

# **Toward the Sustainable Development Goals: The Effects of Digital Leadership and Knowledge-Sharing Behavior on the Higher Education Institutional Change**

## **Abstract**

Utilizing the Institutional Theory of Leadership as a theoretical lens, this study investigates the relationship between digital leadership, knowledge-sharing behavior and institutional change in the realm of higher education, with the aim of achieving education for sustainable development (ESD). Our research objectives are twofold: first, we theoretically explore and assess the mediating effect of knowledge-sharing behavior in the relationship between digital leadership and institutional change within higher education for SDGs; second, we aim to provide managerial recommendations for higher education executives. We employed a quantitative survey approach, the data were collected from 607 valid respondents who are employed at Chinese higher education institutions. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. Our study illuminates the effects of digital leadership and knowledge sharing on institutional change in higher education for SDGs. The results emphasize the significance of digital leadership not only for educational professionals as a form of career capital but also for fostering knowledge sharing through innovative digitization. The findings demonstrate a direct correlation between digital leadership and institutional change, with knowledge-sharing behavior serving as a mediator. Additionally, the study suggests that digital leaders should actively advocate for reforms in higher education systems and promote knowledge-sharing. Higher education institutions can effectively adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of digitalization and future challenges for educational leaders.

**Keywords:** Digital Leadership, Knowledge Sharing, Institutional Change, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Higher Education