

# ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING: THE MODERATING ROLE OF INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR AND TEAM PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE CASE OF AN INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY PROVIDER

Sandra Penger<sup>1</sup>  
Barbara Grah<sup>2</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** *We have investigated how organizational design facilitates organizational learning in the age of digital economy at exploring the cross-level interplay. In this inductive case study of a sustainable mobility provider, we conducted a three-level coding procedure. We found evidence for two moderators — innovative behavior at the individual level and team psychological empowerment at the team level — to propose the conceptual model of their interplay with regard to predicting organizational learning. Based on these findings, we developed a conceptual model of the cross-level interplay between organizational design and the moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment in stimulating organizational learning. Specifically, we found support for three facets of innovative behavior — idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation at the individual level. In addition, we identified four facets of team psychological empowerment at the team-level — team potency, team meaningfulness, team autonomy, and team impact — which act as moderating mechanisms in predicting organizational learning.*

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**Keywords:** *organizational design, organizational learning, innovative behavior, team psychological empowerment, sustainable mobility, multi-level perspective.*

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**JEL classification:** M10, M12, M15

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Increased recognition of organizational design in the era of digital economy has led to models that examine how organizational design (Snow, 2016; Burton et al., 2008) influence

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1 University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana, Slovenia, e-mail: sandra.penger@ef.uni-lj.si

2 Corresponding author, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana, Slovenia, e-mail: barbara.grah@ef.uni-lj.si

the adoption of a particular organizational learning model to achieve organizational fit. While traditionally organizational learning models have been viewed as static models that do not address important contingencies that affect the continuous dimension of the organizational learning process in the age of digital economy (Crossan, Maurer, & White, 2011; Roblek et al., 2018), organizations and researchers (Snow, 2016) are recognizing that organizations need to implement more dynamic organizational ecosystems (Snow, 2016) able to continuously adapt by both acquiring and generating knowledge.

Most of what we know about how organizational design facilitates organizational learning is based on the assumption that organizational learning is often a reaction to environmental change (Kim, 1993; March & Olsen, 1975) rather than a proactive, collaborative process among involved stakeholders. However, while the existing studies describe the link effectively, they do not fully explain the mechanism through which an organization's design facilitates the logic of organizational learning process. Indeed, the existing studies (Huber, 1991) view information processing as static, as it does not integrate the continuity of the organizational learning process, which requires the application of gained knowledge and feedback that form the basis for new loops of organizational learning (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999). In addition, Huber's (1991) model does not incorporate the contingency perspective that would enable information to be processed successfully. It does not discuss inter-organizational learning, although the subject could be implicitly understood from the model.

These and other limitations indicate the need for a conceptual model that includes cross-level interactions and a dynamic focus on the organizational learning process that will follow the contemporary organizational design principles, based on the organic organizational framework. In today's age of digital economy, organizations do not usually operate and act against competitors on their own but rather tend to collaborate with others (Snow, 2016); for example, by building ecosystems based on developed platforms and forming cooperative partnerships which require organizational learning to adapt accordingly. This logic creates a demand for approaching organizational learning as a dynamic process.

The existing studies do not explain how organizational design might facilitate organizational learning within cross-level contextual effects, particularly at both the individual and team levels. Clarifications on the interactions of relevant moderators that characterize the moderating role in predicting organizational learning as a dynamic process have not been explored. This study presents an opportunity to advance the theory by introducing a conceptual model of the cross-level interplay between organizational design and the moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment in stimulating organizational learning.

We know little about how organizations in the era of digital economy adopt organizational learning logic as a dynamic process within different cross-level contextual influences of the moderators — of team psychological empowerment at the team level and innovative behavior at the individual level — that stimulate this relationship. Learning and putting newly gained knowledge into practice are essential processes of knowledge-intensive

organizations. In this line of research, the field of organizational design has offered a variety of perspectives on the key considerations in stimulating organizational learning. In this study, we therefore develop an initial answer to the following research question:

**Research question:** *How does organizational design facilitate organizational learning at the individual and team levels in the age of digital economy?*

To answer this research question we have conducted an inductive study of an international sustainable mobility provider by applying a multi-level perspective (Černe et al., 2018). More specifically, our research focused on collecting primary and secondary data, conducting analysis through a three-level coding procedure and an investigation of qualitative data of an international sustainable mobility provider active in the fields of sharing economy and electric mobility. The data were collected from multiple sources and analyzed by using an inductive case application approach.

In this paper we investigate how organizational design facilitates the organizational learning process following a multi-level logic. In particular, we have identified two contingency factors as moderators in predicting organizational learning in the digital ecosystem — innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment — that an international sustainable mobility provider fostered in order to be aligned with the dynamic logic of organizational learning. Our findings show how organizational design stimulates organizational learning through moderating mechanisms of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment from a multi-level perspective.

Previous frameworks and models of organizational learning have often taken a more restrictive conceptualization of what constitutes organizational learning (Fiol and Lyles, 1985), suggesting that organizational learning is the process of improving action through better knowledge and understanding based on the actor-oriented, problem based approach to organizational learning. With our paper we intent to contribute to the body of literature placed at the intersection between organizational design and organizational learning in three ways. First, our study goes beyond the traditional focus on organizational learning, where the focus lies on the cross-level interplay between organizational design and the moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment. Second, the investigation of the moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment within the proposed cross-level interplay of organizational design represents an important addition to the extant literature (Snow, 2014; Grah et al., 2016), applying a multi-level perspective. Third, based on the notion described above, we derive from the most recent findings on organizational design and organizational learning (Sitar, Pahor and Škerlavaj, 2018), where design of individual work should be adjusted to serve the learning needs of individuals necessary for achieving organizational goals, looking into conceptualization of specific facets of the moderating mechanisms by accounting the dynamic process of organizational learning in the age of digital economy.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Organizational design

In developing a theoretical foundation for this research, we primarily drew from the contingency theory on organizational design (Nasrallah and Qawasmeh, 2009). Organizational design is a process of designing an organization. An organization is a system of interrelated human behaviors where humans perform tasks that are differentiated into several subsystems and each performs their own sub-tasks as well as integrated efforts to achieve effective system performance (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). According to Aldrich and Ruef (2006, in Snow, 2016), the organization is the preferred form to allocate resources over markets. It is a goal-directed, boundary-maintaining activity system that needs to be controlled and coordinated and therefore managed.

Organizational design is a thoughtful process of “configuring structures, processes, reward systems, and people practices to create an effective organization” that will be able to achieve its strategy and goals (Kates and Galbraith, 2007, p. 1). Organizational design can enable managers to create a productive, enjoyable working environment for accomplishing new goals, which will serve individual as well as collective interests (Snow et al., 2010) and stimulate learning. Puranam (2012, p. 18) defines organizational design as “a particular form of human problem solving in which the problem is one of getting multiple individuals with diverse knowledge and interests to collectively achieve something that they could not by acting individually.” Due to the bounded rationality, such solutions might be better or worse, often imperfect, sometimes even unsuccessful or unintentional. Also, Galbraith (1984) as well as Burton, DeSanctis, and Obel (2008) define organizational design as a decision process that involves two main issues: the partition of the whole task of an organization into the smaller parts of the subunits, and coordination of the smaller parts to fit together and achieve goals.

In organizational literature, several different perspectives exist on how to design organizations. According to the traditional universalist view, the concept of an organizational design is perceived to be universal, therefore fitting all organizations. The neoclassical perspective is that it all depends on the situation and the context of the organization. The emphasis is on the uniqueness of a situation as well as the organic structure - decentralization, participative leadership, and a wide span of control. The contingency view combines the universalist and case views and is based on the contingencies or variables that enable understanding of the situation, and thus determine the most appropriate structure. What is appropriate for a specific organization might not be appropriate for others, and different structures fit different purposes (Daft and Marcic, 2013). The mechanistic structure, where centralization, specialized tasks, formalization with many rules, vertical communication and hierarchy are in general more appropriate for contingency factors, such as large size, efficiency strategy, stable environment, rigid culture and manufacturing technology. The organic structure, defined by high decentralization, empowerment, few rules and low formalization, horizontal

communication and collaborative teamwork, is more appropriate for contingency factors, such as small size, innovation strategy, changing environment, adaptive culture and service technology (Daft, 2013), and as such more preferable for the learning organization (Örtenblad, 2004). Innovativeness usually requires higher decentralization and lower formalization; thus an organic structure is more appropriate for organizations striving to be innovative (Wang, 2001).

Contingency theory calls for changing an organization, contingent on external or internal factors, to achieve better performance (Nasrallah and Qawasmeh, 2009), where “contingency is any variable that moderates the effect of an organizational characteristic on performance” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 7). However, there is no single contingency theory, as different scholars and practitioners have identified different, yet similar, contingency factors. However, when searching and adapting to achieve organizational fit, leaders need to be aware they are not only modifying work procedures and other structural dimensions but also affecting humans as it is primarily a social process, which can therefore be very stressful (Carmeli et al., 2010).

A number of influential studies on organizational design have examined different dimensions of this important concept in literature and practice. Burton and Obel (1998) emphasize that the basis for organizational design is promoting the organization's mission and goals, determining the boundaries of the organization, and influencing the choices of technology and size. They also identify the following contingency factors: environment, management style, technology, size, climate, and strategy. Effective and efficient organizational design should provide a good fit between contingency factors and the properties and structure of an organization, which must be seen dynamically as changes happen over time (Burton & Obel, 1998; Nissen, 2014). Donaldson (2001) identifies environment, size, and strategy as the most important contingencies. Additional contingencies, among others, are task uncertainty and interdependence, technology and technological change, and innovation (Donaldson, 2001). Daft (2013) emphasizes the role of goals and strategy, environment, culture, technology, and size. The contextual situation of an organization, described with different contingency factors, influences the structure of an organization, meaning the structural dimensions of an organization describe its internal characteristics. Those properties are, according to Burton and Obel (1998), complexity and differentiation, formalization, centralization, span of control, rules, procedures, professionalism, meetings, reports, communications, media richness, and incentives, which define different structural configurations or the structure of an organization, as for example, simple, functional, divisional, or matrix (Burton & Obel, 1998).

Recent organizational design literature reports on the impact of innovation strategy on organizational learning and innovation performance (Beyene et al., 2016; Janežič et al., 2018). The results of the structural equation modelling analysis revealed a positive relationship of the impact of innovation strategy on organizational learning and product innovation performance. Furthermore, the study confirmed that the firm size and ownership type moderate the effect of innovation strategy on product innovation

performance. Also, the study on the relationship between organizational design and organizational learning in the age of digital economy and innovativeness (Ali et al., in press) investigates the effect of the organizational structure in single and dual-loop learning modes. Namely, the empirical study confirmed a positive and direct relationship between the increased level of organizational complexity and the increased levels of organizational integration, as organic contingency variables of contemporary organizational design in the digital era, on absorptive capacity in single and dual-loop learning modes, whereas higher levels of formalization and higher levels of centralization relate negatively. Furthermore, mechanistic structure is associated with internal learning, independent learning and single-loop learning, whereas organic design leads to external learning, collaborative learning and double-loop learning (Sitar and Škerlavaj, 2018). In conditions of less-structured teamwork in self-managed teams (lower specialization, formalization and hierarchy within a team), the mechanistic structure at the organizational level has been found to have a positive impact on learning and information exchange (Sitar and Škerlavaj, 2018). Moreover, the features of organizational design and organizational learning interact with one another and should be adjusted to accomplish fit in cases of misfits (Daft, 2013). For example, even the most cunning strategies will not reach their potential without support from structures, processes, and systems. Innovativeness usually requires higher decentralization and lower formalization, thus an organic structure is more appropriate for organizations striving to be innovative (Wang, 2001). We thus assume that organizational design of innovative organizations, based on the organic organizational structure, would promote organizational learning. Hence, we specifically predict the following:

**Proposition 1.** *Organic organizational structure is positively related to organizational learning.*

## 2.2 Organizational learning, innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment

Organizational learning focuses on the processes of organization learning within and between organizations (Hernaes et al., 2008) at the individual, team, organizational, and inter-organizational levels. Argyris and Schön (1978) claim that learning takes place only when new knowledge is translated into different behavior that is replicable, whereas Kolb (1984, in Kim, 1993, p. 38) states that “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” Huber (1991) considers an organization has learned if any of its components have acquired information that is used, either by itself or by other components, on behalf of the organization. Kim (1993, p. 38) defines individual learning as “the acquiring of knowledge or skill” encompassing the “know-how” and “know-why.” Team learning is defined as cohesive collective individual learning resulting in shared mental models. Organizational learning is “increasing an organization’s capacity to take effective action” (Kim, 1993, p. 43). Based on the analogy with learning, inter-organizational learning is defined as increasing the capacity to take effective action within a group of organizations (Yang et al., 2011) or by advancing Huber’s (1991) words: “a

group of organizations that continuously learn(s), if, through processing of information, the range of their potential behaviors is changed” (Grah et al., 2016, p. 184).

What we do know about organizational learning has primarily focused on the static dimension of the organizational learning model that does not address important contingencies that affect the learning process in the age of digital economy. The main theoretical limitation of March and Olsen’s (1975) model and Kim’s (1993) model is that they do not incorporate inter-organizational learning. March and Olsen (1975) believe in independence of organizational action and environmental response, which clearly excludes inter-organizational learning. In both models, other organizations are perceived as part of the environment, which presents an environmental response to action and changes individual beliefs (March and Olsen, 1975). In Kim’s (1993) model, these actions are caused by individual or actions that affect individual learning. The environment is perceived in terms of representing shocks (March and Olsen, 1975), not as offering opportunities to learn together and co-create the future. Despite the fact that both models show dynamics and emphasize continuity, they also indicate but do not sufficiently emphasize the importance and interactions of different contingency factors. Huber’s (1991) information processing view is static as it does not integrate the continuity of the organizational learning process, which requires the application of gained knowledge and feedback to form the basis for new loops of organizational learning (Crossan et al., 1999). In addition, Huber’s (1991) model does not incorporate the contingency perspective that would enable information to be processed successfully; therefore, this model can be considered universally applicable. In addition, it does not discuss inter-organizational learning, although the subject could be implicitly understood from the model.

While undoubtedly important, studies do not tell us how organizational design might facilitate organizational learning within different cross-level contextual influences, particularly at both the individual and team levels. Explanations of the interactions of the underlying moderators that characterize the moderation role in predicting the organizational learning as the dynamic process are not offered. By studying the proposed research question, this study presents an opportunity to advance the theory by introducing the conceptual model of the cross-level interplay between organizational design and the moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment in stimulating organizational learning in the digital economy.

Narrowing on two moderators at different levels, innovative behavior at the individual level and team psychological empowerment at the team level, we propose their cross-level interactions in predicting organizational learning. In our research we conceptualize the interplay between organic organizational structure and innovative behavior as the moderator at the individual level and team psychological empowerment at the team level in stimulating organizational learning.

Innovative behavior, in our study drawn from Janssen’s (2000) multi-dimensional conceptualization (idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation), is considered as a key factor in promoting innovation in organization (Amir, 2015).



Innovative work behavior includes exploration of opportunities and generation of new ideas (creativity related behavior), but could also include behaviors directed towards implementing change, applying new knowledge or improving processes to enhance personal and/or business performance (implementation oriented behavior) (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2008). As noted by different authors, organizational innovation plays an important role in stimulating organizational learning in entrepreneurship (García-Morales et al., 2006). Moreover, innovative behavior positively moderates growth intentions (Pekka, 2011). We thus assume that innovative work behavior would also promote organizational learning. Therefore, innovative work behavior would thus moderate the positive relationship between the organic organizational structure and organizational learning, making the relationship even more positive.

**Proposition 2.** *Innovative behavior moderates the positive relationship between the organic organizational structure and organizational learning in such a way that the positive relationship is stronger for individualists with high innovative behavior.*

With teams becoming more and more prevalent in organizations, it is hardly surprising that the empowerment construct has also been extended to, and examined, at the team level of analysis (Maynard et al., 2012). The widespread adoption of the four-dimension view of team empowerment at the team level has been conceptualized by Kirkman and Rosen (1999). They claim team psychological empowerment consists of four facets: (a) potency — a collective belief by team members that they can be effective; (b) meaningfulness — the tasks that the team works on are important, valuable, and worthwhile; (c) autonomy — the team has discretion over their work; and (d) impact — the work performed by the team is significant and advances organizational objectives. The theory reports on positive outcomes of team empowerment on team-level learning (Burke, 2006). Furthermore, team psychological empowerment positively moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and innovation at the individual, team and organizational levels (Grošelj, 2016). Therefore, team psychological empowerment would thus moderate the positive relationship between organic organizational structure and organizational learning, making the relationship even more positive.

**Proposition 3.** *Team psychological empowerment moderates the positive relationship between the organic organizational structure and organizational learning in such a way that the positive relationship is stronger for teams with high team psychological empowerment.*

### 3 METHODS

#### 3.1 Research context: The practice of an international sustainable mobility provider

To gain insight into organizational learning in relation to design, we studied Avant car, an international sustainable mobility provider that is active in the digital economy and focused on constant 360-degree organizational learning (Avant car, n.d.), applying a multi-



level perspective. Avant car (n.d.) has a vision to “*strengthen the position of a successful internationally established provider of complete solutions for new generation mobility*” and enjoys trust from clients from more than 200 companies from 100 countries, while offering a fleet of over 1,000 vehicles. Their key business lines are short-term rentals, long-term business rentals, fleet management, vehicle rentals with drivers and Avant2Go car sharing, the new field of electric mobility as a service with already more than 50 stations and a fleet of 200 electric vehicles, distributed across four Slovene cities — Ljubljana, Maribor, Kranj and Murska Sobota, and in 2018 extending to Croatia (Avant car, 2017b). Their ten key values are: passion, trust, creativity, open-mindedness, flexibility, respect, persistence, progressiveness, team spirit and 360-degree organizational learning (Avant car, n.d.), as showcased by quotations 1 and 2. Avant car is a learning organization, as they practice organizational learning on a continuous basis and are regularly putting newly gained knowledge into practice.

Avant car has an organic organizational structure (Avant car, n.d.; Dimovski et al., 2005) which is adapted to the needs of digital economy and the fast changing environment. Work in Avant car is done in interdisciplinary teams, which require a low level of formalization to be able to perform in innovative ways. In addition, they are practicing decentralization and a low level of hierarchy, as each employee/team/team member is empowered to make decisions related to their area of work, reflecting in interdict specialization (quotations 3 and 4). It enables them to continuously implement new sustainable projects (Civil society organization - Center for promotion of sustainable energy, 2017; Slovenian Convention Bureau, n.d.; STA, 2016; Team red International Consulting GmbH, 2016). According to Grošelj (2018), Avant2Go is a breakthrough high-technological project, requiring team members with interdisciplinary skills to solve ongoing issues in decentralized, non-formal ways, as they operate in a highly complex work environment. For example, development of an application requires a complex combination of knowledge from different fields, including information technology, knowledge on legal issues and data privacy regulations (EU General Data Protection Regulation), as well as others.

Quotation 1:

*“360-degree learning; all of us are teachers and students at the same time. We are glad to learn, develop and grow with each other.”* (Avant car, n.d.)

Quotation 2: *“We have combined our valuable experiences about mobility with the latest technologies and hi-tech solutions. We have brought together the entire range and know-how from a variety of e-mobility brands and our electric fleet of 150 electric cars...; our idea is supported by vast experiences in learning from success and failure.”* (Participant 2, CSO – Chief Strategy Officer)

Quotation 3:

*“Even though we have a clearly defined organizational structure, we pursue a flat and decentralized form without unnecessary borders. This makes us more flexible but sometimes it also means we have to pay attention to something that is not part of our daily work. There is some room for improvement here.”* (Participant 11, Member of R&D)

Quotation 4:

*“Well, we need to support fast growth with a corresponding infrastructure that also includes new working methods and techniques. For example, since our business units are dislocated, we have implemented a video conference tool because we wanted to have the “dispersed” employees in one virtual place, keeping it time-efficient.”* (Participant 11, Member of the R&D team)

Avant car, established in 2002, is an international as well as leading regional provider of sustainable mobility with 100% electric car sharing service within the framework of its innovative Avant2Go project, for which they received the 2017 National Energy Efficiency Award for the most energy-efficient project in 2017 in Slovenia (see Figure 1).

The goal of the Avant2Go project is to provide the new mobility infrastructure, being among the first to put on sustainable mobility, namely Mobility as a service (Maas) which is based on four pillars: (1) car sharing (sharing economy); (2) electric mobility (without harmful emissions); (3) connectivity (in a transparent and efficient manner); (4) enablement of finance and environment-related savings (better vehicle utilization, less environment pollution) in order to improve the quality of living. The Avant2Go project is a result of a collaboration between different organizations, including the Municipalities of Ljubljana, Maribor, Kranj and Murska Sobota, Zavarovalnica Sava, BTC City, BMW, Renault, Smart, Volkswagen, Ljubljana Airport, ABC Accelerator Group, Roto Group, Pomgrad Group, Iskratel, Four Points by Sheraton (Mons), Technology Park, and Comtrade (Avant car, 2017a). Electric car sharing is helping Slovenia toward its goal of becoming a reference point for green and digitally ambitious projects. The Avant2Go project is part of the European Green Capital Award initiative (European Commission, n.d.), as emphasized by the Commission's Vice-President Mr Šefčovič, who is leading the project team Energy Union, (quotation 5):

Quotation 5:

*“I welcome Slovenia's work on its national energy concept, which could serve as a basis for the 2030 national energy and climate plan — an important tool to attract investments and maximize benefits of the ongoing energy transition. The country's innovative and clean tech spirit can create many business opportunities as well as mitigate high dependency on fossil fuel imports. The starting point is rather good, as Slovenia has already reached its 2020 target on greenhouse gas emissions and is well on track to meet its 25 percent renewables target.”* (Šefčovič in the European Commission, 2018).

Figure 1: *Avant2Go project – the 2017 National Energy Efficiency Award and a map of Avant car's locations in the Municipality of Ljubljana*



Source: Avant car (2018).

### 3.2 Study design

We conducted an inductive qualitative study, based on a primary and secondary data analysis in exploring cross-level interactions (Černe et al., 2018), in order to gain insights and propose the conceptual model of the cross-level interplay between organizational design and the moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment in stimulating organizational learning in the digital economy. In order to be able to answer our research question how organizational design facilitates organizational learning at the individual and team levels in the age of digital economy, we followed an inductive case application, giving particular attention to the cross-level interactions of moderators in predicting organizational learning. The inductive approach requires the theory to be developed after the data are collected, so the expected cause and effect relations among the variables in the model are not known prior to the data analysis (Saunders et al., 2009). Qualitative research methods enable in-depth studies of real-world settings and capture the contextual richness and thick descriptions. The five key characteristics of qualitative research are: (1) studying the phenomena in real-world settings, (2) representing the views of the participants, (3) covering the contextual conditions, (4) contributing insights to existing and emerging concepts to explain human social behavior, and (5) striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than a single source, as well as triangulation (Yin, 2003, 2011). To analyze the data, a three-level coding approach was used.

The applied inductive qualitative research study differs from grounded theory. An inductive case study and grounded theory are both qualitative research methodologies (Maxwell,

2013). Case study was operationalized by Yin (2003, 2011, 2012) as positivist, interpretive or critical, depending on the underlying philosophical assumptions. An inductive case study can be single, multiple or comparative, depending on the objective of research, following the inductive logic. As mentioned above, the inductive approach requires the theory to be developed after the data are collected, so the expected cause and effect relations among the variables in the model are not known prior to the data analysis (Saunders et al., 2009). In distinction, grounded theory is used within interpretative philosophy (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as one of the theories of the methodologies used for a qualitative case study. Glaser (1992, in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) believed that grounded theory should be about discovery of the theory and not its verification, therefore, the research starts with no preconceived theoretical ideas. Grounded theory could be one of the methodologies used for building a case study. As Glaser declared “all’s data”, case studies may be integrated into a grounded theory design. Nevertheless, not all inductive case studies use the grounded theory. They can be far more descriptive and do not meet the requirements of the strict research protocol of the grounded theory. The difference between grounded theory and an inductive case study is to be found in underlying research strategies and the ways the empirical investigation of cases is employed.

### 3.3 Data collection

The Avant car company was chosen for a case study on purpose, as (1) they have been identified as a learning organization, practicing 360-degree organizational learning on a continuous basis; (2) in order to implement the Avant2Go project, they have built a business ecosystem in Slovenia, expanding to Croatia in 2018; (3) Avant car is an organization that has successfully adapted to the needs of digital economy, being active in the sustainable mobility field; (4) Avant car was willing to collaborate and granted access to the researchers to collect primary and secondary data.

First, the inductive case of the Avant car study was employed by analyzing secondary data, collected from multiple sources for the purpose of triangulation. The collection of Avant car data included examination of a scientific monograph by Dimovski et al. (2005), seven articles published in international and Slovene print media; four articles published at international conferences and the European Commission website; two annual reports; the official Avant car website, Avant2Go blog, and other social media from the Avant car company as well as three internal documents; five social media videos; news; and documents from reliable journals and magazines, such as Europa.eu, Sloveniatimes.com, Slovenia-convention.com, Sm.team-red.de, Mediachange.info/Circular\_Economy and Balkangreenenergynews.com. The collected data were triangulated and evaluated for possible biases before inclusion in the analysis, as suggested by Charmaz (2011).

Second, eleven one-on-one semi-structured qualitative interviews at the Avant car company were conducted to gain in-depth insight into the concept of organizational learning enhanced by contemporary organizational design practices. The interviewees had different backgrounds, working periods at the company, as well as positions – ranging

from top management positions to assistants. These interviews emphasized guiding questions on the studied topics. Open, semi-structured questionnaires were employed, each consisting of 10 to 12 questions. We asked the interviewees to tell us about their experiences about specific practices and approaches.

To increase the reliability and validity of our qualitative assessment we triangulated primary data by theoretical triangulation through rich data contexts for understanding and interpreting codes on organizational design and organizational learning phenomena. We also employed methodological triangulation, conducted through unstructured naturalistic observations of the respondents at their workplace during the visits to the company.

### 3.4 Data analysis

We structured our analysis by combining the methods of case study (Yin, 2003, 2011) and cross-level analysis (Černe et al, 2018) for the development of the proposed conceptual model. In order to build a case study of high quality, a case study protocol was employed (Yin, 2003). The case study protocol included analyzing (1) the context of the case study, (2) organizational learning processes in the studied case, (3) organizational design in the studied case, and (4) moderating effects at both the individual and team levels.

During the data analysis, five nonlinear phases for analyzing data according to Yin (2011) were followed: (1) compiling data into a formal database; (2) disassembling the data in the database by a three-level coding technique; (3) reassembling the data, requiring insightfulness to reorganize the pieces and see overarching patterns; (4) interpreting to give meaning to the analyzed data; and (5) designing the overarching moderators of the study.

To analyze the data, a systematic three-phased coding procedure was applied. The first step encompassed first-level coding of the collected data, by analyzing and summarizing small chunks of data to produce descriptive codes. Throughout the analysis of the collected data, answers to what, who, how, when, and why were sought. Parallel to first-level coding, a database of quotes was built. The second step encompassed second-level coding to relate to categories emerging from the first-level coding, while in the third step, third-level coding was executed, as the selected codes were combined to identify overarching moderators at multiple levels, namely at the individual and team levels. To code and classify the collected data, we looked for keywords within sentences, pointing to the phenomena under study, based on the coding scheme that was developed by comparing the collected primary and secondary data and the in-depth theoretical review. The themes led us to our categorization of the coded structure, as presented in Figure 2. Additionally, to assure the reliability of the coding procedure, the researchers independently coded the interviews data and, in cases of disagreement, further discussions were held until a consensus was reached. The analysis process concluded when the model fit the raw data. Throughout the analysis, research memos were kept consisting of various insights, generated ideas, observations, and other

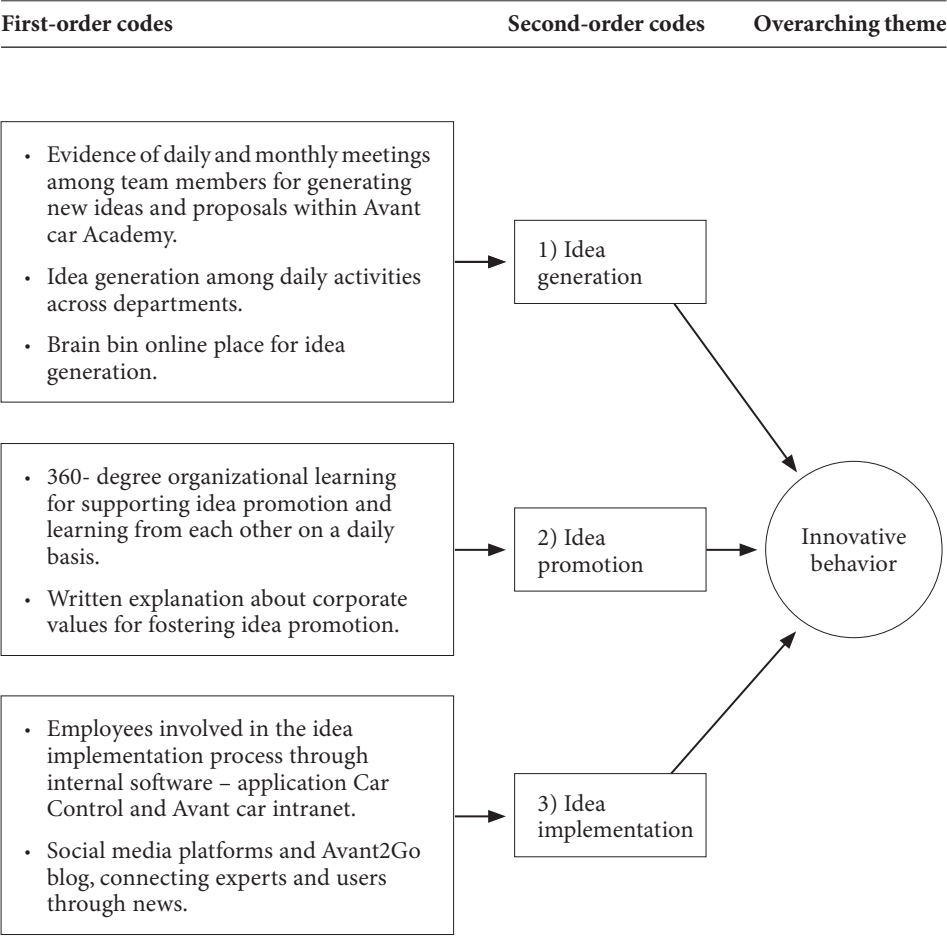
relevant information during the study. The memos included assigned codes as well as our notes and images with reflections on the sets of codes. The analysis was sent to Avant car principals for the purposes of external validation and final authorization.

#### 4 FINDINGS

In the inductive study of the international sustainable mobility provider with the leading position in the Adriatic region, we conducted a three-level coding procedure (Figure 2) resulting in the formulation of the overarching moderators, showing evidence of how organizational design facilitates organizational learning within different cross-level interactions as a response to the increased complexity in the age of digital economy at multiple levels (Figure 3). Figure 2 summarizes the process of the data analysis we followed and includes first-level codes (developed based on a wide range of the primary and secondary data analysis, including visits to the Avant car company), second-level codes (the emergent set of conceptual categories we abstracted from the first-level codes), and aggregates of overarching moderators.

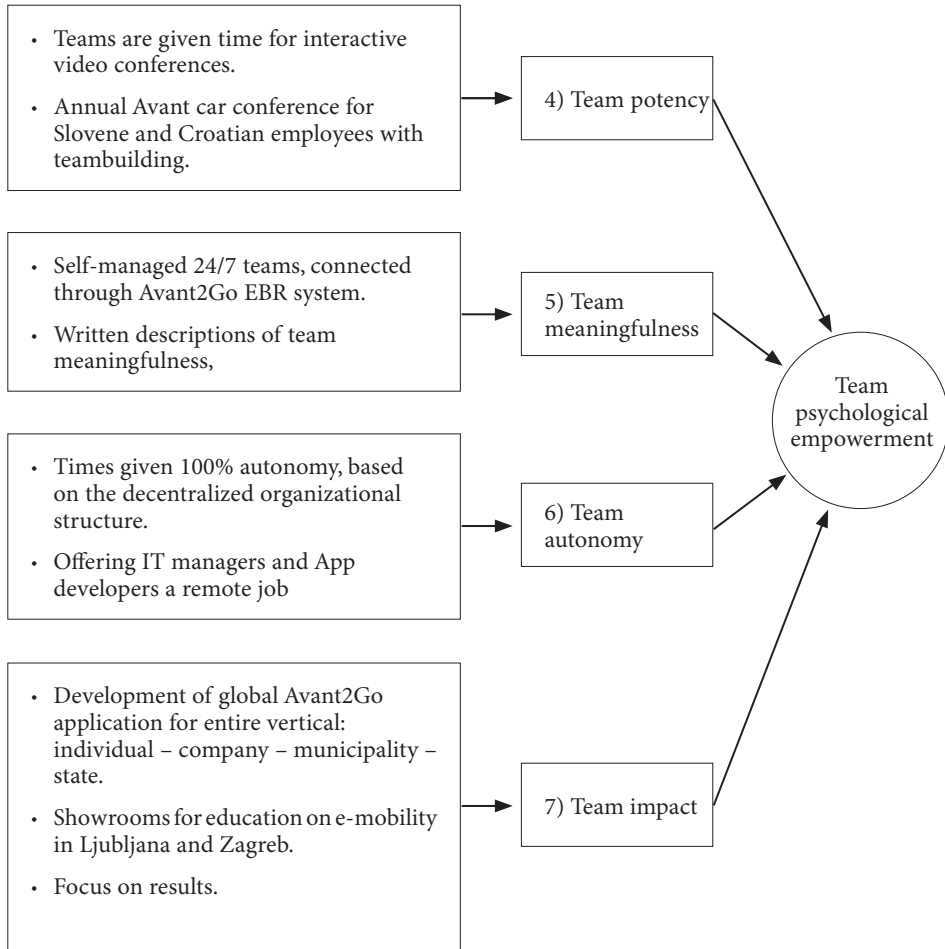
We start by proposing a conceptual model of how organizational design facilitates the organizational learning process at multiple levels, then define the overarching moderators of innovative behavior (at the individual level), and team psychological empowerment (at the team level), and finally, we present each dimension of the conceptual model, linking the three-level data coding structure throughout (Figure 3). Our research revealed two main contingency mechanisms that facilitate organizational learning by intervening in the organic organizational design of our study: innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment. Our analysis further revealed how organizational design facilitates organizational learning in the interactions of the underlying contingency mechanisms within the cross-level interplay, facilitating innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment as the moderators in predicting organizational learning as a dynamic process in the Avant car company. Specifically, our analysis revealed three facets that created the innovative behavior: (1) idea generation, (2) idea promotion, and (3) idea implementation at the individual level. In addition, we identified also four facets of team psychological empowerment: (1) team potency, (2) team meaningfulness, (3) team autonomy, and (4) team impact at the team level. Based on these findings, we developed a conceptual model that explains how organizational design facilitates organizational learning within different cross-level interactions as a response to the increased complexity in the age of digital economy, which integrates research on organizational design, organizational learning, innovative behavior and team empowerment in the era of digital economy.

Figure 2: Overview of Data Coding Structure of the Inductive Case Study





First-order codes	Second-order codes	Overarching theme
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In Tables 1 and 2 we identify two moderators of our conceptual model that intervene in organizational learning—innovative behavior at the individual level (Table 1) and team psychological empowerment at the team level (Table 2)—employed by Avant car.

Table 1: *Innovative Behavior*

Evidence: Exemplary quotations	Form of innovative behavior	Aggregate
<p>Quotation 6: “The project is connected by a strong sense of vision; we see start-up as a child. And regardless of one’s position in the company, whether it’s in development or accounting, we can all generate ideas and suggestions, as well as the vision of the product for the future”. (Participant 3, Head of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 7: <i>“Through excessive testing of the system we are constantly looking for opportunities to see what can be improved and how we can improve things such as app functionalities, better user experience, etc.”</i> (Participant 10, Member of operations)</p> <p>Quotation 8: <i>“We have a so called “brain bin”, an online place, where we put all our ideas. They don’t get lost and they wait for us :).”</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 9: <i>“As I am not only a developer on the project but also a regular user, I always write down things to improve or add. I also think about redundancy a lot and my goal is always to shorten the processes as much as possible.”</i> (Participant 9, Member of the IT team)</p> <p>Quotation 10: <i>“I explore new things on a daily basis. And it doesn’t stop there - I am also in search for the latest trends to have a bigger picture about what is going on in the world.”</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 11: <i>“I always say innovative opportunities must be something that is written in your DNA. It is almost like breathing. If you don’t innovate and adjust to an ever developing environment, the company will eventually fail to successfully fulfill its mission.”</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 12: <i>“I fully use the service and it enables me to understand how to improve customer experience; I get new ideas and then we discuss them with the development team.”</i> (Participant 4, Head of Avant2Go operations)</p> <p>Quotation 13: <i>“Based on our own experiences we generate new ideas for our clients. For example, our staff drive electric cars to and from work and we are 100% electric for our business meetings as well.”</i> (Participant 1, CEO)</p>	Idea generation	Innovative behavior

Evidence: Exemplary quotations	Form of innovative behavior	Aggregate
<p>Quotation 14: <i>"It is interesting but lately I have been looking at the improvements through the UX glasses. Just yesterday, I was included in a debate with our technical staff. They were so deeply involved in the matter they couldn't see the forest anymore, only the individual trees. I asked them only one question: What does an average user really need?"</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 15: <i>"Since I am responsible for the technical development of IT infrastructure, I try to push new ideas into the product. The important part is also persuading others in the development sector to actively support or question the validity of implementing new ideas into the project."</i> (Participant 9, Member of the IT team)</p> <p>Quotation 16: <i>"If I believe in an idea, I try to make everybody in my team a believer. This way, we can be all aligned in our efforts"</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 17: <i>"Educational (awareness-related) and innovational aspect of the Avant2Go service is also to be considered. We want all our users to make use of our service independently right from the start."</i> (Participant 2, CSO – Chief Strategy Officer)</p>	Idea promotion	Innovative behavior
<p>Quotation 18: <i>"Good and useful innovations should be available for everyone. The purpose of the Avant2Go project is to introduce the user experience of sharing electric vehicles to a wider range of people and decision-makers, as well as to accelerate the development of Slovenia to a higher standard."</i> (Participant 2, CSO – Chief Strategy Officer)</p> <p>Quotation 19: <i>"Prototyping new ideas helps us get positive feedback from the management and we usually receive quick approval or cancellation. In my opinion, this is the best way."</i> (Participant 9, Member of the IT team)</p> <p>Quotation 20: <i>"I regularly contribute to the implementation of new ideas and I like it. It feels rewarding."</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 21: <i>"I think that my deficiency is that I never say no to new things and always put effort in the development of new things and projects, but sometimes I lose my focus on other things, while members of our team constantly have new ideas, I get all excited about them and put other projects aside."</i> (Participant 10, Member of operations)</p> <p>Quotation 22: <i>"Our IT team constantly develops and tests new mobile and web apps as prototypes. This way we test the ideas as soon as possible before developing the actual product and we save a lot of time."</i> (Participant 9, Member of the IT team)</p>	Idea implementation	Innovative behavior

Evidence: Exemplary quotations	Form of innovative behavior	Aggregate
<p>Quotation 23: <i>“I always say that you need to put yourself in a role of a user. By making quick prototypes the decision makers are able to test new ideas and features as users themselves.”</i> (Participant 9, Member of the IT team)</p> <p>Quotation 24: <i>“Creating new ideas is something I deal with on a daily basis. But being in the R&amp;D department it is not only about new ideas, we need to make these ideas alive. Oh, not to forget, new ideas apply not only to services, but also to processes, leadership, etc.”</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 25: <i>“I think that systematic introduction of innovative ideas into our work is becoming a reality now, as we have also adjusted our organizational infrastructure to fit the growth requirements. Before, we introduced innovative ideas when we felt we needed to.”</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 26: <i>“We have our R&amp;D team..., for example, we use sustainable recharging, where we already charge our electric fleet with electricity gained by solar power on top of our buildings in Ljubljana and Zagreb. At the moment, we are producing electricity for 1000 electric kilometers a day.”</i> (Participant 2, CSO – Chief Strategy Officer)</p> <p>Quotation 27: <i>“The key of idea implementation is that the leaders first support the major decisions, then they totally trust and empower you, and afterwards two questions follow: Can you do it? and Do you need additional resources to implement the idea? The biggest advantage is quick empowerment to implement the ideas. on the other hand, there might be some disadvantages, as sometimes you might overtake some steps while the other part is still in the waiting phase.”</i> (Participant 3, Head of R&amp;D)</p>	Idea implementation	Innovative behavior

**Innovative behavior.** A number of quotations supported the moderating factor of innovative behavior, creating a dynamic organizational learning ecosystem in the selected company. In particular, quotations 6-13 identified idea generation, the first category that was added to the coding scheme. Furthermore, idea promotion nurtured by small empowered teams, the second category that was added to the coding scheme, was emphasized in quotations 14-17. Similarly, idea implementation as the third category added to our coding scheme was emphasized in quotations 18-27.

Table 2: Team psychological empowerment

Evidence: Exemplary quotations	Form of innovative behavior	Aggregate
<p>Quotation 28: <i>“Despite the fact that we work in different areas, we always believe that a person can take on other roles within the team, so the project can continue. For example, at EUREKA, if one person was absent, we did something else, it was important the project went on. We are also generalists to a certain degree and we believe projects are successful even in case of deviations.”</i> (Participant 5, member of the IT department)</p> <p>Quotation 29: <i>“Sometimes it is enough just to find the right solution, even though it is not the most original one. But when creating a completely new ecosystem like our 100 % electric car sharing system, you mostly start from scrap and need original solutions. For example, our logistics team needed a good overview over the electric fleet, so we created a backend control center for them.”</i> (Participant 11, Member of the R&amp;D team)</p> <p>Quotation 30: <i>“I don’t always seek support for innovative ideas because as an empowered employee I know the company trusts me to execute the tasks. But sometimes you need all the support you can get and then it is good to know you can count on your staff.”</i> (Participant 11, Member of the R&amp;D team)</p> <p>Quotation 31: <i>“We embrace team potency through knowledge sharing, for example the app development and web design teams are continuously updating our own software and hardware solutions, such as Car Control for our internal knowledge, Avant2Go app and Charge Juice app for our clients, etc.”</i> (Participant 6, App developer)</p>	Team potency	Team psychological empowerment
<p>Quotation 32: <i>“An important part of the project is also our partners who identify with our story and support it in one way or another, which makes development sustainable investment and content-wise.”</i> (Participant 2, CSO – Chief Strategy Officer)</p> <p>Quotation 33: <i>“Luckily my boss is very passionate about what he does so I easily caught his ‘disease’.”</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 34: <i>“Since Avant2-Go car sharing is a service available 24/7, the team that takes care of the users is structured in such a way that it can be reached 24/7.”</i> (Participant 1, CEO)</p>	Team meaningfulness	

Evidence: Exemplary quotations	Form of innovative behavior	Aggregate
<p>Quotation 35: <i>"We have brainstorming with the whole team every now and then, where we go through ideas and put them in a test if there are more vital pros than cons. And this is also exactly how we got the idea to start developing our Avant2Go car sharing service and we are seeing the results on the city streets."</i> (Participant 10, Member of operations)</p> <p>Quotation 36: <i>"... as individuals as well as teams are empowered, the organizational structure itself is decentralized and everyone, regardless of their function can promote their idea quickly and efficiently. For example, we have 360-degree learning and it means we all learn from each other at a given time. And then it becomes part of our culture."</i> (Participant 3, Head of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 37: <i>"Checking the most successful projects outside of our field is my way of finding a different way to get the same result."</i> (Participant 9, Member of the IT team)</p> <p>Quotation 38: <i>"Most of the time innovative ideas are my decision and responsibility but sometimes I also ask for an opinion, not necessarily our management but the people that I feel are the most competent and practice-oriented for each case."</i> (Participant 11, Member of R&amp;D)</p> <p>Quotation 39: <i>"I am responsible for the car control and logistic optimization of our electric fleet, for example, our app (noted: Avant2Go app) is constantly in the process of upgrading and here I am paying attention to the new improvements which are not "formally" my daily work. For example, after the last upgrade, the application seemed to respond more slowly, so I informed our developers about it and they checked the whole process."</i> (Participant 8, Member of the operations team)</p> <p>Quotation 40: <i>"In our organization, innovation is easier, as you don't feel the pressure or anxiety over the failure of implementation or the fear of being punished for failure. So you can innovate with passion, you have free hands and the leaders' support."</i> (Participant 3, Head of R&amp;D)</p>	Team autonomy	Team psychological empowerment

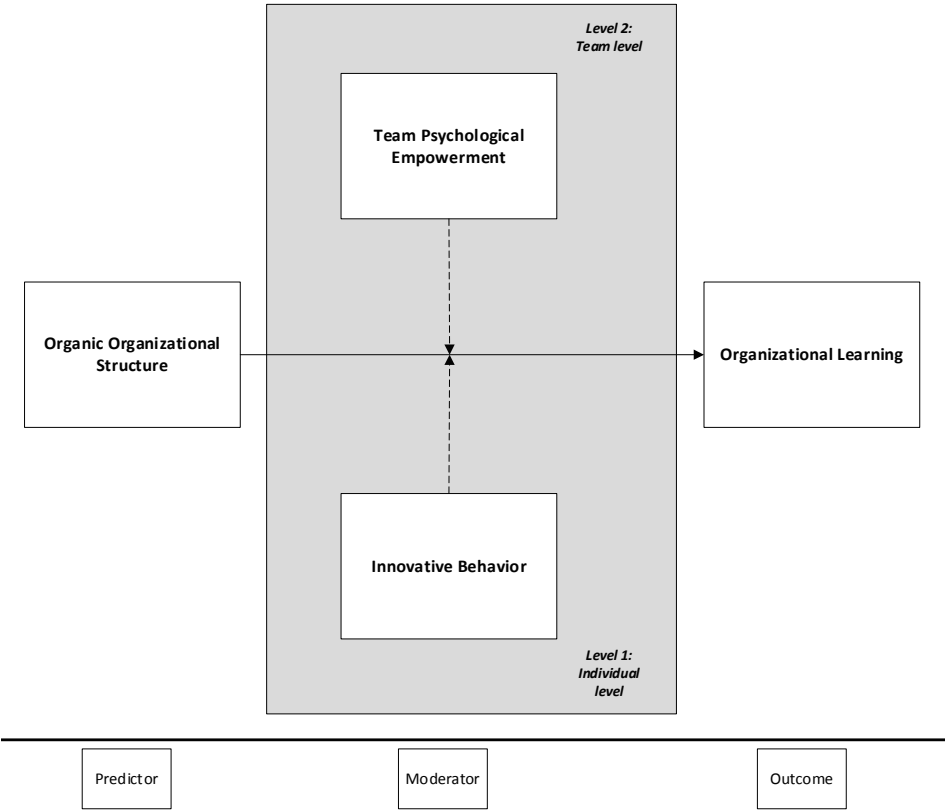
Evidence: Exemplary quotations	Form of innovative behavior	Aggregate
<p>Quotation 41: <i>“The Avant2Go system of 100 % electric car sharing is the first global system with users throughout the entire vertical: individual – company – municipality – state.”</i> (Participant 2, CSO – Chief Strategy Officer)</p> <p>Quotation 42: <i>“Coaching young people at universities about the new way of sustainable and green lifestyle that brings new career opportunities is part of our teamwork.”</i> (Participant 1, CEO)</p> <p>Quotation 43: <i>“We have showrooms in Ljubljana and Zagreb, where we raise awareness about e-mobility.”</i> (Participant 7, team member)</p> <p>Quotation 44: <i>“For the purposes of raising awareness in the region and implementing our new-mobility project (Slovenia, Croatia) we organize training and advisory centers, the so-called showrooms, where qualified advisors enable users the first contact with electric mobility, and in addition to presenting electric mobility and car sharing they also offer practical user experience.”</i> (Participant 1, CEO)</p> <p>Quotation 45: <i>“We strive to achieve that our fleet vehicles will be powered by renewable energy sources also at other Avant2Go stations, which is why we encourage the project partners involved in stations to supply renewable energy too.”</i> (Participant 2, CSO – Chief Strategy Officer)</p>	Team impact	Team psychological empowerment

**Team psychological empowerment.** Several data supported the moderating factor of team psychological empowerment. Based on the inductive research, we labeled the first category team potency, which was added to the coding scheme as proven in quotations 28-31. The second added category was team meaningfulness, as observed in quotations 32-34. The third category, namely, team autonomy, is represented by quotations 35-40. The fourth and the last category of our data coding scheme, team impact, is evident in quotations 41-45.

Thus, our model offers a conceptualization that reveals the cross-level interplay of organizational design within a specific context of moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment for predicting organizational learning as the dynamic process in the digital economy, as presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3: *The conceptual model of the cross-level interplay between organizational design and the moderating role of innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment in stimulating organizational learning*



Source: Own work.

In order to explain how organizational design facilitates organizational learning within the cross-level interplay in Avant car, we developed a conceptual model illustrated in Figure 3. The model summarizes the outcome of our qualitative study and presents our response to the research question: *How does organizational design facilitate organizational learning at the individual and team levels in the age of digital economy?* The model suggests that the coded moderators—innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment—accelerate the organizational learning process in the studied company. We conceptualize three specific facets of innovative behavior as the moderating mechanisms—idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation—that are aligned with the logic of organizational learning as the dynamic process. Similarly, four specific facets of team psychological empowerment—team potency, team meaningfulness, team autonomy, and team impact—support organizational learning as the dynamic process in the age of digital economy.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This inductive study contributes to knowledge on organizational learning phenomena in contemporary workplaces by uncovering key moderation mechanisms—innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment. Our work highlights how organizational design affects organizational learning within the cross-level interplay, facilitating important facets of moderators in predicting organizational learning as the dynamic process able to continuously adapt by both acquiring and generating knowledge, and increasingly, by sharing and co-creating it with clients, suppliers, partners, and other stakeholders. We developed a conceptual model of organizational learning, which integrates research on organizational design, with the focus on innovative behavior at the individual level and team psychological empowerment at the team level.

Whereas previous work focused mainly on static models of organizational learning that do not address important moderators within the cross-level interplay that affect the dimensions of organizational learning as the dynamic process in the age of digital economy (Crossan et al., 2011), our findings highlight that both underlying moderators importantly contribute to the organizational learning process both at individual and team levels. This issue is central to research indicating that in the contemporary environment knowledge is the key resource (Miles et al., 2000; Snow, 2016). One implication of this cross-level perspective is that organizations need to react to or even try to co-create changes in the environment if they want to survive in the long term. Organizations that know how to collaborate with key stakeholders and to learn continuously will be able to gain competitive advantages.

Notably, our findings show that innovative behavior and psychological empowerment have the evidently crucial role of enhancing organizational learning from a cross-level perspective. The study therefore enables us to propose moderators through which organizational design facilitates the organizational learning process at the individual level and team levels. When environments are complex and dynamic, organizations need to constantly acquire, share, and use new knowledge (Hitt, 1996), and they need to continuously transform themselves (Prewitt, 2003). In particular, our research suggests that organizational design facilitates organizational learning in the interactions of the underlying moderating mechanisms by facilitating innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment. These characterize complex conceptualization of a cross-level moderated model of organizational design facilitating organizational learning in the age of digital economy. In line with the findings, organizational design and organizational learning researchers have argued that design dynamics and identification of misfits in order to achieve organizational fit (Burton et al., 2008) are crucial for organizations that strive to be innovative (Wang, 2001). Therefore, organizational design is a normative science with the goal of prescribing how an organization should be structured in order to obtain given goals effectively—doing the right things, and efficiently. Doing it right (Burton & Obel, 1998) means to successfully learn, share and implement knowledge at all organizational levels.

## 5.1 Theoretical contributions

The theoretical contributions of the present study are multidimensional. First, our findings possess important theoretical implications for researchers, conceptualizing organizational learning phenomena within a cross-level moderated nature in the age of digital economy based on an inductive study in the selected sustainable mobility provider. When studying organizational design that supports organizational learning initiatives, the coded moderating mechanisms in stimulating organizational learning in the age of digital economy should be considered. We found evidence of three specific facets of innovative behavior as moderating mechanisms — idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation — that appear specific to stimulating organizational learning. Additionally, we found four specific facets of team psychological empowerment — team potency, team meaningfulness, team autonomy, and team impact — specific to stimulating organizational learning in the age of digital economy.

Second, the key theoretical contributions are to be found in the developed conceptual model itself, which adds to the literature of the scholarly field of organizational learning. Organic organizational structure as a predictor as well as innovative behavior at the individual level and team psychological empowerment at team level as moderators lead to contemporary organizational learning.

The third theoretical contribution is the multiple-level analysis employed in the organizational learning field. Specifically, the developed model overcomes the limitations of the existing organizational learning models by expanding its scope and adding a multi-level nature of conceptualization. As presented and discussed in the previous sections, the model of organizational learning stems from the practice of an international sustainable mobility provider, based on collected contextual rich and real data. It therefore reflects the contemporary business environment of knowledge-intensive organization, including the formation of ecosystem collaborative partnerships, and other characteristics of contemporary organizations active in digital economy.

Another important theoretical contribution of this work stems from building further connections between organizational learning and organizational design scholarly fields. It importantly adds to the existing literature on organizational learning by proposing the conceptual model, emphasizing two moderators; innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment as important factors stimulating organizational learning in contemporary organizations. Nevertheless, the presented case study of an international sustainable mobility provider might also offer important insights for researchers in the fields of sustainability and green mobility.

## 5.2 Practical implications

Our study also highlights important implications for organizational learning and organizational design fields in practice of sustainable industry. In particular, results suggest

one way that important moderators, namely, innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment, can stimulate organizational learning processes at cross levels in the age of digital economy. Strategies such as innovative behavior and team psychological empowerment may help innovative organizations cope with complex environments based on constant learning. This implication is useful for practitioners as well as the consulting industry, as constant organizational learning and putting newly gained knowledge into practice in terms of innovation and improvement of existing products are crucial for long-term success. The presented study is also to be considered as a dissemination of the EU funded and successfully implemented project on e-mobility.

In addition, the presented case study can benefit the Avant car organization itself, as it offers a reflection provided by external researchers, as well as important insights on how their employees perceive the organization, as showcased in the presented proof-citations. the study can be also used as a basis for their knowledge transfer to the Croatian market while introducing e-mobility services or as a solid foundation for other organizations to carry out benchmarking, enabling them to identify their gaps, as well as possible improvements.

The developed case study will also offer an opportunity to build further connections between academic and business societies, as it will be presented at different courses related to organizational learning, performed at the researchers' faculty. Nevertheless, the practical implications of the presented study also go beyond directly involved stakeholders, as the presentation of successful implementation of a sustainable, innovative EU project might stimulate other members of the Slovene business environment to give special attention to learning and innovation, or even to build their own business ecosystems and apply for EU funds when searching for ways to support the development of sustainable innovative ideas.

Last but not least, the presented study is also to be considered as a means of promoting sustainable business and mobility solutions among the EBR's target audience that will help preserve our environment for generations to come.

### **5.3 Limitations and avenues for further research**

While we believe our study has important contributions, it has some limitations. First, it is an inductive qualitative study, analyzed by the three-level coding procedure of data related to an international sustainable mobility provider at the individual and team levels, offering the venue for further research at the organizational and inter-organizational levels. Otherwise, the vast majority of limitations derive from the chosen inductive methodology, which allows the theory to be developed based on real cases and therefore to fit more closely to reality (Eisenhardt, 1989). The inductive research is also advised when relatively sparse literature on the constructs under study exists (Myers, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009), which is the case in this research industry of new generation mobility case in the age of digitalization and circular economy. The main disadvantage of the case study research

method is that it does not allow statistical generalization to the population. Case studies enable “generalizations to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (Yin, 2003, p. 10); when case study research is based on systematic data collection and analysis, the case study findings can be generalized to other situations through theoretical, analytic generalization (Yin, 2012).

Other common limitations of qualitative research are lack of trustworthiness and credibility. Throughout the research, various procedures have been used to overcome this, in line with the proposed case study protocol, as presented in the study design section. The research is presented as transparently as possible. Throughout the study, we relied on explicit, empirical evidence, primary and secondary data, as advised by Yin (2011). For the data analysis, three-level coding was applied with its systematic codification of triangulated data. To increase the validity of the findings, the case study protocol was developed; 11 primary interviews were conducted in the selected company and relevant quotes were included in the research to provide clear empirical evidence to support the findings, next to the external validation. In addition, also the researchers’ memos were written, and a case study database was built.

An interesting avenue for further research direction is the exploration of organizational design and organizational learning mutuality of relationship using complex cross-level empirical examination in selected innovative organizations, as well as identification of organizational design related problems in encouraging organizational learning. Nevertheless, also statistical investigation of the proposed research model is needed to generalize the findings.

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