

THE EVOLUTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR PARADIGM: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW FROM CLASSICAL THEORY TO DIGITAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

Digital transformation has radically changed how organizations operate and challenged the validity of classical theoretical approaches that have long dominated organizational studies. This article aims to examine the evolution of organizational behavior paradigms by tracing the contributions of classical theories, behavioral dynamics in digital environments, and the conceptual transition toward hybrid organizational models. The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by PRISMA, analyzing 21 scholarly articles from reputable journals published in the last five years. The synthesis results indicate that classical theories remain relevant as a foundation for structural stability but must be integrated with principles of flexibility and digital learning to meet the needs of contemporary organizations. The hybrid conceptual model developed in this study represents a significant theoretical contribution in bridging the dichotomy between classical and digital approaches. Furthermore, this article proposes a future research agenda through cross-sectoral approaches and capability-based integration. The main contribution of this study lies in formulating a conceptual framework that reconciles structural efficiency with digital innovation in modern organizational behavior

Keywords: *Paradigm, Classical Theory, Organizational Behavior, Digital Practice, Systematic Literature Review.*

INTRODUCTION

Organizational behavior is a multidisciplinary field that reflects how individuals act, interact, and contribute within ever-evolving organizational structures. Over the past two decades, the waves of digitalization, automation, and global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have compelled organizations to reassess the theoretical approaches they have long employed. In this context, classical theories grounded in structural rationality—such as Weber's bureaucracy, Taylor's scientific management, and Fayol's administrative principles—remain epistemological references in modern managerial practices (Olden & Diana, 2024; Önday, 2021). Unfortunately, the increasingly complex and dynamic work environment demands behavioral flexibility, cultural adaptation, and responsiveness to an ever-changing digital reality (Kronblad & Pregmark, 2021; Hermawan et al., 2025). Today's organizations are not only expected to maintain stability and clearly defined roles, as emphasized by classical theory, but must also accommodate changing values, technologies, and work patterns. The tension between structural efficiency and the need for adaptability is evident across various organizational contexts—industrial, public, and small-to-medium enterprises (Ueasangkomsate, 2025; Moussaoui et al., 2025). Therefore, reflection on the evolution of organizational behavior paradigms has become an urgent academic and practical necessity.

Although numerous previous studies have discussed classical theory and organizational change, most remain narrative, sectoral, or fail to comprehensively integrate digital dynamics. Research conducted by Turbanti (2023), Subramaniam (2021), and Ehiobuche and Tu (2022) has not fully connected the legacy of classical theory with the challenges of digital organizations. Meanwhile, the study by Kalwani and Mahesh (2020) tends to be descriptive, lacking strong synthesis. Some works are even limited to specific domains such as public administration, healthcare management, or mere technical adaptation (Bueno, 2021; Olden & Diana, 2024; Susilowati & Nurcahyanti, 2025). Other analyses, including those by Önday (2021), Syafriadi et al. (2023), and Aytekin et al. (2025), have yet to explicitly examine the paradigm shift in organizational behavior in a longitudinal and integrative manner. Within this

context, a systematic review becomes essential. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by constructing a conceptual framework that elucidates the interconnection between classical legacies and digital practices in organizational behavior. The approach adopted enables the identification of academic narratives and conceptual synthesis that enhance the understanding of paradigm evolution within theoretically and practically relevant frameworks. Hence, this article not only traces the historical contributions of classical theories but also maps their relevance in increasingly digitalized organizational environments. The formulation of this systematic literature review carries significant scientific value in addressing the existing knowledge gap. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach allows researchers to develop an integrative and evidence-based conceptual framework explaining how classical theoretical values remain relevant within today's digital organizational landscape. By employing the PRISMA protocol and thematic analysis, this study will not only map the evolution of academic discourse but also propose a more contextual future research agenda. Accordingly, this research seeks to systematically examine the scholarly literature that discusses the evolution of organizational behavior paradigms from classical theory to digital practice. Specifically, it aims to answer three research questions: 1) How does the legacy of classical theory manifest in studies of organizational behavior?; 2) How has organizational behavior changed in the digital era?; 3) How does the paradigm transition occur from rigid structures to dynamic organizations?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classical Theory

Classical organizational theory constitutes the initial foundation for understanding organizational behavior as a rational, formal, and hierarchical system. Thinkers such as Max Weber with rational bureaucracy, Frederick Taylor with scientific management, and Henri Fayol with administrative principles established structure, division of labor, and clear lines of command as the core elements of an effective organization (Székely, 2024). This model proved capable of creating order, efficiency, and predictability, particularly in stable public-sector and manufacturing contexts. Despite its strong historical value, classical theory faces challenges of relevance within modern, dynamic organizational settings. The principal critiques concern structural rigidity, excessive bureaucratization, and an approach that marginalizes organizational adaptation and learning (Roth, 2023). In an era of digital transformation and global crises, organizations are required not only to be procedurally efficient but also strategically agile. Valentinov and Van Assche (2023) suggest that classical approaches tend to fall short in addressing contemporary complexity because they overlook emergent factors such as innovation, technological responsiveness, and rapidly changing social expectations.

Organizational Behavior in the Digital Era

Digitalization has triggered a revolution in organizational behavior, shifting the focus from fixed structures to adaptive capabilities. Organizations are now compelled to develop data-driven work models, cross-functional collaboration, and real-time digital communication systems (Cherep et al., 2022). The study by Faro, Abedin, and Cetindamar (2022) shows that, in the context of public-sector transformation, organizations require digitally enacted structures that enable process and workflow flexibility. In addition, an orientation toward organizational learning and the management of digital capabilities has become a new pillar in defining organizational excellence (Roth, 2023). This transformation also affects leadership practices, work culture, and reward systems. Reliance on formal hierarchies is no longer sufficient; organizations must foreground trust, job autonomy, and the integration of technology as mechanisms that drive adaptive behavior (Valentinov & Van Assche, 2023). Accordingly, digitalization does not merely introduce technological change; it reshapes organizational values and norms in a comprehensive manner.

Hybrid Model: Integrating Classical and Digital Approaches

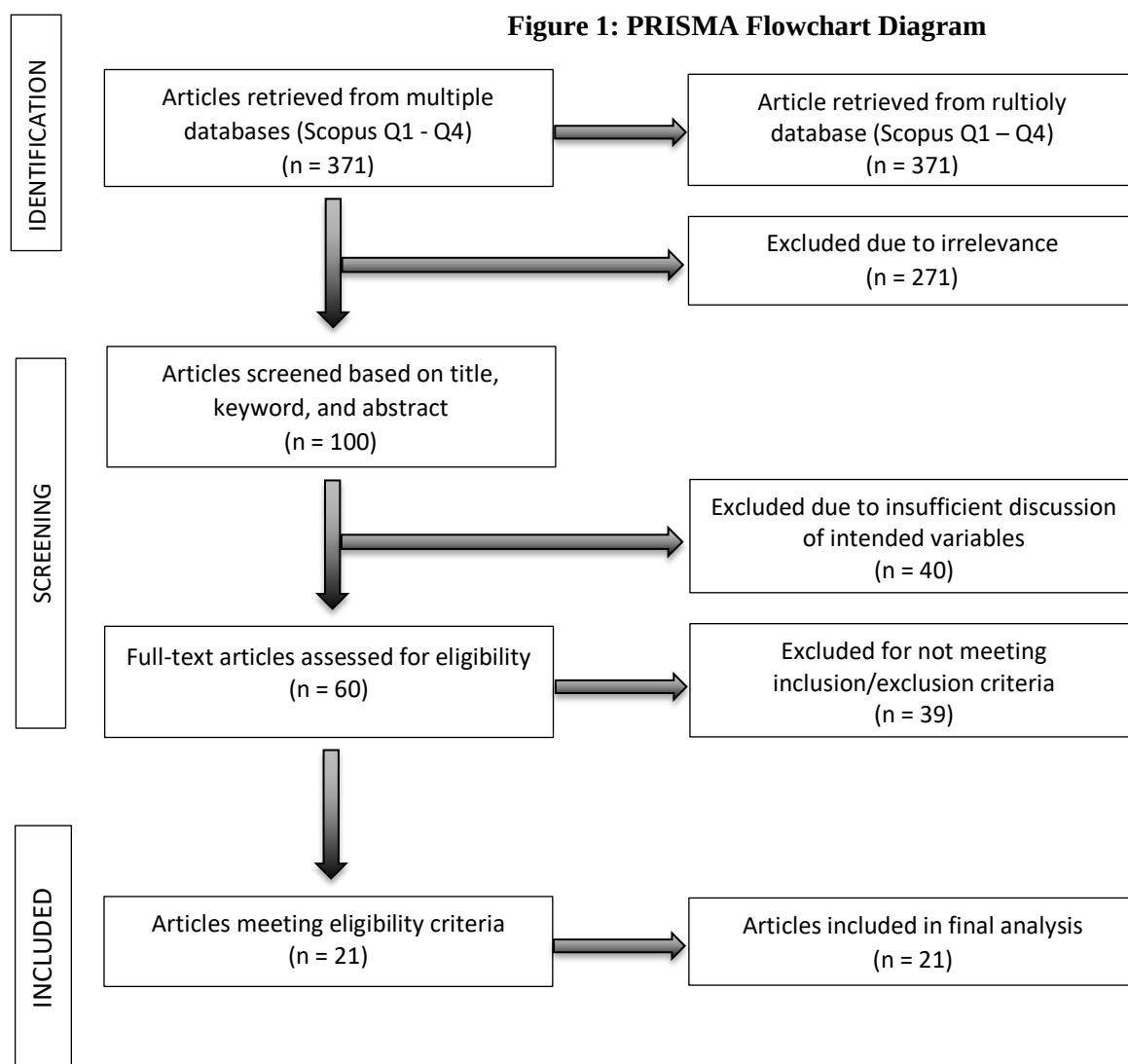
Responding to the dichotomy between classical and digital approaches, a new paradigm has emerged: the hybrid organizational model—an integration of formal structure with digital flexibility. This model allows organizations to retain principles of structural efficiency in areas demanding high stability (for example, finance and legal), while adopting digital practices in units that require innovation and responsiveness (Faro et al., 2022). This concept is reinforced by the ambidextrous approach, in which organizations can exploit existing processes while simultaneously exploring new changes (Tuczek et al., 2022). In practice, hybrid organizations have demonstrated success in creating modular structures that are flexible yet coordinated, enabling cross-team and cross-technology capabilities to develop within a single systemic framework. Thus, this model is not merely a compromise between past and present; it serves as a strategic solution to the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) organizational environment.

METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, with the PRISMA guideline serving as the methodological reference to ensure transparency, replicability, and accountability throughout the review process. PRISMA was selected because it is widely recognized as the standard framework for conducting valid systematic reviews in the fields of management and organizational studies (Mukherjee, 2024; de Geus et al., 2020; Sahoo et al., 2024). The primary data sources were obtained from the Scopus database, which offers comprehensive coverage of internationally reputable journals containing indexed articles across relevant disciplines, including management, organizational behavior, human resources, and digital transformation. The publication range was limited to the years 2020 to 2025 in order to capture the most recent academic trends, as recommended by Abelha et al. (2020) and El Gareh et al. (2025).

The selected articles met the inclusion criteria of focusing on classical organizational theory, organizational behavior, or organizational digital transformation. All included works were written in English and published in peer-reviewed Scopus-indexed journals. Articles classified as opinion pieces, editorials, lacking explicit methodology, or not available in full text were excluded from the review. The search strategy employed a combination of keywords, including “organizational behavior,” “classical theory of organizational behavior,” and “organizational behavior” AND “digital practice,” supported by Boolean operators to refine and increase the precision of search results. The selection process consisted of three main stages: initial identification, removal of duplicates, and screening based on abstracts and full texts. The entire procedure was visualized in a PRISMA flow diagram, illustrating the number of articles identified, screened, and included in the final synthesis (El Gareh et al., 2025; Chlomoudis et al., 2022).

Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart Diagram



The analysis was conducted using three approaches. First, descriptive analysis was employed to present publication metadata such as trends in year of publication, country of origin, journal titles, and research methods.

Second, thematic analysis was carried out to identify conceptual patterns concerning classical and digital narratives by applying open and axial coding techniques. Third, content analysis was used to assess the depth of representation of classical values and to examine how those theories have been transformed within the digital context (Srirahayu et al., 2023; Haque et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Description of the Literature

This systematic review identifies and consolidates 21 scholarly articles that substantively discuss the evolution of the organizational behavior paradigm, spanning from classical theoretical perspectives to contemporary digital practices. The selection of these articles followed a rigorous process using internationally reputable databases, taking into account topic relevance, publication recency, methodological rigor, and conceptual contribution to the development of organizational discourse. From a temporal distribution standpoint, the analyzed publications range from 2020 to 2025, with a relatively even spread across years. The 2021 publications include works by Ferdous (2021), Önday (2021), and Subramaniam (2021), while 2022 is represented by Ehiobuche and Tu (2022) and Ferdous (2022). The 2023 publications—such as Turbanti (2023), Sarker and Khan (2023), Syafriadi et al. (2023), and Kalwani and Mahesh (2023)—demonstrate the sustained academic interest in integrating classical theories with digital advancements. The period 2024–2025 features notable contributions from Olden and Diana (2024), Patalon and Wyczisk (2024), Fadilasari and Ghatak (2024), as well as Moussaoui et al. (2025), Ueasangkomsate (2025), Hermawan et al. (2025), Akhtar et al. (2025), Aytekin et al. (2025), Ou and Tian (2025), and Susilowati and Nurcahyanti (2025). This temporal spread reflects a consistent academic interest in exploring organizational behavior dynamics amidst the accelerating digital transformation.

From a geographical perspective, the authors' institutional origins demonstrate that the issue is global rather than regional. Contributions from Asia include Indonesia (Hermawan et al., 2025; Susilowati & Nurcahyanti, 2025; Syafriadi et al., 2023), Thailand (Ueasangkomsate, 2025), Malaysia (Akhtar et al., 2025), and Bangladesh (Sarker & Khan, 2023). The Middle East and North Africa are represented by Morocco (Moussaoui et al., 2025) and Turkey (Aytekin et al., 2025; Önday, 2021), while international comparative studies include works by Ferdous (2022), Turbanti (2023), and Ehiobuche and Tu (2022). This geographical diversity indicates that the paradigm shift in organizational studies is a universal phenomenon, transcending local boundaries and resonating across the global academic landscape. From a methodological standpoint, the analyzed articles display a variety of approaches that strengthen the validity of findings. Works emphasizing classical theory—such as Ferdous (2021, 2022), Turbanti (2023), Subramaniam (2021), and Önday (2021)—are largely conceptual or literature-based. In contrast, contemporary studies employ more empirical methods, including qualitative case studies (Moussaoui et al., 2025; Aytekin et al., 2025; Patalon & Wyczisk, 2024), quantitative surveys (Akhtar et al., 2025; Susilowati & Nurcahyanti, 2025), as well as bibliometric and systematic review methodologies (Hermawan et al., 2025; Syafriadi et al., 2023). This methodological diversity reflects an analytical maturity and academic depth in understanding the paradigm transition within organizational behavior.

Thematically, the reviewed literature can be grouped into two major domains. The first domain focuses on explaining classical theories—such as bureaucracy, formal structures, and scientific management—as discussed by Turbanti (2023), Ehiobuche and Tu (2022), Ferdous (2021, 2022), Subramaniam (2021), Önday (2021), Olden and Diana (2024), and Sarker and Khan (2023). The second domain explores organizational behavior transformation within the digital context, covering issues such as digital readiness, collaborative work culture, technological adaptation, and ESG value integration, as examined by Moussaoui et al. (2025), Ueasangkomsate (2025), Hermawan et al. (2025), Akhtar et al. (2025), Aytekin et al. (2025), Ou and Tian (2025), Susilowati and Nurcahyanti (2025), and Fadilasari and Ghatak (2024). Transitional studies—such as Syafriadi et al. (2023) and Bueno (2021)—highlight the shift from agency models and classical frameworks to digital approaches. In terms of publication quality, the majority of analyzed articles were published in high-impact journals indexed in Scopus Q1 to Q3. Among them, Hermawan et al. (2025) and Akhtar et al. (2025) were featured in Q1 journals, while Ferdous (2021, 2022), Kalwani and Mahesh (2020), and Subramaniam (2021) appeared in Q2–Q3 journals. This indicates that the findings synthesized in this review are derived from rigorously peer-reviewed and internationally credible sources, reinforcing the reliability and scholarly significance of the study.

Thematic Findings in the Literature

Theme 1: The Legacy of Classical Theory in Organizational Behavior Studies

Classical theory continues to play a vital epistemological role in understanding organizational structure, functions, and behavior. Although modern approaches have broadened analytical perspectives, the classical

framework remains relevant and serves as a foundational reference for explaining the dynamics of contemporary organizations. Fundamental concepts developed by theorists such as Max Weber, Frederick Taylor, and Henri Fayol—regarding bureaucracy, scientific management, and administrative principles—have provided the structural and rational basis for organizational understanding. Turbanti (2023) emphasizes that classical theory is not merely of historical value but continues to serve as a conceptual cornerstone in designing modern, systematic, and structured organizations. Similarly, Ehiobuche and Tu (2022) affirm that classical theory remains applicable for explaining the functioning of formal and hierarchical organizations. Ferdous (2022) offers a critical reflection on the evolution of organizational theory from classical to modern, positioning classical theory as the starting point for developing organizational behavior thought. In his earlier work, Ferdous (2021) identified enduring elements—such as division of labor, hierarchical authority, and formalization—that continue to influence current managerial practices. Subramaniam (2021) critically evaluates the rigidity of classical approaches while acknowledging their contribution to establishing clear and accountable control systems. Olden and Diana (2024) reaffirm this perspective, emphasizing that bureaucratic and scientific management principles still underpin managerial design, particularly in public administration and healthcare contexts.

Sarker and Khan (2023) compare classical and neoclassical perspectives, concluding that classical theory remains essential for explaining formal organizational structures, even though neoclassical approaches emphasize relational aspects. Önday (2021) provides a broader historical overview—from Socratic thought to Weberian analysis—highlighting the significance of rationality and efficiency in shaping modern organizational systems. Bueno (2021) extends this discussion by demonstrating how classical principles continue to inform public administration governance frameworks. Kalwani and Mahesh (2020) reinforce the relevance of classical theory as an analytical tool, especially in studies of leadership and motivation. Syafriadi et al. (2023), through a systematic review of agency theory, underscore how classical structural principles continue to shape control mechanisms and effective work relationships. Collectively, this body of literature demonstrates that classical theory cannot be dismissed as obsolete. Rather, it continues to contribute substantially to understanding organizations that prioritize stability, efficiency, and structural clarity. In today's increasingly digitalized environment, the classical theoretical legacy provides a solid conceptual foundation for navigating and interpreting organizational change in a sustainable manner.

Theme 2: Organizational Behavior Change in the Digital Era

Digital transformation has become a disruptive force that not only reshapes operational mechanisms but also fundamentally redefines the paradigms of organizational behavior. In the context of Industry 4.0 and the post-pandemic era, reliance on formal structures and conventional hierarchies has become increasingly inadequate. Organizations are now required to foster behaviors that are adaptive, collaborative, data-driven, and responsive to technological as well as external environmental dynamics. The reviewed literature consistently asserts that digitalization directly impacts organizational structures, values, and work culture. The qualitative study by Moussaoui et al. (2025) on Moroccan SMEs illustrates that digital adoption drives not only technical changes but also gradual and comprehensive shifts in organizational culture—particularly as a means to overcome resource constraints and stimulate innovation.

In the public sector, Aytekin et al. (2025) reveal how local government institutions in Turkey experienced profound administrative behavioral transformation during the pandemic crisis. The digitalization of public services not only improved efficiency but also cultivated bureaucratic agility and a stronger responsive logic. Similarly, Patalon and Wyczisk (2024) observe that behavioral changes in government organizations often emerge as responses to social and normative pressures, reflecting the influence of external legitimacy demands. Within the industrial sector, digitalization has also reshaped leadership styles and work cultures. Ueasangkomsate (2025) highlights that, in Thai food SMEs, digital transformation necessitates employee retraining and mindset reorientation to align with new work systems. Fadilasari and Ghatak (2024) emphasize the integration of data-driven quality management, where automated decision-making and real-time analytics replace traditional manual control systems.

At the organizational level, Susilowati and Nurcahyanti (2025) confirm that the degree of digital maturity significantly influences adaptive work behavior and task integration. The more digitally capable an organization is, the greater its ability to navigate structural changes. In manufacturing contexts, Akhtar et al. (2025) argue that digital culture serves not merely as a facilitator of efficiency but also as a catalyst for innovative behaviors aligned with sustainability and ESG values—such as accountability, cross-functional collaboration, and social responsibility. The abrupt shifts triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated digitalization within professional service sectors. Kronblad and Pregmark (2021) show that this surge in digitalization drastically reformed communication patterns, cross-temporal and cross-spatial work structures, and coordination systems. Conceptually, Ou and Tian

(2025) interpret digital transformation as the outcome of continuous organizational learning, where digital behavior reflects an institution's capacity to learn and adapt persistently.

Hermawan et al. (2025) add a normative dimension, showing that digital transformation reinforces organizational values and norms that support Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8). Digitalization, therefore, is no longer viewed merely as a technological efficiency effort but as a transformative engine for building collaborative, sustainable, and inclusive organizational behavior. Overall, these findings demonstrate that digital transformation penetrates far beyond technological adoption—it reshapes values, behaviors, and organizational orientations at every level. From SMEs to public institutions, from manufacturing to professional services, organizations are now required to restructure work relations, communication patterns, role distribution, and cultural configurations. This phenomenon marks a paradigm shift from rigid and hierarchical entities toward dynamic, responsive, and digitally integrated organizations.

Conceptual and Theoretical Synthesis

The paradigm transition of organizational behavior from the classical era to the digital era is not a form of total replacement but rather a complex and multilayered conceptual synthesis. Instead of being dichotomous, classical and digital approaches complement one another, forming a new configuration known as hybrid organizational behavior—a model that combines structural control with digital flexibility, and integrates bureaucratic efficiency with data-driven innovation. From a theoretical perspective, the classical theories proposed by Weber, Fayol, and Taylor remain relevant in designing organizational structures, particularly through values such as hierarchy, division of labor, formalization, and coordination. These principles continue to be essential in organizational contexts operating under high levels of complexity and risk (Ferdous, 2022; Ehiobuche & Tu, 2022). However, in situations requiring rapid responsiveness to change, reliance on rigid structures has proven less adaptive, as critiqued by Subramaniam (2021) and further confirmed by Kalwani and Mahesh (2020).

Conversely, digitalization compels organizations to become more dynamic, participatory, and learning-oriented. Concepts such as digital maturity (Susilowati & Nurcahyanti, 2025), remote collaboration (Kronblad & Pregmark, 2021), digital adaptation (Aytekin et al., 2025), and innovative culture (Akhtar et al., 2025) are critical in shaping the characteristics of modern organizational behavior. Ou and Tian (2025) emphasize that organizational resilience in the digital era largely depends on institutional learning capabilities, rather than merely the strength of formal structures. The synthesis of these two approaches yields a hybrid organizational model that blends structural stability with digital agility. Efficiency and control are maintained in functions that demand high reliability—such as finance, compliance, and safety—while innovation- and customer-oriented units are developed based on digital principles: autonomous teamwork, open collaboration, integrated information systems, and flexibility in workspace and time management.

This model reflects an integrative spectrum rather than opposing polarities. Organizations do not evolve linearly from classical to digital paradigms but instead adopt a strategic blend of both, tailored to functional requirements, cultural characteristics, and sectoral contexts. Studies by Patalon and Wyczisk (2024) and Moussaoui et al. (2025) illustrate how bureaucratic structures are retained while simultaneously accompanied by digital adoption as a response to institutional pressures and operational demands. Consequently, organizations must design adaptive modular structures, allowing the application of classical management principles in certain areas and digital flexibility in others. Hermawan et al. (2025) describe this as a strategic response to the pursuit of sustainable productivity, aligning with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8. This hybrid configuration offers a significant theoretical contribution by proposing the framework of an ambidextrous organization—one capable of simultaneously exploring innovation and exploiting efficiency. Such a model bridges transitional dynamics and establishes a new theoretical foundation for understanding organizational behavior in the era of digital disruption.

DISCUSSION

The thematic findings of this study demonstrate that contemporary organizational behavior cannot be adequately understood through a single paradigm. The three central themes—the legacy of classical theory, the dynamics of the digital era, and the paradigm transition—necessitate a more holistic and reflective approach to understanding the complexities of modern organizations. The synthesis between classical frameworks and digital practices is not merely a convergence of methodologies; it represents a deeper epistemological challenge that questions how we classify, interpret, and manage organizational behavior in evolving environments. Classical theories, as formulated by Weber, Fayol, and Taylor, continue to position hierarchical and formal structures as the backbone of organizational design (Ferdous, 2021; Subramaniam, 2021). This framework has proven effective in establishing order and efficiency, yet it becomes increasingly limited when organizations must adapt to rapidly

changing environments. Studies such as Ueasangkomsate (2025) and Susilowati & Nurcahyanti (2025) reveal that modern organizations require greater structural flexibility, sustained learning capabilities, and a more fluid orientation toward change to remain competitive and resilient. The dominance of classical narratives in early literature has contributed to a structural bias in understanding organizational behavior. Works such as Ehiobuche and Tu (2022), Kalwani & Mahesh (2020), and Önday (2021) tend to glorify procedural efficiency while overlooking the social and technological complexities of contemporary organizations. Conversely, more recent studies—such as Akhtar et al. (2025) and Aytekin et al. (2025)—sometimes place excessive emphasis on technology, assuming that digitalization can universally replace traditional organizational systems. This introduces what can be termed contemporary bias, the assumption that all organizations can or should undergo digitalization without considering the enduring need for structure and stability.

Another persistent issue in prior scholarship is the lack of explicit theoretical bridges connecting classical and digital approaches. Studies such as Ferdous (2022), Patalon & Wyczisk (2024), and Bueno (2021) remain largely historical or sectoral in scope, without constructing synthetic models capable of functionally integrating both paradigms. Only a few works—such as Ou and Tian (2025) and Hermawan et al. (2025)—have explicitly developed capability-based integrative frameworks that unify bureaucratic values with digital learning principles within a cohesive theoretical structure. The thematic synthesis presented in this study suggests a substantial opportunity to articulate a more adaptive and comprehensive framework of organizational behavior. The hybrid organizational model, which combines structural efficiency with digital agility, emerges as a strategic direction for organizations aiming to remain relevant and sustainable. Furthermore, future research should explore comparative cross-contextual studies—for instance, between the public and private sectors or between developing and developed nations—to enhance the validity and generalizability of the proposed hybrid models. Accordingly, future methodological approaches must adopt a more reflective and multidimensional orientation. This systematic review serves as an initial step in bridging the divide between classical stability and digital dynamism. Nonetheless, continued theoretical development is essential—both to empirically test existing conceptual frameworks and to refine them in response to emerging contexts and challenges within the evolving organizational landscape.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study provides significant contributions to both the theoretical development and practical application of organizational behavior in contemporary contexts. Theoretically, the findings underscore the urgency of an integrative approach that transcends the dominance of any single paradigm. Classical organizational theory, as emphasized by Ferdous (2022) and Olden & Diana (2024), remains relevant for maintaining structural stability and rational work systems. However, the limitations of classical models in addressing rapid change and digital complexity, as noted by Subramaniam (2021), reinforce the need for a more adaptive conceptual framework. The primary theoretical implication of this study is the necessity to develop ambidextrous organizational models, capable of simultaneously exploiting structural efficiency and exploring adaptive innovation (Hermawan et al., 2025). In such models, organizations are no longer confined within the classical-versus-digital dichotomy but emerge as hybrid, flexible, modular, and contextually responsive entities. This approach broadens the theoretical horizon of organizational behavior by emphasizing the need for dynamic frameworks that can respond effectively to external pressures.

From a methodological standpoint, the synthetic approach via the SLR method employed in this study demonstrates the potential for integrating previously fragmented literature. Through thematic coding and cross-study mapping, this article constructs a cohesive conceptual framework consistent with the PRISMA-based thematic approach advocated by Sahoo et al. (2024). This represents a valuable methodological contribution to developing more reflective and evidence-based organizational research. Practically, the findings highlight the need for organizations to design behavioral architectures that balance structural rigor with digital agility. In highly regulated and high-risk sectors, classical principles such as role clarity and formalization remain indispensable. However, to navigate disruption effectively, organizations must also adopt digital collaboration models, flexible communication systems, and technological integration that foster adaptability and innovation (Ueasangkomsate, 2025; Akhtar et al., 2025).

Further implications extend to the design of work structures that support employees' digital capabilities. This demands leadership that cultivates organizational learning systems, serving as the foundation for resilient and competitive work cultures (Ou & Tian, 2025). Organizational learning, therefore, should not be treated as a mere administrative process but as a core pillar in constructing a robust digital culture. For management practitioners, this study provides strategic guidance in designing organizational policies and structures that avoid overreliance on either extreme. The integration of classical and digital values must be embedded within a coherent, contextually relevant

system of work behavior. Meanwhile, for public policy designers, the findings emphasize the urgency of fostering adaptive bureaucracies—structures that remain accountable yet open to innovation and digital transformation (Patalon & Wyczisk, 2024; Aytekin et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of 21 scholarly articles from reputable journals published over the past five years has produced a conceptual synthesis that effectively addresses the key research questions of this study. The first finding affirms that classical organizational theory continues to possess substantial conceptual depth and practical significance. Principles such as formal hierarchy, procedural efficiency, and division of labor remain the structural foundations of organizations, particularly within highly regulated sectors. Although often criticized for its mechanistic orientation, classical theory continues to contribute to stability and role clarity within the context of modern managerial practice. The second finding reveals that digital transformation has radically altered organizational behavior. This transformation extends beyond technological dimensions, exerting profound impacts on work culture, leadership structures, and patterns of interpersonal interaction. Organizations are increasingly required to develop more flexible, collaborative, and continuously learning digital work models. In this sense, digitalization is no longer merely an operational strategy but functions as a transformative instrument of organizational behavior.

The third finding emphasizes that contemporary organizations operate along a continuum that bridges classical stability with digital agility. The synthetic model proposed in this study demonstrates that organizations need not choose between being exclusively bureaucratic or fully digital; instead, they can configure hybrid forms that adapt to contextual demands. The concept of organizational ambidexterity emerges as a key theoretical framework explaining an organization's capacity to simultaneously maintain efficiency and foster continuous innovation. Based on these findings, several important future research agendas are identified. Comparative empirical studies across sectors and nations are needed to test the validity of the hybrid organizational model in diverse contexts. Longitudinal approaches and mixed-method research designs will enrich understanding of the behavioral transition process from classical structures to digital practices. Furthermore, exploration of contextual variables—such as national culture, regulatory frameworks, and levels of digital maturity—will be essential for comprehending the dynamic interplay between structure and flexibility in shaping the organizational designs of the future.

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