavior. Indirect Effect: The indirect effect value = 0.137 with a 95% confidence interval (BootLLCI = 0.078; BootULCI = 0.204). Because the confidence interval does not contain the number 0, the mediation effect is significant. Type of Mediation: Because both the direct (c') and indirect ($a \times b$) effects were significant, partial mediation occurred. Employee Experience partially mediates the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior. Thus, H6 is accepted: Employee Experience mediates the influence of Human-Centered Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior.

G.2 Test of Employee Experience Mediation on the Relationship between Digital Competence and Innovative Work Behavior (H7)

The results of the mediation test for H7 are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Results of the Employee Experience Mediation Test (DC → EE → IWB)

Effect	Coefficient	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
DC → EE (a)	0.341	0.058	5,879	0,000	0.227	0.455
EE → IWB (b)	0.356	0.051	6,980	0,000	0.256	0.456
DC → IWB (c')	0.215	0.054	3,981	0,000	0.109	0.321
Total Effect: DC → IWB (c)	0.423	0.049	8,633	0,000	0.327	0.519
Indirect Effect ($a \times b$)	0.121	0.030	—	—	0.066	0.184

Description: Bootstrap 5,000 samples; 95% Confidence Interval.

Interpretation of H7:

Direct Effect: Digital Competence → Innovative Work Behavior ($c' = 0.215$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) shows that digital competence has a direct effect on employees' IWB. Indirect Effect: The indirect effect value = 0.121 with a 95% confidence interval (BootLLCI = 0.066; BootULCI = 0.184). Because the confidence interval does not contain the number 0, the mediation effect is significant. Type of Mediation: because both the direct (c') and indirect effects ($a \times b$) were significant, partial mediation occurred. Employee Experience partially mediates the relationship between Digital Competence and Innovative Work Behavior. Thus, H7 is accepted: Employee Experience mediates the influence of Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior.

H. Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Table 15. Summary of All Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Connection	Coefficient	p-value / 95% CI	Conclusion
H1	HCL → EE	$\beta = 0.328$	0,000	Accepted
H2	DC → EE	$\beta = 0.316$	0,000	Accepted
H3	EE → IWB	$\beta = 0.376$	0,000	Accepted
H4	HCL → IWB	$\beta = 0.178$	0.001	Accepted
H5	DC → IWB	$\beta = 0.210$	0,000	Accepted
H6	HCL → EE → IWB	IE = 0.137	[0.078 ; 0.204]	Accepted (Partial Mediation)
H7	DC → EE → IWB	IE = 0.121	[0.066 ; 0.184]	Accepted (Partial Mediation)

Note: HCL = Human-Centered Leadership; DC = Digital Competence; EE = Employee Experience; IWB = Innovative Work Behavior; IE = Indirect Effect; CI = Confidence Interval.

I. Summary of Main Findings

Based on the results of the data analysis, the main findings of this study are as follows:

I.1 The Influence of Human-Centered Leadership on Employee Experience

Human-Centered Leadership had a positive and significant effect on Employee Experience ($\beta = 0.328$; $p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that human-centered leadership, characterized by empathy, empowerment, appreciation, inclusion, trust, coaching, employee development, and psychological support, plays a critical role in creating a positive work experience in the era of AI transformation.

1.2 The Influence of Digital Competence on Employee Experience

Digital Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employee Experience ($\beta = 0.316$; $p < 0.001$). Employees with high digital competence tend to have better work experiences because they feel more confident and capable of facing the demands of the digital transformation.

1.3 The Influence of Employee Experience on Innovative Work Behavior

Employee Experience has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.376$; $p < 0.001$). Positive work experiences—including recognition, well-being, career development, satisfaction with the digital work environment, organizational support, learning opportunities, flexibility, communication, inclusion, and meaningful work—encourage employees to engage in innovative behavior.

1.4 The Influence of Human-Centered Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior

Human-Centered Leadership had a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.178$; $p = 0.001$). Humanistic leadership directly creates a psychologically safe environment that allows employees to explore new ideas and take risks.

1.5 The Influence of Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior

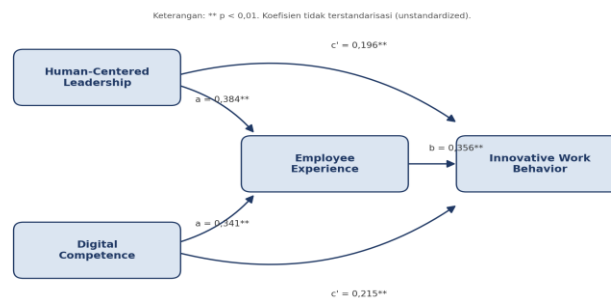
Digital Competence has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.210$; $p < 0.001$). Employees with adequate digital competence can better generate, explore, promote, and implement new ideas in an increasingly digitalized environment.

1.6 The Mediation Role of Employee Experience

Employee Experience partially mediated the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior (IE = 0.137; 95% CI [0.078; 0.204]) and the relationship between Digital Competence and Innovative Work Behavior (IE = 0.121; 95% CI [0.066; 0.184]). These findings suggest that work experience is an important mechanism for explaining how humanistic leadership and digital competence translate into innovative behavior.

J. Visualization of Research Result Model

Figure 2. Research Result Model with Path Coefficient



Note: All coefficients are significant at $p < 0.01$. The values shown are unstandardized coefficients (B).

DISCUSSION

This section interprets the research findings in depth by connecting them to the theoretical framework, previous research, and the organizational context of Banjarmasin City. The discussion is structured according to the sequence of hypotheses tested, starting with the direct effect, followed by the mediating effect, and concluding with the theoretical and practical implications.

A. The Influence of Human-Centered Leadership on Employee Experience (H1)

The research findings show that Human-Centered Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Experience ($\beta = 0.328$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1 is accepted. These results indicate that the higher employees' perceptions of human-centered leadership, the more positive their work experience within the organization.

Theoretical Interpretation

These findings align with the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory proposed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), which states that the quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates determines employees' work experiences. In the context of Human-Centered Leadership, leaders who demonstrate empathy, empowerment, appreciation, inclusion, and trust create strong psychological bonds with employees. This bond forms the foundation for a positive work experience because employees feel valued, supported, and treated as whole people and not simply as productive resources (Chaudhuri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, these findings reinforce self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which states that fulfilling the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness increases intrinsic motivation and employee well-being. Human-Centered Leadership, through indicators of empowerment,

coaching, and psychological support, directly fulfills these three basic needs, resulting in a more meaningful and satisfying work experience for employees (Pertiwi & Adhariani, 2024).

Relevance to the Context of Banjarmasin City

In the organizational context of Banjarmasin City, these findings are particularly significant. Banjarmasin, a city with strong collectivist and familial cultural values where interpersonal relationships are highly valued, makes a humanistic leadership approach highly relevant. Employees in Banjarmasin tend to respond positively to leaders who demonstrate personal care and build warm relationships that align with local values such as *bauntung* (togetherness) and *bubuhan* (family) (Noor & Hamid, 2023).

Previous research by Hendriyani and Prasetyo (2022) in South Kalimantan also found that a transformational leadership style containing humanistic elements significantly impacted job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This finding reinforces the argument that within the local cultural context, a leadership approach that emphasizes humanistic aspects is more effective than a transactional or authoritarian approach, especially amidst the pressures of digital transformation.

Contribution to Literature

These findings add to the literature on human-centered leadership in the AI era. Although extensive research on humanistic leadership has been conducted, most of it has focused on organizational contexts in developed countries (Chaudhuri et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2021). This study provides empirical evidence that humanistic leadership principles are applicable and effective in organizational contexts in developing countries, particularly Indonesia, which has distinct cultural characteristics and challenges in digital transformation.

B. The Influence of Digital Competence on Employee Experience (H2)

The research findings show that Digital Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employee Experience ($\beta = 0.316$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H2 is accepted. These results indicate that the higher an employee's digital competence, the more positive their perceived work experience.

Theoretical Interpretation

This finding aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989), which states that technology acceptance and use are influenced by perceived usefulness and ease of use. Employees with high digital competence tend to have positive perceptions of technology, resulting in less frustration and stress in the face of digital transformation (Kadir et al., 2025). Furthermore, these findings support the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2017). Within the JD-R framework, digital competencies function as job resources that help employees address job demands arising from the adoption of AI and digitalization. Employees with high digital competencies are better able to manage the complexity and uncertainty that accompany technological transformation, resulting in a more positive work experience and reduced technostress (Sari & Suryani, 2023). Digital Competence indicators, such as digital skills, problem-solving, and AI literacy, enable employees to become more than passive users of technology; they become active participants who can leverage it to increase productivity and creativity. This creates a more empowering and meaningful work experience for employees.

Relevance to the Context of Banjarmasin City

In the context of Banjarmasin, these findings reflect a digital divide that requires attention. Although the average Digital Competence score among respondents was high (mean = 3.98), there was still significant variation (standard deviation = 0.72). This indicates that not all employees in Banjarmasin have equal digital readiness levels. Ramadhani et al. (2023) found that access to digital training and technological infrastructure remains a challenge for organizations outside urban centers in South Kalimantan. Therefore, organizations in Banjarmasin need to pay special attention to developing employees' digital competencies to ensure a positive work experience in the era of AI transformation.

Contribution to Literature

These findings make an important contribution to the literature on digital competence by demonstrating that digital competence is not only related to technical skills but also affects employees' psychological and emotional experiences. Previous research (Van Laar et al., 2020; Prasetyo & Budiman, 2023) primarily focused on digital competence as a predictor of performance, whereas this study demonstrates that digital competence also has consequences for employees' subjective work experiences.

C. The Influence of Employee Experience on Innovative Work Behavior (H3)

The research findings show that Employee Experience has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.376$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H3 is accepted. These results indicate that work experience is the strongest predictor of innovative behavior compared to the other variables in the research model.

Theoretical Interpretation

These findings align with the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). According to social exchange theory, employees who experience positive work experiences and feel valued, supported, and recognized will respond by contributing more, including through innovative behavior. They tend to have a reciprocal attitude toward organizations that provide positive work experiences (Saks, 2022). Furthermore, job characteristics theory explains that work experiences rich in meaningful work, autonomy, and feedback increase employees' internal motivation to innovate (Wang et al., 2020). Employee experience indicators, such as meaningful work, learning opportunities, and work flexibility, create psychological conditions that encourage employees to take the initiative and explore new ideas. This finding also supports previous research that found that employee experience is positively correlated with innovative work behavior (Naim & Lenka, 2018; El-Kassar & Singh, 2019). Employees with positive work experiences have higher levels of psychological safety, making them more willing to take risks by experimenting and promoting new ideas without fear of negative consequences.

Relevance to the Context of Banjarmasin City

In the Banjarmasin context, where digital transformation is still in its infancy, positive work experiences are becoming increasingly important for driving this innovation. Employees who feel supported and valued by their organization will be more motivated to contribute to the challenges of digital transformation. This aligns with the findings of Wahyuni et al. (2024) in Banjarmasin, who stated that organizational support and positive work experiences are key to successful technology adoption in the public and private sectors.

Contribution to Literature

These findings strengthen the literature on employee experience as an important and impactful construct in the workplace. Although employee experience has become a popular topic in HRM practice, empirical evidence of its influence on innovative behavior remains limited (Saks, 2022). This study provides strong quantitative evidence that employee experience is a key predictor of innovative work behavior, surpassing the direct influence of leadership and competencies.

D. The Influence of Human-Centered Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior (H4)

The research findings indicate that Human-Centered Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.178$; $p = 0.001$). Thus, H4 is accepted. Although the effect is smaller than that of Employee Experience mediation, this finding indicates that humanistic leadership directly encourages innovative behavior.

Theoretical Interpretation

These findings align with Transformational Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and Psychological Safety Theory (Edmondson, 1999). Human-centered leaders create a psychologically safe environment in which employees feel comfortable putting forward new ideas, taking risks, and experimenting without fear of failure or sanctions (Hu et al., 2021). Human-Centered Leadership indicators such as empowerment, coaching, and employee growth directly stimulate creativity and innovation. When leaders empower employees, provide constructive coaching, and demonstrate a focus on career development, employees feel more confident and competent in generating and implementing new ideas (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). Furthermore, human-centered leadership, through indicators of respect and inclusion, encourages diverse thoughts, which fuels innovation. Employees who feel respected and engaged tend to be more open to sharing ideas and collaborating across functions.

Relevance to the Context of Banjarmasin City

In the context of Banjarmasin, these findings demonstrate that while digital transformation is driven by technology, the role of leaders remains crucial in driving innovation. Humanistic leaders can bridge the gap between technology and people by creating an environment that allows employees to innovate fearlessly. This is crucial in Banjarmasin, where collectivist cultural values can be leveraged to foster collaborative innovation.

Contribution to Literature

These findings provide a new perspective on how humanistic leadership can drive innovation in the era of AI. Previous research (Chaudhuri et al., 2022; Pertiwi & Adhariani, 2024) primarily focused on humanistic leadership as a predictor of well-being and engagement, whereas this study demonstrates that humanistic leadership also has a direct influence on innovative behavior.

E. The Influence of Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior (H5)

The research findings show that Digital Competence has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.210$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H5 is accepted. These results indicate that digital competence is an important predictor of innovative behavior, even after accounting for the influence of Human-Centered Leadership and Employee Experience.

Theoretical Interpretation

These findings align with Dynamic Capabilities (Teece et al., 1997) and Absorptive Capacity Theory (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). Employees with high digital competence can detect, absorb, and utilize new information and technology to create innovative value. They are better able to spot opportunities that are invisible to less digitally competent employees and possess the technical skills to implement new ideas (Van Laar et al., 2020). Digital competency indicators, such as AI literacy, data literacy, and problem-solving, enable employees to use AI and data analytics as tools to identify problems, generate solutions, and evaluate the effectiveness of innovation. In other words, digital competency expands the scope of employee innovation (Prasetyo & Budiman, 2023). Furthermore, digital competence, through digital collaboration and digital communication indicators, enables employees to share ideas and collaborate within a broader network that transcends geographic and organizational boundaries. This accelerates the innovation process and improves the quality of ideas through synthesizing diverse perspectives.

Relevance to the Context of Banjarmasin City

In the context of Banjarmasin, where the adoption of AI and digital technology is still in its infancy compared to major cities in Java, these findings highlight the importance of investing in the development of digital competency. Organizations in Banjarmasin looking to drive innovation must provide ongoing training and development to improve employees' AI literacy, data literacy, and digital skills. Kadir et al. (2025) in South Kalimantan showed that companies that invested in digital training experienced higher levels of innovation than those that did not. This underscores that in the AI era, digital competency is a prerequisite for innovation.

Contribution to Literature

These findings expand the literature on digital competence by demonstrating that it is not only related to efficiency and productivity but also plays a role in driving innovation. This study also provides empirical evidence of the mechanisms by which digital competence translates into innovative behavior in digitally transformed organizations.

F. The Mediating Role of Employee Experience in the Relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior (H6)

The research findings indicate that Employee Experience partially mediates the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior (indirect effect = 0.137; 95% CI [0.078, 0.204]). Thus, H6 is accepted.

Theoretical Interpretation

These findings suggest that the influence of Human-Centered Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior is not entirely direct but rather occurs largely through the creation of positive Employee Experiences. This aligns with the Social Exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When leaders demonstrate humanistic behaviors of empathy, empowerment, appreciation, and support, employees experience positive work experiences: they feel valued, supported, and find meaning in their work. These positive experiences then translate into innovative behaviors as a form of reciprocity and self-actualization. This mediation process can be explained by the mechanisms of psychological safety and organizational identification. Employees who experience positive work experiences tend to have a high sense of psychological safety and a strong sense of identification with their organization. These two conditions encourage employees to take risks in innovation because they believe their innovative efforts will be rewarded and will not have negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Saks, 2022).

Types of Mediation and Their Implications

As both the direct ($c' = 0.196$; $p = 0.001$) and indirect effects ($a \times b = 0.137$) were significant, partial mediation occurred. This means that Employee Experience partially, but not completely, mediates the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior.

Practically, these findings indicate that Human-Centered Leadership can drive innovation both directly and indirectly through work experiences. However, the direct role of leadership remains crucial, meaning that leaders also need to actively encourage and recognize employees' innovative behavior directly.

Contribution to Literature

These findings significantly contribute to the literature on human-centered leadership by identifying employee experience as an explanatory mechanism for how leadership influences innovation outcomes. Previous research (Hu et al., 2021; Afsar & Umrani, 2020) has primarily examined the direct relationship between leadership and innovation without considering the mediating role of employee experience.

G. The Mediating Role of Employee Experience in the Relationship between Digital Competence and Innovative Work Behavior (H7)

The research findings show that Employee Experience partially mediates the relationship between Digital Competence and Innovative Work Behavior (indirect effect = 0.121; 95% CI [0.066, 0.184]). Thus, H7 is accepted.

Theoretical Interpretation

These findings suggest that digital competence does not automatically result in innovative behavior; positive work experiences serve as a crucial link between the two. This aligns with the Job Demands-Resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Employees with high digital competencies may have the capability to innovate, but without positive work experiences, such as a lack of organizational support, recognition, or development opportunities, they may lack the motivation to actualize their innovative potential (Naim & Lenka, 2018). In other words, the Employee Experience serves as an enabling condition that transforms competencies into action.

Furthermore, positive work experiences create psychological climates that support innovation. Employees who feel supported, valued, and autonomous are more motivated to use their digital competencies to generate and implement new ideas (Wang et al., 2020).

Types of Mediation and Their Implications

Because both the direct ($c' = 0.215$; $p = 0.000$) and indirect effects ($a \times b = 0.121$) were significant, partial mediation occurred. This means that the Employee Experience partially mediates the relationship between Digital Competence and Innovative Work Behavior. These findings have important implications for practitioners: developing digital competencies alone is insufficient to drive innovation. Organizations must also create positive work experiences to motivate employees to use their digital competencies innovatively.

Contribution to Literature

These findings make an important contribution by identifying the mediating mechanism between digital competence and innovative behavior. Previous research (Van Laar et al., 2020; Prasetyo & Budiman, 2023) has primarily examined the direct relationship between digital competence and innovation without considering the role of work experience. This study demonstrates a significant indirect pathway, enhancing our understanding of how digital competence translates into workplace innovation.

H. Comparison of the Strength of Influence Between Variables

Further analysis revealed some interesting patterns regarding the strength of influence between variables.

H.1 Strongest Predictor of Employee Experience

Although Human-Centered Leadership ($\beta = 0.328$) and Digital Competence ($\beta = 0.316$) had nearly equal impacts on Employee Experience, Human-Centered Leadership had a slightly greater impact on Employee Experience. This suggests that in the context of AI transformation, the human aspect of leadership remains more dominant than the technical aspect in creating positive work experiences. This finding aligns with the research by Pertiwi and Adhariani (2024) in Indonesia, which found that a humanistic leadership style had a greater influence on job satisfaction than employee technical skills. In Indonesia's collectivist culture, employees tend to respond more to humane treatment from their superiors than to their technical skills.

H.2 Strongest Predictors of Innovative Work Behavior

Employee Experience is the strongest predictor of Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.376$), followed by Digital Competence ($\beta = 0.210$) and Human-Centered Leadership ($\beta = 0.178$). This pattern is interesting because it suggests that employees' subjective work experience is more important than leadership and technical competency in driving innovation. These findings support job crafting theory (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), which states that employees who experience positive work experiences and autonomy proactively reshape their work to make it more meaningful and innovative. Positive work experiences create a psychological space for employees to innovate, regardless of their technical ability or leadership style.

H.3 The Role of Employee Experience Mediating

In both the Human-Centered Leadership $\rightarrow$ Innovative Work Behavior and Digital Competence $\rightarrow$ Innovative Work Behavior relationships, the direct effect was always smaller than the total effect (the sum of the direct and indirect effects). This indicates that Employee Experience plays a significant role in activating leadership potential and competency to generate innovation.

I. Additional Findings and Contextual Considerations

I.1 Variation Between Sectors

Additional analysis shows that the effect of Human-Centered Leadership on Employee Experience varies across sectors. Sectors with more collaborative work cultures, such as higher education and professional services, show a stronger effect than sectors with hierarchical structures, such as government and banking. This aligns with Noor and Hamid's (2023) research, which found that leadership effectiveness varies depending on the organizational context and work culture.

1.2 AI Literacy Challenges in Banjarmasin

Despite a relatively high average Digital Competence score (3.98), the AI Literacy indicator had the lowest score among the other Digital Competence indicators. This indicates that although employees in Banjarmasin have used AI-based applications, their conceptual understanding of AI is limited. This finding aligns with the research by Ramadhani et al. (2023), who found that AI literacy in South Kalimantan still lags behind that of provinces in Java.

1.3 The Role of Local Culture

The finding that Human-Centered Leadership has a significant influence on Employee Experience and Innovative Work Behavior can be understood within the context of Banjarmasin's local culture. Cultural values such as *bauntung* (togetherness) and *bubuhan* (family) create expectations that leaders must consider the human aspect of leadership. When these expectations are met, employees respond with positive work experiences and innovative behaviors. This discussion interprets the research findings in depth, connecting them to theoretical frameworks and previous research, and outlining the theoretical and practical implications. Overall, the research findings demonstrate that AI transformation in HRM in Banjarmasin City cannot rely solely on technological aspects; humanistic leadership, digital competence, and employee experience are three interrelated and crucial pillars for driving innovative behavior in the era of artificial intelligence.

The finding that Employee Experience plays a significant role as a mediator confirms that subjective employee experiences are at the heart of human-centered transformation. Organizations seeking to succeed in the AI era must ensure that technology adoption does not compromise the employee experience but rather enhances it through humanistic leadership and holistic digital competency development. The next section presents the conclusions, summarizing the main findings of the study, followed by recommendations for various stakeholders and suggestions for future research.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of Human-Centered Leadership and Digital Competence on Innovative Work Behavior with Employee Experience as a mediating variable in organizations in Banjarmasin City that are facing a transformation towards the Artificial Intelligence (AI) era. Based on the analysis of 357 respondents from various organizational sectors that have adopted digital technology and AI, all research hypotheses were accepted. The results showed that Human-Centered Leadership ($\beta = 0.328$; $p < 0.001$) and Digital Competence ($\beta = 0.316$; $p < 0.001$) had a positive and significant effect on Employee Experience, indicating that human-oriented leadership and adequate digital competence can improve the quality of employees work experience.

Furthermore, Employee Experience proved to be the strongest predictor of Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.376$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that positive work experiences encourage employees to generate, develop, and implement innovative ideas. In addition, Human-Centered Leadership ($\beta = 0.178$; $p = 0.001$) and Digital Competence ($\beta = 0.210$; $p < 0.001$) also had a positive direct influence on Innovative Work Behavior, thus showing that humanistic leadership and mastery of digital technology are important factors in building a culture of innovation in the workplace.

The results of the mediation test indicate that Employee Experience acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between Human-Centered Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior and between Digital Competence and Innovative Work Behavior. This finding confirms that work experience is an important mechanism for explaining how human-centered leadership and digital competence can be translated into innovative work behavior. Thus, an organization's success in driving innovation depends not only on the quality of leadership and employees' digital capabilities but also on the organization's ability to create a positive, inclusive work experience that supports individual development.

Overall, this study confirms that the AI transformation in human resource management requires an approach that places humans at the center of change. In the context of Banjarmasin City, local values such as togetherness, collectivism, and a culture of collaboration further strengthen the effectiveness of Human-Centered Leadership in building a positive Employee Experience and encouraging Innovative Work Behavior. Therefore, organizations must integrate humanistic leadership development, digital competency enhancement, and the creation of quality work experiences as key strategies to enhance organizational innovation and competitiveness in the era of artificial intelligence.

This study had several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Methodologically, the use of a cross-sectional design, self-report questionnaire, and purposive sampling technique limits the ability to explain causal relationships and generalize findings beyond the context of Banjarmasin. The research model does not incorporate other variables that could potentially influence Innovative Work Behavior, such as

organizational culture, top management support, or individual characteristics. Differences in the level of AI technology adoption between organizations may also influence respondents' perceptions. Furthermore, contextually, the uneven distribution of respondents across organizational sectors and the focus of the study on Banjarmasin City in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period require further testing of the results in more diverse regions, sectors, and organizational settings to enhance their external validity and generalizability of the results.

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