

## IMPORTANCE OF DIGITALIZATION, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, AND INCENTIVE SYSTEMS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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### *Abstract*

*This study investigates the impact of knowledge sharing, incentive systems, and digitalization on organizational performance among companies in Sulaymaniyah, located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The primary objective is to determine whether these three factors significantly influence company performance. To achieve this, a quantitative research approach was adopted. Primary data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire distributed to employees across several private sector companies, including Asiacell, IQ Online, Akat Company, and others. The results of the analysis reveal that all three independent variables—knowledge sharing, incentive systems, and digitalization—have a statistically significant positive impact on organizational performance. Among them, digitalization demonstrated the strongest effect, followed by incentive systems and then knowledge sharing. These findings suggest that companies in Sulaymaniyah are actively leveraging digital technologies to enhance performance and should continue to invest in digital infrastructure and employee digital competencies.*

**Keywords:** *Knowledge Sharing, Incentive System, Digitalization, Organizational Performance, Quantitative Research.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In today's dynamic business environment, digitalization stands as a critical driver of organizational transformation. It refers to the process of converting products, services, and processes into digital formats and integrating digital technologies into all aspects of business operations. This transformation has revolutionized how organizations communicate, operate, and compete, offering numerous advantages including cost reduction, improved efficiency, market development, and enhanced collaboration (Riemer, Schellhammer, & Meinert, 2019).

One of the primary benefits of digitalization is the reduction of operational costs. By replacing manual, paper-based processes with digital alternatives, companies save on printing, storage, and administrative overheads. Digital tools also facilitate real-time communication and collaboration, enabling employees across different locations to share information and coordinate effectively through platforms like emails, instant messaging, and video conferencing (Parviainen et al., 2017). This increased accessibility fosters productivity and a better understanding of organizational goals and individual responsibilities.

Furthermore, digitalization allows organizations to collect and analyze data efficiently. This enables better decision-making by identifying cost drivers, evaluating risks, and monitoring performance. Among digital technologies, mobile tools play a pivotal role by enhancing customer engagement and supporting business objectives (Schwertner, 2017). Digital marketing, for example, has been transformed through the use of social media, search engines, and online platforms, enabling businesses to engage effectively with target audiences (Saura, Palos-Sanchez, & Correia, 2019).

Digital technologies also support knowledge sharing, which is crucial for innovation and organizational learning. Employees can exchange ideas, experiences, and expertise through digital platforms, fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Huang et al., 2023; Yaqub & Alsabban, 2023). Tools like online courses, webinars, and knowledge-sharing platforms promote employee development and allow access to industry updates and training resources (Gregson et al., 2015; Wei et al., 2015). As shown by Budur (2025), employee training directly influences innovative behaviors, with knowledge sharing playing a key mediating role in this relationship.

Social media has become a prominent channel for digital knowledge sharing. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, and online forums like Reddit and Quora facilitate the exchange of information and insights among employees (Sivakumar et al., 2023; Alzahrani, 2017). These tools not only reduce the need for physical documentation but also enhance collaboration and idea generation within organizations (Naeem, 2019).

In organizational settings, knowledge sharing enhances efficiency, innovation, and employee satisfaction. It allows for the flow of useful information across individuals, teams, and departments, helping to address challenges and improve overall performance (Nugraha, 2021; Diab, 2021). However, knowledge sharing depends on both personal and organizational

factors. Trust, personality traits, and organizational culture—including support from leadership and the availability of digital infrastructure—play significant roles in promoting effective knowledge exchange (Luo et al., 2023). As demonstrated by Budur, Rashid, Faeq, Demirer, & Tajdini (2025), charismatic leadership and teamwork enhance job satisfaction through the mediating role of knowledge sharing, confirming the strategic importance of these organizational factors.

A supportive environment for knowledge sharing requires guidelines, proper incentives, and a culture that encourages open communication. Companies that focus on cultivating such environments can benefit from enhanced employee engagement, problem-solving, and creative output (Natu & Aparicio, 2022; Deng et al., 2023). Digitalization, by making knowledge more accessible, supports this process and enables global collaboration (Barykin et al., 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of digital platforms for communication and knowledge sharing became even more evident. With limited physical interaction, tools like Zoom, Skype, and Google Meet played a critical role in maintaining connectivity and enabling remote work and training (Tønnessen, Dhir, & Flåten, 2021).

Digitalization, as a process of integrating technology into business operations, enhances performance by automating tasks, improving decision-making, and reducing costs (Saleem, 2021). It fosters employee engagement by providing tools for collaboration and knowledge sharing, contributing to a more agile and innovative organization.

Another crucial factor influencing performance is the implementation of incentive systems. These systems motivate employees through financial rewards, bonuses, salary increases, and profit-sharing, all of which encourage high performance and alignment with organizational goals (Naranjo-Gil et al., 2012). Effective incentives also contribute to employee retention, job satisfaction, and continuous improvement (Shih et al., 2006). Additionally, virtue-based leadership approaches, as discussed by Budur (2024), can enhance organizational commitment by aligning employee values and motivation with ethical leadership practices.

In the digital age, knowledge sharing, digitalization, and incentive systems are interrelated elements that play a fundamental role in driving organizational performance. Sharing knowledge enhances collective intelligence and supports innovation, while digital tools and incentives create the environment and motivation necessary for this sharing to occur (Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019).

To investigate the influence of these factors, this study examines the impact of knowledge sharing, incentive systems, and digitalization on organizational performance among private-sector employees in Sulaymaniyah City, located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed using correlation and regression tests.

The subsequent sections of this study are organized as follows:

- Section 2 presents the literature review and explores prior research on the study variables.
- Section 3 outlines the hypotheses and discusses the proposed relationships between the independent and dependent variables.
- Section 4 describes the methodology and data collection process.
- Section 5 provides the results of the data analysis, including reliability tests and hypothesis testing through correlation and regression.
- Finally, Section 6 concludes the study and offers recommendations based on the findings.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Digitalization**

In the era of advanced technologies, organizations are increasingly adopting digital tools and systems to streamline operations, reduce costs, and foster innovation. Digitalization refers to integrating digital technologies into business processes to generate value and improve performance. Technologies such as digital traceability, social media, information systems, and blockchain are central to this transformation and help shape future business models (Ribeiro Navarrete et al., 2021).

Digitalization enables new business model innovations, facilitates collaboration, and opens access to new markets. It simplifies operations, enhances real-time data collection, and strengthens customer interaction through digital platforms, dashboards, and mobile applications (Parviainen et al., 2017). The use of tools like Google Forms allows organizations to collect data more efficiently and reduce costs.

Failure to adapt to digitalization can cause organizations to fall behind in competitive markets. Organizations that integrate digital tools into customer interaction, communication systems,

and sales channels gain a competitive edge. Mobile apps, digital payment solutions like Apple Pay and Google Wallet, and e-commerce platforms such as Amazon or eBay have transformed traditional business models (Rachinger, 2018).

Additionally, digitalization supports continuous improvement by allowing companies to track performance, analyze data, and refine strategies (Burchardt & Maisch, 2019). It also contributes to sustainable practices when combined with quality standards such as ISO 9001 certification, which has shown to strengthen the links between knowledge management and organizational sustainability (Demir, Budur, Omer, & Heshmati, 2023).

Internal and external communication is a core factor in successful digitalization. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Skype, and Viber support communication and knowledge exchange regardless of location (Bolton et al., 2016). Strong transformational leadership also plays a key role in guiding digital change and boosting customer satisfaction through enhanced employee behaviors and organizational citizenship (Budur & Poturak, 2021).

Digital transformation allows for global market expansion, enabling companies to reach international customers and increase profitability (Vadana, 2020). However, effective implementation requires clear goals and plans. Communication systems, collaboration tools, and customer service technologies must be carefully selected and aligned with company strategies (Kolić, 2021).

## **2.2 Knowledge sharing**

Knowledge sharing is the process by which employees exchange information, insights, and expertise within an organization. It enhances learning, problem-solving, and innovation, thereby supporting both individual and organizational growth (Abdulwahab Mohammed, 2023).

Numerous personal and organizational factors influence knowledge sharing. A supportive organizational culture, trust, reward systems, and digital platforms all play significant roles. Trust is especially essential for promoting open knowledge exchange, as employees are more likely to share valuable insights when they feel psychologically safe (Farooq, 2018; Zaim, Demir, & Budur, 2021).

Organizational socialization also contributes to employee engagement and knowledge behaviors. As demonstrated by Torlak, Budur, and Khan (2024), socialization enhances affective commitment and innovative work behavior, which are closely linked to effective knowledge sharing practices. Furthermore, Budur, Demirer, and Rashid (2024) identified innovative organizational culture and quality of work life as key mediators in the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovation.

In addition, employee training can enhance both declarative and procedural knowledge, directly improving performance (Demir, Kiziloglu, Budur, & Heshmati, 2022). Such training programs strengthen the knowledge base and empower employees to make better decisions.

Knowledge sharing is also vital for team creativity and organizational learning. Employees collaboratively solving problems through shared knowledge are more adaptable to technological changes and evolving industry trends (Khassawneh et al., 2022). Budur et al. (2025) further emphasized the mediating role of teamwork and knowledge sharing in achieving job satisfaction and better performance.

A shared knowledge environment encourages employees to contribute ideas, innovate, and challenge outdated practices. This enhances not only performance but also career advancement, as employees acquire new skills and become eligible for higher-level roles (Ahmad & Karim, 2019).

### **2.3 Incentive system**

Incentive systems are structured mechanisms used by organizations to motivate employees and enhance performance. These systems reward individuals based on measurable contributions, aligning employee goals with those of the organization (Grabner, 2014).

Incentives can include bonuses, salary increases, profit-sharing, or recognition programs, all of which encourage higher levels of performance. For such systems to be effective, they must be transparent and fair, with clearly defined metrics for evaluation (Ahmed et al., 2013). Effective rewards improve job satisfaction, engagement, and employee retention.

Studies have shown that well-designed incentive systems promote organizational commitment and boost morale, especially when paired with leadership styles that emphasize values and ethics (Budur, 2024; Zaim et al., 2021). Furthermore, incentive strategies help align personal

ambitions with the broader organizational vision, increasing productivity and driving long-term success (Fadillah & Ismail, 2018).

Research also highlights the cross-cultural effectiveness of transformational leadership in delivering results through properly aligned reward systems (Poturak et al., 2020). When leadership approaches and incentives are in sync, the impact on employee performance is amplified (Budur & Poturak, 2021).

### **3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Performance**

Studies by Mahfodh & Obeidat (2020) confirm that knowledge sharing significantly enhances organizational performance, especially when supported by organizational culture, training, and best practices. Similarly, Sunarta (2020) found that knowledge sharing drives product, process, organizational, and marketing innovation, which are all positively associated with performance improvements.

Additionally, Budur, Demirer, and Rashid (2024) highlighted how knowledge sharing influences innovative behaviors, with innovative culture and quality of work life serving as mediators. This strengthens the case for viewing knowledge sharing as a strategic enabler of performance.

H1: Knowledge sharing significantly affects organizational performance.

#### **3.2 Incentive system has a positive impact on organizational performance**

Solomon (2012) showed that employee motivation, often driven by incentive systems, has a direct and significant impact on productivity and organizational performance. When aligned with ethical leadership and fair distribution, incentives encourage employees to exceed expectations (Budur, 2024; Zaim et al., 2021).

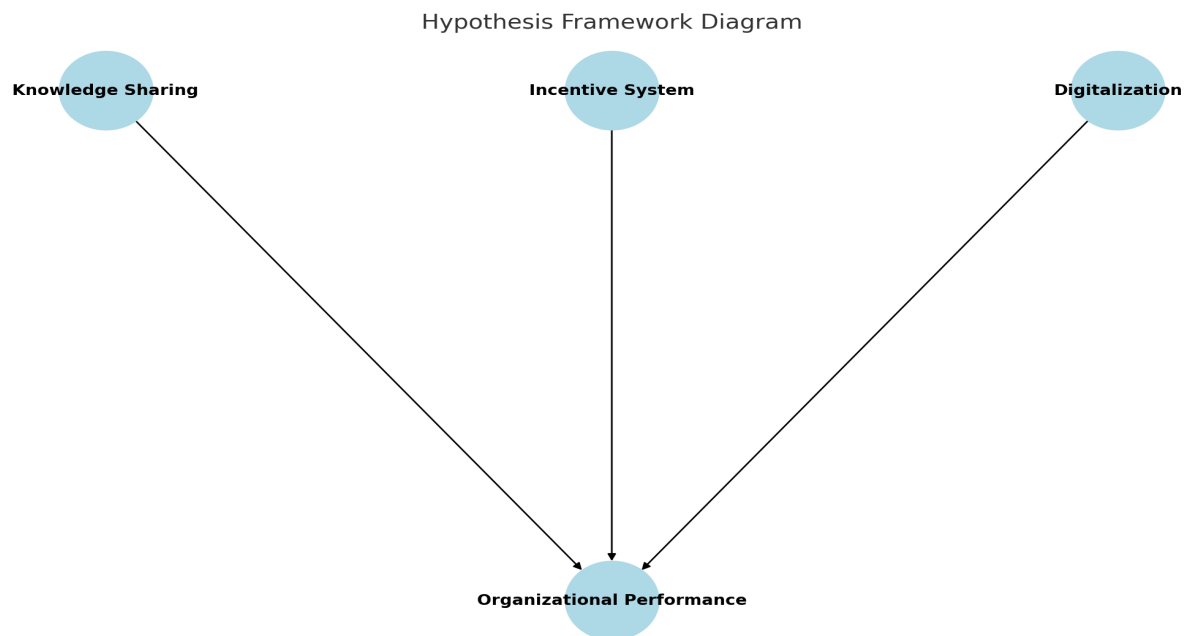
H2: Incentive systems significantly affect organizational performance.

#### **3.3 Digitalization has a positive impact on organization performance**

Wang et al. (2023) demonstrated that digital capabilities such as operational and integration abilities are significantly associated with improved business performance. Moreover,

digitalization enables efficiency, cost savings, and scalability, which enhance competitiveness. As Demir, Budur, Omer, and Heshmati (2023) noted, digital transformation combined with quality standards like ISO 9001 boosts sustainability and performance.

H3: Digitalization significantly affects organizational performance.



This diagram illustrates the research hypotheses. Knowledge Sharing, Incentive Systems, and Digitalization are the independent variables, each hypothesized to have a positive impact on Organizational Performance, which is the dependent variable. These relationships are tested through correlation and regression analysis in the study.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore the impact of knowledge sharing, digitalization, and incentive systems on organizational performance. Conducted in Sulaymaniyah, within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the research specifically targets local companies to assess how these factors influence their overall performance. Data was gathered from 172 employees across various sectors—primarily telecommunications and manufacturing—via structured questionnaires distributed through Google Forms. The survey included 33 items, prepared based on previous scholarly research, and was available in both Kurdish and English. Participants voluntarily responded, representing diverse positions,

genders, educational backgrounds, and years of experience. The responses were collected directly from employees without any coercion, ensuring the authenticity and reliability of the primary data.

#### **4.1 Demographic Graph**

Table 1 summarizes the demographic distribution of the 172 survey respondents. The majority of participants (48%) have between 1–5 years of experience, with 6–10 years being the second most common category (38%). Most respondents hold entry-level positions (36%), followed by supervisors (21%). The gender distribution is heavily skewed towards males, who make up 87% of the respondents. Regarding education, a significant majority (84%) are university graduates, while a small portion (1%) have not completed high school.

*Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents*

| <b>Category</b>        | <b>Sub-category</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Experience</b>      | 1–5 years             | 83               | 48%               |
|                        | 6–10 years            | 66               | 38%               |
|                        | 11–15 years           | 11               | 6%                |
|                        | 16 and more           | 12               | 7%                |
| <b>Position</b>        | Entry-level           | 62               | 36%               |
|                        | Supervisor            | 54               | 21%               |
|                        | Director              | 17               | 10%               |
|                        | Manager               | 1                | 1%                |
|                        | Other                 | 36               | 21%               |
| <b>Gender</b>          | Male                  | 149              | 87%               |
|                        | Female                | 22               | 13%               |
| <b>Education Level</b> | University Graduate   | 144              | 84%               |
|                        | High School Graduate  | 14               | 8%                |
|                        | Master's/Ph.D.        | 12               | 7%                |
|                        | Less than High School | 3                | 1%                |

## **5. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This section presents the statistical analysis conducted to test the reliability and relationships among the study variables using SPSS software. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, indicating how consistently participants responded across items within each construct. Correlation and regression analyses were then performed to examine the relationships between

independent variables (knowledge sharing, incentive system, and digitalization) and the dependent variable (organizational performance).

*Table 2: Reliabilities*

| Variable                          | Cronbach Alpha | Reliability Level |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Knowledge Sharing</b>          | 0.748          | Good              |
| <b>Incentive System</b>           | 0.87           | Very Good         |
| <b>Digitalization</b>             | 0.635          | Moderate          |
| <b>Organizational Performance</b> | 0.758          | Good              |

The reliability analysis results indicate that all measured constructs demonstrate acceptable levels of internal consistency (Table 1). Knowledge sharing recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.748, signifying good reliability, meaning the responses were consistent across related items. The incentive system achieved a higher alpha of 0.870, reflecting very good reliability and strong internal coherence among its items. Digitalization showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.635, indicating moderate reliability, which is acceptable but suggests room for improvement in item alignment. Lastly, organizational performance attained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.758, also indicating good reliability. Overall, these results confirm that the survey items used to measure each construct were dependable and fit for further analysis.

*Table 3: Correlation Matrix*

|                                   | <b>Knowledge Sharing</b> | <b>Incentive System</b> | <b>Digitalization</b> | <b>Organizational Performance</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Knowledge Sharing</b>          | 1.000                    | 0.403**                 | 0.286**               | 0.376**                           |
| <b>Incentive System</b>           | 0.403**                  | 1.000                   | 0.228**               | 0.434**                           |
| <b>Digitalization</b>             | 0.286**                  | 0.228**                 | 1.000                 | 0.474**                           |
| <b>Organizational Performance</b> | 0.376**                  | 0.434**                 | 0.474**               | 1.000                             |

*Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

The correlation analysis reveals positive relationships between all the independent variables (knowledge sharing, incentive system, and digitalization) and the dependent variable (organizational performance). Knowledge sharing is moderately correlated with incentive system ( $r = 0.403$ ) and weakly with digitalization ( $r = 0.286$ ). It also shows a moderate correlation with organizational performance ( $r = 0.376$ ). Incentive system is weakly correlated with digitalization ( $r = 0.228$ ) and moderately with organizational performance ( $r = 0.434$ ). Digitalization shows the strongest correlation with organizational performance ( $r = 0.474$ ), suggesting a relatively stronger linear relationship. All correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating reliable associations among the variables (Table 3).

*Table 4: Regression Model Summary*

| <b>Model</b> | <b>R</b> | <b>R Square</b> | <b>Adjusted R Square</b> | <b>Std. Error of Estimate</b> |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>     | 0.596    | 0.356           | 0.344                    | 0.44198                       |

The model summary shows (Table 4) an Adjusted R Square of 0.344, meaning that 34.4% of the variance in organizational performance can be explained by the three independent variables: knowledge sharing, incentive system, and digitalization. This suggests that the model has a moderate level of explanatory power, indicating a meaningful relationship between the predictors and the outcome variable.

*Table 5: Anova*

| <b>Model</b>    | <b>Sum of Squares</b> | <b>Df</b> | <b>Mean Square</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>Sig.</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| <b>1</b>        | 18.228                | 3         | 6.076              | 31.105   | 0.000       |
| <b>Residual</b> | 33.013                | 169       | 0.195              |          |             |
| <b>Total</b>    | 51.242                | 172       |                    |          |             |

The ANOVA results show a significant F-value of 31.105 with a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that at least one of the independent variables significantly predicts organizational performance, and the model is a good fit for the data.

Table 6: Hypotheses Results

| Hypothesis | Independent Variable | B Coefficient | Std. Error | Beta  | T     | Sig.  |
|------------|----------------------|---------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| H1         | Knowledge Sharing    | 0.162         | 0.072      | 0.155 | 2.248 | 0.026 |
| H2         | Incentive System     | 0.197         | 0.046      | 0.288 | 4.240 | 0.000 |
| H3         | Digitalization       | 0.359         | 0.064      | 0.363 | 5.592 | 0.000 |
| —          | Constant             | 1.281         | 0.289      | —     | 4.439 | 0.000 |

### H1: Knowledge Sharing → Organizational Performance

The regression result for H1 shows a B coefficient of 0.162 and a T-value of 2.248 with  $p = 0.026$ , indicating statistical significance (Table 6). This suggests that knowledge sharing has a positive and significant impact on organizational performance, although the effect is moderate. The logic behind this result is that when employees effectively share knowledge, it enhances communication, innovation, and problem-solving across the organization, which ultimately contributes to improved performance.

### H2: Incentive System → Organizational Performance

For H2, the B coefficient is 0.197, with a T-value of 4.240 and  $p = 0.000$ , which confirms strong statistical significance. This indicates that the incentive system strongly influences organizational performance. Logically, this shows that motivating employees through financial or non-financial rewards increases productivity, satisfaction, and goal alignment—factors that directly enhance overall performance.

### H3: Digitalization → Organizational Performance

H3 exhibits the strongest result with a B coefficient of 0.359, T-value of 5.592, and  $p = 0.000$ , making digitalization the most influential factor among the three. This indicates that digitalization has a very strong and statistically significant effect on organizational performance. The reasoning is that adopting digital tools and processes streamlines operations, enhances data accuracy, enables faster decision-making, and promotes agility—leading to measurable improvements in organizational outcomes.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The primary objective of this research was to examine the impact of digitalization, knowledge sharing, and incentive systems on organizational performance within companies located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The findings indicate that all three independent variables—digitalization, knowledge sharing, and incentive systems—have a positive effect on the dependent variable, organizational performance.

Digital technologies play a crucial role in enhancing performance by streamlining daily operations, reducing time consumption, and cutting costs. The study shows that the successful implementation of digital tools within organizations simplifies processes, increases efficiency, and contributes significantly to performance improvement.

Knowledge sharing was also found to be vital for organizational success. Without an effective knowledge-sharing culture, organizations struggle to leverage internal expertise. Sharing knowledge facilitates the exchange of ideas across various levels of the organization, promotes teamwork, problem-solving, and ultimately contributes to improved decision-making and innovation.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of incentive systems in motivating employees. Rewarding performance and offering career development opportunities encourage employees to excel, which in turn drives overall organizational performance.

To investigate these relationships statistically, data were collected from private organizations in Kurdistan, including Asiacell and IQ (an internet service provider), among others. The reliability of the data was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, and correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between variables. Six significant correlation results were identified. Regression analysis further examined the influence of the independent variables on organizational performance. The use of the regression model enabled the identification of key contributing factors, offering valuable insights into how digitalization, knowledge sharing, and incentive systems collectively enhance organizational outcomes.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of the Cronbach's alpha test, the data showed good internal consistency and reliability. We recommend that future participants be encouraged to answer survey questions more accurately and attentively to further improve data reliability.

The correlation analysis revealed generally positive relationships between the variables. However, these relationships were mostly weak to moderate in strength. Therefore, we offer the following recommendations:

**Incentive Systems:** Organizations should enhance their incentive systems by providing more comprehensive rewards and career development opportunities. This will motivate employees to perform at higher levels and contribute more effectively to organizational goals.

**Digitalization:** Companies should continue to invest in digital technologies to improve communication, increase efficiency, and develop sustainable systems for data storage and analysis. Implementing advanced digital tools will support better control and monitoring of employee performance and promote a more agile working environment.

**Knowledge Sharing:** Leadership should focus on cultivating a culture of knowledge sharing. This includes encouraging open communication, team collaboration, and the free exchange of ideas. Technology should also be used to facilitate easier access to knowledge-sharing platforms, ensuring that all employees can participate actively.

Regression results also indicated that while knowledge sharing positively impacts organizational performance, the strength of this relationship may not be as significant as that of digitalization or incentive systems. Therefore, organizations—particularly in Sulaymaniyah—should place greater emphasis on fostering a collaborative culture and enhancing communication practices to amplify the benefits of knowledge sharing.

Finally, since both digitalization and incentive systems showed significant positive relationships with performance, we recommend continued development and integration of these strategies. Motivating employees and implementing digital processes can significantly improve efficiency, innovation, and overall organizational success.

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