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The Mediation Role of Career Sustainability in The Relationship Between Self Efficacy and Inclusive Leadership to Innovative Work Behavior in The Creative Industry

Kharisma Hardiyanti A. M¹, Rina Anindita²

¹Esa Unggul University, clarakharismajpg@gmail.com

²Esa Unggul University, rina.anindita@esaunggul.ac.id

Corresponding Author: clarakharismajpg@gmail.com¹

Abstract: The rapid growth of the creative industry requires employees to demonstrate innovative work behavior (IWB) to sustain organizational competitiveness. Individual factors such as self-efficacy and contextual factors such as inclusive leadership are considered crucial in shaping career sustainability, which ultimately drives innovative behavior. This study aims to analyze the influence of self-efficacy and inclusive leadership on career sustainability and their implications for innovative work behavior, while also examining the mediating role of career sustainability and the moderating effect of age demographics. A quantitative approach was applied using purposive sampling of 190 employees from the creative industry in the Jabodetabek area. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that self-efficacy positively influences career sustainability but does not directly influence innovative work behavior. Inclusive leadership has a significant positive effect on both career sustainability and innovative work behavior. Moreover, career sustainability significantly influences innovative work behavior and mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and innovative work behavior, but does not mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior. Age demographics were found not to moderate the relationship between career sustainability and innovative work behavior. This research contributes to organizational behavior literature and provides practical recommendations for creative industry organizations to enhance employees' self-efficacy and inclusive leadership to foster sustainable innovation.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Inclusive Leadership, Career Sustainability, Innovative Work Behavior, Age Demographics.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing globalization has intensified competition across industries, compelling organizations to continuously innovate to sustain their competitive advantage (Usmanova et al., 2023). In this context, innovative work behavior (IWB) has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational adaptability and long-term performance (Elidemir et al., 2020). Innovation is no longer optional but a strategic necessity for achieving organizational growth and sustainability (Jamil et al., 2024). Consequently, understanding the drivers of innovative work

behavior has become a central concern in organizational research (Hosseini & Haghighi Shirazi, 2021).

While prior studies have identified various antecedents of innovative work behavior, both individual and contextual factors remain inconsistently understood. From an individual perspective, self-efficacy defined as an individual's belief in their capability to perform tasks successfully (Bandura, 2023) has been widely recognized as a key predictor of proactive and innovative behaviors. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to embrace challenges, take risks, and demonstrate creativity (Cundawan et al., 2021; Uppathampracha & Liu, 2022). However, empirical findings regarding its direct effect on innovative work behavior remain inconclusive. Some studies report a significant positive relationship (Hsiao et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2023), while others find that self-efficacy does not directly translate into innovative outcomes without the presence of supporting contextual factors (Sharma et al., 2024). This inconsistency suggests the need to examine potential mediating mechanisms that can better explain how self-efficacy influences innovation.

One such mechanism is career sustainability, which reflects an individual's ability to maintain long-term career development characterized by adaptability, continuous learning, and well-being (Donald, 2024; Adegbite & Hoole, 2024). Drawing on the perspective of career sustainability, self-efficacy may not directly lead to innovative work behavior but instead enhances individuals' ability to sustain their careers, which in turn fosters innovation. Despite its conceptual relevance, the role of career sustainability as a mediating variable in linking self-efficacy to innovative work behavior has received limited empirical attention. This gap is significant because it shifts the focus from short-term performance outcomes to long-term career dynamics as a foundation for innovation.

From a contextual perspective, leadership plays a crucial role in shaping employee behavior. Inclusive leadership, characterized by openness, accessibility, and appreciation of diversity (Çelik et al., 2024), has been identified as a key driver of employee engagement and innovation (Bataineh et al., 2022). Inclusive leaders create a supportive environment that encourages employees to express ideas and take initiative. However, similar to self-efficacy, empirical findings regarding the effectiveness of inclusive leadership are not entirely consistent. While several studies highlight its positive impact on innovation and career outcomes (Byung et al., 2021; Chang & Chen, 2020), others indicate that its effectiveness may vary depending on contextual and demographic factors, such as organizational culture and employee characteristics (Bataineh et al., 2022; Wu & Li, 2023).

One important yet underexplored factor influencing these relationships is age demographics. Employees from different age groups may perceive leadership styles and career opportunities differently, leading to variations in their responses to inclusive leadership and their engagement in innovative behavior (Katsaros, 2024). However, most existing studies focus on single generational cohorts, such as Millennials or Generation X, without conducting comprehensive cross-generational analyses (Hsiao et al., 2021). This limitation restricts the generalizability of findings and overlooks the complexity of multigenerational workforces.

Furthermore, prior research has predominantly examined self-efficacy, inclusive leadership, career sustainability, and innovative work behavior in isolation or through partial models. There is still a lack of integrative frameworks that simultaneously examine these variables within a unified model. In addition, the mediating role of career sustainability and the moderating role of age demographics remain insufficiently explored, particularly in emerging economies such as Indonesia, where cultural values may influence leadership effectiveness and employee behavior (Ali et al., 2022; Hern et al., 2025). This creates a critical research gap that warrants further investigation.

Therefore, this study offers a theoretical contribution by integrating Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura), which explains the role of self-efficacy in shaping behavior, with Leadership Theory and Career Sustainability perspectives to develop a more comprehensive model of

innovative work behavior. By positioning career sustainability as a mediating mechanism and age demographics as a moderating factor, this study extends existing literature beyond direct-effect models and provides a more nuanced understanding of how individual and contextual factors interact to drive innovation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to: (1) examine the effect of self-efficacy and inclusive leadership on career sustainability, (2) analyze their impact on innovative work behavior, (3) investigate the mediating role of career sustainability, and (4) evaluate the moderating effect of age demographics on these relationships. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of human resource management theory and provide practical insights for organizations in managing a diverse workforce and fostering sustainable innovation.

METHOD

Measurement and Operational Definitions

To improve clarity and rigor, all research variables were operationalized based on established theoretical and empirical foundations. Each construct was measured using multiple indicators adapted from prior validated scales and contextualized for organizational settings.

Table 1. Operational Definitions and Measurement Indicators.

Variable	Operational Definition	Dimensions / Indicators	Source
Self-Efficacy (X1)	An individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform tasks and overcome challenges in the workplace	Confidence in problem-solving; Ability to handle difficult tasks; Persistence in facing obstacles; Belief in achieving goals	Bandura (2023); Erickson & Noonan (2024)
Inclusive Leadership (X2)	A leadership style characterized by openness, accessibility, and recognition of employee contributions in a diverse work environment	Openness to ideas; Leader availability; Accessibility for consultation; Fair treatment	Sharma et al. (2024)
Career Sustainability (Z)	The ability of individuals to maintain long-term career development through adaptability, continuous learning, and well-being	Meaning perception; Skill acquisition; Relationship building; Environmental awareness	Kim et al. (2024)
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	Employee behavior directed toward the generation, promotion, and realization of new ideas in the workplace	Idea generation; Idea promotion; Idea realization	Zhang & Chin (2024)
Age Demographics (M)	Classification of employees based on generational cohorts reflecting differences in values, experience, and career perspectives	Baby Boomers (1946–1964); Generation X (1965–1980); Generation Y/Millennials (1981–1996); Generation Z (1997–2012)	Adapted from generational theory

Source : Research Data

All variables, except age demographics, were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 36 questionnaire items were developed based on these indicators.

Justification of Age Demographics as a Moderating Variable

The inclusion of age demographics as a moderating variable is grounded in Career Construction Theory (Savickas) and Generational Cohort Theory, which emphasize that individuals' career attitudes, adaptability, and responses to organizational practices differ across life stages and generational experiences.

From a theoretical perspective, younger employees (e.g., Generation Z and Millennials) tend to prioritize career flexibility, learning opportunities, and meaningful work, making them more responsive to inclusive leadership practices and self-development factors such as self-efficacy. In contrast, older employees (e.g., Generation X and Baby Boomers) often emphasize job stability, accumulated experience, and organizational loyalty, which may alter how they perceive leadership inclusiveness and translate it into career sustainability and innovative behavior.

Furthermore, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura) suggests that personal factors (such as self-efficacy) interact with environmental influences (such as leadership) differently depending on individual characteristics, including age. Therefore, age demographics are expected to moderate the strength and direction of the relationships between self-efficacy, inclusive leadership, career sustainability, and innovative work behavior.

This moderation perspective is particularly relevant in multigenerational workplaces, where differences in values, technological adaptability, and career expectations can lead to varied behavioral outcomes.

Data Collection and Sampling

Data were collected through an online survey distributed via Google Forms. The target population consisted of employees working in the creative industries within private and government sectors in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek area).

A purposive sampling technique was applied with the following criteria:

1. Active employees with a minimum of one year of work experience
2. Belonging to Generation X, Y (Millennials), or Z
3. Currently working in the Jabodetabek area

The sample size determination followed Hair et al. (2013), which recommends a minimum of five respondents per indicator. With 36 items, the minimum required sample size was 180 respondents.

Instrument Testing (Validity and Reliability)

A pretest involving 30 respondents was conducted to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability of the instrument. The measurement model was evaluated using:

1. Convergent Validity:
 - a. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.5
2. Composite Reliability (CR):
 - a. $CR \geq 0.7$ indicates good reliability
3. Internal Consistency Reliability:
 - a. Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.7 (acceptable ≥ 0.6 for exploratory research)
 - b. All tests were conducted using SmartPLS 4.0.

Data Analysis Technique

This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze both measurement and structural models. PLS-SEM was selected due to its suitability for:

1. Analyzing complex models with multiple variables
2. Testing mediating and moderating relationships simultaneously
3. Handling non-normal data distributions
4. Supporting prediction-oriented research
 - a. The structural model evaluation included:
5. Path coefficients (β)
6. t-statistics and p-values (bootstrapping)
7. Coefficient of determination (R^2)

8. Effect size (f^2)
9. Predictive relevance (Q^2)

This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of both direct and indirect effects, including the mediating role of career sustainability and the moderating role of age demographics (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

This study involved 190 respondents, employees of private and government creative industry companies in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. The study was conducted by distributing a questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: respondent identification and statements regarding the variables being studied. This section will explain the descriptive characteristics of the study respondents, as shown below.

Table 2. Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Man	104	54.7
Woman	86	45.3
Age		
<= 27 years	31	16.3
28 years - 43 years	142	74.7
44 years - 59 years	16	8.4
>= 59 years old	1	0.5
Marital status		
Not married yet	74	38.9
Marry	116	61.1
Current residence		
Bekasi	5	2.6
Bogor	3	1.6
Depok	6	3.2
Jakarta	138	72.6
Tangerang	6	3.1
Other	32	16.8
Last education		
High School/Vocational School	59	31.1
Diploma III	16	8.4
S1	101	53.2
Masters/Doctoral Degree	14	7.4
Creative Industries Workplace		
Entertainment and performance: (Director/producer/actor, musician/songwriter, choreographer/stage manager, sound designer/audio editor)	77	40.5

Visual Creativity (Art and design): (Graphic design, product/interior/fashion designer, illustrator, animator, architect, fine artist)	24	12.6
Local crafts and culinary: (Craftsmen, creative chefs & food stylists, textile designers, culinary entrepreneurs and local products)	11	5.8
Media and narrative (communication and publishing): (Journalist, content creator, book writer & translator)	34	17.9
Technocrative (Digital technology and games): (Game developer, UI/UX designer, Web&app designer, animator, digital marketing specialist)	6	3.2
Other	38	20.0
Length of work		
1 year	16	8.4
2 years	15	7.9
>= 3 Years	159	83.7
Total	190	100.0

Source: Research data

Data from 190 respondents working in the creative industry revealed that although there were slightly more men than women, the proportion of male and female respondents was quite balanced. Millennials (28–43 years old), a productive age group, dominated the survey population. Most respondents were also married and lived in Jakarta. In terms of education, the majority were bachelor's degree graduates (S1), indicating a relatively high level of education among creative industry workers. Most responses came from the entertainment and performance sector, followed by media, creative visuals, and other industries when viewed by sub-sector. In terms of experience, most respondents had worked for three years or more, indicating that most of them had fairly advanced expertise in their fields.

Structural Equation Model – Partial least squares (SEM-PLS)

The theoretical model developed in the hypothesis will be presented in a flowchart. Flowcharts are used to facilitate the identification of causal relationships being studied.

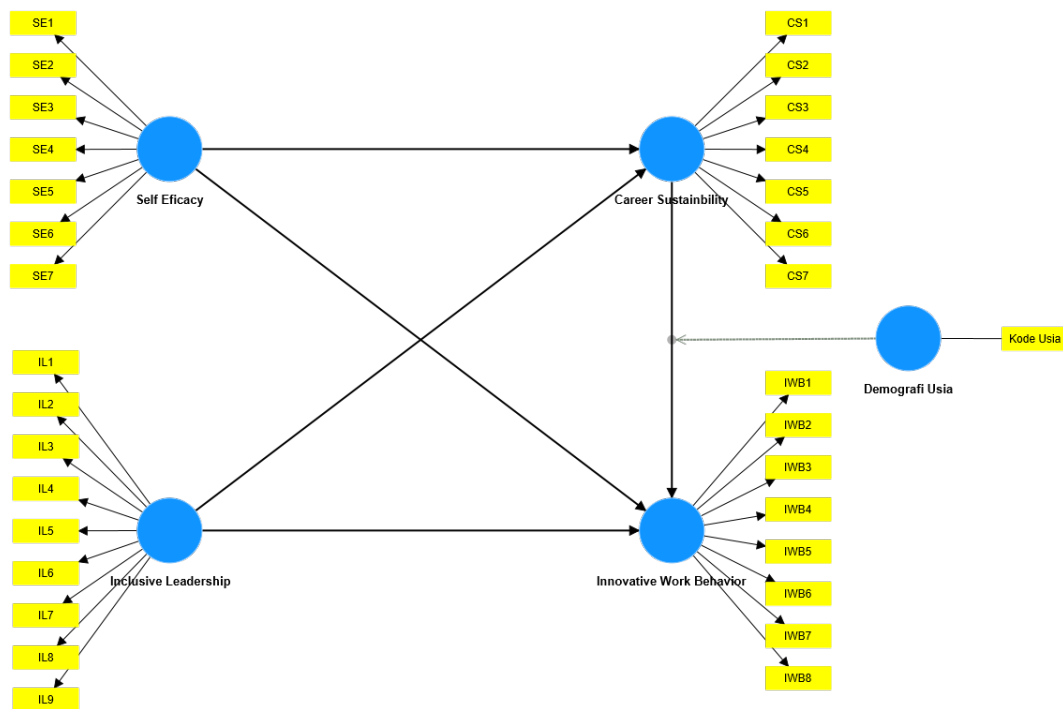


Figure 2. Conceptual Research Model
Source: Research data

The blue circle in the image indicates the observation variable used in the questionnaire. Likewise, the other constructs are based on the shape of each indicator. In PLS applications, causal relationships can be illustrated with a flowchart.

Validity Test

Measurement model evaluation in PLS-SEM builds on non-parametric evaluation criteria and uses bootstrapping and blindfolding procedures. The focus of measurement model evaluation is on the validity and reliability of construct or indicator measurements. In this study, the reflective measurement model evaluation was conducted using Convergent Validity, Average Variance Extracted, Discriminant Validity, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha.

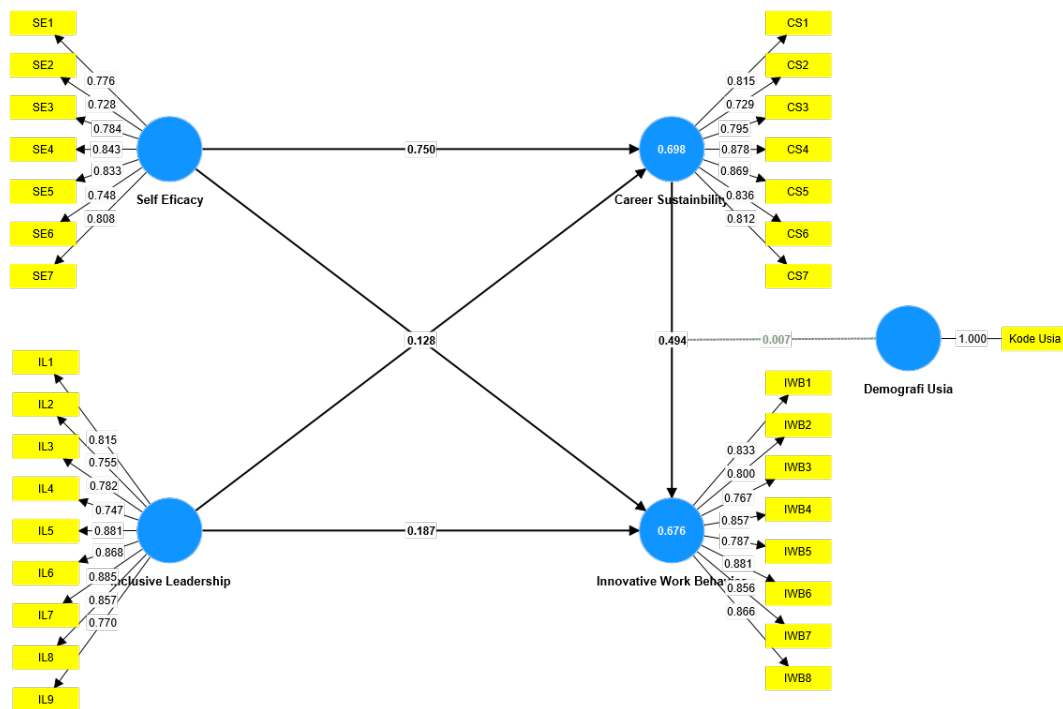


Figure 3. Outer Model
Source: Research data

Convergent validity assessed based on the loading factor value. An indicator is said to have good validity for its construct or latent value if the loading factor value is ≥ 0.7 . The following are the results of the validity test on the results of the questionnaire distribution data to 190 research respondents. Initial testing showed two indicators that did not reach the set target values. These indicators came from the Career Sustainability and Self-Efficacy variables. Therefore, these two indicators were eliminated from the measurement model to improve convergent validity. Initially, the Career Sustainability variable consisted of 8 indicators, after elimination, the number of indicators was reduced to 7. Similarly, the Self-Efficacy variable initially consisted of 8 indicators and became 7 indicators after the elimination process. Based on the results of further testing after the elimination process, it can be seen that all statement indicators are accurate because the loading factor value is ≥ 0.70 . Therefore, the model evaluation process can be continued.

Discriminant validity measuring how far a construct is truly different from other constructs (Hair et al., 2019). The discriminant validity test can be seen in the cross-loading value. The criterion that must be met is where the cross-loading value of each variable statement item for the variable itself is greater than the correlation value of the statement items for other variables. Based on the results of the cross-loading analysis, it can be determined that the cross-loading validity test is met. This can be seen from the cross-loading value of each variable statement item for the variable itself being greater than the correlation value of the statement items for other variables. Therefore, a reliability test on the research variables can be carried out.

Reliability Test (Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability) and Validity Test of Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Reliability testing is an index that shows the level of accuracy or reliability of a research instrument. (Hair et al., 2019). Reliability was also tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) measurements, with a value ≥ 0.7 considered to indicate good reliability, and a value ≥ 0.6 is still acceptable for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2019).

Furthermore, validity was tested by looking at the average variance extracted (AVE) value where an AVE value above 0.5 indicates a valid construct.

Table 3. Reliability Test and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted(AVE)
Career Sustainability	0.919	0.935	0.673
Inclusive Leadership	0.938	0.948	0.671
Innovative Work Behavior	0.936	0.947	0.692
Self-Efficacy	0.899	0.920	0.623

Source: Research data

The results above show that the alpha coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) and composite reliability are >0.7 . Therefore, it can be concluded that the research variables are reliable or have high reliability, thus having high accuracy to be designated as research variables. Furthermore, all values for each construct and its indicators are good because they have met the minimum value requirement, namely an AVE value of ≥ 0.5 .

Model Fit Test

The evaluation of the structural model (inner model) is carried out in several stages, namely testing the coefficient of determination, Q-square, F-square, and significance testing. The analysis of the impact of determination in SEM analysis is used to understand the contribution of exogenous variables to endogenous variables, as seen from the R-square. The coefficient of determination (R²) essentially measures the level of the model's capacity to explain endogenous variation.

Table 4. Test of the Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

Variables	R-square
Career Sustainability	0.698
Innovative Work Behavior	0.676

Source: Research data

Based on the table above, the R² value for the Career Sustainability variable obtained is 0.698, meaning that Self-Efficacy and Inclusive Leadership explain the Career Sustainability variable by 69.8% and the remainder is explained by other factors not explained in the model such as work-life balance and career adaptation (Yani and Saputra, 2024). Furthermore, the R² value for the Innovative Work Behavior variable obtained is 0.676, meaning that social Self-Efficacy and Inclusive Leadership as well as Career Sustainability are able to explain the Innovative Work Behavior variable by 67.6% and the remainder is explained by other factors not explained in the model such as Organizational Psychological Ownership and High Commitment Work Practices and Knowledge Sharing (Arrayyan, et al., 2024).

Q-square measures the predictive relevance of a model and act as predictive relevance of endogenous constructs. A Q-square value above zero means the values are well reconstructed and the model has predictive relevance. The test results are presented in Table 4:

Table 5. Q-test Square

Variables	Q ²
Career Sustainability	0.455
Innovative Work Behavior	0.446

Source: Research data

Based on Table 4 regarding the results of the Q-square (Q^2) test, the Q^2 value for the Career Sustainability variable is 0.455, while for the Innovative Work Behavior variable it is 0.446. A Q-square value greater than zero indicates that the constructed structural model has good predictive ability for the endogenous construct. Thus, these results support that the constructed research model is predictively relevant and can be used to explain phenomena in the context of career development and innovation in the workplace.

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is a tool to measure model fit. The requirement is that an SRMR value below 0.08 indicates a good model fit, while an SRMR value between 0.08 and 0.10 is still acceptable.

Table 6. Fit Test Summary	
Indicator	Mark
SRMR	0.066
NFI	0.789

Source: Research data

The table above shows that the Standardized Root Mean Square (SRMR) value is 0.066, which is less than 0.08. Therefore, the model meets the model fit criteria.

Hypothesis Testing

Significance test analysis will be conducted by calculating path coefficients for each path. This influence analysis is performed by first resampling the sample using the bootstrapping method.

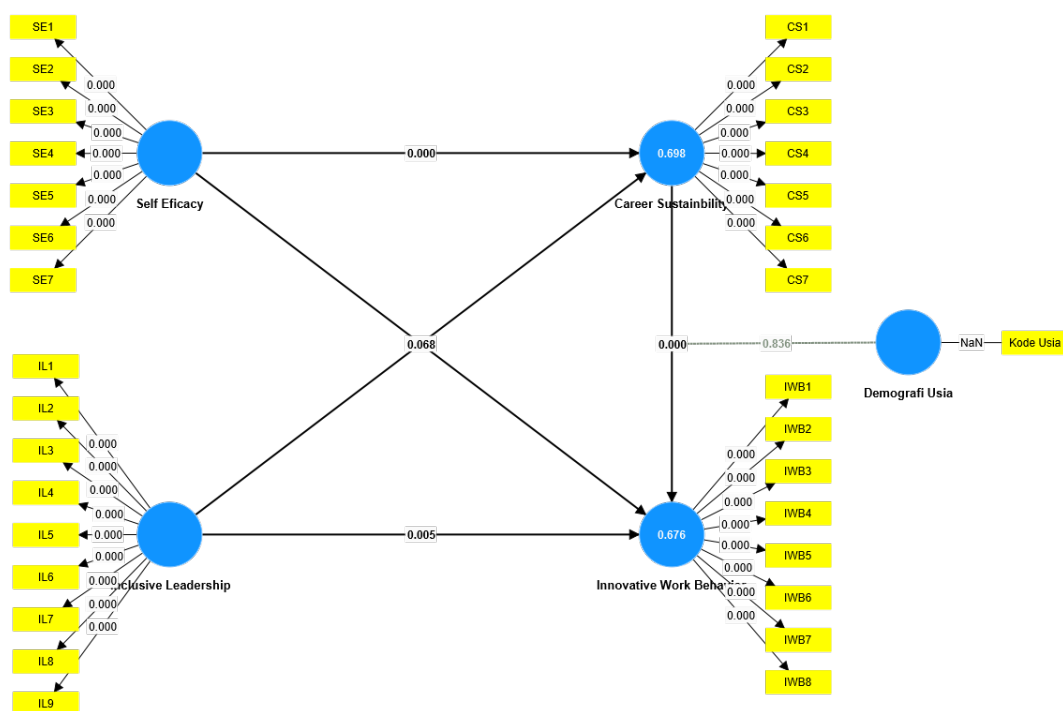


Figure 4. Bootstrapping Model Output

Source: Research data

The path coefficients output in this study used a significance level and a tolerable error rate of 0.05 or 5%. The results of the hypothesis testing can be seen below.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Information
H1	Self-efficacy has a positive influence on career sustainability for employees in the creative industry	0.750	13,843	0,000	Data supports the hypothesis
H2	Self-efficacy has a positive influence on innovative work behavior in employees in the creative industry.	0.223	1,828	0.068	Data does not support the hypothesis
H3	Inclusive leadership has a positive influence on career sustainability for employees in the creative industry.	0.128	2,219	0.027	Data supports the hypothesis
H4	Inclusive leadership has a positive influence on innovative work behavior in employees in the creative industry.	0.187	2,803	0.005	Data supports the hypothesis
H5	Career sustainability has a positive influence on innovative work behavior in employees in the creative industry.	0.494	4,470	0,000	Data supports the hypothesis
H6	Career sustainability mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and innovative work behavior in employees in the creative industry.	0.371	4,414	0,000	Data supports the hypothesis
H7	Career sustainability mediating the relationship between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior in employees in the creative industry.	0.063	1,811	0.070	Data does not support the hypothesis
H8	Age demographics moderate the relationship between career sustainability and innovative work behavior in employees in the creative industry.	0.007	0.207	0.836	Data does not support the hypothesis

Source: Research data

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, in this study, hypotheses H1, H3, H4, H5, and H6 were supported by the data. Meanwhile, the results for H2, H7, and H8 were not supported. The structural model analysis reveals several important relationships among the studied variables, providing both expected and nuanced findings. While the statistical results confirm the strength and direction of relationships, a deeper interpretation highlights the underlying behavioral and organizational dynamics.

The analysis shows that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on career sustainability. This suggests that employees who possess strong confidence in their abilities

tend to demonstrate greater adaptability, persistence, and long-term career orientation. In practice, individuals with high self-efficacy are more proactive in developing skills, maintaining professional relationships, and navigating career challenges, which collectively strengthen their career sustainability.

However, the direct relationship between self-efficacy and innovative work behavior (IWB) was found to be non-significant. This finding indicates that confidence alone does not automatically translate into innovative actions in the workplace. While individuals may feel capable of performing tasks, innovation requires more than internal belief it involves risk-taking, idea expression, and challenging existing norms. Without a supportive organizational climate, employees may hesitate to act on their ideas despite having high self-efficacy.

This result suggests that self-efficacy may play a more indirect role in fostering innovation. Employees with high self-efficacy may first focus on stabilizing and developing their careers enhancing competencies, building networks, and adapting to organizational demands before engaging in innovative behavior. In this sense, innovation emerges as a downstream outcome of career development processes rather than a direct consequence of individual confidence.

Moreover, this non-significant effect may reflect contextual characteristics of the workplace. In environments where hierarchical structures are strong or where psychological safety is limited, employees may avoid expressing new ideas due to fear of criticism or rejection. Thus, even when individuals believe in their capabilities, the absence of supportive conditions can suppress the manifestation of innovative behavior.

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of Open Statements

How confident do you feel about your ability to complete challenging work tasks that you have never done before?	Frequency
Learn & Try	67
Seeking Information & Collaboration	4
Motivation from Others	7
No answer	3
Confident & Self-assured	109
What has been your experience working with a boss or leader who is open to different opinions and backgrounds within your team?	Frequency
Collaborative & Open	89
Feeling Appreciated & Heard	19
The Importance of the Role of Superiors	38
Positive, Happy/Grateful	25
No answer	3
No Obstacles (Neutral)	16
What are your views on career sustainability (continuity) and the meaning of your current job, when viewed from a long-term perspective?	Frequency
Continuous Learning	23
Focus on Consistency	24
Career as a Long-Term Process	71
Work as Meaning / Hobby	17
No answer	1
There is no meaningful answer	35
Career Goal is Welfare / Family	19

	Frequency
How do you usually create and implement new ideas in your work?	
Opportunity Analysis & Learning	17
Creative Thinking through Experience	56
Collaboration or Discussion	56
Seeking Inspiration from Outside (Places, Media)	53
There is no meaningful answer	8

Source: Research data

Table 7 presents the frequency distribution of open-ended statements given by respondents regarding self-confidence in completing challenging tasks, experience working with superiors who are open to differences, career sustainability (continuity) and the meaning of work as well as ways of creating and implementing new ideas in employee work. The results also indicate that career sustainability has a significant positive effect on innovative work behavior. Employees who experience meaningful work, continuous growth, and supportive relationships are more likely to contribute innovative ideas. This suggests that innovation is closely linked to how individuals perceive their long-term role and development within the organization. When employees feel secure and valued in their careers, they are more willing to invest effort in creative and innovative activities.

Importantly, career sustainability was found to mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and innovative work behavior. This reinforces the notion that self-efficacy contributes to innovation indirectly by strengthening career-related capacities first. In other words, individuals with high self-efficacy build sustainable careers, and it is this sustainability that eventually fosters innovation.

The moderating role of age demographics further enriches these findings. Differences across generational groups indicate that the strength of relationships between variables varies depending on career stage and life experience. Younger employees may rely more on external support, such as inclusive leadership, to engage in innovation, while older employees may depend more on accumulated experience and internal confidence. This variation highlights the importance of considering generational diversity when interpreting behavioral outcomes.

Overall, these findings emphasize that innovative work behavior is not merely the result of individual capability, but rather the outcome of a complex interaction between personal beliefs, leadership context, and career development processes. The absence of a direct effect of self-efficacy on IWB underscores the importance of organizational support and career sustainability as key mechanisms that translate potential into actual innovative behavior

Discussion

The results of the study show that creative industry players, both employees and entrepreneurs who are directly involved in the process of creating, managing and developing creative ideas. Those with high self-efficacy often have excellent career sustainability. This is because self-confidence inspires people to continue learning, adapting, and maintaining their presence in a rapidly changing job market. Confidence to face challenges is very necessary in the context of the creative industry which is characterized by rapid changes in trends and fierce competition, so that employees can survive and thrive.

The demands of digital technology change, the need for continuous innovation, and the pressure of high-target work are widely experienced by industrial workers, which poses a unique challenge for creative industry employees in both the government and private sectors. On the other hand, intense competition refers to the competitive environment among employees and among companies, particularly in the Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi areas. The creative industry development hub is a place where many young workers from generations

X, Y, and Z with comparable talents compete for jobs, promotions, or professional recognition. Based on the descriptive analysis results, most respondents in this study were aged 28–43 years, had a bachelor's degree, and had more than three years of professional experience, indicating that they had the confidence and ability to negotiate their careers. Kumari et al. (2023), who confirmed that self-efficacy is a key motivator for career sustainability through increased confidence and adaptability in the workplace, reinforce this finding.

Conversely, high self-efficacy does not automatically drive innovative work behavior. In the creative sector, the ability to innovate depends not only on personal beliefs but also heavily on a supportive work context, including a cooperative culture, flexible organizational structures, and safe spaces for expression. Considering that many confident creative workers still need social validation, honest feedback, and encouragement from management and their teams to boldly convey fresh ideas, this becomes crucial. The profile of respondents, who mostly work in the entertainment and performance industries, indicates that teamwork, collaborative improvisation, and exploratory space provided by management often result in innovation in the workplace. This is in line with the conclusion of Ramadhani et al. (2025), who stated that self-efficacy does not directly influence innovative work behavior. However, job crafting functions as a complete mediator in this relationship, underscoring its important role in fostering innovation in organized professional environments.

Furthermore, the research results show that inclusive leadership has a beneficial and significant impact on both career sustainability and innovative work behavior. In the fluid and dynamic creative sector, having leaders who are transparent, supportive, and respectful of diversity is crucial. Leaders who provide opportunities for their staff to speak up, experiment, and contribute without fear of failure indirectly help improve their career sustainability. This aligns with the profile of the respondents in this study, most of whom have worked for more than three years in industries such as entertainment, media, and visual creative, where space for exploration and freedom of expression are essential. Inclusive leadership allows employees to feel valued and supported, thereby increasing their motivation to stay and thrive in their jobs.

Inclusive leadership has also been shown to stimulate more innovative work behavior. Inclusive leaders are crucial in creating a mentally safe workplace, motivating people to voice new ideas without fear of criticism or failure. The presence of leaders who encourage the exploration of ideas and provide autonomy will help increase workers' courage to test new approaches in the workplace in the creative industries, where innovation is a crucial component. Furthermore, research by William et al. (2022) and Windasari et al. (2022) confirms that inclusive leadership fosters a cooperative and empowering workplace, ultimately increasing the quality and frequency of innovative behavior. Furthermore, career sustainability has also been shown to have a significant impact on innovative work behavior. People who believe their careers will be sustainable, both in terms of job stability, development possibilities, and long-term competency relevance, tend to be more motivated to exhibit innovative behavior. Perceptions of job security and associated future prospects enable people to be more willing to take risks and explore ideas. The motivation to generate added value in one's work is part of the effort to maintain position and presence in the industry, in the context of creative industry employees who have significant work experience and are mostly highly educated.

This study contributes to the literature on innovative work behavior (IWB) by examining the roles of self-efficacy, inclusive leadership, and career sustainability within a multigenerational workforce. The findings provide a more nuanced understanding of how individual and contextual factors interact to shape innovation, extending beyond purely statistical interpretations toward theoretical and practical implications.

Self-efficacy demonstrates a significant positive effect on career sustainability, indicating that individuals with strong beliefs in their capabilities are more likely to sustain adaptive and meaningful career trajectories. This result is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2023), which emphasizes that self-efficacy influences persistence, motivation, and long-term

behavioral regulation. Employees with high self-efficacy tend to invest more effort in skill development, maintain professional relationships, and respond constructively to career challenges, thereby strengthening their capacity for sustainable career growth.

The direct relationship between self-efficacy and innovative work behavior is not statistically significant, representing a critical finding of this study. This result challenges the common assumption that confidence in one's abilities directly translates into innovative action. A theoretical explanation can be drawn from the broader framework of Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights that behavior is shaped by the interaction between personal, environmental, and behavioral factors. Self-efficacy may function primarily as a cognitive and motivational resource rather than an immediate behavioral driver. Individuals may feel capable of generating ideas but remain hesitant to express or implement them in the absence of supportive organizational conditions.

A process-based interpretation further clarifies this relationship. Self-efficacy appears to influence innovation indirectly through career sustainability. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to prioritize building stable and meaningful careers by enhancing competencies, adapting to organizational demands, and strengthening professional networks. These career-related processes create the foundation for innovative behavior to emerge over time. Career sustainability therefore operates as a critical mechanism that translates individual confidence into tangible innovation outcomes.

Contextual factors also provide important insight into this finding. Organizational environments characterized by hierarchical structures or limited psychological safety may discourage employees from expressing novel ideas. Cultural characteristics, particularly in collectivist contexts, reinforce tendencies to maintain harmony and respect authority, which can suppress the direct expression of innovation despite high levels of self-efficacy. This perspective helps explain inconsistencies in prior research, particularly when comparing findings across different cultural settings.

Inclusive leadership demonstrates a strong and consistent influence on both career sustainability and innovative work behavior. This result underscores the central role of leadership in shaping employee behavior and organizational climate. Leadership Theory suggests that inclusive leaders foster openness, accessibility, and fairness, creating an environment in which employees feel valued and supported. Such conditions reduce perceived interpersonal risks and encourage active engagement in idea generation and implementation. Inclusive leadership therefore functions as a key enabler that activates employee potential and facilitates innovation.

Career sustainability shows a significant positive effect on innovative work behavior, reinforcing its role as a central construct in this study. Employees who perceive their careers as meaningful and supported are more likely to engage in innovative activities. This finding aligns with Career Construction Theory, which emphasizes that career development is an ongoing, adaptive process shaped by both individual agency and contextual support. Innovation can be understood as a behavioral outcome of sustained career engagement, rather than a short-term response to situational factors.

The moderating role of age demographics highlights the importance of generational differences in shaping these relationships. Variations across age groups suggest that employees at different career stages respond differently to self-efficacy and leadership practices. Younger employees tend to rely more on external support, including inclusive leadership, to engage in innovation. More experienced employees are more likely to draw on accumulated knowledge and internal confidence. These patterns are consistent with Career Construction Theory, which posits that career behaviors evolve over time and are influenced by changing personal and contextual conditions.

The findings of this study offer several theoretical contributions. The absence of a direct effect of self-efficacy on innovative work behavior provides evidence that innovation is not

solely driven by individual psychological resources. Career sustainability emerges as a crucial mediating construct that explains how individual capabilities are transformed into behavioral outcomes. The role of inclusive leadership further emphasizes the importance of organizational context in enabling innovation. The integration of these variables within a single framework contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of innovation as a multi-level and process-oriented phenomenon. This study also contributes to the growing body of research by highlighting the importance of cultural and generational contexts. Differences in findings across settings indicate that theoretical relationships cannot be assumed to be universal. A context-sensitive approach is necessary to fully understand how innovation is shaped within diverse organizational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the relationships between self-efficacy, inclusive leadership, career sustainability, and innovative work behavior (IWB) within a multigenerational workforce. The findings demonstrate that inclusive leadership and career sustainability play significant roles in fostering innovative work behavior, while self-efficacy contributes indirectly through its effect on career sustainability. The absence of a direct relationship between self-efficacy and innovative work behavior highlights the importance of contextual and developmental mechanisms in translating individual capabilities into observable innovation outcomes.

Theoretical Contributions

This study offers several important contributions to the literature on organizational behavior and human resource management. First, it challenges the commonly assumed direct relationship between self-efficacy and innovative work behavior by demonstrating that this relationship is not universally applicable. The findings suggest that self-efficacy functions more effectively as a foundational psychological resource that requires mediating processes to influence behavior. Second, the study positions career sustainability as a central mediating construct that explains how individual and organizational factors interact to produce innovative outcomes. This contributes to the integration of Social Cognitive Theory and Career Construction Theory by showing that innovation is a developmental outcome shaped by long-term career processes rather than immediate individual capability alone. Third, the inclusion of age demographics as a moderating variable extends existing research by highlighting the role of generational differences in shaping behavioral responses. The results support the argument that innovation-related behaviors are influenced by career stage and life experience, reinforcing the need for a context-sensitive and multi-level theoretical approach.

Practical Implications

The findings provide several actionable insights for organizations aiming to enhance innovative work behavior. Organizations should not rely solely on improving employees' self-efficacy, as confidence alone does not guarantee innovation. Greater emphasis should be placed on creating a supportive work environment that enables employees to express and implement ideas. The role of inclusive leadership is particularly critical. Organizations are encouraged to develop leadership practices that emphasize openness, accessibility, and fairness. Leadership development programs should focus on building inclusive behaviors that foster psychological safety and encourage employee participation in innovation processes.

In addition, organizations should invest in strategies that promote career sustainability. This includes providing opportunities for continuous learning, facilitating professional relationship-building, and supporting employees in adapting to changing work demands. Employees who perceive their careers as meaningful and sustainable are more likely to engage in innovative activities. Attention should also be given to generational differences within the workforce. Management strategies should be tailored to accommodate varying expectations and

needs across age groups. Younger employees may benefit more from structured support and inclusive leadership, while more experienced employees may require opportunities to leverage their expertise and autonomy.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is subject to several limitations. The use of cross-sectional data limits the ability to establish causal relationships. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs to better capture the dynamic nature of career sustainability and innovation. The use of purposive sampling may also limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the specific context of this study. Further research is recommended to explore additional contextual variables, such as organizational culture, psychological safety, or leadership styles, which may strengthen or weaken the relationships examined in this study. Comparative studies across different cultural settings would also provide deeper insights into the role of context in shaping innovative work behavior.

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