



Organisational culture, innovation, and knowledge sharing in selected non-profit organisation projects in Gauteng

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the assignment submitted herewith to the North-West University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is my own original work. It has been text-edited in accordance with professional communication standards and has not been previously submitted to any other institution for evaluation purposes.

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30 November 2025

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I wish to thank **my Lord, Jesus Christ**, for granting me the strength, ability, and opportunity to pursue this MBA. It is a profound privilege to acknowledge Him as the source and fulfilment of all wisdom and knowledge.

This work is dedicated to my husband, Wico, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and practical assistance made the completion of this dissertation possible.

To my colleagues, for their belief in my abilities, continuous motivation, and understanding during the most demanding periods of this journey.

And to my son, Hendrik, born during the course of my MBA, whose arrival inspired me to persevere and complete this work with dedication. May this achievement one day serve as a source of encouragement and example to him.

PREFACE

Completing this dissertation marks the culmination of a rigorous academic and personal journey. Pursuing the Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Northwest University has not only expanded my theoretical and practical understanding of strategic and organisational management. However, it has also enhanced my appreciation for the role of organisational culture and knowledge in fostering sustainable innovation within non-profit organisations.

The choice of the topic was inspired by my professional experience in project-based settings, where I observed firsthand how organisational culture and knowledge sharing significantly influence employees' willingness and capacity to innovate. I was specifically motivated to contribute to the body of knowledge on South African non-profit organisations, given that much of the existing literature in this area is dominated by research from Western or corporate contexts. I hope this dissertation provides relevant insights to both academics and practitioners, especially leaders of NPOs seeking to build resilient, innovative organisations despite resource constraints.

This research would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and institutions. I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr. William Makumbe, for his guidance, constructive feedback, and encouragement throughout the research process. I also thank the management and employees of the participating NPOs for their willingness to engage with this study and for openly sharing their experiences. Their contributions have yielded invaluable insights into the dynamics of organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation in practice.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their unwavering support, patience, and encouragement throughout this journey. Their belief in me has been a source of strength and motivation during my MBA studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between organisational culture and employees' innovative behaviours' within selected project-based non-profit organisations (NPOs) in Gauteng Province, South Africa, with a specific focus on the mediating role of knowledge sharing. Guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), the research described organisational culture as a strategic intangible resource and knowledge sharing as a dynamic capability that promotes innovation.

A quantitative research approach was adopted, utilising a structured survey distributed among employees engaged in project-based roles within NPOs in the Solidarity Movement. Data from 253 respondents were analysed using structural equation modelling to examine the hypothesised relationships among organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative behaviour. The reliability and validity of the measures were confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted.

The findings demonstrated that organisational culture significantly influenced both knowledge sharing and innovative behaviour. Furthermore, knowledge sharing was found to have a direct positive effect on innovative behaviour and mediated the relationship between organisational culture and innovation. This confirms that knowledge sharing serves as the mechanism through which culture fosters innovation in NPO project settings.

The study contributes to theory by contextualising the RBV and KBV within the African NPO environment, a setting often overlooked in innovation studies. Practically, the findings provide actionable recommendations for NPO leaders to embed a culture of trust, openness, and collaboration, while institutionalising knowledge-sharing practices to strengthen innovation capacity.

Limitations of the study include the cross-sectional design, geographic focus on Gauteng, and reliance on self-reported data. Future research should consider longitudinal and mixed-method approaches across broader contexts.

Key terms: Organisational culture, knowledge sharing, innovative behaviour, project-based settings, non-profit organisations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NWU - Northwest University (Abbreviation)

OC - Organisational Culture

IB - Innovative Behaviours

IWB - Innovative work behaviour

KS - Knowledge Sharing

PP - Project-Based Setting

KM – Knowledge Management

NPO – Non-Profit Organisation

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In today's fast-changing business environment, organisations are increasingly working within project-based frameworks to boost efficiency, innovation, and their competitive edge. Projects, as temporary coordination structures, require effective teamwork among employees with diverse skills to meet organisational goals within established deadlines (Ajmal & Tauno, 2009). Within these dynamic environments, organisational culture is crucial in shaping employee behaviours, particularly in fostering knowledge sharing and innovation. Recent studies underscore this relationship, with Cui (2025) highlighting that knowledge-based organisational support and artificial intelligence (AI) driven knowledge sharing significantly enhance organisational performance, thereby emphasising the importance of a knowledge-driven culture. A knowledge-driven organisational culture empowers businesses to respond effectively to market changes by leveraging employees' collective expertise to generate innovative solutions and improve performance (Lam, Nguyen et al., 2021). Hence, a knowledge-driven and innovative organisational culture plays a primary role in organisations such as Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), as most work is centred around projects that require extensive knowledge dissemination.

NPOs play a vital role in developing countries, amid widespread recognition that social needs continue to grow (Vorwerk Marren, Davis & Williamson 2024). In the South African context, there are over 280,000 NPOs registered with the Department of Social Development (DistriksPos, 2024). Although these organisations are promoting the NPO mandate, significant challenges exist. These include declining financial support and budget cuts, which endanger their existence and the delivery of vital services in initiatives like poverty reduction, fighting hunger and disease, and providing quality care education. For example, the recent suspension of funding by the United States of America through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has affected several projects in South Africa (Murray & Venter, 2025). The financial challenges facing NPOs affect not only service delivery but also the culture, innovative behaviours, and attitudes of employees within these organisations. Established relationships can be impacted when confronted with shrinking budgets, which in turn affects knowledge sharing and work behaviours. Considering this dynamic, a study of this nature has become increasingly important for South African NPOs.

Past research suggests that organisational culture has a significant impact on both knowledge sharing and innovation (Kokt & Makumbe, 2020). A supportive organisational culture fosters trust, collaboration, and a willingness to share knowledge (Deng, Salmador et al. 2018). As people

share knowledge, novel ideas can be generated, which are crucial for facilitating innovation (Ajmal & Tauno, 2009). However, while extensive research has studied the direct relationship and connection between organisational culture and innovation (Gorzelany et al., 2021; Javanmardi Kashan et al., 2021; Lam et al., 2021; Deng et al., 2018), the mediating and facilitating role of knowledge sharing in this process remains underexplored, particularly within non-profit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa. For this reason, this study inspected and studied the mediating role of knowledge sharing on the relationship between organisational culture and innovation in the context of South African NPOs. The findings aim to offer practical insights for NPOs on encouraging a culture that supports both effective knowledge exchange and innovation, ultimately improving project efficiency and long-term sustainability.

1.2 Background to the study

An expanding range of research has developed around the concepts of organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation. Organisational culture has been extensively explored by authors such as Bogale (2024), Zhang et al. (2023), and Cao et al. (2025). Similarly, knowledge sharing has been investigated by authors such as Wahyudi et al. (2025), Nguyen et al. (2024), and Abdelrahman et al. (2025). On the other hand, innovation, as a key organisational outcome, has been studied by Parveen (2023), Zhang et al. (2023), and Cui (2025). Most of these studies are primarily confined to industries such as digital technology (Cui, 2025), higher education (Nguyen et al., 2024), and corporate services (Parveen, 2023).

A worldwide review of studies on organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation reveals that most of the existing literature is situated within Global North contexts, with substantial research originating from countries such as the United States (Schein, 2010), Italy (Bonesso et al., 2014), the United Kingdom (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010), Germany (Hofstede et al., 2010), Canada (Lam, 2021), the Netherlands (Van den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004), Sweden (Alvesson, 2016), and Australia (e.g., Prajogo & Ahmed, 2006). A study of the interplay of these variables in project-based settings remains limited, especially in the global south, in countries such as South Africa. This study is, therefore, important because managing through projects has become a standard business practice and a key component of many organisations' strategies. Projects serve as temporary coordination systems where specialists with diverse skills collaborate to complete complex tasks within a set timeframe (Ajmal & Tauno, 2009). A full understanding of the interplay of the variables under study has, therefore, become a necessity in project-based settings.

Past research suggests that due to the nature of tasks in a project setting, knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in ensuring project effectiveness through innovation. For example, Ajmal and

Tauno (2009) stated that a knowledge-sharing culture should be established in project settings because it integrates continuous learning at the individual, team, and company levels. This can lead to novel ideas that are critical in project performance. Furthermore, the same authors pointed out that in today's economic and social landscape, knowledge has become a crucial factor, surpassing traditional resources such as labour, raw materials, and capital, leading project settings to recognise that knowledge now serves as the primary source of competitive advantage. In line with this, authors such as Mthunzi (2024) have observed that a positive and collaborative culture—characterised by trust, transparency, and open communication—significantly impacts the sharing of knowledge in South African Public sector organisations.

Prior research also confirms that organisational culture has long been a key factor in innovation. According to Calin and Grecu (2024), Organisational culture plays a crucial role in enabling innovation, as it shapes the way organisations generate and implement new ideas, processes, and products. It allows companies to navigate the complexities of open innovation by incorporating external markets and innovations, which leads to generating new value and fostering the development of innovative business models. (Bogale et al., 2021, p. 3). Organisational culture also serves as a foundational platform that influences people and processes, fostering a deeper understanding of systems, promoting creativity and innovation, and enhancing employee attitudes, cooperation, communication, and professionalism—all of which are vital for improving firm productivity, competitive advantage, and overall business performance.

“In light of the above context, examining the relationship between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation has become essential in Africa, particularly within project-based environments. Organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation are essential components that can improve project effectiveness.

1.3 Problem statement

Project-based work has become a common way of conducting business, and it is now acknowledged as influencing key aspects of many organisations' strategic agendas. This implies that investigating the building blocks of project performance has become paramount. In line with this, previous research has identified organisational culture and knowledge sharing as critical drivers of organisational performance in general (Iqbal et al., 2025) and project performance in particular (Ajmal & Tauno, 2009). Owing to this, there has been an upsurge of literature on these variables (Lam et al., 2021; Azeem et al., Chatterjee et al., 2019; Castaneda & Cuellar, 2020b; Bulutlar & Kamasak, 2009). However, most of these studies are primarily Western context-based research work in large conglomerates. The difference in organisational culture amongst nations

implies that the research results from Western contexts cannot be directly applied in other jurisdictions, especially in Africa. For this reason, this study examined the link between organisational culture and innovation in project-based work in an African setting.

Furthermore, the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the link between organisational culture and innovation has not yet been thoroughly examined within project environments, including NPOs in South Africa. A strong organisational culture and knowledge-sharing behaviours are critical in South African NPOs as they influence critical organisational variables such as innovation (Kokt & Makumbe, 2020), organisational citizenship behaviour (Madadha et al., 2021), and project performance (Nauman et al., 2022). This study, therefore, investigated how organisational culture influences innovative behaviours through knowledge sharing. The study seeks to provide meaningful insights that can assist NPOs in cultivating an organisational culture that encourages innovation and effective knowledge sharing, thereby helping to overcome existing inefficiencies and enhance project success.

1.4 Research objectives

1.4.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this investigation is to examine how organisational culture affects the innovative behaviours of employees in NPO project environments, with a particular focus on revealing the mediating role of knowledge sharing.

1.4.2 Secondary objectives

To accomplish the main goal, the following supporting objectives were established:

- To determine the influence of organisational culture on employees' innovative behaviours in NPO project settings.
- To explore the impact of organisational culture on knowledge sharing among employees in NPO project settings.
- To assess the effect of knowledge sharing on the innovative behaviours of employees in NPO project settings.
- To examine the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between organisational culture and innovative behaviours in NPO project settings.
- To develop a framework that enhances innovation in an NPO project setting.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Primary research questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does organisational culture influence employees' innovative behaviours in NPO project settings?
2. In what ways does organisational culture impact knowledge sharing among employees in NPO project settings?
3. What is the effect of knowledge sharing on innovative behaviours of employees in NPO project settings?
4. How does knowledge sharing mediate the relationship between organisational culture and innovative behaviours in NPO project settings?
5. What framework can enhance innovation in a NPO project setting?

1.6 Definition of key terms

Organisational Culture (OC): The notion of organisational culture has been interpreted from multiple viewpoints. Robbins and Sanghi (2007) explain that organisational culture consists of the values and attitudes that shape an organisation's distinct social and psychological environment (Robbins & Sanghi, 2007).

Other scholars, such as Bamidele (2022), describe organisational culture as the shared values, beliefs, and ideals held by members. It is influenced by elements such as an organisation's history, products, market, technology, strategy, workforce characteristics, and managerial style.

Innovative Behaviours (IB): Innovative behaviour involves the generation, development, and practical application of new ideas through collaboration, problem-solving, and resource utilisation to enhance individual, group, and organisational performance (Choi et al., 2021). They further state that innovative behaviour refers to an individual's ability to develop and implement actionable plans by securing resources to generate, introduce, and apply new ideas that enhance job, group, and organisational performance (Choi et al., 2021).

Knowledge Sharing (KS): Knowledge sharing is defined as the exchange of employees' knowledge, skills, and experiences (Nazim & Mukherjee, 2016). It ensures that the knowledge within an organisation is available for employees whenever they need it, and its benefits include retaining intellectual assets and improving productivity.

Project-Based Setting (PP): A work environment where tasks and activities are organised around specific projects with defined goals, timelines, and deliverables. Turner & Muller (2023) described that employees in such settings often work collaboratively and need to adapt quickly to changes. Project-based settings are characterised by temporary teams, cross-functional collaboration, and a strong focus on achieving project objectives within constraints such as time, budget, and resources (Turner & Muller, 2003).

Non-Profit Organisation (NPO): “A non-profit organisation, as the name suggest is a legal organisation whose primary purpose is to promote public good rather than making profit. These are founded by a group of people who come together for a common purpose, i.e. to provide service to members and people” (SAIPA, 2017).

1.7 Chapter layout

The mini dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background:

This chapter presents the study, outlines the background context, and highlights the research problem. It defines the main and secondary objectives, research questions, and key terms, while also offering an overview of the methodology and the structure of the document dissertation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter critically examines theoretical frameworks like the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Knowledge-Based View (KBV), and discusses key study variables: organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative behaviours. It also reviews empirical research, identifies gaps in current knowledge, and formulates hypotheses to guide further investigation study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, philosophy, and approach, emphasising why a quantitative, cross-sectional survey was chosen. It discusses the population, sampling methods, data collection techniques, ethical issues, and the statistical tools used to assess validity, reliability, and the proposed relationships.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter outlines the descriptive and inferential findings of the study, covering demographic data, reliability and validity assessments, and hypothesis testing. It examines how organisational

culture impacts knowledge sharing and innovation, and explores how knowledge sharing mediates this relationship, connecting the results to existing theories and literature.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter summarises the study's findings in light of its objectives, highlighting both theoretical and practical contributions. It outlines managerial implications and recommendations for NPO leaders, acknowledges limitations, and suggests directions for future research, before closing with a final conclusion.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical examination of the existing literature related to the main constructs informing this study—organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behaviour—specifically within the context of project-based non-profit organisations (NPOs). The literature review serves to ground the study in established theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, while also identifying gaps and inconsistencies that justify the present research.

The chapter opens by examining the concept of organisational culture, covering its definitions, dimensions, and its influence on shaping behaviour within the workplace. This is followed by an examination of knowledge sharing, with particular attention to its antecedents, processes, and the influence of organisational culture on knowledge exchange among employees. The construct of innovative work behaviour is then discussed, highlighting the factors that promote or hinder innovation at the individual level. The review also considers the interplay between these three constructs, drawing from prior research to illustrate potential relationships and mediating effects.

In addition, this chapter positions the study within the wider academic conversation by examining literature across different industries and international contexts, with particular emphasis on research conducted in developing countries. The chapter ends by outlining the theoretical and empirical gaps that the present study seeks to address, thereby providing a clear justification for the research questions and hypotheses.

2.1.1 Study variables

2.1.1.1 Organisation culture:

Organisational culture is regarded as both organisational capital and a core competency, encompassing shared values, beliefs, and behaviours that align employee and organisational values. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping and managing this culture, which in turn influences organisational performance and differentiation (Azeem et al., 2021:2). Organisational culture is the defining internal characteristic that guides a firm's long-term development, shaping how members interact with each other and stakeholders, and directing the operation, workflow, and customer management processes (Lam, Nguyen, et al., 2021:3). "Organisational culture seems to be a critical factor in the success of any organisation, lying at the heart of organisational innovation" (Deng et al., 2018:5). Organisational culture significantly influences knowledge-sharing behaviours by embedding deeply rooted beliefs, values, and artifacts within employees

and work groups, which shape decision-making, problem-solving, and social norms, thereby guiding appropriate behaviours across the organisation (Makambe & Osupile, 2021:118).

Organisational culture is a core idea in organisational studies, covering the shared values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours that influence how members interact, make decisions, and work toward common goals. (Schein, 2004; Cameron & Quinn, 2006). It serves as the social glue that binds individuals within organisations, enabling them to interpret their roles, expectations, and the overall organisational purpose. In the context of this study, which investigates the role of organisational culture in influencing knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour within project-based NPOs in Gauteng, understanding the nuances of organisational culture is essential.

Schein (2004) defines organisational culture as a collection of fundamental assumptions that a group creates, discovers, or develops as it learns to address external challenges and maintain internal unity. These assumptions become accepted as valid because they have proven effective, and they are passed on to new members as the appropriate ways to interpret, think about, and respond to relevant issues. This multidimensional definition includes three layers: artefacts (the visible structures and processes), espoused values (the strategies, goals, and philosophies), and basic underlying assumptions (the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs).

Organisational culture is not only shaped by leadership and structure but also evolves through interactions between employees over time. It reflects the personality of the organisation and acts as a lens through which strategy and operations are enacted (Kokt & Makumbe, 2020). In project-based environments—such as NPOs that operate through temporary, team-driven initiatives—organisational culture plays an even more pronounced role in defining behaviours and enabling flexibility, collaboration, and learning.

Scholars have long debated whether organisational culture can be managed or merely guided, but consensus remains that organisational culture significantly influences organisational outcomes such as performance, employee satisfaction, innovation, and knowledge sharing (Makambe & Osupile, 2021; Khan et al., 2022). Cameron and Quinn (2006) categorise organisational cultures into four major types using the Competing Values Framework (CVF): Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy. Each organisational culture type brings unique advantages and challenges. Clan organisational cultures promote cohesion, trust, and mentorship; Adhocracy cultures favour innovation and flexibility; Market cultures emphasise competition and goal achievement; and Hierarchy cultures focus on formal structure and stability (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

An environment that fosters trust, openness, collaboration, and continuous learning is essential for effective knowledge sharing. Osupile and Makambe (2021) highlight that organisational culture significantly enhances knowledge sharing, especially when it promotes interpersonal trust, team cooperation, and acknowledgment through rewards. Their study found that in a Botswanan government ministry, people-centric elements such as collaboration and trust showed a strong positive correlation with effective knowledge sharing, while rigid, hierarchical structures hindered it. Similarly, Kathiravelu, Mansor, Ramayah & Idris (2014) assert that employees are more inclined to share knowledge when they perceive a supportive cultural environment practices.

This is echoed by Fullwood et al. (2013), who argue that leaders and organisational systems must align their values and practices to cultivate a sharing organisational culture. Managers' behaviours, organisational communication structures, and even informal social interactions influence how knowledge flows within an organisation. In other words, organisational culture sets the tone for whether knowledge hoarding or knowledge sharing becomes the norm.

From an innovation perspective, organisational culture also plays a crucial enabling role. Organisational cultures that reward risk-taking, tolerate failure, and encourage new ideas tend to be more innovative (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016). Büschgens, Bausch, and Balkin (2013) argue that certain cultural attributes—such as autonomy, flexibility, and decentralised decision-making—are directly associated with higher levels of organisational innovation. This is particularly relevant in the non-profit sector, where innovation is often constrained by limited resources, yet made possible through agile teams and mission-driven organisational cultures (Kokt & Makumbe, 2020).

Khan et al. (2022) further emphasise the role of organisational culture in moderating the relationship between leadership and innovative work behaviour. In their empirical research within higher education institutions in Pakistan, they found that organisational culture acted as a bridge between transformational leadership styles and employees' ability to innovate. This illustrates how organisational culture not only reflects but actively shapes organisational dynamics and capacities.

The literature also underscores the multidimensional nature of organisational culture. It is not a singular, uniform entity but comprises multiple subcultures that can exist across departments or project teams. These subcultures can either align with or resist the dominant organisational values, thereby affecting cohesion and performance (McDowell et al., 2016). Understanding and managing these subcultures is especially critical in project-based environments, where temporary teams with diverse backgrounds must quickly develop shared norms and ways of working.

In developing country contexts such as South Africa, research on organisational culture has begun to address localised challenges and opportunities. Kokt and Makumbe (2020) highlight that in Southern African universities, innovation and knowledge sharing are often impeded by rigid legacy cultures. Their research suggests that an “adhocracy” culture—marked by flexibility, external focus, and dynamism—is more conducive to fostering innovation and sharing among academic staff. This insight aligns with broader global findings but also contributes a nuanced understanding specific to resource-constrained environments. Accordingly, this study views organisational culture as a dynamic, multidimensional construct that profoundly shapes employees’ willingness and capacity within NPOs to share knowledge and participate in innovative behaviours. Depending on how its values, norms, and structures promote openness, experimentation, and collaboration, organisational culture can function either as a facilitator or an obstacle.

2.1.1.2 Innovation

Innovation involves generating new ideas and guiding them through multiple stages to develop enhanced products, services, or processes. It also includes implementing new elements like products, technologies, organisational structures, or systems to improve performance, foster growth, ensure sustainability, and attain organisational success (Deng et al., 2018:3).

Internal incentives and leadership play a vital role in fostering an organisational culture that promotes open innovation. Non-monetary, management-driven incentives often lead to better results than monetary rewards. Effective leadership is essential for driving cultural change and encouraging employees to share new ideas within an open innovation environment (Lam, Nguyen, et al., 2021:4). Lam et al. noted that “leaders have tremendous flexibility to determine how their organisations will be managed, and thus, have a significant effect on the culture of an organisation.” (Lam, Nguyen, et al., 2021:4).

Innovation is a multifaceted and dynamic concept that plays a central role in driving organisational growth, performance, and long-term sustainability. Fundamentally, innovation refers to the implementation of new or significantly improved products, processes, marketing methods, or organisational practices to enhance effectiveness, competitiveness, or value creation (Herkema, 2003). According to Castaneda and Cuellar (2020:160), innovation is highly dependent on the exchange and assimilation of knowledge, indicating a strong link between organisational knowledge management practices and innovative performance. This relationship is particularly significant in project-based environments, such as NPOs, where innovation is critical for adapting to external pressures and achieving strategic goals.

2.1.1.2.1 Types of Innovation

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005) outlines four primary categories of innovation: product, process, marketing, and organisational (or administrative). Each category offers a unique path for organisations to create value and enhance competitiveness.

Product innovation refers to introducing goods or services that are new or significantly enhanced in terms of their characteristics or intended use. Such improvements may relate to technical specifications, materials, components, software, user-friendliness, or other functional attributes (Castaneda & Cuellar, 2020). In the healthcare industry, for example, product innovation might involve creating new medications or medical devices.

Process innovation involves implementing new or considerably enhanced production or delivery methods. This may include changes to techniques, equipment, or software that lead to greater efficiency, reduced costs, or better service quality. (Brewer & Tierney, 2012). Process innovation is particularly relevant in NPO project settings, where optimising limited resources and enhancing service delivery is often a strategic imperative.

Marketing innovation involves creating new marketing approaches that include substantial changes in product design, packaging, placement, promotion, or pricing strategies. Its goal is to better meet customer needs, access new markets, or reposition products within the market. (Harrington et al., 2014). For NPOs, marketing innovation may manifest as the creative use of digital platforms to reach diverse donor bases or beneficiaries.

Administrative or organisational innovation involves implementing new methods in business practices, workplace structure, or external partnerships. Its main goal is to boost firm performance by improving knowledge sharing, communication, and stakeholder coordination. (OECD, 2005). As noted by Ganguly et al. (2019), such innovations are crucial for fostering an organisational culture that enables creativity, collaboration, and adaptability.

2.1.1.2.2 Trajectories of Innovation

Innovation can also be analysed through its evolutionary trajectories. Three common innovation trajectories include incremental innovation, disruptive innovation, and radical innovation.

Incremental innovation refers to the gradual, continuous improvement of existing products, services, or processes. It is the most prevalent form of innovation in mature organisations and involves refining existing capabilities rather than creating entirely new ones (Pfotenhauer et al.,

2019). For example, adjusting a project management process to improve efficiency constitutes incremental innovation. These gradual changes, while not groundbreaking, contribute cumulatively to organisational advancement and adaptability.

Disruptive innovation, a term popularised by Christensen and Raynor (2003), describes innovations that significantly alter the way industries operate by introducing products or services that are more accessible, affordable, or convenient. Disruptive innovations often begin in niche markets before transforming mainstream industries. In the NPO context, the use of mobile technologies to provide healthcare services in remote areas represents a disruptive innovation that reshaped service accessibility and delivery.

Radical innovation involves the creation of entirely new knowledge, capabilities, or technologies that result in transformative changes within organisations or industries. These innovations often stem from intensive research and development and require significant investments and risk-taking (Nelson, 1993; Henderson & Clark, 1990). Radical innovations can lead to entirely new markets or redefined organisational identities. For instance, the development of blockchain technology for transparent donor tracking in NPOs represents a radical shift in accountability and trust mechanisms.

Innovation is not just a technical or operational activity; it is deeply embedded in an organisation's strategy and culture. According to Castaneda (2015), innovation is driven by human factors such as leadership, creativity, knowledge sharing, and self-efficacy. This perspective emphasises the importance of fostering an organisational culture that encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and collaboration. In line with this, du Plessis (2007) notes that innovation requires ongoing improvement through both existing resources and the introduction of new intangible assets.

Research by Kamasak and Bulutlar (2009) found that knowledge collecting (acquiring and absorbing information) had a significant impact on all types of innovation, while knowledge donating (sharing knowledge with others) significantly influenced exploitative innovation and ambidexterity. This suggests that innovation strategies are most effective when supported by robust knowledge-sharing practices within teams and across organisational boundaries. Ambidexterity—the ability to pursue both exploratory and exploitative innovations simultaneously—is a critical capability for organisations aiming to remain competitive in dynamic environments (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). Exploratory innovation involves trying new ideas, taking risks, and experimenting, while exploitative innovation concentrates on enhancing current skills and boosting efficiency. (Diercks et al., 2019). Organisations that cultivate ambidexterity are better positioned to adapt to change while maintaining operational excellence.

Ganguly et al. (2019) assert that tacit knowledge—knowledge derived from experience and embedded in organisational routines—is particularly influential in shaping innovation capabilities. The sharing of tacit knowledge relies on relational, cognitive, and structural social capital, which facilitates collaboration and trust among employees. When such knowledge is effectively shared, it enhances both incremental and radical innovation capabilities.

2.1.1.2.3 Barriers and enablers of innovation

Although innovation is crucial, it often encounters obstacles such as resistance to change, limited resources, rigid hierarchies, and lack of collaboration. Kremer et al. (2020) point out that as the ideas' novelty and scope increase, innovation processes become more complex, requiring strong leadership, strategic alignment, and a supportive organisational culture. On the other hand, factors that promote innovation include high-quality knowledge, reciprocity, open communication, and digital infrastructure (Iqbal et al., 2025). Social capital especially plays a vital role in fostering innovation. The strength of relationships within organisations—both interpersonal and inter-unit—affects how easily knowledge and ideas are shared, influencing the speed and extent of innovation. Additionally, social capital relies on trust and shared norms, which are crucial for successful collaborative innovation efforts.

Innovation is a complex, multi-dimensional concept that encompasses various types and trajectories, each contributing uniquely to organisational growth and resilience. Whether through incremental improvements, disruptive transformations, or radical breakthroughs, innovation enables organisations to adapt, compete, and thrive. Central to this process are knowledge-sharing mechanisms and an organisational culture that supports learning, collaboration, and change. This is particularly relevant within project-based NPO settings, where resource constraints and social missions coexist, innovation serves as both a strategic necessity and a cultural enabler of sustainable impact.

2.1.1.3 Knowledge sharing

“Knowledge is a vital organisational asset that significantly impacts business operations” (Idris et al., 2014:119). Azeem et al. (2021) emphasise that knowledge sharing has become a key element of knowledge management (Azeem et al., 2021:2). It can be described as “the exchange of experiences, facts, knowledge, and skills within an organisation” (Azeem et al., 2021:2). “Knowledge sharing involves employees exchanging their tacit and explicit knowledge to create new insights” (Kokt & Makumbe, 2020:3). In today’s economy, sharing knowledge is essential for improving business capabilities, encouraging creativity, and driving innovation (Azeem et al., 2021:2). By utilising knowledge resources, organisations can discover new opportunities,

enabling employees to share information, solve key issues, and develop improved methods for work processes (Azeem et al., 2021:2).

In modern organisational theory, knowledge is widely acknowledged as a vital strategic asset that enhances competitive edge, fosters innovation, and improves decision-making. Unlike tangible physical resources, knowledge is immaterial, constantly evolving, and embedded within individuals and organisational workflows. Drucker (1993) was among the first to highlight the importance of knowledge as a key factor in productivity within the knowledge economy. Building on his insights, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) viewed knowledge not just as data or information, but as a dynamic blend of experience, values, contextual understanding, and expert insights. According to this perspective, knowledge becomes truly valuable when it is internalised, actively used, and shared across organisations.

A central distinction in knowledge literature is between explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that can be easily codified, documented, and transferred through formal systems such as databases, manuals, and written procedures (Grant, 1996; Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Examples include technical specifications, standard operating procedures, or policy documents. Because it can be articulated clearly, explicit knowledge lends itself to quick dissemination across organisational boundaries and digital platforms.

In contrast, tacit knowledge is deeply personal, experiential, and specific to context. It resides in individuals' minds and is often gained through socialisation, observation, or on-the-job experience rather than formal instruction (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Tacit knowledge includes insights, intuitions, and hunches that are difficult to articulate. As Kogut and Zander (1992) explain, it is “inarticulable,” making it challenging to transfer through written or spoken communication. For example, the know-how of a skilled artisan or the problem-solving ability of an experienced project manager is largely tacit and must be shared through mentorship, storytelling, or direct involvement. The importance of tacit knowledge in organisational contexts cannot be overstated. It forms the foundation of innovation, creativity, and strategic problem-solving (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Buckman, 2004). Organisations that can effectively harness and share tacit knowledge are more agile and innovative. Especially in project-based environments like NPOs, the ability to transfer experience-based knowledge across temporary teams can significantly improve adaptability and performance (Kokt & Makumbe, 2020).

However, knowledge sharing—especially of tacit knowledge—is not without barriers. Trust, openness, communication channels, and organisational culture significantly affect whether knowledge is hoarded or disseminated (McDermott & O'Dell, 2001; Al-Alawi et al., 2007). Employees may withhold knowledge due to fear of losing power, lack of recognition, or

interpersonal conflicts. Moreover, organisational structures and leadership styles can either foster or inhibit an organisational culture of knowledge sharing. For instance, bureaucratic and hierarchical environments often discourage the informal exchanges necessary for the transfer of tacit knowledge (Suppiah & Sandhu, 2011).

Organisational culture, therefore, plays a crucial role in shaping knowledge-sharing behaviours. According to Schein (2004), organisational culture comprises the shared assumptions, values, and norms that define appropriate behaviour in an organisation. In organisational cultures characterised by openness, collaboration, and trust—such as the “clan” or “adhocracy” types identified by Cameron and Quinn (2006)—knowledge sharing is more likely to flourish. On the other hand, in rigid, control-oriented organisational cultures, employees may fear making mistakes or exposing knowledge gaps, thus limiting sharing (Suppiah & Sandhu, 2011; Kathiravelu, Mansor, Ramayah & Idris, 2013).

Recent research confirms the link between knowledge sharing and innovation. Kamasak and Bulutlar (2010) note that effective knowledge sharing, especially of tacit knowledge, encourages both exploratory innovation (such as radical changes and new products) and exploitative innovation (such as incremental improvements). When employees openly share insights, reflect on experiences, and collaborate on new ideas, organisational learning and innovation improve. Additionally, Khan et al. (2022) emphasise that leadership styles alone cannot foster innovative behaviours in higher education institutions unless an organisational culture of knowledge sharing supports them.

It is also important to note that not all knowledge sharing is beneficial unless aligned with strategic objectives. Fullwood, Rowley and Delbridge (2013) emphasise that excessive or unfocused knowledge exchange may overwhelm employees or lead to information fatigue. Thus, effective knowledge management systems are needed to filter, validate, and integrate shared knowledge into daily practice. In project-based NPOs—where teams are often temporary and interdisciplinary—formal mechanisms, such as after-action reviews and shared digital repositories, and informal practices, like mentoring and storytelling, can enhance the capture and transfer of critical experiential knowledge (Iqbal et al., 2025).

The digital age has changed how knowledge is shared. Although platforms like knowledge management systems (KMS), enterprise social networks, and collaborative tools support explicit knowledge sharing, they often fail to capture and transfer tacit knowledge (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Face-to-face interaction, shared experiences, and contextual understanding are still essential for transmitting tacit knowledge. Therefore, combining technological methods with human-centered practices is becoming more advisable.

2.2. Theoretical framework

The Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) theories underpin this study. The theories are discussed below.

2.1.2 Resource-Based View

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is a fundamental theory in strategic management that describes how firms can gain lasting competitive advantage by utilising their internal resources capabilities. This perspective marked a shift from traditional industrial organisation (I/O) economics—which emphasised external market structure—as the primary determinant of firm performance, to a view that internal firm resources can be equally, if not more, influential in shaping long-term success (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993). According to RBV, firms are inherently heterogeneous, and it is this variation in their internal resource bases that accounts for differences in performance outcomes (Madhani, 2010; Lockett, Thompson & Morgenstern, 2009:10).

2.1.3 Linking the RBV to this study

Central to the RBV is the assertion that not all resources contribute equally to competitive advantage. For a resource to yield a sustainable competitive edge, it must meet four key criteria: it must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). This framework, first outlined by Barney (1991), has become a cornerstone of modern strategic thinking.

- Valuable resources allow an organisation to exploit environmental opportunities or neutralise threats. In this study, organisational culture and knowledge sharing are considered valuable as they facilitate innovation, adaptability, and responsiveness—capabilities that are essential in the complex environments of project-based NPOs.
- Rare resources are those that are not widely possessed by competitors. An organisational culture that embeds trust, collaboration, and continuous learning is relatively uncommon and, therefore, serves as a source of competitive differentiation.
- Inimitable resources cannot be easily replicated by competitors. As Lockett et al. (2009:12) note, resources that are socially complex, path dependent, or causally ambiguous—such as a deeply rooted organisational culture or tacit knowledge shared through informal relationships—are often inimitable.

- Non-substitutable resources are those for which no strategic equivalents exist. For example, no system or process can fully substitute for the kind of intrinsic motivation, psychological safety, and mutual trust fostered by a supportive organisational culture.

The RBV also makes an important distinction between resources and capabilities. Resources are defined as the firm's assets—tangible (e.g., buildings, technology) and intangible (e.g., brand equity, organisational culture, knowledge)—that can be drawn upon to carry out activities. Capabilities, in contrast, refer to the firm's capacity to deploy and combine resources effectively. This distinction is critical to this study, where organisational culture is viewed as a key intangible resource, and knowledge sharing is positioned as a dynamic capability that facilitates innovation performance (Peteraf & Barney, 2010, p. 4).

2.1.4 Resource-Based View Critique

As RBV has developed, so have critiques of its conceptual limits. Lockett et al. (2009) argue that early versions of RBV were often tautological or lacked clarity in defining what makes a resource strategic. Additionally, empirical studies faced difficulties in measuring resources and establishing causal links between them and firm outcomes. In response, scholars have added extensions such as the dynamic capability framework, which emphasises how firms adapt, integrate, and reconfigure resources in rapidly changing environments. This is especially relevant to project-based NPOs, where resource limitations and changing stakeholder demands require flexible and knowledge-driven responses.

Despite these critiques, RBV remains a robust lens through which to examine the internal foundations of sustained performance. One of its enduring strengths lies in its emphasis on firm-specific assets and processes—attributes that are often neglected in externally focused models. In the context of this study, RBV provides the theoretical grounding to explore how unique and intangible internal factors—specifically, organisational culture—serve as enablers of knowledge sharing, which in turn enhances employees' innovative work behaviours.

By applying the RBV, this study investigates how the interplay between organisational culture (as a strategic resource) and knowledge sharing (as a capability) contributes to innovative outcomes in project-based NPO environments. The theory not only supports the structural design of the conceptual model but also informs the rationale for empirically testing the relationships between these constructs. Ultimately, the RBV emphasises the strategic importance of cultivating internal strengths as a pathway to sustained organisational success.

2.1.5 The Knowledge-Based View (KBV)

From a theoretical standpoint, the knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm, an extension of the resource-based view (RBV), posits that knowledge is the most strategically significant resource a firm possesses (Grant, 1996). According to this view, firms exist to integrate and apply the specialised knowledge of individuals. In project-driven NPOs, this suggests that performance and innovation rely heavily on the organisation's ability to capture, disseminate, and apply both tacit and explicit knowledge from one project to the next.

Knowledge—especially in its tacit form—is a vital organisational resource that underpins learning, collaboration, and innovation. The distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge is essential for understanding the challenges and opportunities inherent in knowledge sharing. Cultural, structural, and technological factors all influence whether and how knowledge is shared. For project-based NPOs operating in dynamic environments, nurturing an organisational culture that promotes trust, collaboration, and continuous learning is critical for effective knowledge sharing and, by extension, innovative work behaviour. This study, therefore, positions knowledge sharing not only as a behavioural process but also as a strategic capability rooted in organisational culture.

The following section (hypotheses development) discusses the relationships among the variables under study.

2.1.6 Hypotheses development

2.1.6.1 Organisational culture and innovation

Organisational culture profoundly impacts innovation by shaping the shared norms, beliefs, and practices that guide employee behaviour and decision-making. Organisational cultures that foster innovation are characterised by tolerance for ambiguity, risk, and conflict, as well as decentralised structures that empower employees to explore alternative solutions to achieve organisational goals (Zhang, Li & Wang, 2023; Parveen, 2023). Further, more recent evidence from Zhang et al. (2023) emphasises that psychological safety, collectivism, and lower power distance — **are some of the key** dimensions of organisational culture — positively influence innovation by creating social and performance management contexts that facilitate experimentation and autonomy. This aligns with classic models of organic organisations, which posit that innovative organisations comprise adaptive, flexible cultural orientations.

Kathiravelu et al. (2013) identified seven cultural norms essential for fostering innovation, such as support for creativity, open-mindedness, moderate risk-taking, and the allocation of resources

to nurture new ideas. These norms underscore the role of organisational culture as a shared system of meaning, which not only distinguishes one organisation from another but also actively drives innovation (Schein, 2012). The way organisations sense and adapt to environmental changes significantly affects their ability to execute innovation strategies effectively. This implies that organisations with a proactive and adaptive cultural orientation can enhance firm innovations. Previous studies highlight that organisational culture significantly impacts innovation (Azeem et al., 2021; Iqbal, 2025). Owing to the discussion above, the following hypotheses can be made:

H1: *Organisational culture positively influences innovation*

2.1.6.2 Organisational culture and knowledge sharing

The culture of an organisation is critical in advancing knowledge sharing. This is because the culture of an organisation is instrumental in creating an environment that either impedes or facilitates knowledge exchange among employees. Siadat et al. (2016) argue that organisations seeking sustainable success must understand how organisational culture influences knowledge sharing. For example, a collaborative organisational culture fosters a sense of openness and trust, enabling employees to share knowledge and achieve organisational goals more effectively. Furthermore, the organisational cultural attributes shape decision-making, problem-solving approaches, and the utilisation of opportunities, becoming ingrained norms that are naturally adopted and passed on to new members. For example, values, as a core component of organisational culture, function as informal social controls, establishing behavioural expectations in the workplace (Arekkuzhiyil, 2016). Hence, values can emphasise collaboration in the workplace, thus improving knowledge sharing. A supportive organisational culture aligns knowledge management (KM) practices with organisational effectiveness, facilitating knowledge sharing as a natural and voluntary activity. Conversely, an inappropriate organisational culture can obstruct the sharing of knowledge (Arekkuzhiyil, 2016; Jalal et al., 2011). The following organisational cultural attributes are key for knowledge sharing:

Employees: While processes and technologies are integral to KM, it is the people within an organisation who serve as the true drivers of success. Employees act as the creators, sources, and consumers of knowledge, bringing unique experiences, creativity, and skills to KM processes (Omotayo, 2015). Neumann and Tome (2011) emphasise that sustainable knowledge flow relies on employees, with their willingness to share knowledge being central to its dissemination within and across organisations (Han, Seo et al. 2016). This willingness is directly influenced by organisational culture, which shapes employees' basic assumptions, norms, and values, fostering an environment conducive to knowledge sharing (Schein, 2012).

Collaboration: is a crucial factor in knowledge sharing, integrating tangible and intangible assets to meet customer needs and enhance competitive advantage (Whitehead et al., 2019). Social networking platforms further boost collaboration by building communities of practice where employees can exchange knowledge through activities like posting information, sharing insights, and organising events (Abedin et al., 2013). These platforms are especially valuable in industries such as tourism, where sharing tacit knowledge is vital (Nezakati et al., 2015).

Trust: Trust is essential for effective knowledge sharing. An organisational culture built on trust makes employees feel secure enough to share both tacit and explicit knowledge, encouraging open collaboration (Zhang, 2014). Conversely, organisations characterised by distrust and secrecy face major barriers to sharing knowledge, as employees may see knowledge as a source of power and fear losing their competitive advantage (Deverell & Burnett, 2012; Wah et al., 2018). Past studies have confirmed that organisational culture strongly influences knowledge sharing (Kokt & Makumbe, 2020; Azeem et al., 2021; Lam et al., 2021; Iqbal, 2025). Based on this discussion, it can therefore be hypothesised that:

H2: *Organisational culture positively influences knowledge sharing*

2.1.6.3 Knowledge sharing and innovation

Knowledge sharing is a vital driver of innovation, as it promotes the exchange of ideas, expertise, and skills necessary for developing new solutions. Innovation is unlikely to occur without knowledge sharing, as highlighted by Castaneda & Cuellar (2020). Collaborative knowledge acquisition enhances both the effectiveness and efficiency of innovation, enabling organisations to leverage diverse perspectives and expertise in the innovation process (Castaneda & Cuellar, 2020). In support of this, authors such as Wang and Wang (2012) also argued that knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in driving innovation by enabling employees to exchange knowledge, skills, and experiences that contribute to value creation. Firms that effectively facilitate knowledge sharing are more likely to develop innovative solutions, as knowledge is firm-specific, socially complex, and path-dependent (Chiang & Hung, 2010; Gachter, von Krogh, & Haefliger, 2010). Furthermore, the ability to transform and utilise knowledge enhances an organisation's capacity to introduce new problem-solving methods and respond swiftly to market demands (Wang & Wang, 2012).

However, successful knowledge management depends on employees' willingness to share knowledge, as continuous knowledge exchange fosters innovation. Employees often rely on both tacit knowledge—such as personal experience and skills—and explicit knowledge—such as documented processes and best practices—to complete innovative tasks (Lundvall & Nielsen,

2007). Tacit knowledge resides within the mind of an individual; hence, its effectiveness depends on the willingness of an individual to share it. Promoting an organisational culture of knowledge sharing accelerates responses to customer demands, reduces operational costs (Sher & Lee, 2004), and strengthens an organisation's learning and market orientation, leading to greater adaptability and competitiveness (Lin, 2007; Ordaz, Cruz, & Ginel, 2010), and the development of new business opportunities (Calantone et al., 2002; Vaccaro et al., 2010). Previous research confirms that knowledge sharing has a significant impact on innovation (Lam et al., 2021; Koko & Makumbe, 2020; Iqbal, 2025). Accordingly, it can be hypothesised that:

H3: Knowledge sharing positively influences innovation

2.1.6.4 The mediating role of knowledge sharing

Multiple studies (Al-Husseini, 2021; Lei, 2021; Rubel et al., 2021; Imam & Zaheer, 2021) have confirmed the mediating role of knowledge sharing. It is widely acknowledged that knowledge sharing (KS) is essential for sustainable innovation because it improves an organisation's capacity to manage knowledge effectively (Ba Le et al., 2018). An organisational culture that neglects knowledge sharing cannot support sustainable innovation, as knowledge and experience exchange among individuals occurs only through sharing. Such collaboration equips individuals with new skills, complements their existing knowledge, and helps achieve organisational goals more efficiently. Organisational cultures that promote teamwork, open communication, and cooperation foster an environment where social interaction and knowledge exchange flourish across all organisational levels.

An organisational culture centred on knowledge sharing is crucial for fostering innovation by promoting the exchange of information regarding business needs, technological possibilities, and collaboration with customers and partners (Lam, Nguyen, et al., 2021). Implementing knowledge-sharing systems encourages organisations to shift from traditional operational approaches to new processes, organisational cultures, and practices that integrate innovation. To effectively meet the fast-changing demands of the market and customers, organisations need to develop an organisational culture that nurtures knowledge. Such an organisational culture helps firms forecast and tackle environmental challenges, maintaining their competitiveness through continuous innovation. Based on the discussion above, it can be hypothesised that:

H4: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between organisational culture and innovation

In light of the abovementioned hypotheses, this investigation presents the conceptual framework below:

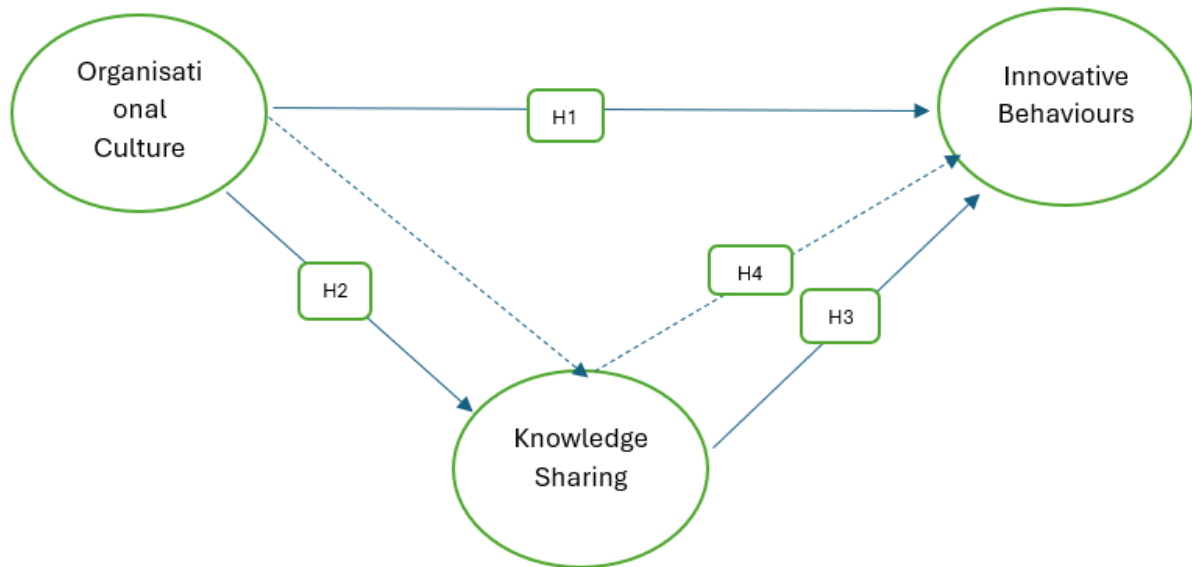


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

Source: Researchers Own Creation

Figure 2.1 shows the hypotheses that were tested in this investigation:

H1: Organisational culture positively influences innovative behaviours.

H2: Organisational culture positively influences knowledge sharing.

H3: Knowledge sharing has a positive influence on innovative behaviours.

H4. Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between organisational culture and innovative behaviours.

The section below gives a brief synopsis of previous studies regarding the variables under investigation. It discusses research results from different parts of the continent.

2.2 Empirical Studies:

Supporting the current study's findings, an increasing amount of empirical research emphasises the vital role of knowledge sharing in promoting innovation across organisational settings. Iqbal et al. (2022), in a study of Pakistani project-based organisations, confirmed that knowledge sharing greatly contributes to project innovation, supporting the idea that collaborative knowledge exchange refines ideas and fosters new project management methods. Likewise, another study in the same context showed that knowledge sharing impacts project success through the mediating effect of innovation, and that transformational leadership styles further strengthen this

relationship (Iqbal et al., 2025). This closely aligns with the NPO project environment under investigation. Khan et al. (2022) examined the dynamics within higher education institutions in Pakistan and found that a supportive organisational culture encourages knowledge sharing, which subsequently boosts innovative work behaviour. The study also revealed that transformational leadership indirectly enhances innovation through improved knowledge-sharing mechanisms.

Supporting these findings culturally, Suppiah and Sandhu (2011) discovered that clan and adhocracy cultures encourage tacit knowledge sharing, which is closely associated with innovation, while control-focused cultures tend to suppress it. In the wider Asian context, Kathiravelu, Mansor, Ramayah, and Idris (2013) showed that organisational cultures based on trust and collaboration directly boost knowledge sharing, thereby fostering innovation and increasing employee engagement.

Fullwood et al. (2013) carried out a study at UK universities indicating that knowledge sharing among academics greatly fosters innovative teaching methods and research productivity. Their results highlight the critical role of a transparent and collaborative environment in promoting innovation through interpersonal trust and dynamic knowledge exchange.

Together, these studies consistently demonstrate that both organisational culture and leadership are central to enabling knowledge sharing and innovation, echoing the patterns observed in the current research on NPOs. These studies are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: A summary of key findings in empirical studies

Study	Context	Key Finding	Relevance
Iqbal et al. (2025)	Project-based organisations in Pakistan	Knowledge sharing enhances innovation and project success	Direct alignment with this investigation.
Khan et al. (2022)	Higher education	Organisational culture enables knowledge sharing, which leads to innovative behaviour	Emphasises the indirect pathway of knowledge sharing
Suppiah & Sandhu (2011)	Public/private organisations in Malaysia	Clan culture promotes tacit knowledge sharing	Supports organisational culture-based knowledge sharing

Kathiravelu, Mansor, Ramayah & Idris (2013)	Asian organisations	A trust-based organisational culture supports innovation through knowledge sharing	Reinforces the link between trust, knowledge sharing, and innovation
Fullwood et al. (2013)	United Kingdom universities	Open organisational culture drives innovative output via knowledge sharing	Confirms the importance of organisational culture and sharing

Source: Researchers' Own Creation

2.3 Summary of Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 critically examines the theoretical and empirical literature underpinning the study, focusing on the links between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and employees' innovative work behaviour in NPOs. It introduces key frameworks, such as the Resource-Based View and the Knowledge-Based View, which highlight the importance of intangible resources, including organisational culture, knowledge, and innovation, as drivers of sustained competitive advantage. These frameworks underpin how internal organisational factors influence innovation outcomes.

Organisational culture is described as shared values, beliefs, and practices that guide behaviour. The review emphasises that a supportive, collaborative organisational culture promotes trust, openness, and commitment—factors that enhance knowledge sharing and innovation. Empirical studies support the notion that dimensions such as adaptability, involvement, and consistency significantly affect employees' willingness to innovate.

Knowledge sharing is examined as both a process and a result, vital for organisational learning and innovation. Literature indicates that leadership support, trust, and effective communication systems are key enablers, while barriers include knowledge hoarding, inadequate incentives, and rigid hierarchies. Evidence indicates that sharing both tacit and explicit knowledge improves problem-solving and drives innovation.

Innovative work behaviour (IWB) involves generating, promoting, and implementing new ideas. The review differentiates between incremental and radical innovation and stresses that employee behaviours are crucial for organisational adaptation in changing environments. The roles of leadership, organisational support, and psychological safety in boosting IWB are highlighted.

The chapter synthesises findings to show that organisational culture shapes the climate for knowledge sharing, which in turn fosters innovation. Knowledge sharing acts as a mediator—linking cultural support to tangible innovation outcomes. Studies across sectors confirm this three-part relationship.

The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the existing literature: limited research on NPOs in South Africa, inconsistent results on cultural dimensions, and the absence of integrated models connecting organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation. These gaps inform the development of testable hypotheses for the empirical analysis in later chapters.

Overall, Chapter 2 constructs a robust conceptual framework, reviewing relevant theories and prior research on organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation. It illustrates their interrelationships, points out gaps, and sets the stage for the study's hypotheses.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the research design used to explore the link between organisational culture and employees' innovative work behaviours, focusing on how knowledge sharing mediates this relationship within project-based non-profit organisations (NPOs) in Gauteng Province. The design functioned as a blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis, ensuring the research aims were effectively met.

Since the study aimed to examine relationships between specific constructs within a theoretical framework, a quantitative, non-experimental approach was deemed suitable. This enabled the collection of numerical data and the application of statistical methods to test hypotheses and evaluate the strength and direction of these relationships. The quantitative method supported objectivity, reproducibility, and the broad applicability of results.

The cross-sectional design captured data at a single point in time to evaluate current perceptions and behaviours among employees in NPO project settings. Using a structured questionnaire, the study aimed for consistent responses to facilitate statistical analysis and interpretation. This section establishes the methodological foundation by justifying the chosen design in relation to the research problem and goals. Later sections detail the population, sampling strategy, data collection tools, and analysis methodology.

3.2 Research philosophy

Research philosophy is central to any form of scientific inquiry. Before undertaking an investigation, researchers are required to determine their underlying philosophical assumptions, as these form the basis for the research design (Bahari, 2010). The two primary philosophical assumptions in research are ontology and epistemology (Wahyuni, 2012). This study adhered to an ontological position of objectivism and an epistemological stance of positivism. These positions advocate for the use of scientific approaches to generate valid and reliable knowledge (Wahyuni, 2012). According to Saunders et al. (2009), positivism emphasises quantifiable observations that could be statistically analysed. In alignment with this stance, the study collected quantitative data and analysed it using advanced statistical tools.

3.3 Research approach and design

When conducting research, it is essential to establish a clear and well-defined methodology. According to Wahyuni (2012), research methodology offers a structured framework for conducting research within a specific paradigm. It includes the core beliefs that guide a researcher's choice of methods and analytical strategies, thereby providing the rationale for the selected research design.

A research design acts as a blueprint for collecting, measuring, and analysing data (Bryman & Bell, 2021). Likewise, Sekaran and Bougie (2016) described a research design as a plan that outlines how data is gathered, analysed, and interpreted to answer the research questions. The choice of a specific research design reflects the focus on important parts of the research process, including sampling methods, instruments, and analytical techniques.

For this research, a survey design was chosen as the most appropriate method to address the research problem and objectives. According to Bryman and Bell (2021), cross-sectional surveys allow for the collection of quantifiable data on multiple variables from a wide population at one point in time. This approach was especially useful for examining relationships between variables among a sample of South African NPOs. Creswell and Creswell (2019) also endorse this approach, noting that survey research offers a numerical description of trends, attitudes, or opinions within a population by analysing a sample of that population. Although surveys can be cross-sectional or longitudinal, this study employed a cross-sectional design using self-administered questionnaires.

The study used a quantitative research method because it was the most suitable for testing theoretical relationships between defined variables. Creswell and Creswell (2019) defined quantitative research as an approach used to test objective theories by examining the relationships among variables using numerical data and statistical analysis. The preference for a quantitative approach stemmed from its reliance on deductive reasoning to identify patterns in human behaviour by isolating observable and measurable components (variables). This enabled the exploration of variable relationships through the application of statistical tools (Makambe & Osupile, 2021). Bahari (2010) also noted that quantitative researchers primarily built knowledge on positivist assumptions, which focus on cause-and-effect relationships, the reduction of phenomena into testable components, and the use of empirical data to support or refute theories. Yilmaz (2013) further explained that quantitative research is grounded in objectivist epistemology and aimed to formulate universal explanatory laws regarding human behaviour through statistical measurement and causal analysis.

In this study, a positivist philosophical orientation, combined with a survey design and quantitative methodology, was employed to examine the relationships between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative behaviours within selected project-based NPOs in Gauteng.

3.4 Population

The term "population" denotes the entire group of individuals, events, or objects a researcher aims to examine (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It is considered the universe of units—such as people, organisations, or regions—from which the sample is drawn (Bryman et al., 2021, p. 170). Botma et al. (2021:260) describe the population as all elements—be they individuals, objects, or substances—that meet specific inclusion criteria within a particular universe and are of interest to the researcher.

This study's population included all staff members working in project-based roles within the Solidarity Movement, a South African non-profit organisation based in Gauteng. Data from the organisation's Human Resources Department indicate there are about 750 employees. These staff members come from diverse professional backgrounds, such as communication, marketing, legal services, project coordination, administration, management, and academia.ia.

3.5 Scope of the study

This study focused on selected NPOs operating under the umbrella of the Solidarity Movement in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The research specifically examined employees working in project-based environments across various sectors within the movement, including education, community and civil rights, labour unions, property management, culture, and media.

The participating organisations included:

- Education: SolTech (Centurion), Akademia (Centurion), Bo-Karoo Akademie (Orania), and SOS (Centurion).
- Community and Civil Rights: Solidarity Helping Hand (Centurion).
- Labour Union: Solidarity (Centurion and national branches).
- Property Management: Kanton (Centurion).
- Culture and Heritage: FAK (Pretoria).
- Media and Communication: Maroela Media (Pretoria).

Data collection for the study was conducted during June 2025, a period selected to ensure participants had recent and active involvement in ongoing project-based work, thereby enhancing

the relevance and accuracy of responses related to organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behaviours.

The study was geographically limited to Pretoria and Centurion, as these locations hosted most of the selected organisations. While the findings aimed to offer valuable insights into the dynamics of knowledge sharing, organisational culture, and innovation within project-based NPO settings, the generalisability of the results to NPOs in other provinces or sectors was limited. Nonetheless, the study intended to contribute meaningfully to the broader understanding of these constructs within the context of South African non-profit organisations.

3.6 Sampling

This study's sample was a subset of the population (Botma et al., 2021, p. 261). Because the total population was quite large, collecting data from every individual was impractical. The key criterion for selecting the sample was its representativeness—that is, how well its characteristics matched those of the entire population (Polit & Beck, 2016, p. 34). These characteristics typically include variables like education level, employment role, socio-cultural group, socioeconomic status, age, and gender (Botma et al., 2021:152). Therefore, a sample reflecting the broader population was chosen.

The total population for this research consisted of roughly 750 employees of the Solidarity Movement working in project-based roles. A simple random sampling method was used to select participants, ensuring each individual had an equal and independent chance of being chosen, a common practice in probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2009).

According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table (Table 3.1), for a population between 700 and 750, a sample of about 253 respondents was sufficient to produce statistically valid results. This size allowed the findings to be reliably generalised to the larger group of project-based employees in the Solidarity Movement.

Table 3.1: Krejcie and Morgan Sample size determination table

Table 3.1									
<i>Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population</i>									
N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384
<i>Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size</i>					<i>Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970</i>				

Source: Krejcie & Morgan (1970)

To ensure the relevance and reliability of the study's findings, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied when selecting participants for the survey.

3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria

Participants were included in the study if they met the following conditions:

- Employment in an NPO: Participants had to be currently employed in an NPO that was part of the Solidarity Movement within Gauteng Province.
- Project-based work: Participants had to be actively engaged in project-based roles within their respective organisations. This included positions across sectors such as education, community and civil rights, unions, property management, law, culture, and media.
- Minimum work experience: Participants were required to have at least six months of work experience in their current organisation. This ensured adequate exposure to the organisation's culture and its knowledge-sharing practices.
- Willingness to participate: Only those who voluntarily agreed to take part in the study and provided informed consent were included.

- Age requirement: Participants had to be 18 years or older to ensure ethical compliance and maturity in responding.

3.6.2 Exclusion Criteria

Participants were excluded from the study if any of the following conditions were met::

- Not employed in an NPO: Individuals employed in sectors outside the NPO context of the Solidarity Movement (e.g., private, public, or governmental sectors) were excluded.
- Non-project-based roles: Employees in purely administrative or operational roles not directly involved in project execution were not eligible to participate.
- Individuals with less than six months of employment in the organisation were excluded to ensure they had sufficient familiarity with it. context.
- Refusal to provide consent: Individuals who declined participation or withdrew consent at any point during the study were excluded.
- Temporary or contract workers: Employees on short-term contracts or internships, who may not be substantially engaged in organisational knowledge-sharing or innovation processes, were excluded.

This inclusion and exclusion framework ensured the study targeted participants with relevant experience and exposure to the organisational dynamics being studied, which helped improve the validity of the results.

A total of 253 employees from selected NPOs within the Solidarity Movement participated in the survey. They came from various sectors such as education, community and civil rights, unions, property management, culture, and media. All had at least six months of experience in project-based roles in their organisations. This sampling aimed to gather diverse insights on how knowledge sharing influences the relationship between organisational culture and employees' innovative work behaviours in project-driven NPOs environments.

3.7 Data collection

The data collection process involved the selection and appointment of a gatekeeper who facilitated the research process.

3.7.1 Role of the gatekeeper

A gatekeeper played a pivotal role in facilitating access to the research setting while ensuring ethical compliance and safeguarding participants' rights. In this study, the gatekeeper was a

representative from the Solidarity Movement's Human Resources (HR) department or an appointed official within the selected NPOs.

3.7.2 The responsibilities of the gatekeeper include

The gatekeeper's responsibilities included:

- Authorising access to the study population: The gatekeeper granted permission for the researcher to distribute survey invitations and communicate with potential participants.
- Ensuring ethical compliance: The gatekeeper ensured that the research aligned with organisational policies and did not interfere with daily operations.
- Protecting participants' rights: By overseeing the research process, the gatekeeper ensured that participation was voluntary, confidential, and free from coercion.
- Facilitating communication: The gatekeeper assisted in introducing the study to employees and addressing any concerns they had about participation.
- Maintaining organisational integrity: The gatekeeper ensured that the research posed no risks to the organisation, such as reputational harm or data security breaches.
- The researcher formally requested written approval from the gatekeeper before commencing with data collection, in alignment with institutional research ethics requirements.

3.8 Research Instrument

The study employed a structured questionnaire to collect data from participants. The structured questionnaire included predetermined response categories, which enabled the collection of diverse perspectives from respondents (Yilmaz, 2013). For a study involving a large sample and intended for quantitative analysis, the questionnaire was deemed the most appropriate data-gathering instrument (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Furthermore, the structured questionnaire featured standardised questions that the targeted participants consistently interpreted (Saunders et al., 2009), thereby improving the reliability and comparability of the research findings.

Survey research played a key role in the study design, supporting exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory analysis (Botma et al., 2021, p. 160). The sample was made up of individual elements. Survey research allowed the collection of original data from a population that was too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2013:229; Fallah et al., 2020:140). A probability sampling method was used to ensure that the results could be generalised to the larger population (Botma et al., 2021:160). According to Hofstee (2006:122), "Surveys can be an excellent way of finding out people's opinions, desires and attitudes and be used to elicit purely factual information." In

this study, the survey employed a questionnaire as the main tool for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of fixed questions, batteries of questions, tests, and/or scales with pre-coded response options. Participants could not elaborate on answers or seek clarification (Botma et al., 2021:160). The questionnaires were completed individually, distributed electronically, and submitted online by the participants.

3.9 Measurement scales

The questionnaire contained four sections:

- Section A – Demographics
- Sections B to D used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to agree (5) strongly.

Section B measured the organisational culture variable. Organisational culture was operationalised using a scale developed by Azeem et al. (2021). A sample item from this scale was: *“This organisation has informal norms and rules which are to be followed by everyone.”*

Section C measured the innovative behaviours variable. Innovation was measured using items developed by Lam, Nguyen, Le, & Tran (2021). A sample item from this scale was: *“I can develop ideas and solutions for creative opportunities in my field.”*

Section D measured the knowledge-sharing variable. Knowledge sharing was assessed using validated items adapted from the work of Kamasak and Bulutlar (2009). A sample item from this scale was: *“When I learn something new, I see to it that co-workers can learn it as well.”*

3.10 Reliability and validity analysis

The data were assessed for validity and reliability using established statistical techniques.

Indicator reliability was assessed by analysing the reflective indicator loadings, with items having loadings above 0.5 considered acceptable for their respective latent constructs (Hulland, 1999).

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using both Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach’s alpha, where a CR value of 0.7 or higher indicated satisfactory reliability, as suggested by Gefen et al. (2000). Similarly, Hair et al. (2017) noted that Cronbach’s alpha (α) values above 0.60 are acceptable in social science research.

Convergent validity was determined by the degree to which a measure correlated positively with other measures of the same construct (Hair et al., 2012), assessed via the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a value above 0.5 indicating adequacy.

Discriminant validity was checked using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, recommended by Hair et al. (2012), which involves comparing the square root of each construct's AVE to its correlations with other constructs. Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the AVE exceeds the construct's correlations with any other constructs in the model.

3.11 Data Collection Channel

The data collection channel used in this research study was a Microsoft Form, an online questionnaire platform. A structured questionnaire primarily consisting of Likert-scale items was employed to gather and analyse the data. According to Ali (2021:6), beyond the content of the questionnaire, the sequencing and arrangement of questions were critical for eliciting effective responses from participants. Well-structured questionnaires enhanced respondent comprehension, thereby increasing the likelihood of obtaining valid and relevant primary data. This organisation ensured a logical flow of responses and reduced cognitive overload, with simpler questions placed before more complex ones to maintain participant engagement and accuracy (Ali, 2021:6).

3.11.1 Data collection procedure

The data collection procedure followed several key steps. First, the research questions were formulated and refined in consultation with the research supervisor to ensure appropriate wording and structure. Upon receiving approval, the researcher constructed the questionnaire using the Microsoft Form platform and conducted internal testing of the survey tool. Following this, a pre-test was conducted with selected experts in the field. Once the tool was validated, the questionnaire was distributed to the sample group using the approved recruitment strategy, along with informed consent documentation. Data were collected over a period of one month before analysis commenced.

Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a panel of experts and pilot participants. As Botma et al. (2021:160) recommend, the pre-test included individuals with expertise in the discipline and familiarity with questionnaire design, as well as participants similar to those in the actual sample, though not part of it. The purpose of the pre-test was to evaluate the instrument for content-related validity, including face and construct validity, and to assess the clarity, readability, and appropriateness of the questions. The pre-test also evaluated the effectiveness

of instructions, the completeness of response sets, the estimated completion time, and the overall functionality of the data-gathering tool (Botma et al., 2021:160).

During data collection, the researcher adhered to several ethical considerations, as outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2019:93–94), including:

- Respecting the research site and minimising disruption.
- Ensuring all participants were equally considered, despite the absence of direct personal benefit from the study.
- Avoiding deception of participants.
- Acknowledging and addressing potential power imbalances
- Preventing exploitation of participants.
- Avoiding the collection of any harmful or sensitive information.

After the survey period was concluded, the data were analysed to identify associations and patterns between key variables (Bryman et al., 2021:237). During analysis, the researcher maintained academic integrity and ethical rigour by (Creswell & Creswell, 2019:94–95):

- Avoiding naivety or researcher bias.
- Reporting both positive and negative findings to ensure transparency and honesty.
- Ensuring the privacy and anonymity of participants by disassociating names from response data.

3.12 POPIA

To ensure compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) (Act No. 4 of 2013) and to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of participants, this study adhered to strict data protection protocols. All personal information collected was managed in accordance with POPIA guidelines, ensuring that data were processed lawfully, transparently, and securely (Republic of South Africa, 2013). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without facing any consequences.

No personally identifiable information—such as names, employee numbers, or contact details—was disclosed or linked to the research findings. All data were anonymised and stored securely, with access restricted to the researcher and authorised academic supervisors. Upon completion of the study, all data were retained for a period not exceeding five years, after which they were

permanently deleted in accordance with the South African Information Regulator's data retention and disposal policies (South African Information Regulator, 2021).

These procedures guaranteed the full protection of participants' privacy, dignity, and rights throughout the research process.

3.13 Data coding and analysis

To facilitate data analysis, responses were coded according to the questionnaire structure, enabling efficient data entry and analysis with statistical software. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed using SmartPLS 4 to examine the hypothesised relationships between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behaviour. Before SEM, the dataset was tested for normality using the Shapiro-Wilks test. The constructs' reliability and validity were assessed through various statistical methods. Internal consistency was checked with Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with thresholds of 0.7 or above considered acceptable. Convergent validity was evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values over 0.5 indicating good convergence. Discriminant validity was confirmed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which requires the square root of each construct's AVE to be greater than its correlations with other constructs.

These procedures ensured the measurement model had strong psychometric properties before analysing the structural model.

3.14 Trustworthiness of the data

The trustworthiness of the data in this study was established through a combination of methodological rigour, ethical safeguards, and statistical validation techniques. Trustworthiness in quantitative research primarily concerns the accuracy, consistency, and credibility of the measurement instruments and data collected (Botma et al., 2021). To ensure reliability, the study employed established and validated measurement scales adapted from prior research, such as those by Azeem et al. (2021) for organisational culture and Kamasak and Bulutlar (2009) for knowledge sharing. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability, with thresholds of 0.7 and above regarded as acceptable (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, validity was ensured through the use of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for convergent validity and the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2012). The use of probability sampling increased the likelihood that the sample was representative of the larger population, enhancing the external validity of the findings (Polit & Beck, 2016). Ethical safeguards, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and data anonymity, further

reinforced the credibility and ethical integrity of the data (Republic of South Africa, 2013; Botma et al., 2021). Collectively, these practices ensured that the data used in the analysis were trustworthy and suitable for drawing meaningful conclusions.

3.15 Ethical considerations

In conducting this research, ethical considerations were treated as a central aspect of the research process. Ethical issues often arise in studies involving data collection from and about people, and addressing these concerns was essential in upholding the integrity of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2019, p. 88). The researcher took proactive steps to protect participants, build trust, promote research integrity, and prevent any form of misconduct that could reflect negatively on the individuals involved or on the institutions associated with the study. Furthermore, contemporary ethical challenges, including personal disclosure, authenticity, cross-cultural sensitivity, and privacy concerns related to digital data collection, were also considered (Creswell & Creswell, 2019, p. 88).

3.15.1 Before Commencing the Study

Before starting data collection, ethical approval was received from the North-West University (NWU) Business School's Research Ethics Committee (NWU-00640-25-A4). The researcher strictly followed the guidelines in the ethical clearance framework, making sure the research did not harm participants and met all institutional and legal ethical standards, including POPIA. (Republic of South Africa, 2013).

3.15.2 During Sampling

During the sampling phase, potential participants were contacted via email or WhatsApp to inform them about the purpose of the study. It was clearly communicated that participation in the research was voluntary and that no coercion or pressure would be applied. The communication also clarified the rights of participants, including the right to refuse participation or withdraw at any time without facing any consequences.

3.15.3 During Data Collection

Participants were consistently treated with respect during data collection process. The researcher made sure that no participant was misled about the purpose of the research. Each participant had to sign an informed consent form before taking part in the study. The form (Appendix A) detailed the following ethical assurances:

- Participation in the study would not provide any direct personal benefit.
- Participation was completely voluntary.
- Respondents had the right to withdraw from the study at any point.
- All responses would stay anonymous and confidential.
- Data would not be shared with any supervisors, colleagues, or organisation leadership.
- If a participant chose to withdraw, all data related to their participation would be permanently deleted.

These measures were taken to uphold the ethical principles of autonomy, confidentiality, beneficence, and non-maleficence throughout the research (Botma et al., 2021).²¹

3.16 Limitations of the study

3.16.1 Scope and Generalisability

This research focused on selected NPOs within the Gauteng province, which may have limited the generalisability of the findings to other regions or different organisational settings. The specific cultural and operational dynamics of the NPOs studied may not have fully represented broader trends across South African NPOs or other project-based organisations. Generalisability was a common concern in organisational research, particularly in studies that concentrated on specific sectors or geographic areas (Bryman et al., 2021).

3.16.2 Cross-Sectional Design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, capturing data at a single point in time. While this approach provided valuable insights, it limited the ability to establish causal relationships between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). Longitudinal studies that collect data over time would have offered a better understanding of how these relationships evolve and change within NPOs (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

3.16.3 Self-Reported Data and Response Bias

Data collection depended on self-reported questionnaires, which could have led to response bias. Participants might have given socially desirable answers instead of truthful reflections of their knowledge-sharing behaviours and perceptions of organisational culture. (Botma et al., 2021).

Additionally, differences in individual interpretations of survey questions may have impacted the consistency of responses—a challenge often encountered in survey-based research (Fowler, 2008).

3.16.4 Limited Measurement of External Factors

The study primarily examined internal organisational factors affecting knowledge sharing and innovation. However, external influences such as economic conditions, regulatory changes, and funding constraints also played a significant role in shaping NPO operations and innovation capabilities (DistriksPos, 2024). These external elements, while important, were not explicitly accounted for in the research model, limiting the comprehensiveness of the study's findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2019).

3.16.5 Sample Representativeness

While simple random sampling helped ensure fair participant selection, relying solely on employees from the Solidarity Movement might have introduced bias. The results may not reflect the full diversity in organisational culture and knowledge-sharing practices across various NPOs with different missions, structures, or funding sources. (Polit & Beck, 2016). As research suggested, variations in organisational culture across sectors could significantly influence knowledge-sharing behaviours and innovation performance (Makambe & Osupile, 2021).

3.16.6 Survey-Based Research Constraints

While surveys provided a structured method of data collection, they may not have captured the depth of qualitative insights regarding the nuances of organisational culture and knowledge-sharing behaviours. A mixed-methods approach incorporating interviews or case studies could have enhanced understanding (Bryman et al., 2021), but it fell outside the scope of this study. Qualitative methods often provide richer contextual insights that complement quantitative findings (Yilmaz, 2013).

3.16.7 Technological and Digital Barriers

The study utilised an online survey distribution method, which may have excluded potential participants with limited access to digital resources or low familiarity with online platforms. This could have affected response rates and the diversity of participant perspectives (Ali, 2021). Digital divides remain a concern in research that relies on online data collection, particularly in sectors where technology access varies (Hofstee, 2006).

Despite these limitations, the study provided valuable insights into how organisational culture influenced employees' innovative behaviours through knowledge sharing. The findings contributed to the existing literature and offered practical recommendations for fostering innovation within NPOs.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a descriptive statistical analysis of data collected from 253 respondents. The goal was to outline response patterns related to key constructs: organisational culture, innovative behaviour, and knowledge sharing. The descriptive analysis utilised frequency tables showing how responses were distributed across a five-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.ee.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics include numerical and graphical methods like frequencies, means, and standard deviations, which offer an overview of a dataset's distribution and features (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In this study, demographic and construct-related data were summarised using frequency tables, graphs, and pie charts. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed, with 253 responses received, yielding a response rate of 72.3%. This high response rate increases the trustworthiness of the results and indicates they are likely representative of the target NPO project population.

4.2.1 Demographic profile of respondents

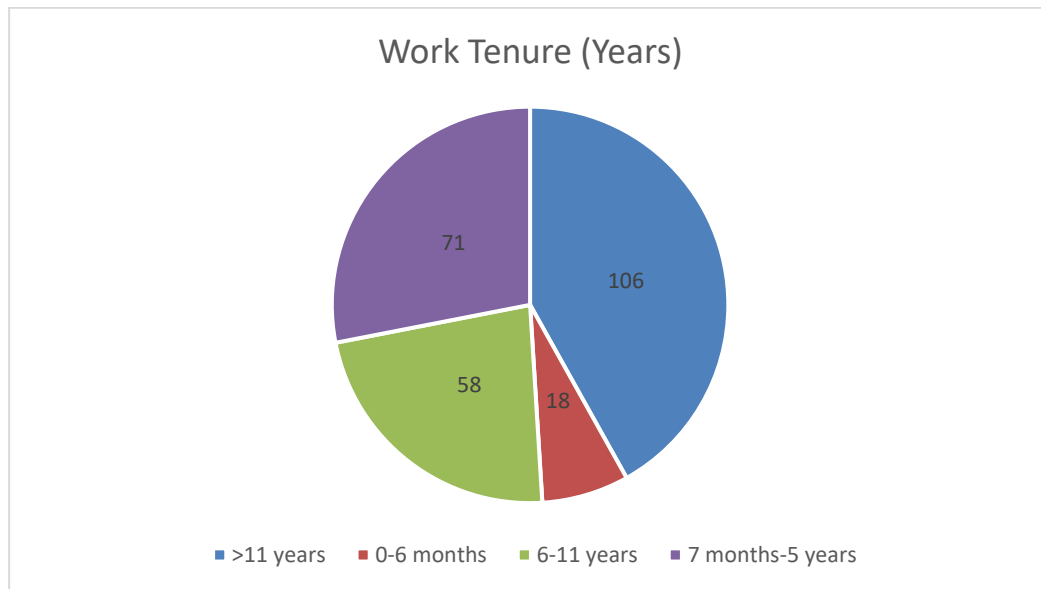


Figure 4.1 Work Tenure Distribution

Figure 4.1 presents the work tenure of respondents. The majority of participants reported being employed for more than 11 years, followed by a smaller proportion indicating less than 5 years of experience and between 6 and 11 years. A minimal portion of respondents reported having less than 6 months of work experience. This distribution highlights a workforce with moderate institutional tenure, suggesting stability and familiarity with organisational culture.

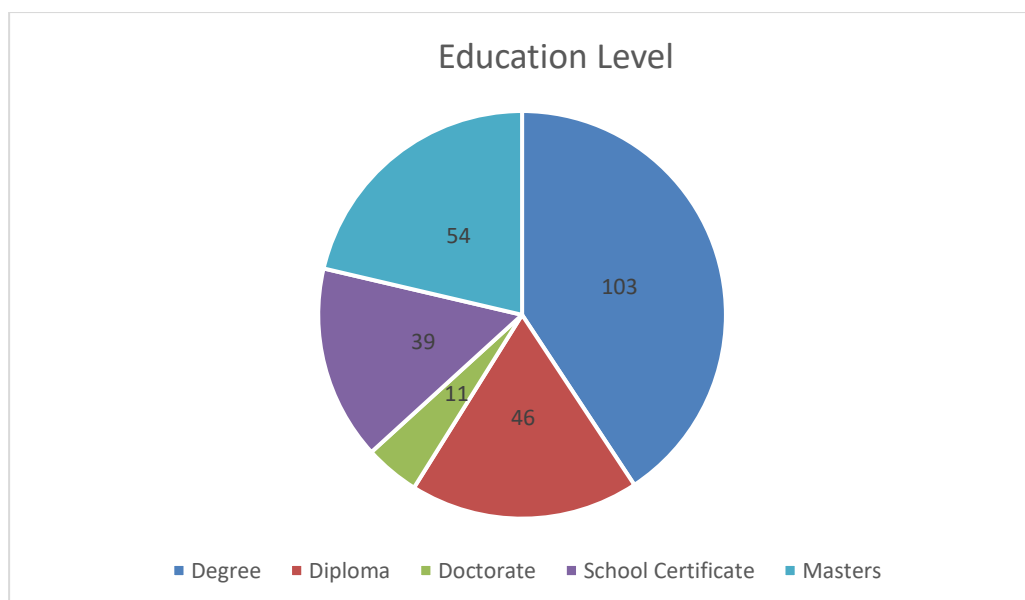


Figure 4.2: Education Level Distribution

Question 2 required respondents to indicate their qualifications. The results are depicted in Figure 4.2 which illustrates the highest level of academic qualification attained by the respondents. Most participants held a bachelor's degrees (40.7%) and this may include an honours degree as well, indicating a highly educated workforce. Other qualifications included, Master's (21.3%), Doctorates (4.3%), and diplomas (18.2%), reflecting a diverse academic backgrounds with a strong presence of postgraduate achievement.

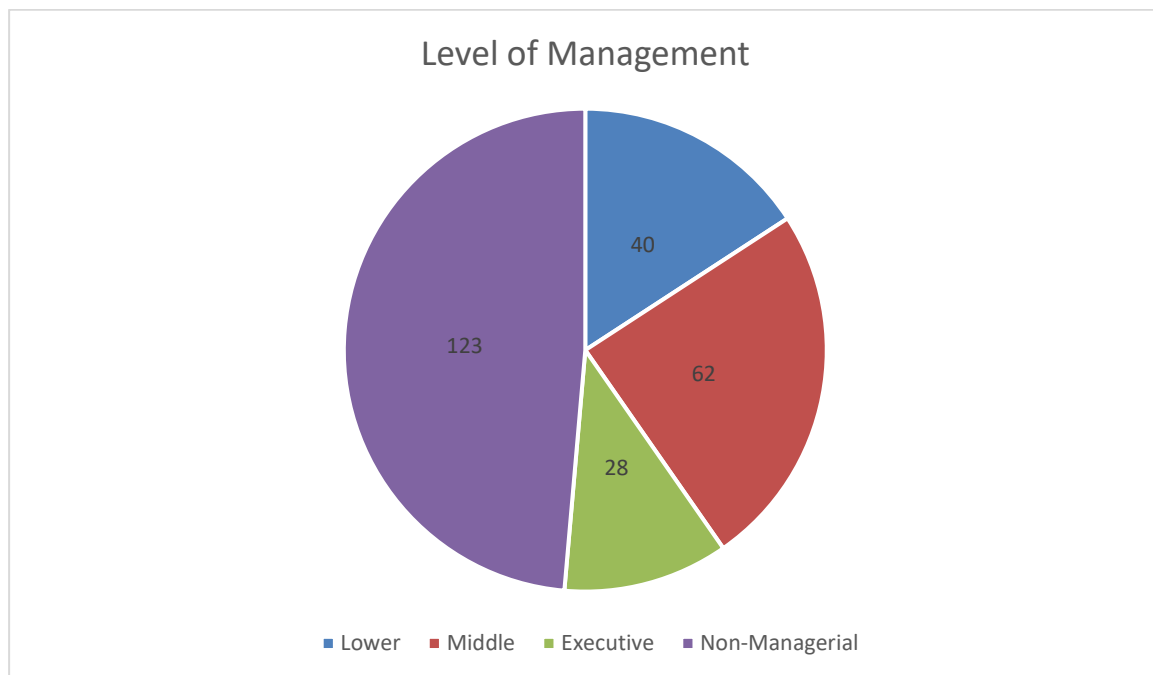


Figure 4.3: Management Level Distribution

In Question 3, respondents had to indicate their level of management. The current management level of respondents is summarised in Figure 4.3. The largest segment consisted of non-management roles (48.6%), with smaller proportions occupying senior (11.1%), middle (24.5%) and lower-level (15.8%) management. This demonstrates that the survey reached a broad spectrum of operational levels, which may enhance the representativeness of perceptions around organisational culture and innovation.

4.2.2 Organisational Culture

This section explores the perceptions of organisational culture (OC) among respondents in the Solidarity Movement as measured through seven survey items (OC1 to OC7). Each item reflected a distinct dimension of organisational culture, and responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

Table 4.1: Organisational Culture Frequencies

	QUESTION	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
		TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %
OC1	We have informal norms and rules that everyone in the organisation is expected to follow.	2.4%	5.5%	7.9%	49.8%	34.4%
OC2	Instructions and regulations are necessary to govern every process of work in the organisation.	0.8%	7.9%	14.2%	43.5%	33.6%
OC3	Customers' interests are never ignored in the decision-making processes of the organisation.	0.8%	8.7%	14.2%	53.0%	23.3%
OC4	We constantly improve our methods of work to gain advantages over rivals in the industry.	1.2%	3.6%	8.7%	40.7%	45.8%
OC5	Agreement is easily achieved, even concerning complex problems within the organisation.	2.0%	11.1%	22.9%	49.0%	15.0%
OC6	In a group, everyone must put forth maximum effort to achieve a common goal.	0.8%	3.2%	11.1%	47.8%	37.2%
OC7	Information is readily available for everyone in the organisation; anyone can access the information they need.	2.0%	11.1%	19.4%	38.3%	29.2%

Source: Researchers Own Creation

The construct of organisational culture was assessed using seven items (OC1–OC7), capturing employees' perceptions of norms, rules, communication, innovation, and access to information.

For OC1, out of a total of 253 responses, the majority of respondents (48.8%) agreed that *there are informal norms and rules that everyone in the organisation is expected to follow*". This indicates that informal behavioural expectations are well-established and widely accepted. Only a small minority (7.9%) expressed neutrality or disagreement.

For OC2, 43.5% of the respondents agreed that *"Instructions and regulations are necessary to govern every process of work in the organisation"*. This suggests that employees recognise the importance of structured governance through formal processes.

For OC3, a total of 53.3% of the respondents agreed that customers' interests are never ignored in the decision-making processes. This implies that a customer-focused organisational culture is valued within the NPOs under study.

For OC4, a combined 86.5% (40.7% + 45.8%) of the respondents confirmed that their representative organisations constantly improve methods of work to gain advantages over rivals in the industry, reflecting an organisational culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

For OC5, 49.0% of the respondents agreed that “agreement is easily achieved, even concerning complex problems within the organisation”, while 15.0% strongly agreed. However, 22.9% remained neutral, which may indicate some uncertainty or inconsistency in achieving consensus during complex decision-making.

For OC6, 47.8% of the respondents agreed that “in a group, everyone must put forth maximum effort to achieve a common goal”, with a further 37.2% strongly agreeing. These results reflect a robust team orientation and a shared commitment to group performance.

For OC7, 38.3% of respondents agreed and 29.2% strongly agreed that “information is readily available for everyone in the organisation; anyone can access the information they need”. Despite this, 19.8% were neutral and 13.0% disagreed, suggesting there may still be room to improve transparency and access to information.

4.2.3 Innovative Behaviour

This section presents the respondents’ perceptions of their innovative behaviour (IB) within the organisational context, in the Solidarity Movement, as measured by six items (IB1 to IB6). Responses were provided on a five-point Likert scale.

Table 4.2: Innovative Behaviour Frequencies

	QUESTION	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
		TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %
IB1	I can develop ideas and solutions for creative opportunities in my field.	0.4%	2.0%	11.5%	48.6%	37.5%
IB2	I discuss with my colleagues the possible opportunities to change work patterns to achieve better results.	0.4%	4.3%	8.3%	52.2%	34.8%
IB3	I propose new ideas for development within this organisation.	0.8%	4.3%	17.0%	48.2%	29.6%
IB4	I promote colleagues' ideas.	0.4%	0.8%	6.7%	57.3%	34.8%
IB5	We test solutions for unexpected problems that arise when ideas are put into practice.	1.2%	6.7%	17.4%	53.0%	21.7%
IB6	We monitor progress during the process of putting ideas into practice.	0.8%	3.6%	11.9%	60.1%	23.7%

Source: Researchers Own Creation

The innovative behaviour construct comprised six items (IB1–IB6), exploring respondents' creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving capabilities.

For IB1, 48.6% of the respondents agreed that “I can develop ideas and solutions for creative opportunities in my field”, while 37.5% strongly agreed. This indicates that most respondents feel confident in their creative capabilities and are encouraged to pursue innovation within their roles.

In IB2, 52.2% agreed and 34.8% strongly agreed that “I discuss with my colleagues the possible opportunities to change work patterns to achieve better results”. This suggests a workplace culture that supports collaborative problem-solving and continuous improvement.

For IB3, 48.2% of the respondents agreed that “I propose new ideas for development within this organisation”, with a further 29.6% strongly agreeing. These responses demonstrate that most employees feel empowered to contribute innovative ideas, although a moderate portion (17.0%) remained neutral.

For IB4, 57.3% agreed and 34.8% strongly agreed that “I promote colleagues' ideas”. This indicates a supportive environment in which the sharing and endorsement of new ideas are actively encouraged among peers.

For IB5, 53.0% of the respondents agreed that “we test solutions for unexpected problems that arise when ideas are put into practice”, while 21.7% strongly agreed. Although the majority reported practical application of innovation, 17.4% remained neutral, suggesting that not all employees consistently experience this follow-through.

For IB6, 60.1% agreed and 23.7% strongly agreed that “we monitor progress during the process of putting ideas into practice”. These responses reflect strong levels of accountability and a structured approach to innovation implementation.

4.2.4 Knowledge Sharing

The knowledge sharing (KS) construct was evaluated using four items (KS1 to KS4) that explored the availability and openness of information within the Solidarity Movement.

Table 4.3: Knowledge Sharing Frequencies

	QUESTION	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
		TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %	TABLE TOTAL N %
KS1	Employees in our organisation actively exchange knowledge with their co-workers.	0.4%	1.6%	5.1%	50.6%	42.3%
KS2	In their work, employees in our organisation rely on their experience, skills, and knowledge.	0.4%	2.4%	10.3%	49.4%	37.5%
KS3	In our team, we frequently adjust our shared understanding of end-user needs, preferences, and behaviours.	0.8%	1.6%	5.5%	48.6%	43.5%
KS4	Our organization effectively exchanges information related to changes in the technology of our focal products.	0.4%	2.4%	6.7%	37.2%	53.4%

Source: Researchers Own Creation

Knowledge sharing was evaluated using four items (KS1–KS4), with responses showing overwhelmingly positive perceptions.

For KS1, 50.6% of respondents agreed that “employees in our organisation actively exchange knowledge with their co-workers”, while 42.3% strongly agreed. This indicates that knowledge sharing is well embedded in the organisational culture.

For KS2, 49.4% agreed and 37.5% strongly agreed that “in their work, employees in our organisation rely on their experience, skills, and knowledge”. These findings show that professional expertise is recognised and applied effectively in daily operations.

For KS3, 48.6% of the respondents agreed and 43.5% strongly agreed that “in our team, we frequently adjust our shared understanding of end-user needs, preferences, and behaviours”. This indicates that teams are actively responsive to feedback and capable of adapting to client needs.

For KS4, 37.2% of respondents agreed and 53.4% strongly agreed that “our organisation effectively exchanges information related to changes in the technology of our focal products”. This demonstrates a strong emphasis on staying current with technological developments and ensuring that relevant knowledge is disseminated across the organisation.

4.3 Summary of Descriptive Results

The descriptive results across the three core constructs—organisational culture, innovative behaviour, and knowledge sharing—indicate an overall positive organisational climate within the surveyed non-profit organisations. Each construct was evaluated using multiple Likert-scale items, and the findings reveal significant trends regarding workplace dynamics, innovation readiness, and knowledge flow.

The analysis of organisational culture revealed a supportive and structured environment. A strong majority of respondents agreed that their organisations uphold informal norms and behavioural expectations (OC1), contributing to a consistent internal organisational culture. Similarly, formal rules and governance mechanisms were perceived as necessary (OC2), indicating a preference for clearly defined processes. A customer-centric focus also emerged, with over three-quarters of participants affirming that customer needs are incorporated into decision-making (OC3). Additionally, there was strong agreement on the continual improvement of work methods to maintain competitiveness (OC4), reinforcing the notion of a progressive and adaptable organisational culture. While there was a somewhat lower level of strong agreement regarding the ease of achieving consensus on complex issues (OC5), perceptions of teamwork were generally high (OC6), and the majority agreed that employees align with organisational goals. However, some concerns were noted around the full accessibility of information across the organisation (OC7), suggesting a need to improve transparency or communication systems.

In terms of innovative behaviour, the responses reflected a workforce that is both creative and collaborative. Employees reported confidence in developing new ideas (IB1) and frequently

discussed improvements in work processes with colleagues (IB2). They were also actively involved in proposing and promoting ideas (IB3 and IB4), which reflects an organisational culture that values innovation at all levels. The items concerning implementation—such as testing solutions and monitoring progress (IB5 and IB6)—received moderate-to-strong agreement, indicating that innovation is not just encouraged, but also followed through with practical actions. These results point to an environment where innovation is systematically supported from idea generation through to execution.

Knowledge sharing was another strongly endorsed domain. Respondents largely agreed that their organisations support the exchange of knowledge among employees (KS1), and that employees rely on shared skills and experience to perform their roles effectively (KS2). Teams reportedly adapt their understanding of end-user needs on an ongoing basis (KS3), which signals responsiveness and learning agility. Furthermore, there was particularly strong agreement that information related to technological changes is effectively exchanged across the organisation (KS4). These results suggest that knowledge sharing is not only encouraged, but also actively embedded in the organisation's operations.

The combined analysis of OC, IB, and KS suggests that the organisational climate is conducive to innovation, grounded in clear structures and open collaboration. Strong leadership support, consistent communication, and team cohesion underpin the positive outcomes seen across all three constructs. However, the organisation may benefit from addressing minor gaps in information that flow across the organisation and consensus-building mechanisms to further strengthen employee engagement and strategic alignment. These constructs collectively reinforce the view that a supportive organisational culture, coupled with intentional knowledge sharing, provides fertile ground for innovative work behaviour.

4.4 Inferential statistics

The researcher used the SPSS software (Version 27.0) to conduct statistical analysis of the data that was presented. Reliability tests, correlation, hypothesis testing and structural equation modelling were executed using the tool.

4.4.1 Reliability and Validity Tests

Reliability and validity of the data were evaluated using Indicator reliability (Factor loadings), Cronbach's alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR). As presented in Table 4.4, the data met the minimum thresholds.

Indicator reliability: Reflective indicator loadings above 0.5 indicate that the item effectively measures a latent construct (Hulland, 1999). In this case, all indicator loadings exceeded 0.5 (see Table 4.4).

Internal consistency reliability: CR and Cronbach's alpha (α) assess internal consistency, with Gefen, Straub, and Boudreau (2000) recommending a CR of at least 0.7. Hair et al. (2017) consider Cronbach's alpha values between 0.60 and 0.70 acceptable in research. All constructs in Table 4.4 met these thresholds.

Convergent reliability measures the extent to which a scale correlates positively with other measures of the same construct (Hair et al., 2017). The AVE, which should be over 0.5 (Bagozzi, 1986; Hair et al., 2016), confirmed this. All study constructs had AVE values above 0.5, indicating good convergent validity.

Table 4.4 Reliability and Validity

			FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH ALPHA	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY
Organisation Culture	OC 1	We have informal norms and rules that everyone in the organisation is expected to follow.	0.689	0.764	0.515	0.772
	OC 2	Instructions and regulations are necessary to govern every process of work in the organisation.	0.764			
	OC 3	Customers' interests are never ignored in the decision-making processes of the organisation.	0.782			
	OC 4	We constantly improve our methods of work to gain advantages over rivals in the industry.	0.631			
	OC 5	Agreement is easily achieved, even concerning complex problems within the organisation.	0.713			

			FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH ALPHA	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY
Innovative Behaviour	IB1	I can develop ideas and solutions for creative opportunities in my field.	0.748	0.798	0.498	0.855
	IB2	I discuss with my colleagues the possible opportunities to change work patterns to achieve better results.	0.788			
	IB3	I propose new ideas for development within this organisation.	0.651			
	IB4	I promote colleagues' ideas.	0.686			
	IB5	We test solutions for unexpected problems that arise when ideas are put into practice.	0.661			
	IB6	We monitor progress during the process of putting ideas into practice.	0.688			

			FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH ALPHA	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY
Knowledge Sharing	KS1	Employees in our organisation actively exchange knowledge with their co-workers.	0.847	0.866	0.713	0.866
	KS2	In their work, employees in our organisation rely on their experience, skills, and knowledge.	0.840			
	KS3	In our team, we frequently adjust our shared understanding of end-user needs, preferences, and behaviours.	0.873			
	KS4	Our organization effectively exchanges information related to changes in the technology of our focal products.	0.818			

Source: Researchers Own Creation

4.5 Discriminant Validity

According to Hair et al., (2012), discriminant validity can be assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. This technique compares the square root of the AVE values with the correlations of the latent variable with other constructs. The square root of the AVE of each construct should be higher than the correlation with any other construct (Hair et al., 2012), as is the case in Table 2.

Table 4.5: Discriminant Validity

	INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOURS	KNOWLEDGE SHARING	ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE
Innovative Behaviours	0.705		
Knowledge Sharing	0.544	0.845	
Organisational Culture	0.521	0.420	0.718

(The discriminant validity values are shown diagonally in bold)

Source: Researchers Own Creation

4.6 Test for Normality

To test the data for normality, the Shapiro-Wilks test was used. As all the data variables significantly deviated from a normal distribution, the use of PLS-SEM was required. As indicated in Table 4.6, all data variables significantly deviated from a normal distribution as their p-values were less than 0.05, hence PLS-SEM was used to analyse the data (Laerd Statistics, 2019).

Table 4.6: Tests of Normality

	KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOVA			SHAPIRO-WILK		
	STATISTIC	DF	SIG.	STATISTIC	DF	SIG.
IB1	.252	253	.000	.796	253	.000
IB2	.286	253	.000	.782	253	.000
IB3	.271	253	.000	.834	253	.000
IB4	.304	253	.000	.750	253	.000
IB5	.305	253	.000	.836	253	.000
IB6	.325	253	.000	.785	253	.000

	KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOVA			SHAPIRO-WILK		
	STATISTIC	DF	SIG.	STATISTIC	DF	SIG.
OC1	.306	253	.000	.776	253	.000
OC2	.266	253	.000	.831	253	.000
OC3	.311	253	.000	.829	253	.000
OC4	.264	253	.000	.762	253	.000
OC5	.290	253	.000	.864	253	.000

	KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOVA			SHAPIRO-WILK		
	STATISTIC	DF	SIG.	STATISTIC	DF	SIG.
KS1	.261	253	.000	.741	253	.000
KS2	.258	253	.000	.790	253	.000
KS3	.260	253	.000	.737	253	.000
KS4	.318	253	.000	.729	253	.000

4.7 Hypotheses Testing

The outcome of hypothesis testing using SPSS statistical software is shown in Figure 4.4 and Table 4.7 below. (OC6 & OC7 were removed from the final analysis because the factor loadings were below 0.50).

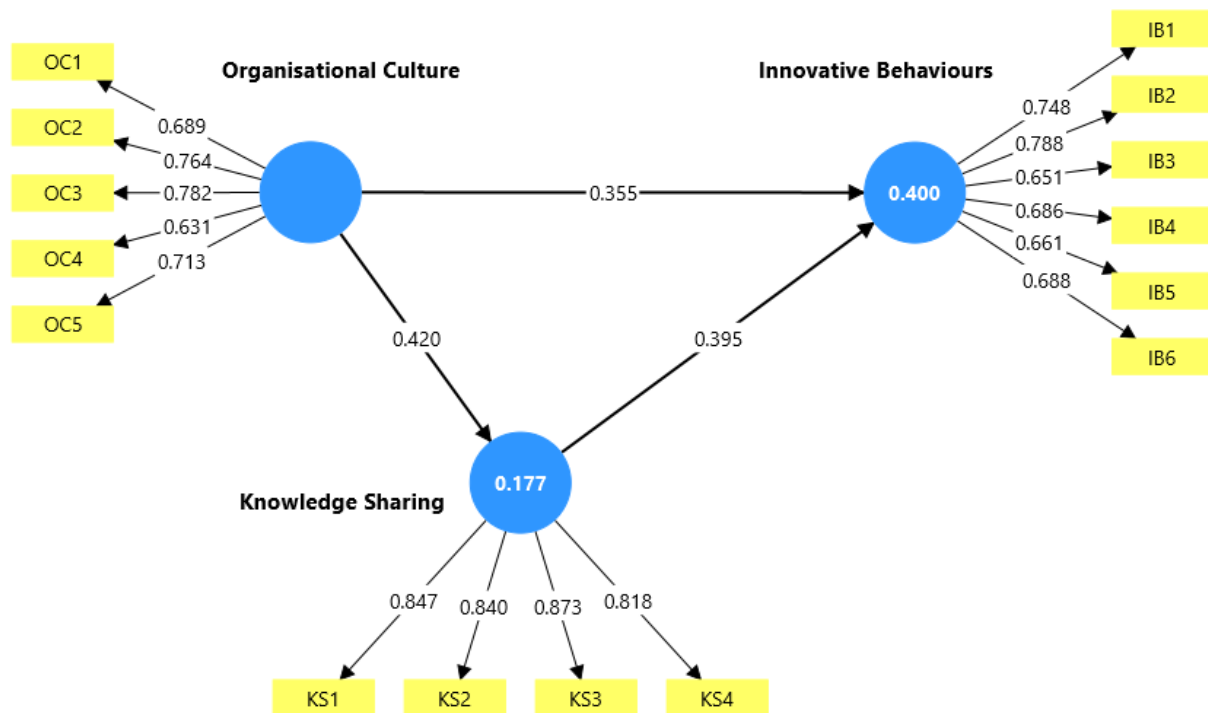


Figure 4.4 Hypothesis testing diagram

Table 4.7 Hypothesis Tests Results

PATH	RESULT (B)	PROBABILITY VALUE (P)	DECISION
H1: Organisational culture positively influences knowledge sharing.	0.420	+0.00	Accept
H2: Organisational culture positively influences innovation.	0.355	+0.00	Accept
H3: Knowledge sharing positively influences innovation.	0.395	+0.00	Accept
H4: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between organisational culture and innovation.	0.166	+0.00	Accept

Source: Researchers Own Creation

4.8 Direct Effects

Table 4.7 shows that organisational culture had a profound positive impact on knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.420$, $p < 0.001$) and innovation ($\beta = 0.355$, $p < 0.001$), hence the decision is to accept H1 and H2. Knowledge sharing also had a positive influence on innovation ($\beta = 0.395$, $p < 0.001$), hence the decision is to accept H3.

4.9 Mediation effect

The mediation role of knowledge sharing was confirmed in the research. Knowledge sharing partially mediated the relationship between organisational culture and innovation ($\beta = 0.166$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, H4 was accepted.

4.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 presents both the descriptive and inferential results of the study. It begins with the demographic profile of the 253 respondents, providing insights into respondent age, gender, qualifications, tenure, and work sections. Descriptive statistics are then reported for the three main constructs: organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative behaviour, with results indicating generally high mean scores across variables.

The chapter further outlines reliability and validity tests, including Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted, confirming that the measurement model is both reliable and valid. Hypothesis testing using structural equation modelling revealed that organisational culture significantly influences both knowledge sharing and innovative behaviour, while knowledge sharing directly impacts innovation. Importantly, knowledge sharing was shown to mediate the relationship between organisational culture and innovation, serving as the mechanism that enables cultural values and practices to foster innovation in NPO projects.

The discussion links these findings to existing literature and theoretical frameworks (RBV and KBV), emphasising that organisational culture and knowledge are strategic resources that enhance innovation in resource-constrained non-profit environments. The chapter closes by highlighting the role of leadership and organisational practices in embedding a knowledge-sharing culture to strengthen innovation capacity and project sustainability in South African NPOs

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the analysis of organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative behaviour within selected non-profit organisation (NPO) projects in the Gauteng Province. The study aimed to explore how organisational culture influences employees' innovative work behaviours, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of knowledge sharing. The findings contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical application by offering insights into the mechanisms through which organisational culture shapes employee behaviours in project-based NPO settings.

While the study provides meaningful conclusions, certain limitations inherent to the research design are acknowledged. Nonetheless, the results highlight important relationships and trends that can help NPOs enhance their innovative capacity and overall sustainability. This chapter restates the study's aim and objectives, discusses the major findings, outlines managerial implications, provides recommendations, identifies limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

5.2 Aim and Objectives

5.2.1 Primary Objective

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the impact of organisational culture on the innovative behaviours of employees within NPO project settings, focusing on the mediating role of knowledge sharing.

5.2.2 Secondary Objectives

The secondary objectives were formulated as follows:

- To determine the influence of organisational culture on employees' innovative behaviours in NPO project settings.
- To explore the impact of organisational culture on knowledge sharing among employees in NPO project settings.
- To assess the effect of knowledge sharing on innovative behaviours of employees in NPO project settings.
- To examine the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between organisational culture and innovative behaviours.

- To propose a framework that enhances innovation in an NPO project setting.

5.3 Summary of the Findings

This study explored how organisational culture influences employees' innovative behaviours in NPO project settings in Gauteng Province, emphasising the mediating role of knowledge sharing. The results strongly indicate that organisational culture directly encourages innovation and also promotes it indirectly by fostering knowledge sharing. This section discusses these findings in relation to the main goal and secondary objectives, relating them to theoretical models like the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), along with the wider literature.

5.3.1 Primary Objective

The main goal was to examine how organisational culture impacts employees' innovative work behaviours within NPO project environments, with knowledge sharing acting as a mediator. The results verified that organisational culture significantly influences innovation both directly and indirectly. This supports the RBV (Barney, 1991), which suggests that unique, intangible resources like organisational culture provide competitive advantages, and the KBV (Grant, 1996), highlighting knowledge as the most vital organisational resource.

By confirming this relationship, the study contributes to theory by empirically demonstrating that a supportive organisational culture is not only valuable but also instrumental in enabling knowledge sharing as a pathway to innovation.

5.3.2 Secondary Objective 1: To determine the influence of organisational culture on employees' innovative behaviours in NPO projects

This study concludes that organisational culture profoundly impacted innovation in project-based settings ($\beta = 0.355$, $p < 0.001$). This finding corroborates the work of Azeem et al. (2021), who found that organisational culture significantly enhances innovation when supported by knowledge-sharing practices, and Lam et al. (2021), who demonstrated that organisational cultures emphasising openness, collaboration, and learning are directly associated with improved innovation capability. Similarly, Choi, Kang, and Choi (2021) reported that organisational culture and perceived organisational support foster innovative work behaviours by empowering employees to experiment and implement new ideas.

In addition, Koko and Makumbe (2020) emphasised that in higher education settings, organisational culture plays a critical role in promoting innovation by shaping how knowledge is

created and disseminated. Bamidele (2022) also highlighted that cultural values embedded within organisations provide the structural and behavioural context in which innovation flourishes. Taken together, these empirical studies support the present findings, underscoring that organisational culture is a strong predictor of innovation and an essential driver of employees' innovative behaviours in NPO projects.

Specifically, organisational cultures characterised by openness, collaboration, and flexibility fostered idea generation, creativity, and the implementation of new solutions. This resonates with Schein's (2010) conceptualisation of organisational culture as an enabler of adaptability and Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Competing Values Framework, particularly the adhocracy dimension, which prioritises risk-taking and innovation.

For NPOs, this means that cultivating values that encourage experimentation and tolerate failure is essential for sustaining innovative practices under conditions of resource scarcity.

5.3.3 Secondary Objective 2: To explore the impact of organisational culture on knowledge sharing among employees in NPO project-based settings

This study concluded that organisational culture was a strong predictor of knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.420$, $p < 0.001$). indicating that a supportive organisational culture significantly enhances employees' willingness to exchange knowledge. This result aligns with the findings of Al Saifi, Dillon, and McQueen (2016), who showed that management support and cultural values such as trust and collaboration are critical enablers of knowledge sharing in organisations. Similarly, Han et al. (2016) confirmed that transformational leadership and empowerment within a strong cultural context increase employees' intentions to share knowledge.

Further, Makambe and Osupile (2021) reported that organisational culture had a direct effect on knowledge-sharing behaviours within public sector organisations in Botswana, highlighting the importance of context-specific cultural factors. Omotayo (2015) also emphasised that knowledge management practices cannot succeed unless they are embedded within an organisational culture that promotes openness and cooperation. In addition, Siadat, Abdollahi and Mohseni (2016) found that cultural values are among the most influential factors determining whether employees engage in knowledge-sharing activities.

Taken together, these findings provide strong evidence that organisational culture is a fundamental driver of knowledge-sharing behaviours. For NPOs, this means that fostering cultural values of collaboration, openness, and trust is essential for creating an environment where

knowledge can flow freely across projects and functions, ultimately supporting organisational learning and innovation.

This supports the KBV, which views knowledge as a firm's most strategically significant resource (Grant, 1996), and Nonaka and Takeuchi's, Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation model (1995) (SECI model), which emphasises the role of cultural conditions in facilitating knowledge conversion processes. In line with Wang and Noe (2010), the findings confirm that organisational culture is the foundation upon which knowledge-sharing behaviours are built.

5.3.4 Secondary Objective 3: To assess the effect of knowledge sharing on Innovation

This study established that knowledge sharing has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behaviour ($\beta = 0.395$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that when employees exchange tacit and explicit knowledge, they are more likely to generate and implement novel ideas. This finding is consistent with Castaneda and Cuellar (2020a), who demonstrated that knowledge sharing serves as a critical antecedent of innovation across organisational contexts. Similarly, Wah, Zawawi, Yusof, and Sambasivan (2018) reported that tacit knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between trust and innovative behaviour, highlighting how knowledge flows translate directly into creativity and problem-solving.

In addition, Wang and Wang (2012) found that both explicit and tacit knowledge sharing significantly improve firm innovation and performance, while Bulutlar and Kamasak (2009) confirmed that knowledge sharing enhances innovation capability by fostering collaboration and idea exchange. Ba Le, Nguyen and Yang (2018) also identified knowledge sharing as the mechanism through which collaborative organisational culture influences innovation capacity, underscoring its role as a bridge between cultural values and innovative outcomes.

Collectively, these studies reinforce the present findings by showing that knowledge sharing is not only a catalyst for innovation but also a vital organisational process through which ideas are refined and transformed into practical outcomes. For NPOs in South Africa, this suggests that investing in structures and practices that facilitate knowledge sharing—such as mentoring systems, after-action reviews, and digital repositories—can significantly enhance their innovative capacity and ensure long-term sustainability. In practice, this means that knowledge sharing is not simply a support activity but a driver of innovation, particularly in NPOs that rely heavily on collective expertise to deliver impact.

5.3.5 Secondary Objective 4: To examine the mediating role of knowledge sharing on the relationship between organisational culture and innovation

The results of this study confirmed that knowledge sharing plays a significant mediating role between organisational culture and innovation ($\beta = 0.166$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that while organisational culture directly influences innovative behaviours, its impact is substantially strengthened when it fosters effective knowledge-sharing practices. In other words, a supportive and collaborative organisational culture provides the foundation, but it is through the exchange of knowledge that ideas are refined, disseminated, and transformed into innovative outcomes.

These findings are consistent with prior research. Azeem, Ahmed, Haider and Sajjad (2021) demonstrated that knowledge sharing acts as a bridge through which organisational culture enhances innovation performance. Similarly, Ba Le, Nguyen and Yang (2018) found that collaborative organisational culture drives innovation capability primarily through employees' willingness to share knowledge. Wah et al. (2018) also highlighted the mediating role of tacit knowledge sharing in shaping innovative behaviours, while Kokt and Makumbe (2020) emphasised that in higher education contexts, knowledge sharing channels the cultural values of openness and trust into innovative capacity.

Considered together, these results indicate that knowledge sharing is not merely an outcome of organisational culture but a critical mechanism that enables organisational culture to translate into innovation. For NPOs in South Africa, this underscores the importance of embedding structured knowledge-sharing practices—such as after-action reviews, cross-functional collaboration, and digital knowledge platforms—into daily operations. By doing so, leaders can ensure that cultural strengths are effectively leveraged to achieve sustainable and impactful innovation. This is a key theoretical contribution: it demonstrates that organisational culture does not automatically generate innovation — it does so by first enabling knowledge flows that employees transform into innovative practices.

5.4 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study provide strong support for the Resource-Based View (RBV) by confirming that intangible resources—specifically organisational culture and knowledge sharing—serve as critical enablers of employees' innovative behaviours. By demonstrating that a supportive organisational culture fosters the exchange of knowledge, which in turn promotes innovation, the results align with RBV's assertion that unique, valuable, and inimitable internal resources underpin sustainable organisational performance. This study, therefore, reinforces the

RBV in the context of NPOs, where human and social capital are vital in creating innovative solutions in resource-constrained environments.

Beyond affirming existing theory, the study contributes to extending the body of literature on organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation within the underexplored setting of South African NPOs. While much of the prior research has concentrated on private and public sector organisations, the results here highlight the significance of these constructs in driving innovation in non-profit contexts. In doing so, this study not only addresses a notable research gap but also provides a foundation for future studies to test and refine these relationships across different South African organisational contexts. The results can serve as a theoretical platform for further exploration of how cultural and knowledge-based factors influence innovation in sectors such as education, healthcare, and community development.

5.5 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study provide several practical implications for managers and leaders of NPOs in South Africa. First, this study revealed that organisational culture is a strong predictor of innovation. This implies that NPO managers must intentionally nurture an organisational culture that values creativity, openness, and collaboration, as these cultural attributes provide the foundation for employees to engage in innovative behaviours.

Secondly, the results confirm that knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between organisational culture and innovation. Therefore, managers should foster a knowledge-sharing culture by actively cultivating trust, collaboration, and open communication. This includes rewarding employees for knowledge-sharing behaviours, creating safe spaces where experiences and lessons can be shared without fear of reprisal, and embedding knowledge sharing into daily project practices through mechanisms such as after-action reviews, digital repositories, and structured mentoring.

Thirdly, the findings highlight that leadership plays a pivotal role in enabling organisational culture and innovation. NPO leaders should serve as cultural role models by practising transparent communication, encouraging participative decision-making, and providing mentoring opportunities. By doing so, leaders strengthen both the cultural foundation and the innovation capacity of their organisations.

Finally, the study underscores that sustainability in NPOs is closely tied to their ability to innovate. By leveraging organisational culture and embedding knowledge sharing into project work, NPOs can enhance their innovative capacity and ensure that they continue to deliver impactful services

despite resource constraints. In this way, managers and leaders can translate cultural strengths into sustainable innovation strategies that secure long-term organisational effectiveness.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, **a framework is proposed that highlights the pathways through which innovation can be enhanced in NPO projects.** The framework positions organisational culture as the foundation for innovation, emphasising values of trust, collaboration, openness, and support for creativity. This organisational culture directly influences employees' innovative behaviours but, more importantly, enables the development of knowledge-sharing practices that serve as the key mediating mechanism. When employees actively exchange tacit and explicit knowledge, they refine ideas, solve problems collectively, and create an environment conducive to innovation.

The framework thus integrates three essential elements: (1) organisational culture as the enabler, (2) knowledge sharing as the mechanism, and (3) innovation as the outcome (Figure 5.1). This relationship was empirically confirmed in the current study, with organisational culture significantly predicting both knowledge sharing and innovation, and knowledge sharing mediating the organisational culture–innovation link. By embedding this framework into practice, NPOs in South Africa can cultivate an organisational culture that values openness, establish systems that encourage continuous knowledge exchange, and thereby enhance their innovative capacity.

This proposed framework (see Figure 5.1 below) provides not only a practical guide for NPO managers seeking to strengthen innovation, but also a theoretical foundation for future studies exploring how organisational culture and knowledge interact to influence innovation across different organisational contexts.

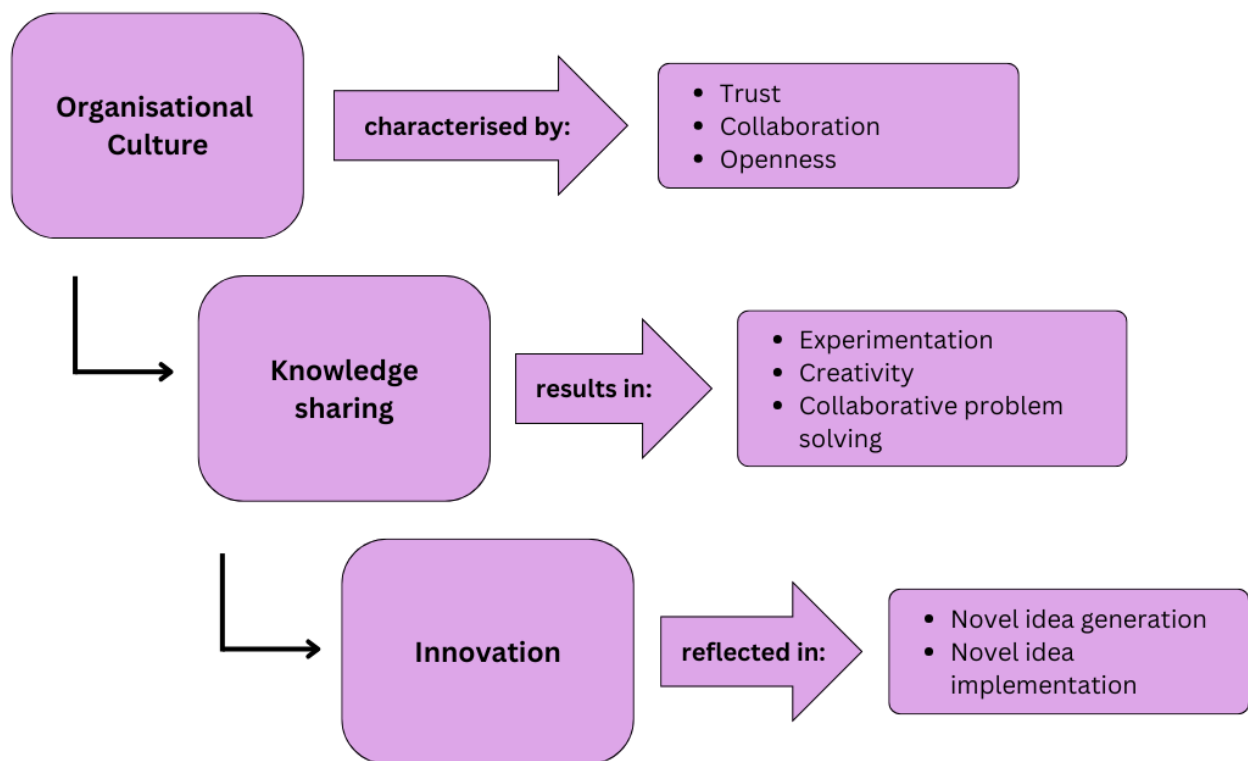


Figure 5.1: Pathways for innovation framework

Source: Researchers Own Creation

The proposed framework of figure 5.1 illustrates the interrelationships between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behaviour as established by the findings of this study. At the foundation, organisational culture—characterised by trust, collaboration, and openness—emerges as the critical determinant of employees' willingness to share knowledge and engage in innovation. The framework highlights that organisational culture not only shapes knowledge-sharing behaviours but can also exert a direct influence on innovation outcomes, even in the absence of formal knowledge-sharing practices.

Central to the model is knowledge sharing, which functions as the mediating mechanism. When employees actively exchange tacit and explicit knowledge, the collective expertise of the organisation expands, enabling experimentation, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving. This process translates the supportive elements of organisational culture into tangible innovative behaviours such as generating, promoting, and implementing new ideas. Ultimately, innovative work behaviour is presented as the outcome of both a strong organisational culture and effective knowledge-sharing practices.

From a managerial perspective, the framework provides practical guidance for strengthening innovation capacity in NPOs:

- Training and development should be prioritised to build competencies in knowledge management and innovation practices, ensuring employees are equipped to contribute effectively.
- Knowledge-sharing systems—both technological platforms and human-centred approaches such as mentoring and storytelling—must be institutionalised to facilitate the exchange and retention of organisational knowledge.
- Collaborative structures that minimise bureaucratic barriers and promote flexible, participative project designs can empower employees to contribute ideas and test solutions.
- Embedding the framework into project cycles by integrating organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation into planning, implementation, and evaluation will institutionalise innovation as an ongoing process.
- Cross-NPO collaboration should also be encouraged, enabling organisations to share best practices, pool resources, and collectively enhance innovation capacity in the South African non-profit sector.

Together, these implications underscore that investing in an enabling organisational culture and embedding systematic mechanisms for knowledge exchange are essential steps for NPOs seeking to achieve sustainable service delivery and long-term organisational impact.

5.7 Limitations

While this study provides important insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

- Cross-sectional design: Data were collected at a single point in time, limiting the ability to establish causality.
- Geographic scope: The study was restricted to NPOs in Gauteng Province, which limits the generalisability of findings to other regions or contexts.
- Self-reported data: Reliance on survey responses introduces potential response bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable answers.
- Focused scope: The study examined only three constructs (organisational culture, knowledge sharing, innovative behaviour), excluding other potential influences such as leadership style, funding, or digital infrastructure.

5.8 Suggestions for Future Research

To build upon the findings of this study, future research should consider:

- Conducting longitudinal studies to assess changes in organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation over time.
- Expanding the research to include other provinces or countries, thereby enhancing external validity.
- Exploring additional mediators or moderators, such as leadership, digital technology, or employee engagement.
- Employing mixed-method approaches to combine quantitative insights with qualitative depth, such as interviews or focus groups.
- Examining the impact of demographic factors (e.g., age, tenure, education) on the relationships among organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and innovation.

5.9 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how organisational culture influences employees' innovative behaviours in project-based NPOs, with knowledge sharing as a mediating factor. The findings confirm that organisational culture has a direct and significant impact on both knowledge sharing and innovation. Furthermore, knowledge sharing acts as a crucial mechanism through which organisational culture fosters innovation.

The study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends understanding of the mediating role of knowledge sharing within NPO project settings, a context often overlooked in the literature. Practically, it provides actionable recommendations for NPO leaders to strengthen organisational culture, embed knowledge-sharing practices, and ultimately enhance innovation.

In conclusion, the results underscore that NPOs operating in resource-constrained environments can build resilience and sustainability by cultivating a supportive organisational culture and embedding effective knowledge-sharing mechanisms. By doing so, they can unlock employees' potential to innovate and improve their capacity to deliver meaningful impact in the communities they serve.

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ANNEXURES:

Questionnaire:



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