
The Effect of Workplace Friendship on Employees' Innovative Behavior With Knowledge Sharing and Psychological Safety as Mediation At BPTD Class II West Sumatra

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Abstract

Facing an era of disruption and complexity in public services, public sector organizations are faced with the urgency of encouraging innovative behavior within the bureaucracy. Effective innovation stems not only from structural reform but also depends heavily on the quality of human resources, openness in exchanging information, and psychological well-being in the workplace. While previous studies have linked workplace friendship to various employee outcomes, research examining the simultaneous mediating mechanisms of knowledge sharing and psychological safety remains limited, particularly within the rigid structures of public administration in developing nations. Based on this, this study aims to determine the effect of workplace friendship on employee innovative behavior with knowledge sharing and psychological safety as mediating variables at BPTD Class II West Sumatra. This study applied quantitative research methods and employed a survey method, collecting data through an online questionnaire distributed via a link. The population consisted of all ASN employees working at the Class II Land Transportation Management Center (BPTD) of West Sumatra who are of productive age, totaling 186 people. The sampling technique used a non-probability sampling method with a saturated or census sampling technique. The analysis technique used Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS, and mediation testing used the path coefficient significance. Based on the research results, it was found that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on knowledge sharing. Workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior. Workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on psychological safety. Furthermore, knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior. Psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior. Finally, knowledge sharing and psychological safety positively mediate the effect of workplace

friendship on employee innovative behavior, with the form of mediation being complementary mediation (partial mediation).

Keywords: Workplace Friendship, Knowledge Sharing, Psychological Safety, Innovative Behavior

1. Introduction

1.1 Introducing the Problem

In an era of disruption and increasingly complex public service demands, government organizations are faced with the pressing need to continuously innovate in carrying out their duties and functions. Innovation is not only born from policies or the implementation of cutting-edge technology, but also depends heavily on the quality and capabilities of their human resources. One government institution facing these dynamics is the West Sumatra Class II Land Transportation Management Center (BPTD), a Technical Implementation Unit (UPT) under the Ministry of Transportation responsible for managing land transportation efficiently, safely, and adaptively in the West Sumatra province. In facing bureaucratic complexity and increasing demands for responsive public services, BPTD Class II West Sumatra is not only required to carry out technocratic functions procedurally, but must also be able to innovate in solving various transportation problems that are dynamic and multidimensional.

In this context, the existence of competent and innovative human resources is a key factor in determining BPTD's success in meeting the demands of this change. To see the potential of human resources that support this, the age of BPTD Class II West Sumatra employees as of November 2025 shows that of the total 374 employees, the majority are in the young age range, especially the 22–35 year old age range. Of the total 374 employees, BPTD Class II West Sumatra employees are generally dominated by employees with an age range of 22–28 years, as many as 87 people and the age range of 29–35 years as many as 99 people. Of these two age ranges, generally employees have a Diploma 3 (D3) educational background as many as 75 people and the rest are almost balanced between those with high school/equivalent education as many as 52 people and S1 as many as 59 people. This shows that BPTD Class II West Sumatra employees are dominated by young employees, who with their dominance should have great potential in terms of creativity and innovation (Majid, 2023).

1.2 Explore the Importance of the Problem

However, to prove whether the potential dominance of young employees has been realized in real action, an objective picture is needed in the field. In order to obtain an initial picture of the condition of innovative behavior in the BPTD Class II West Sumatra environment, researchers conducted a preliminary survey of employees included in the young and productive age group. This survey aims to identify the tendencies, characteristics, and levels of innovative behavior shown by employees. Based on the initial survey conducted on 26 BPTD Class II West Sumatra employees aged between 22 and 35 years regarding innovative behavior in November 2025, the results obtained that overall employee innovative behavior obtained an average of 3.67 with a

respondent achievement level of 73.4% between 61-80% so it is included in the good category. When viewed per statement item as a whole, each statement item also obtained a respondent achievement level between 61-80% so it is included in the good category.

However, behind this good category, overall, there are several indicators of innovative behavior statement items that received the lowest scores and require attention. Indicators that fall into the low score category include "seeking and ensuring the availability of funds for the implementation of new ideas" with an average of 3.35. This is understandable considering that employees in this age group do not have direct authority in budget management and are not accustomed to being involved in the budget preparation and submission process. Complex and bureaucratic funding procedures in government agencies also make employees tend not to be involved in efforts to find the resources needed to realize ideas. Thus, employees' ability to secure resource support for the implementation of innovation is still not optimally developed.

In addition to limited resource support, another obstacle is seen in the indicator "developing appropriate plans and schedules to implement new ideas," which also received a low score with an average of 3.54, indicating that employees still experience difficulties in translating ideas into concrete work plans. Lack of experience in project planning, high routine workloads, and a lack of guidance or support in developing implementation steps cause many ideas to stop at the idea stage and not develop into structured action plans. This condition indicates that the process of planning the implementation of ideas has not been running effectively in the work environment.

Furthermore, obstacles to realizing this innovative behavior also arise from communication factors between employees. This is indicated by the indicators "promoting and championing ideas to others" and "promoting and defending innovative ideas to others," with an average of 3.58 each. This low score occurs because employees still feel a lack of confidence in conveying and defending ideas. The hierarchical organizational structure and work culture that tends to be formal cause young employees to hesitate to express ideas, especially when they have to deal with more senior employees or superiors. Fear that ideas will be rejected, deemed less relevant, or create negative perceptions also makes employees reluctant to actively promote or defend ideas.

Overall, the survey results indicate that the innovative behavior of BPTD Class II West Sumatra employees is stronger in idea generation, but remains weak in idea promotion and realization. The work environment does not fully provide adequate space and support for young employees to convey, maintain, and realize innovative ideas. Factors such as organizational culture, bureaucratic hierarchy, limited authority, lack of training, and a limited forum for expressing ideas also contribute to low scores on these indicators.

This weakness in the promotion and implementation of ideas is reinforced by real-world conditions. A survey conducted in early June 2025 revealed that many young employees lack the initiative to demonstrate innovative behavior in generating new ideas. This could be due to a rigid work culture and complex bureaucracy, making it difficult to propose and accept new ideas.

Furthermore, a lack of support and appreciation from leadership makes employees feel the risk of failure is too high without commensurate rewards. A lack of soft-skills development training also hinders the development of creative and critical thinking skills. Heavy work pressure and a focus on achieving administrative targets lead young employees to prefer performing routine and safe tasks rather than taking risks and innovating. These conditions further clarify that weaknesses in the promotion and implementation of ideas are not only evident in the survey but are also reflected in employees' daily behavior.

In addition to challenges stemming from individual employee aspects, the West Sumatra Class II BPTD also faces various operational challenges. The implementation of its duties at the BPTD is still hampered by a general lack of adequate human resources, damaged facilities and infrastructure, and various operational constraints such as vehicle overloading violations and non-compliance with SOPs in several work units (Majid, 2023). Based on an initial survey conducted in June 2025, many innovations produced to address these conditions are often temporary and poorly planned, making them less able to meet the challenges of constantly changing transportation needs. As a result, public transportation management often lags behind technological developments and community needs, thus reducing workplace camaraderie and the organization's operational effectiveness and potentially disrupting harmonious working relationships between employees. This confirms that structural organizational challenges also weaken employees' ability to realize sustainable innovation.

Considering these various issues, it is clear that innovation cannot rely solely on structural policies or leadership decisions, but must begin with the innovative behavior of individuals within the organization. Innovative behavior is key to creating a work environment that supports the emergence of new ideas and the implementation of innovative solutions in transportation management. Therefore, understanding and developing innovative behavior among BPTD Class II West Sumatra employees is a strategic step to improve the quality of innovation and the effectiveness of transportation management in the future. Therefore, strengthening individual capacity and improving the work environment need to go hand in hand to ensure optimal innovation development.

1.3 Describe Relevant Scholarship

In the context of developing innovative behavior, one factor that has received attention in influencing innovative behavior is knowledge sharing. Effective knowledge sharing produces innovative behavior. This is because creative ideas are the foundation of innovation, and these ideas are generated through effective communication among employees, leading to a strong tendency among them to strive for innovation (Johan, 2021). Knowledge sharing activities provide valuable information exchange from colleagues that is useful for problem solving and/or creating new ideas, and there is a crucial role of knowledge sharing in increasing the level of innovative work behavior, absorptive capacity, and innovation of the institution (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). In addition, knowledge sharing helps foster mutual communication and trust among employees as they exchange experiences and knowledge, which positively enhances

employees' innovative work behavior and improves organizational performance (Aldabbas et al., 2021).

In addition to knowledge sharing, psychological safety also plays a crucial role in encouraging employee innovative behavior. Employee psychological safety is an important cognitive mechanism (Hirak et al., 2012) that can improve employee performance, productivity, creativity, and innovative behavior. If employees feel psychologically safe, they will be more satisfied with their work tasks and perform them more effectively. Psychologically safe employees are more creative and innovative, considering new approaches and perspectives in carrying out their work tasks. They generate and implement new concepts and ideas because they are more satisfied and willing to take risks (Ali et al., 2022).

Besides knowledge sharing and psychological safety, another equally important factor in triggering this process is workplace friendship, where innovative behavior is driven by workplace friendship. Workplace friendship is a conscious and voluntary bond of friendship between employees in the workplace, where friendship is built on trust, motivation, interests, values, and shared commitment (Berman et al., 2002; Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). Innovative work behavior is not only the process of generating valuable ideas but also implementing them in the workplace. At every stage of innovative behavior, support from coworkers is crucial. Friendly relationships provide an informal and voluntary environment that can foster information sharing among employees (Donati et al., 2016). In the idea promotion stage, employees must be confident that the proposed idea poses no risk if implemented. Therefore, support from coworkers as "backers" is crucial for idea promotion. Thus, it can be concluded that friendship with coworkers plays a significant role in enhancing employee innovative behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020)

Besides directly influencing innovative behavior, workplace friendship also influences knowledge sharing. Social interaction is the main foundation of knowledge sharing behavior (Ghahtarani et al., 2020). Workplace friendship shows the emotional closeness of an individual without any limitations or status ties in the workplace (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). More opportunities for workers to share information are provided through an established environment of engagement. When team members need information and seek advice, they are more likely to complete tasks. In other words, employees' willingness to ask for and give advice implies that knowledge sharing creates openness and effective communication in the workplace. Furthermore, workplace friendship improves transparency, communication, and task completion (Nguyen et al., 2021). In line with this, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) revealed that employees who have close relationships with coworkers will provide quality knowledge sharing.

Not only contributing to knowledge sharing activities, workplace friendship has also been shown to promote psychological safety. Friendly relationships provide emotional support, trust, and a sense of comfort among employees in an organization (Berman et al., 2002). In this context, Mutual trust and understanding in the workplace are considered to have an important effect on employee psychological safety (Appelbaum et al., 2016). Workplace friendship can help

individuals gain a sense of belonging and feel supported by their coworkers (Berman et al., 2002), thus maintaining a high level of psychological safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Furthermore, having stronger relationships with coworkers can promote greater psychological safety, or a shared belief that their company is open to risk-taking behavior. Therefore, individuals with high levels of workplace friendship will also experience high levels of psychological safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Therefore, Workplace friendship is a potential resource to improve employee psychological safety (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Mao & Hsieh, 2017).

Conceptually, the success of workplace friendship in encouraging innovative behavior depends heavily on the role of knowledge sharing and psychological safety as the primary foundations driving the innovation process. Through the support of these aspects, employees tend to be more active in exploring new approaches, proposing unconventional solutions, and daring to break out of rigid mindsets. This openness and sense of safety serve as the initial foundation for innovative behavior, because without the generation and dissemination of new ideas, the innovation process cannot continue sustainably.

Furthermore, knowledge sharing and psychological safety also serve as mediators connecting workplace friendship to innovative behavior. This connection can be explained through two main mediation pathways. First, knowledge sharing mediation pathway. Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) revealed that employees who have close relationships with their coworkers will provide quality knowledge sharing. When greater knowledge exchange among employees occurs, this condition has the potential to trigger innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). This indicates workplace friendship. Creating positive social interactions and strengthening trust and collaboration between employees. When these friendly relationships are strong, employees feel more comfortable and open to asking and giving advice to one another. This established environment of engagement opens up greater opportunities for employees to share new information, insights, and experiences. Through effective knowledge sharing, employees obtain sufficient raw information to process into new ideas, ultimately encouraging innovative behavior in the workplace.

Second, on the Psychological Safety mediation pathway. In the context of interactions between employees, mutual trust and understanding in the workplace are considered to have a significant effect on employee Psychological Safety (Appelbaum et al., 2016). This is reinforced by the fact that having stronger relationships with coworkers can lead to greater Psychological Safety or a shared belief that their company is open to risk-taking behavior (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Therefore, workplace friendship can improve psychological safety (Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). This condition makes employees involved in workplace friendship consider friends as "supporters" to support their creative ideas, so that workplace friendship is positively related to psychological safety, and in turn, increases innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). This indicates workplace friendship is a potential resource for improving employee psychological safety through the presence of emotional support and mutual trust. These close relationships with coworkers provide a sense of belonging and support, thus maintaining high levels of psychological safety. This sense of psychological safety gives employees confidence that their

work environment is open to risks. Thus, employees feel safe to express ideas, explore new approaches, and propose unconventional solutions without fear of being criticized, which then facilitates the continued implementation of innovative behavior.

Thus, workplace friendship indirectly contributes to innovative behavior through knowledge sharing and psychological safety. Workplace friendships create a friendly and safe work environment and encourage effective knowledge sharing practices. This, in turn, allows employees to be more open to exploring ideas, taking risks, and expressing their ideas freely, which ultimately not only encourages individual initiative but also strengthens the creation of sustainable innovative behavior within the organization.

Fundamentally, the dynamics of the reciprocal relationship between organizational support and employee responses at BPTD Class II West Sumatra can be explained through the Social Exchange Theory (SET) developed by Blue (1964). This theory argues that social obligations are generated through a series of interactions between individuals based on the principle of reciprocity. In this study, workplace friendship is seen as the primary social inducement provided by the organization. When an agency facilitates the formation of friendly relationships, employees will feel a moral social responsibility to reciprocate through voluntary actions that benefit the organization (extra-role behavior), such as a willingness to build psychological safety, share knowledge, and demonstrate innovative behavior (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This principle asserts that if employees feel valued through strong bonds of friendship, they will voluntarily exchange their innovative efforts and intellectual capital for the advancement of the organization.

Furthermore, the mechanism of employees' cognitive processes in responding to the bureaucratic environment is explained through Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Through the concept of Triadic Reciprocal Determinism, SCT emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between the environment, personal factors (cognitive), and behavior. Although government organizational structures often have rigid rules, the existence of an environment full of familiarity between colleagues through friendship (as an environmental factor) will influence employees' cognitive perceptions. This friendship directly stimulates the emergence of Psychological Safety in employees (as a factor) *Person/Cognitive*. Psychological safety provides self-efficacy that the ideas or knowledge they share will not jeopardize their self-image. Thus, the positive interaction between a socially supportive environment and employees' self-efficacy will fuel their courage to persist in performing real behavior, specifically through a willingness to share knowledge and to develop new ideas without feeling threatened by existing bureaucratic structures (Bandura, A., 1986). SCT strengthens SET by explaining that innovative behavior emerges because an environment that promotes friendship successfully changes mindsets, builds Psychological Safety, and encourages employee knowledge sharing behavior.

To explain the internal processes that link these environmental factors to innovation output, this study uses the Componential Theory of Creativity as an applied theory. This theory explains that employee innovative behavior results from the interaction between expertise, open-minded

thinking, and intrinsic motivation, which in this study is represented through the role of knowledge sharing and Psychological Safety as mediating variables. The friendly work environment at BPTD Class II West Sumatra acts as a work environment stimulant that triggers intrinsic employee motivation. Amabile and Pratt (2016) confirms that social support significantly increases creative efficacy and the sense of making progress, which is the primary fuel for the emergence of innovative behavior. The existence of workplace friendship dramatically increases intrinsic motivation, where without a psychological bridge in the form of Psychological Safety (creative thinking process) and knowledge sharing activities (expertise in a particular field), friendship input will not be able to transform into valuable innovative actions (Amabile, 1988; Amabile & Pratt, 2016)

The urgency of integrating these three theories is highly relevant for BPTD Class II West Sumatra in addressing the challenge of low promotion and implementation of ideas among young employees, as found in the initial survey. Through the broad umbrella of social exchange, social cognitive, and innovation theories, it can be understood that innovation in the bureaucratic environment is not simply a work order, but rather the result of healthy social and psychological transactions. If leaders are able to build a friendly work climate interpersonally through friendship, Then the stimulus will be successfully relayed through increased psychological safety and openness of information (knowledge sharing). This mediation process is ultimately capable of overcoming structural barriers by internal encouragement of employees to contribute actively and innovatively for the advancement of land transportation services.

In line with the importance of these factors in driving innovative behavior, various previous studies have examined the relationship between these variables. Numerous studies have been conducted and empirically demonstrated on how workplace friendship can stimulate knowledge sharing and psychological safety, as well as its impact on innovative behavior. As a first step, based on a literature review, several studies have shown that Workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on knowledge sharing (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021). Likewise, regarding employee innovative behavior, workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022; IH Ali et al., 2024). Then also regarding Psychological Safety, where Workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on Psychological Safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020; Helmy & Wiwoho 2020). On the other hand, other studies have found knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Johan, 2021; Rafique et al., 2022; Sari & Wahyuni, 2023a; Saif et al., 2024). Then Psychological Safety also has an effect positive towards innovative employee behavior (Zhu & Zhang, 2019; Cao & Zhang, 2020; Ali et al., 2022; Imran et al., 2025)

In addition to this relationship, it was also found that knowledge sharing has been recognized as a mediating variable in many studies related to innovation (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). Specifically, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) found that knowledge sharing has a significant mediating effect in the relationship between workplace friendship and innovative work behavior. Furthermore, the relationship between workplace friendship and

innovative behavior is also mediated by psychological safety, where the results of the study indicate that individuals with high levels of friendship at work will experience high levels of psychological safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Empirically, having friendly relationships with coworkers can result in greater psychological safety (Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). In line with this, Cao & Zhang (2020) found that workplace friendship has a positive indirect effect on employee innovative behavior through psychological safety.

Although the above studies have provided a broad overview, In general, the objects of previous research are still limited to the education sector, SMEs, the IT industry, hospitals, the furniture sector, online transportation, and industrial or public sector companies outside the context of government bureaucracy, especially in the public transportation sector. In addition, there has been no research that places knowledge sharing and psychological safety as mediating variables between workplace friendship and innovative behavior, especially in the context of horizontal interactions between employees. More importantly, a critical theoretical gap remains: existing literature has predominantly examined knowledge sharing and psychological safety as isolated, independent mediation pathways. To date, there is a lack of integrated structural frameworks that evaluate these two variables as simultaneous mediators linking workplace friendship to innovative behavior. This omission overlooks the complex interplay between communicative mechanisms (knowledge sharing) and psychological mechanisms (psychological safety) in driving innovation. Examining this dual-mediation dynamic is particularly imperative within government land transportation agencies in Indonesia, such as BPTD Class II West Sumatra, where the public sector environment is inherently hierarchical, highly formalized, and rule-bound. By integrating Social Exchange Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and the Componential Theory of Creativity into a unified dual-mediation framework within a rigid bureaucratic setting, this study directly addresses these theoretical and contextual gaps, offering a more sophisticated understanding of how informal social capital can break through administrative inertia to foster public sector innovation.

1.4 Literature Review And State Hypotheses

1.4.1 Literature Review

Innovative behavior

Innovative behavior Innovative behavior refers to the active act of creating, introducing, and implementing new ideas that can help improve individual or group job performance. Innovative behavior is defined as increasing creativity by using individual problem-solving skills in developing and implementing new ideas and strategies, products, and services (Choi et al., 2021). Besides that, Farid et al. (2017) defines innovative behavior as “the deliberate introduction or application of new ideas, products, processes, and procedures by employees to their work roles, work units, or organizations.” Innovative behavior in this study is conceptualized as a complex behavior consisting of activities related to the creation/introduction of new ideas (either by oneself or adopted from others) and the realization/implementation of new ideas (Janssen, 2000; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Farid et al., 2017). This can also include developing ideas for new products or technologies, as well as changes in procedures or services,

and implementing new ideas or technologies in a more significant or more efficient work environment (Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). Innovative work behavior consists of several stages which include idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010).

Workplace friendship

Friendship is a personal and emotional relationship that is unique to the parties involved. It is based on irreplaceable and distinct emotions and fosters emotional support, a warm exchange of interests, and shared needs (Geylan, 2023). On the other hand, Workplace friendship is characterized as a reciprocal connection between individuals in the same workplace, which includes shared bonds, trust, common values, and interests; it goes beyond mere acquaintance but excludes any romantic elements (Berman et al., 2002; Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018), positive relational dynamics (Lee et al., 2020) be at the heart of Workplace friendship (Geylan, 2023). Furthermore, Workplace friendship refers to informal and voluntary interpersonal relationships in the workplace between employees with mutual trust, dependency, and shared interests in an organizational environment, which are characterized by non-exclusive, informal, and voluntary nature (Berman et al., 2002; Li et al., 2024). The friendships that develop in a professional environment go beyond mere acquaintance. A sense of shared intimacy, mutual commitment, trust, and spontaneous benefits are the hallmarks of these friendships (Cao & Zhang, 2020; IH Ali et al., 2024). In other words, Workplace friendship is a voluntary and individually driven interaction that develops through personal choice (Geylan, 2023). In this context, the concept of friendship, often expressed as “mutual solidarity between two individuals on voluntary terms,” has two fundamental characteristics at work. First, it is based on voluntary choice (Geylan, 2023), and second, individual-centered, focusing not only on them as employees but as whole social beings, thus facilitating communication (Sias et al., 2004; Geylan, 2023).

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge is an important asset in organizations. Knowledge is defined as information processed by individuals, consisting of facts, skills, ideas, and evaluations relevant to individual and group performance (Suwanti, 2019). Knowledge is important as a source and strategy for gaining competitive advantage (Rafique et al., 2022). Therefore, the management and utilization of knowledge are inseparable from an organization's ability to channel that knowledge through sharing between individuals and groups. This process, known as knowledge sharing, is the primary means of disseminating and applying knowledge in the workplace. Suwanti (2019) defines knowledge sharing as the communication of knowledge from various sources in such a way that it can be learned and applied by the recipient. Knowledge sharing occurs when someone intends to disseminate, communicate, and acquire knowledge. This includes providing knowledge, both explicit and tacit, to help others achieve work goals, solve problems, or develop new ideas. Furthermore, knowledge sharing is a process that allows knowledge held by individuals and groups to be transferred to the organizational level, where it can be applied to the development of new products, services, and processes (Johan, 2021). Knowledge sharing is the process of actively expressing one's own ideas, sharing information to help others with their

problems, or discussing innovative methods and developing new ideas through collaboration (Zhang et al., 2023).

Psychological Safety

Psychological Safety is increasingly becoming a critical factor for organizational success in today's business environment, given the requirement for employees to share information and exchange ideas across team members and the organization in order to achieve common goals (AC Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Psychological Safety refers to the perception of conditions when people feel comfortable or able to be themselves (Kim et al., 2019) or a condition where an individual feels able to show, employ and utilize himself without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career (Kim et al., 2019; Wowor & Dewi, 2022; Geylan, 2023). In 1999, Edmondson defined Psychological Safety as a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (i.e., engaging in learning behaviors that may put workers at risk, including seeking feedback, sharing information, asking for help, talking about mistakes, and experimenting) (Sasaki et al., 2022). In a psychologically safe work environment, employees feel that their coworkers will not reject people for being themselves or saying what they think, respect each other's competence, are interested in each other as people, have positive intentions for each other, can engage in constructive conflict or confrontation, and feel safe to experiment and take risks (A. Edmondson, 1999). Behaviorally, psychological safety causes employees to engage in open communication, voice their concerns, and seek greater feedback; all of which are interpersonally risky behaviors (Pearsall & Ellis, 2011).

1.4.2 State Hypotheses

The Effect of Workplace Friendship on Knowledge Sharing

Social interaction is the main foundation in knowledge sharing behavior (Ghahtarani et al., 2020). Workplace friendship shows the emotional closeness of an individual without any limitations or status ties in the workplace (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). This friendship develops because of closeness and shared experiences. They often rely on each other for problem-solving, such as interpreting new events or managing relationships with others within the organization (Nguyen et al., 2021). Besides that, Nguyen et al., (2021) stated that when team members need information and ask for advice, they are more likely to complete tasks. In line with this, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) revealed that employees who have close relationships with coworkers will provide quality knowledge sharing.

Theoretically, this relationship is explained from the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (SET), where workplace friendship acts as a social inducement or initial social investment. The existence of emotional bonds and mutual trust between colleagues triggers the norm of reciprocity, so that employees voluntarily carry out reciprocal actions in the form of a willingness to share their non-material resources, namely information and expertise. In line with Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), friendship functions as a positive environmental factor. This familiar social environment influences employees' cognitive factors (Person), reducing, anxiety, and strengthening their motivation to engage in concrete behaviors (behaviors) such as

knowledge sharing. Referring to the Componential Theory of Creativity, friendship is an environmental stimulant that triggers employees' intrinsic motivation. When this intrinsic motivation is aroused, employees will be encouraged to use knowledge sharing activities as a means of collective knowledge acquisition for the advancement of the organization (Blau, 1964; Bandura, A., 1986; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Apart from being supported by the theoretical basis above, this relationship is also strengthened by various empirical findings. Specifically, previous studies have found that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on knowledge sharing (Nguyen et al., 2021; Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). Based on the above explanation, it is explicitly argued that higher workplace friendship directly leads to increased knowledge sharing. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H1: Workplace friendship has a positive effect on knowledge sharing

The Effect of Workplace Friendship on Innovative Behavior

Innovative work behavior is a form of innovation at the individual level (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Innovative work behavior consists of several stages which include idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). At every stage of innovative behavior, support from colleagues is crucial. Friendly relationships provide informal and voluntary conditions that can trigger information sharing among employees (Donati et al., 2016). In the idea promotion stage, employees must be confident that the proposed idea poses no risk if implemented. Therefore, support from coworkers as "backers" is crucial for idea promotion. Consequently, it can be concluded that friendship with coworkers plays a significant role in enhancing employee innovative behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020)

Theoretically, this relationship is explained from the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (SET), where workplace friendship is seen as a form of social inducement or social investment from the organization that triggers the norm of reciprocity in employees. The perceived bond of friendship becomes a reason for employees to voluntarily 'return the favor' through innovative behavior that goes beyond formal job descriptions for the advancement of the organization. In line with Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), a friendly environment functions as an external stimulus that reduces risk perception and strengthens positive interactions between environmental and cognitive factors, thereby increasing employee self-efficacy to act proactively. Operationally, referring to the Componential Theory of Creativity, workplace friendship acts as an environmental stimulant that generates intrinsic motivation, allowing employees to convert this social energy into creative ideas and concrete innovative actions as the end result of healthy social transactions (Blau, 1964; Bandura, A., 1986; Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

A number of empirical findings strengthen this relationship. Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) found that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior. Likewise with what was found I.H Ali et al., (2024) who found that workplace friendship has a significant positive impact on innovative behavior among employees. Similar things were also found by Rahmaningtyas et al., (2022) that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior. This result is interpreted as the better the workplace friendship, the

higher the innovative behavior. Workplace friendship encourages someone to innovate and work more efficiently. Workplace friendships provide unique knowledge about work experiences and activities that enable communication about work-related issues in a more in-depth and efficient manner, which is not available in other friendships. When employees have trusted friends at work, they can help or advise their colleagues and, therefore, they feel safe, comfortable, and satisfied with their work at work. With good friendships at work, someone tends to be more innovative in carrying out their work because they feel comfortable and satisfied with their work. Based on the above explanation, it is explicitly argued that strong workplace friendship serves as a vital resource that drives employee creativity and proactive actions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H2: Workplace friendship has a positive effect on innovative behavior

The Effect of Workplace Friendship on Psychological Safety

Friendly relationships provide emotional support, trust, and a sense of comfort among employees in an organization (Berman et al., 2002). In this context, mutual trust and understanding in the workplace are considered to have an important effect on employee psychological safety (Appelbaum et al., 2016). This means that workplace friendship can help individuals gain a sense of belonging and feel supported by their coworkers (Berman et al., 2002), thus maintaining a high level of psychological safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Furthermore, having stronger relationships with coworkers can promote greater psychological safety, or a shared belief that their company is open to risk-taking behavior. Therefore, individuals with high levels of workplace friendship will also experience high levels of psychological safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). In the end, strong friendships in the workplace increase the sense of disclosure and openness among employees in an organization. Therefore, workplace friendship is a potential resource for improving employee psychological safety (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Mao & Hsieh, 2017).

These psychological and emotional mechanisms can be explained comprehensively from the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (SET), where organization-facilitated friendships are seen as a valuable form of social support. This social investment fosters strong psychological bonds among employees. In line with Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), these friendships represent external environmental factors that provide positive stimuli. When the work environment is filled with close and supportive relationships between colleagues, employees' cognitive factors (Person) will process this information into a subjective assessment that their environment is safe for self-expression. This reciprocal interaction process directly shapes and enhances employees' sense of psychological safety, leading them to believe that social closeness in the office will protect them from interpersonal risks or threats to their self-image (Blau, 1964; Bandura, A., 1986).

These conceptual arguments are in line with empirical evidence from previous research. Cao & Zhang (2020) found that workplace friendship is positively related to psychological safety. Similar to these results, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) found that workplace friendship has a positive

and significant effect on psychological safety. Based on the above explanation, it is explicitly argued that workplace friendship provides the necessary social buffer that directly fosters employee psychological safety. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H3: Workplace friendship has a positive effect on psychological safety**The Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Innovative Behavior**

Knowledge assets can increase an organization's opportunities to create and implement innovation. Because knowledge is embedded in individuals, it is necessary to share knowledge among organizational members to build new routines and mindsets that will help them solve problems. Knowledge sharing among organizational members tends to generate new ideas for product development and process innovation (Johan, 2021). Fundamentally, this relationship is explained from the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (SET), in which knowledge sharing is viewed as a form of reciprocal action or employee reciprocity for the social investment provided by the organization. Knowledge sharing is a tangible manifestation of voluntary "reciprocity" that goes beyond formal job descriptions for the benefit of the organization. In line with Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), this activity strengthens the interaction between environmental factors and behavior, where the availability of collective information triggers employees' courage to act proactively. The tangible output of this exchange of non-material resources in the form of information and experience is the emergence of innovative behavior as the end result of healthy social transactions (Blau, 1964; Bandura, A., 1986; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005)

Knowledge sharing activities provide valuable information exchanges from coworkers that are useful for problem-solving and/or the generation of new ideas. Knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in increasing the level of innovative work behavior, absorptive capacity, and organizational innovation. Furthermore, employees can assess potential risks in implementing innovation in the workplace through the knowledge sharing process with coworkers. This mechanism, in turn, enhances employees' innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). In the knowledge sharing process, participants involved in knowledge sharing first translate knowledge into a form that is easy to understand; this ability increases the capacity of contributors to generate new ideas, which is the basis of innovative work behavior (Kang & Lee, 2016).

These findings are in line with the views of other researchers who emphasize that knowledge sharing not only plays a role in communication between individuals, but also in the formation of cognitive processes that drive innovation. Akram et al., (2017) stated that knowledge sharing stimulates the cognitive process of elucidation, which provides employees with new insights and suggests future directions when facing challenges in the workplace. When individuals have relevant knowledge, information, tools, and ideas at their disposal, they are more likely to act innovatively. The Study of Saif et al., (2024) found a positive effect between knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior. A similar finding was also found by Johan (2021) that knowledge sharing has a positive effect on innovative behavior. Sari & Wahyuni (2023a) also found that knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior. These

results indicate that innovative work behavior can be enhanced by increasing knowledge sharing among employees. Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) as well as Rafique et al., (2022) find that knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior. Based on the above explanation, it is explicitly argued that knowledge sharing serves as the primary cognitive vehicle that directly converts individual insights into innovative behavior. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Knowledge sharing has a positive effect on innovative behavior**The Effect of Psychological Safety On Innovative Behavior**

The concept of Psychological Safety reflects how much people feel comfortable expressing themselves in front of others while trying new approaches and making mistakes without facing negative consequences in the workplace (Imran et al., 2025). Employee psychological safety exists when employees can freely express themselves and take calculated risks within the organization without fear of embarrassment, rejection, or punishment (Newman et al., 2018). Theoretically, Psychological Safety acts as a social inducement within the framework of Social Exchange Theory (SET) and an environmental factor within Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). In a bureaucratic environment that tends to be rigid, Psychological Safety provides assurance that risk-taking will not result in punishment, thereby changing employee risk perception. Based on SCT logic, when the environment provides a sense of safety, this will trigger employee self-efficacy to implement ideas into tangible innovative behavior. This sense of safety assures employees that they remain on the right track even while making new breakthroughs for the advancement of the organization (Blau, 1964; Bandura, A., 1986; A. Edmondson, 1999)

Psychological Safety is an employee's feelings about the interpersonal risks faced in the work environment (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). If employees feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to offer ideas to others. This motivates them to develop, promote, and implement new ideas (Javed et al., 2017). Employee psychological safety is an important cognitive mechanism (Hirak et al., 2012). This improves employee performance, productivity, creativity, and innovative behavior. Psychologically safe employees are more creative and innovative, and think of new ways and perspectives in carrying out their work tasks (A. Ali et al., 2022). Psychological Safety in the workplace enables employees to take innovative risks which results in higher engagement in problem-solving tasks and creative projects (Frazier et al., 2016; Imran et al., 2025). Psychological Safety significantly contributes to increasing innovation, especially when employees receive positive messages from their organizational environment (Ahmad et al., 2023). A number of previous studies strengthen this argument. The study of Imran et al., (2025) found that Psychological Safety has a positive effect on employee innovative behavior. Cao and Zhang (2020) also revealed that Psychological Safety is positively related to innovative behavior. Likewise, research by Ali et al., (2022) found that employee psychological safety had a positive effect on employee innovative behavior. A similar finding was also found by Zhu and Zhang (2019) that psychological safety is positively related to innovative behavior. Based on this explanation, it is explicitly argued that higher psychological safety removes the fear of failure and directly fosters innovative behavior. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Psychological Safety has a positive effect on innovative behavior.**Knowledge Sharing Mediates the Effect of Workplace Friendship on Innovative Behavior**

The characteristics of workplace friendship encourage employees to share information or methods of working with colleagues. Employees become more open and honest in conveying information, which can reduce barriers to knowledge sharing (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). Operationally, this exchange process begins when Nguyen et al., (2021) stated that employees' willingness to ask for and give advice implies that knowledge sharing creates openness and effective communication in the workplace.

When a higher level of knowledge exchange among employees is established, this condition has the potential to become a trigger for innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). Employees can assess the potential risks of implementing innovation in the workplace through knowledge sharing with coworkers. This mechanism, in turn, increases employees' innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). In this internal dynamic, participants involved in knowledge sharing first translate knowledge into a form that is easy to understand; this ability increases the capacity of contributors to generate new ideas, which is the basis of innovative work behavior (Kang & Lee, 2016). As a reinforcement of the cognitive process, Akram et al., (2017) stated that knowledge sharing stimulates the cognitive process of elucidation, which provides employees with new insights and suggests future directions when facing challenges in the workplace. When individuals have relevant knowledge, information, tools, and ideas at their disposal, they are more likely to act innovatively. Johan (2021) declared that as the quality of knowledge sharing between individuals accumulates, its impact will extend to the organizational level where knowledge sharing among organizational members tends to generate new ideas for product development and process innovation.

This mediation relationship is fundamentally explained through the integration of SET, SCT, and the Componential Theory of Creativity. Workplace friendship, as a social inducement, does not immediately transform into innovation but requires an intermediary process. Closeness between employees triggers a norm of reciprocity that encourages them to share knowledge (reciprocal action). Based on the Componential Theory of Creativity, this knowledge sharing activity functions as a means of knowledge acquisition that enriches expertise in specific fields (domain-relevant skills) in a holistic collective manner. When employees' skills are enriched through the information flowing within these friendship networks, their cognitive fuel is replenished. Ultimately, this integration of intrinsic motivation from friendship and expertise from knowledge sharing converts social energy into tangible innovative behavior, the end result of healthy social transactions (Blau, 1964; Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Previous research findings reveal that knowledge sharing has been recognized as a mediating variable in many studies related to innovation (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). Specifically, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) found that knowledge sharing has a significant mediating effect in the relationship between workplace friendship and innovative work behavior. Based on the above explanation, it is explicitly argued that knowledge sharing

serves as the underlying mechanism that translates interpersonal ties into proactive organizational outcomes. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H6: Knowledge sharing mediates the positive effect of workplace friendship on innovative behavior.

Psychological Safety Mediates the Effect of Workplace Friendship on Innovative Behavior

In the context of interactions between employees, mutual trust and understanding in the workplace are considered to have an important effect on employee psychological safety (Appelbaum et al., 2016). More specifically, workplace friendship helps to feel the presence of affective support and adequate resources, which will make it easier for individuals to overcome difficulties and deal with stress (Berman et al., 2002; Guchait et al., 2014; Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). This is reinforced by the fact that having stronger relationships with coworkers can lead to greater Psychological Safety or a shared belief that their company is open to risk-taking behavior (Cao & Zhang, 2020).

Furthermore, once this interpersonal comfort is established, psychological safety related to workplace friendship will effect employee innovative behavior, as viewed from the perspective of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1999). In this case, psychological safety enables members to undertake innovative and challenging tasks. This is because psychological safety is a determining factor for individuals to take action (Cao & Zhang, 2020). When psychological safety in the workplace is at a high level, individuals are more likely to innovate and explore new methods because psychological safety greatly reduces their fear of possible failure and its negative outcomes (Hirak et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2016). This condition makes employees involved in workplace friendship consider friends as "supporters" to support their creative ideas, so that workplace friendship is positively related to Psychological Safety, and in turn, increases innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020).

The connection of this mediation mechanism is explained through Triadic Reciprocal Determinism in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and is supported by Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Componential Theory of Creativity. Workplace friendship acts as an environmental factor (Environment) that becomes the initial trigger. This familiar environment is cognitively processed by employees, thus giving rise to a sense of Psychological Safety in the personal factor (Person/Cognitive). This Psychological Safety acts as a crucial psychological "bridge." In accordance with the Componential Theory of Creativity, this sense of security from bureaucratic threats and interpersonal risks boosts intrinsic motivation and optimizes employees' creative thinking processes (creativity-relevant processes). When employees feel safe because they are supported by their colleagues, their self-confidence (self-efficacy) increases sharply, triggering the courage to implement ideas into innovative behavior (Behavior) without fear of being punished by a rigid bureaucratic structure (Blau, 1964; Bandura, A., 1986; Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Previous research findings revealed that the relationship in the workplace with innovative behavior is also mediated by Psychological Safety, where the research results show that individuals with high friendships in the workplace will feel high Psychological Safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Empirically, having friendly relationships with coworkers can result in greater psychological safety (Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). In line with this, Cao & Zhang (2020) found that workplace friendship has a positive indirect effect on employee innovative behavior through psychological safety. Based on the above explanation, it is explicitly argued that psychological safety acts as an essential interpersonal shield that translates workplace bonds into innovative behavior. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H7: Psychological safety mediates the positive effect of workplace friendship on innovative behavior

Premised upon the aforementioned hypotheses, the conceptual framework of this study is structured as follows:

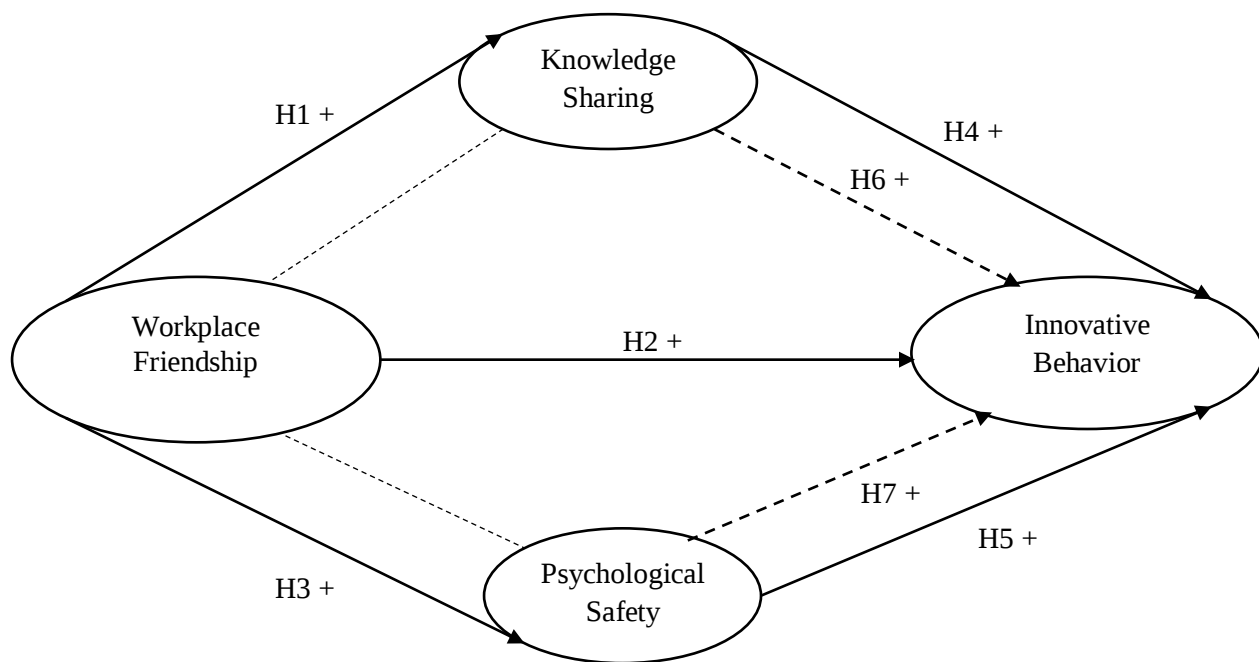


Figure 1 conceptual framework of the research

2. Method

This type of research uses quantitative research methods. A quantitative approach is applied to examine a specific population or sample through instrument-based data collection, which is subsequently analyzed statistically to test a predetermined hypothesis (Sugiyono, 2021). This

study uses a survey method with data collection through an online questionnaire distributed via a link.

2.1 Population and Sample

The population in this study was all 186 productive-age ASN employees working at the Class II Land Transportation Management Center (BPTD) in West Sumatra. The sample is a portion of the entire population selected to represent the characteristics of the individual group or object as a whole in the study (Sugiyono, 2021). The sampling technique uses Non-probability sampling method with saturated or census sampling technique. Saturated or census sampling method is a sampling technique where all members of the population are used as samples.(Sugiyono, 2021). The sample in this study is 186 ASN employees working at the Class II Land Transportation Management Center (BPTD) of West Sumatra who are of productive age.

2.2 Data Collection Techniques and Data Sources

In this study, data was collected using a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a data collection technique that involves providing respondents with a set of written statements to answer (Sugiyono, 2021). The questionnaire used was structured as a closed-ended statement with answer choices using a Likert scale. The data source used was primary data. Primary data is the data source that directly provides data to the data collector (Sugiyono, 2021). This primary data source was obtained from distributing questionnaires to 186 ASN employees working at the Class II Land Transportation Management Center (BPTD) of West Sumatra who are of productive age.

2.3 Measurement of Variables

Innovative behavior refers to the active act of creating, introducing, and implementing new ideas that can help improve the job performance of individuals or groups (Choi et al., 2021). Innovative behavior is measured using 10 statement items consisting of 6 statement items proposed by Scott & Bruce, 1994 (Choi et al., 2021) as well as 4 statement items put forward by De Jong & Den Hartog, 2005 (Bednall et al., 2018).

Workplace friendship refers to informal and voluntary interpersonal relationships in the workplace between employees with mutual trust, dependency, and shared interests in an organizational environment, which are characterized by non-exclusive, informal, and voluntary nature (Berman et al., 2002; Li et al., 2024). Workplace friendship is measured using 6 statement items put forward by Nielsen, Jex and Adam, 2000 (Helmy et al., 2020).

In the context of individual behavior in the workplace, knowledge sharing refers to the behavior share information and ideas with other people (Elrehail et al., 2016) and gather knowledge to create new ideas through knowledge exchange (Eidizadeh et al., 2017). Various knowledge was measured using 8 statement items put forward by Van Den Hooff and De Ridder, 2004 (Rafique et al., 2022).

Psychological Safety describes perceptions about the consequences of taking interpersonal risks in a particular context such as the workplace (AC Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Sasaki et al., 2022) Psychological safety was measured using 12 statement items put forward by Clark, 2020 (Wowor & Dewi, 2022).

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique in this research uses SEM-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Ghozali (2021) asserts that PLS serves to evaluate theories, validate theoretical models, and elaborate on the existence of relationships between variables. Furthermore, this approach can be applied as a general methodology for path analysis. SEM-PLS analysis consists of two models: the first is the Measurement Model Assessment (MMA), often referred to as the outer model. MMA is used to test the validity and reliability of the model. MMA defines how each indicator block relates to its latent variables (Ghozali, 2021). The tests used in MMA include convergent validity and discriminant validity. Second, the Structural Model Assessment (SMA), often referred to as the inner model, examines the R-square and Q-square values. Furthermore, the SMA is primarily used to test research hypotheses. Hypothesis testing in SEM-PLS uses the bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis is accepted if the calculated t value > t table with a confidence level of 95% or a significance level of 5%, where a significance of less than 0.05 indicates a significant effect. Then, to determine the direction of the effect, the original sample value is examined to show a positive (+) or negative (-) effect. The hypothesis test results are declared accepted for a one-tailed hypothesis with the provision that the t-statistic value is greater than the t table value (1.65) for a significance level of 0.05. Finally, the evaluation of mediating effects adopts the approach proposed by Hair et al., (2017) which relies on the significance of path coefficients.

3. Result

3.1 Respondent Profile

The general profile of respondents in this study was classified according to gender, age range, highest level of education, and length of service. The majority of respondents at the West Sumatra Class II BPTD were male, totaling 127 (68.3%). Respondents were aged between 21 and 35 years, with the majority being 23 years old (21 people) (11.3%), and 20 people aged 25 years old (10.8%). Then, the majority had a Diploma III (95 people) as their final educational background. The majority of respondents had a work period of less than 5 years (122 people) (65.6%). This indicates that the majority of productive-age ASN employees working at BPTD Class II West Sumatra are male. The dominance of the number of male employees reflects the characteristics of the work environment in the land transportation sector which often requires high mobility and field activities. In addition, the majority of employees are in the productive age group, where psychologically this age group has great energy and potential in developing innovative behavior. This condition is also dominated by Diploma III (DIII) and Bachelor's (S1) graduates. This background indicates a good level of formal competence as state officials to support the development of innovative behavior in the workplace. Finally, the characteristics of respondents dominated by those with relatively new work experience (less than 5 years). This

situation theoretically presents a significant opportunity because young employees generally bring fresh, new perspectives to foster innovative behavior in the workplace.

3.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement Model Assessment(MMA) or measurement model assessment is often referred to as the outer model. MMA is used to test the validity and reliability of the model. MMA defines how each indicator block relates to its latent variables.(Ghozali, 2021)The tests used in MMA are Convergent validity and Discriminant validity.

3.2.1 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is defined as the extent to which a measure positively correlates with alternative measures of the same construct. Convergent validity is determined by examining the correlation between item/indicator scores and the construct scores. An individual indicator is considered valid when its outer loading correlation is greater than 0.70. Furthermore, a construct is considered reliable when its composite reliability or Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70. Another test for convergent validity is the construct validity using the AVE value. The AVE value for each construct is greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017).The following are the results of convergent validity testing, construct reliability and AVE in the second stage as shown in table 1:

Table 1 Results of Convergent Validity Testing, Construct Reliability and AVE Stage Two

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loadings Second Stage	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Knowledge sharing	BP1	0.733	0.821	0.882	0.653
	BP2	0.734			
	BP3	0.879			
	BP4	0.873			
Psychological Safety	KP1	0.779	0.896	0.916	0.576
	KP10	0.734			
	KP11	0.728			
	KP2	0.778			
	KP3	0.748			
	KP4	0.788			
	KP6	0.733			
	KP7	0.780			
Innovative behavior	PI1	0.838	0.958	0.965	0.773
	PI10	0.921			
	PI2	0.818			
	PI3	0.856			
	PI4	0.874			
	PI7	0.880			

	PI8	0.918			
	PI9	0.923			
Workplace friendship	PTK1	0.828			
	PTK2	0.782			
	PTK3	0.906	0.911	0.933	0.737
	PTK4	0.903			
	PTK5	0.868			

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

In the first stage of testing, it was shown that there were several statement items that did not meet the criteria *convergent validity* because it has an outer loading value of less than 0.70 (<0.70). These indicators include item PTK6 (0.540) in the Workplace friendship variable; items BP5 (0.466), BP6 (0.684), BP7 (0.664), and BP8 (0.545) in the Knowledge sharing variable; items KP5 (0.648), KP8 (0.642), KP9 (0.564), and KP12 (0.558) in the Psychological Safety variable; and items PI5 (0.490) and PI6 (0.545) in the Innovative behavior variable. This means that these indicators are declared invalid, so they must be removed or deleted from the model and the validity test must be repeated at the next stage.

In the second stage of testing, it was shown that all the remaining statement items met the criteria *convergent validity* because it has an outer loading value greater than 0.70 (> 0.70). After eliminating invalid indicators in the first stage, no statement items had values below the specified threshold. This means that all remaining indicators in the second-stage measurement model were declared valid and can therefore be retained for further analysis.

Despite several reductions in indicators from the initial estimate, the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all variables resulting from this second iteration workplace friendship, knowledge sharing, psychological safety, and innovative behavior remained greater than 0.70 (>0.70). This demonstrates that all constructs or variables in the estimated model met the criteria for excellent reliability and high internal consistency.

Meanwhile, for the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, all variables in this second stage of testing have also met the requirements for good validity measurement because all values are above the minimum limit of 0.50 (> 0.50). The knowledge sharing and psychological safety variables that did not meet the requirements in the first stage are now declared to have passed the test along with the workplace friendship and innovative behavior variables after invalid indicators were eliminated, so this model is declared strong and ready for use in further testing.

3.2.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity assessment can be done using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The Fornell-Larcker criterion compares the square root of the AVE value to the correlation value between constructs. If the square root of the AVE value for each construct is greater than the correlation value between the construct and other constructs in the model, then it is said to have good

discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). The following are the results of the discriminant validity test using the *Fornell-Larcker criterion*:

Table 2 Results of Discriminant Validity Testing Using *Fornell-Larcker criterion*

	Knowledge sharing	Psychological Safety	Innovative behavior	Workplace Friendship
Knowledge sharing	0.808			
Psychological Safety	0.491	0.759		
Innovative behavior	0.628	0.714	0.879	
Workplace Friendship	0.592	0.559	0.612	0.859

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on the test data in Table 2, it is evident that the square root value of AVE for each respective variable comprises the square root of AVE of the variables knowledge sharing (0.808), workplace friendship (0.859), psychological Safety (0.757), and innovative behavior (0.879), which is greater than the correlation value between the variables with other variables in the model, where if the square root value of AVE for each variable is greater than the correlation value between the variables with other variables in the model, then it is said to have a good discriminant validity value.

3.3 Structural Model Assessment

Structural model assessment (SMA), or structural model assessment, is often referred to as the inner model. This measurement examines the R-square and Q-square values. Furthermore, SMA is primarily used to test research hypotheses. Hypothesis testing in SEM PLS uses the bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis is accepted if the calculated t value is greater than the t table value with a 95% confidence level or a significance level of 5%, where if the calculated t value is less than 0.05, it means there is a significant effect. Then, to determine the direction, the original sample value is used to indicate a positive (+) or negative (-) effect.

3.3.1 R Square

R Square (R^2) is used to explain the magnitude of the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, expressed as a percentage. The predictive power of (R^2) is generally classified into three categories: weak (0.25), moderate (0.50), and strong (0.75) (Hair et al., 2017). Based on the results of data processing, the R-square estimation results were obtained as in table 3 below:

Table 3 R-square

	R-square
Knowledge sharing	0.351
Psychological Safety	0.313
Innovative behavior	0.628

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

From the results of the R Square value in Table 3, it shows that knowledge sharing can be explained by workplace friendship in this study with a value of 0.351 (35.1%), while 64.9% was accounted for by alternative variables not included in this study, whereby the explanatory capacity of the model was classified as weak because its value was greater than 0.25 but lower than 0.50. Furthermore, psychological safety can be explained by workplace friendship in this study at 0.313 (31.3%), while 68.7% was accounted for by alternative variables not included in this study, whereby the explanatory capacity of the model was classified as weak because its value was greater than 0.25 but lower than 0.50. Lastly, innovative behavior can be explained by workplace friendship, knowledge sharing, and psychological safety in this study at 0.628 (62.8%), while 37.2% was accounted for by alternative variables not included in this study, whereby the explanatory capacity of the model was classified as moderate because the value was greater than 0.50 but lower than 0.75.

3.3.2 Q square

To measure the capacity of exogenous variables in estimating endogenous variables (predictive relevance), the Q square (Q^2) value can be examined. A model is considered to possess good predictive relevance if the calculated Q-square value is above 0 (zero). Q-square values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are interpreted as small, medium, and large, respectively (Hair et al., 2017). Based on the results of data processing, the Q-square estimation results were obtained as in table 4 below:

Table 4 Q-square

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Knowledge sharing	744,000	578,794	0.222
Psychological Safety	1488,000	1229,786	0.174
Innovative behavior	1488,000	775,843	0.479
Workplace Friendship	930,000	930,000	0.000

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on Table 4, it can be explained that the knowledge sharing variable has a *Q square* (Q^2) value of 0.222, where its predictive relevance value is classified as moderate because the value is greater than 0.15 ($0.222 > 0.15$). Furthermore, the psychological safety variable has a *Q square* (Q^2) value of 0.174, where its predictive relevance value is also classified as moderate because the value is greater than 0.15 ($0.174 > 0.15$). In addition, the innovative behavior variable has a

Q square (Q^2) value of 0.479, where its predictive relevance value is considered large because the value is greater than 0.35 ($0.479 > 0.35$). From these results, it can be concluded that this research model has a moderate predictive relevance value for the variables knowledge sharing and psychological safety and a large predictive relevance value for innovative behavior, which means the model has very good predictive relevance.

3.3.3 Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis testing in this study are declared acceptable for the results of the one-tailed hypothesis (1-way hypothesis) with the provision that the t-statistic value is greater than the t-table value (1.65) for a significance level of 0.05.(Hair et al., 2017). The following are the results of SMA testing using the bootstrapping method to see the results of hypothesis testing:

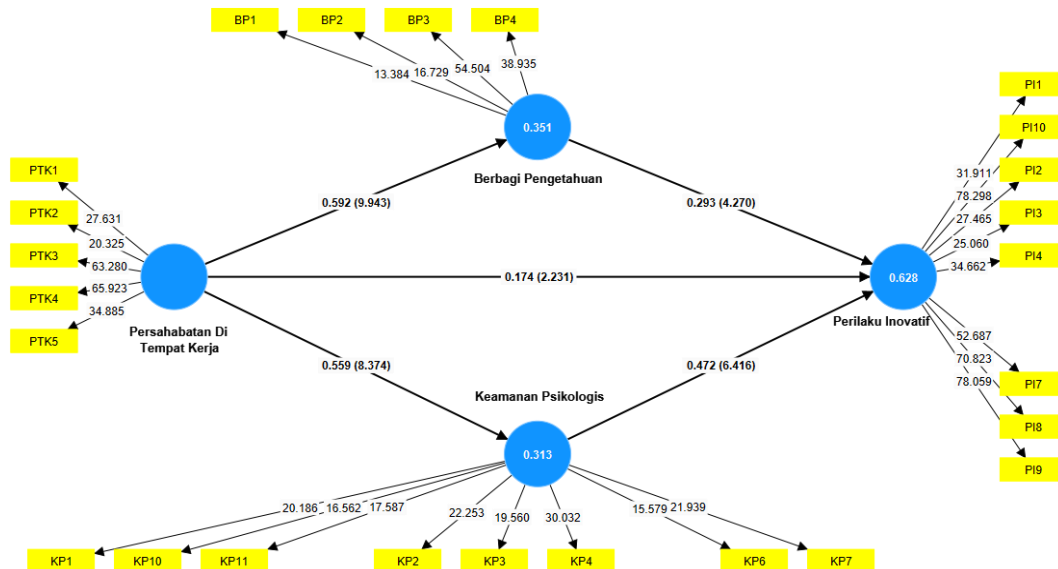


Figure 2 Bootstrapping results

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

The estimated outcomes for both direct effects (path coefficients) and indirect effects are presented below:

Table 5 Path Coefficients and Indirect Effect Results

				Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Note
H1	Workplace Friendship	Knowledge sharing	->	0.592	0.597	0.060	9,943	0.000	Accepted
H2	Workplace Friendship	Innovative behavior	->	0.174	0.177	0.078	2,231	0.013	Accepted
H3	Workplace Friendship	Psychological Safety	->	0.559	0.562	0.067	8,374	0.000	Accepted
H4	Knowledge sharing	Innovative behavior	->	0.293	0.296	0.069	4,270	0.000	Accepted
H5	Psychological Safety	Innovative behavior	->	0.472	0.469	0.074	6,416	0.000	Accepted
H6	Workplace Friendship	Knowledge sharing	->	0.174	0.176	0.043	4,008	0.000	Accepted
H7	Workplace Friendship	Psychological Safety	->	0.264	0.262	0.046	5,778	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on the H1 test findings, the original sample value is positive at 0.592 with a T-statistic test value (9.943 > 1.65) and a p-value (0.000 < 0.05), so it is stated that Workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on employee Knowledge sharing, so H1 is accepted. According to the H2 test verification, the original sample value is positive at 0.174 with a T-statistic test value (2.231 > 1.65) and a p-value (0.013 < 0.05), so it is stated that Workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on employee Innovative behavior, so H2 is accepted.

The statistical output for H3 reveals that the original sample value is positive at 0.559 with a T-statistic test value (8.374 > 1.65) and a p-value (0.000 < 0.05), so it is stated that Workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on employee Psychological Safety, so H3 is accepted. Evidenced by the H4 test analysis, the original sample value is positive at 0.293 with a T-statistic test value (4.270 > 1.65) and a p-value (0.000 < 0.05), so it is stated that Knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on employee Innovative behavior, so H4 is accepted. The calculation for the H5 test indicates that the original sample value is positive at 0.472 with a T-statistic test value (6.416 > 1.65) and a p-value (0.000 < 0.05), so it is stated that Psychological Safety has a positive and significant effect on employee Innovative behavior, so H5 is accepted.

The empirical data from the H6 test demonstrates that the original sample value of the indirect effect is positive at 0.174 with a T-statistic test value (4.008 > 1.65) and a p-value (0.000 < 0.05), so it is stated that Knowledge sharing mediates the effect of Workplace friendship on employee Innovative behavior positively, so H6 is accepted. As indicated by the H7 hypothesis testing, the

original sample value of the indirect effect is positive at 0.264 with a T-statistic test value (5.778 > 1.65) and a p-value (0.000 < 0.05), so it is stated that Psychological Safety mediates the effect of Workplace friendship on employee Innovative behavior positively, so H7 is accepted.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Effect of Workplace Friendship on Knowledge Sharing

Based on the results, the study concluded that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on employee knowledge sharing at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra, thus H1 is accepted. This indicates that the better the workplace friendship, the higher the employee knowledge sharing activity at the agency. This is because when employees have formed strong friendships in the workplace and are supported by habits where they often socialize with colleagues outside the workplace, a fluid communication climate will be created without formal barriers. Furthermore, the sense of security that arises from employees being able to entrust things to people at work and feeling they can truly trust many coworkers is a crucial factor in eliminating hesitation in communication. In addition, the fact that being able to meet coworkers is one of the reasons employees look forward to their jobs makes them feel comfortable in the work environment, making them more open to sharing insights.

These friendships develop because of closeness and shared experiences. They often rely on each other for problem-solving, such as interpreting new events or managing relationships with others within the organization (Nguyen et al., 2021). Besides that, Nguyen et al., (2021) stated that when team members need information and ask for advice, they are more likely to complete tasks. In line with this, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) revealed that employees who have close relationships with their coworkers will provide quality knowledge sharing. In addition to being supported by the theoretical basis above, this relationship is also strengthened by various empirical findings. Specifically, previous studies have found that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on knowledge sharing (Nguyen et al., 2021; Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). This emphasizes that good workplace friendship relations between employees at BPTD CLASS II West Sumatra are the main driver of successful knowledge transfer within the organization.

4.2 The Effect of Workplace Friendship on Innovative Behavior

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior of employees at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra, then H2 is accepted. This shows that well-established workplace friendship activities provide a real contribution to increasing the innovative behavior of employees in the agency. This condition is due to the fact that employees have formed strong friendships in the workplace and often socialize with colleagues outside the workplace not only to fulfill personal social needs, emotional comfort, and the harmony of interpersonal relationships alone, but also because these informal close relationships are automatically able to stimulate the professional drive of employees to implement new work methods, execute ideas, or take concrete actions in changing work procedures in carrying out daily operational tasks.

Furthermore, when employees feel they can entrust something to people in the workplace and feel they can truly trust many of their colleagues, this trust serves as an effective foundation for igniting the courage to take risks, promote new ideas, or make systemic changes that challenge old habits for the sake of service progress. In addition, the feeling that being able to meet colleagues is one of the reasons employees look forward to their work confirms that this dimension of friendship works in harmony in building job satisfaction, affective employee retention, and encouraging innovative work productivity. Healthy emotional closeness has been shown to increase openness, thereby minimizing communication barriers among colleagues, which in turn facilitates the emergence of the stages of realizing ideas into real public service innovations. Thus, good workplace friendship at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra has succeeded in becoming a driving force for employee innovative behavior because this social interaction is able to align close personal relationships with the implementation of operational solutions for the advancement of the agency.

Practically, these results indicate that the characteristics of the work environment in government agencies such as BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra are able to utilize the dynamics of close interpersonal relationships to produce optimal innovation performance output. These findings illustrate that workplace friendship encourages someone to innovate and work more efficiently due to the existence of healthy emotional bonds. This is because workplace friendship provides unique knowledge about work experiences and activities that allow communication about work-related issues in a deeper and more efficient way, which is not available in other friendships. When employees have trusted friends at work, they can help or advise their colleagues and, therefore, they feel safe, comfortable, and satisfied with their work. With good friendships at work, someone tends to be more innovative in carrying out their work because they feel comfortable and satisfied with their work. The ideal conditions of comfort, psychological safety, and emotional satisfaction formed from personal closeness in BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra are proven to open up space for the emergence of objective discussions and critical thinking that are essential in encouraging real innovative actions. The close relationship in this agency is able to build a sense of mutual support, so that employees feel confident in promoting new creative ideas without having to worry about disturbing the comfort of the work group because of the established sense of mutual understanding.

The findings in this study are consistent with the results of previous research. Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) found that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior. Likewise, I.H Ali et al., (2024) found that workplace friendship has a significant positive impact on innovative behavior among employees. A similar finding was also reported by Rahmaningtyas et al., (2022), who argued that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior. This result is interpreted as the better the workplace friendship, the higher the innovative behavior. Workplace friendship encourages someone to innovate and work more efficiently. Workplace friendships provide unique knowledge about work experiences and activities that enable deeper and more efficient communication about work-related issues, which is not available in other friendships. When employees have trusted friends at work, they can help or advise their coworkers and, therefore, they feel safe,

comfortable, and satisfied with their work. With good friendships at work, someone tends to be more innovative in doing their work because they feel comfortable and satisfied with their work.

4.3 The Effect of Workplace Friendship on Psychological Safety

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on employee psychological safety at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra, therefore H3 is accepted. This indicates that the better the workplace friendship relationship, the greater the employee's sense of psychological safety at the agency. This is because when employees have formed strong friendships in the workplace, and are supported by the habit of frequently socializing with coworkers outside the workplace, it creates a social environment full of familiarity, thus reducing employee interpersonal anxiety. Furthermore, the sense of security that arises because employees can entrust something to people in the workplace and feel they can really trust many colleagues is a crucial factor in building a subjective assessment that their environment is safe to express themselves without fear of interpersonal risks. In addition, the fact that being able to meet coworkers is one of the reasons employees look forward to their work makes employees feel comfortable in the work environment, so they are more open and confident that social closeness in the office will protect them from threats to their self-image.

These field conditions are in line with the conceptual explanation that friendly relationships provide emotional support, a sense of trust, and a sense of comfort among employees in an organization (Berman et al., 2002). In this context, mutual trust and understanding in the workplace are considered to have an important effect on employee psychological safety (Appelbaum et al., 2016). In the end, strong friendships in the workplace increase the sense of disclosure and openness among employees in an organization. Therefore, workplace friendship is a potential resource for improving employee psychological safety (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Mao & Hsieh, 2017). The results of this study are in line with previous research by Cao & Zhang (2020), who found that workplace friendship is positively related to psychological safety. Similar to these results, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) found that workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on psychological safety. This confirms that good workplace friendships among employees at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra are a key driver of increased psychological safety in the workplace.

4.4 The Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Innovative Behavior

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on employee innovative behavior at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra, so H4 is accepted. This indicates that the better the knowledge sharing activity, the more innovative employee behavior increases in the agency. This is because when employees learn something new, they immediately tell their colleagues, thus supporting the creation of new insight transfers that trigger fresh ideas in the work environment. In addition, the willingness of employees to share their information with colleagues allows for collaborative problem-solving in a more efficient manner, which directly encourages the emergence of creative and innovative actions in carrying out operational tasks.

Furthermore, employees' awareness that it is crucial for their colleagues to know what they are working on has made inter-line communication more open, flexible, and collaborative. Furthermore, employees' habit of regularly informing their colleagues about their work creates a supportive work environment, minimizes technical errors, and accelerates problem-solving through continuously evolving work procedures. Thus, a strong knowledge-sharing culture is a driving force behind increased innovative behavior at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra, as these interactions not only expand individual competencies but also stimulate strong collaboration in generating new, adaptive solutions and work methods for the advancement of the agency.

Knowledge sharing among organizational members tends to generate new ideas for product development and process innovation (Johan, 2021). Knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in increasing the level of innovative work behavior, absorptive capacity, and organizational innovation. Furthermore, employees can assess potential risks in implementing innovation in the workplace through knowledge sharing with colleagues. This mechanism, in turn, enhances employees' innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). Besides that, Akram et al., (2017) suggest that knowledge sharing stimulates the cognitive process of elucidation, which provides employees with new insights and suggests future directions when facing challenges in the workplace. If individuals have relevant knowledge, information, tools, and ideas at work, they are more likely to act innovatively. The results of this study are consistent with research by Saif et al., (2024) who found a positive effect between knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior. A similar finding was also found by Johan (2021) that knowledge sharing has a positive effect on innovative behavior. Sari & Wahyuni (2023a) also found knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior. These results indicate that innovative work behavior can be enhanced by increasing knowledge sharing among employees. Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) as well as Rafique et al., (2022) found that knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior.

4.5 The Effect of Psychological Safety on Innovative Behavior

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on the innovative behavior of employees at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra, so H5 is accepted. This indicates that the better the sense of psychological safety, the more innovative behavior of employees at the agency increases. This is due to the feeling of being accepted by colleagues and the establishment of good relationships with colleagues even outside the workplace, thus supporting the creation of a supportive social environment and minimal interpersonal pressure. In addition, a close relationship with the work team fosters a high sense of mutual trust, which directly encourages employees' courage to propose new ideas without fear of rejection or negative judgment from those around them in carrying out operational tasks. Furthermore, this sense of security allows employees to easily express their opinions in every organizational meeting and feel brave enough to take risks to make changes in the workplace. In addition, direct support received from superiors provides moral and emotional legitimacy for employees, so they are more motivated and often submit creative ideas to improve operational efficiency. Thus, good psychological safety is the main foundation for increasing innovative behavior at BPTD CLASS II West Sumatra because a psychologically safe work climate not

only creates comfort in interactions, but also stimulates individual courage to act proactively in creating new, adaptive solutions and work methods for the advancement of the agency.

Psychological safety is an employee's feeling about the interpersonal risks faced in the work environment (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). If employees feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to offer ideas to others. This motivates them to develop, promote, and implement new ideas (Javed et al., 2017). Employee psychological safety is an important cognitive mechanism (Hirak et al., 2012) that improves employee performance, productivity, creativity, and innovative behavior. Psychologically safe employees are more creative and innovative, and think of new ways and perspectives in carrying out their work tasks (A. Ali et al., 2022). Psychological safety in the workplace enables employees to take innovative risks, which results in higher engagement in problem-solving tasks and creative projects (Frazier et al., 2016; Imran et al., 2025). Psychological safety significantly contributes to increasing innovation, especially when employees receive positive messages from their organizational environment (Ahmad et al., 2023). The findings of this study are in line with research by Imran et al., (2025), who found that psychological safety has a positive effect on employee innovative behavior. Cao and Zhang (2020) also revealed that psychological safety is positively related to innovative behavior. Likewise, research by Ali et al., (2022) found that employee psychological safety had a positive effect on employee innovative behavior. A similar finding was also found by Zhu and Zhang (2019) who showed that psychological safety is positively related to innovative behavior.

4.6 Knowledge sharing mediates the effect of workplace friendship on innovative behavior

Based on the results, it can be concluded that knowledge sharing mediates the effect of workplace friendship on employee innovative behavior positively at BPTD CLASS II West Sumatra, so H6 is accepted. Based on the mediation effect test using the significance of path coefficients, it is evident that both the direct and indirect relationships are significant and possess the same positive direction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the form of mediation is complementary mediation, which is a type of partial mediation. Partial mediation occurs when the exogenous variable is able to directly affect the endogenous variable without involving the mediator (intervening) variable. This indicates that high levels of workplace friendship can directly encourage employee innovative behavior without involving knowledge sharing. However, this condition can also make knowledge sharing a mediating variable, which bridges the effect of workplace friendship on the innovative behavior of employees at BPTD CLASS II West Sumatra.

This connection is demonstrated in the field, where when employees learn something new, they immediately share it with their coworkers. Employees also voluntarily share their information, recognizing the importance of keeping their coworkers informed of their work, and regularly update them on their progress. This knowledge-sharing activity, stemming from close workplace friendships, has been shown to significantly stimulate and is considered by employees as an intermediary for improving the innovative behavior of employees at BPTD CLASS II West Sumatra.

These field conditions are in line with the argument that theoretically, the characteristics of workplace friendship encourage employees to share information or working methods with colleagues. Employees become more open and honest in conveying information, which can reduce barriers to knowledge sharing (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). Operationally, this exchange process begins as stated by Nguyen et al., (2021), namely that employees' willingness to ask for and give advice implies that knowledge sharing creates openness and effective communication in the workplace.

Furthermore, when a higher level of knowledge exchange among employees is formed, this condition has the potential to become a trigger for innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). Employees can assess the potential risks of implementing innovation in the workplace through knowledge sharing with coworkers. This mechanism, in turn, increases employees' innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020). In this internal dynamic, participants involved in knowledge sharing first translate knowledge into a form that is easy to understand; this ability increases the capacity of contributors to generate new ideas, which is the basis of innovative work behavior (Kang & Lee, 2016). As a reinforcement of the cognitive process, Akram et al., (2017) suggest that knowledge sharing stimulates the cognitive process of elucidation, which provides employees with new insights and suggests future directions when facing challenges in the workplace. When individuals have relevant knowledge, information, tools, and ideas at their disposal, they are more likely to act innovatively. Johan (2021) stated that as the quality of knowledge sharing between individuals accumulates, its impact will extend to the organizational level, where knowledge sharing among organizational members tends to generate new ideas for product development and process innovation. The results of this study are consistent with previous research findings that revealed that knowledge sharing has been recognized as a mediating variable in many studies related to innovation (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Wang & Kwek, 2018). Specifically, Helmy & Wiwoho (2020) found that knowledge sharing has a significant mediating effect in the relationship between workplace friendship and innovative work behavior.

4.7 Psychological Safety Mediates the Effect of Workplace Friendship on Innovative Behavior

Based on the results, it can be concluded that psychological safety mediates the effect of workplace friendship on employee innovative behavior positively at BPTD CLASS II West Sumatra, so H7 is accepted. Based on the mediation effect test using the significance of path coefficients, it is evident that both the direct and indirect relationships are significant and possess the same positive direction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the form of mediation is complementary mediation, which is a type of partial mediation. Partial mediation occurs when the exogenous variable is able to directly affect the endogenous variable without involving the mediator (intervening) variable. This indicates that high levels of workplace friendship can directly encourage employee innovative behavior without involving psychological safety. However, this condition can also make psychological safety a mediating variable that bridges the effect between workplace friendship and innovative behavior of employees at BPTD CLASS II West Sumatra.

This relationship is proven through conditions in the field, where close friendships make employees feel very accepted by their colleagues, have good relationships outside the workplace, and have close relationships with their work teams. This positive social climate builds a sense of psychological safety, so that employees easily express opinions in meetings, dare to take risks, feel they have direct support from superiors, and dare to make changes. Psychological safety activities that originate from close workplace friendships are proven to be able to trigger and be considered by employees as intermediaries, where in the end, the high level of Psychological Safety felt by these employees is proven to trigger them to often convey creative ideas that encourage an increase in employee innovative behavior at BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra.

These field conditions are in line with the argument that theoretically in the context of interactions between employees, mutual trust and understanding in the workplace are considered to have an important effect on employee psychological safety (Appelbaum et al., 2016). More specifically, workplace friendship helps employees feel the presence of affective support and adequate resources, which will make it easier for individuals to overcome difficulties and deal with stress (Berman et al., 2002; Guchait et al., 2014; Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). This is reinforced by the fact that having stronger relationships with coworkers can lead to greater psychological safety or a shared belief that their company is open to risk-taking behavior (Cao & Zhang, 2020).

Furthermore, once this interpersonal comfort is established, psychological safety related to workplace friendship will affect employee innovative behavior, as viewed from the perspective of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1999). In this case, psychological safety enables members to undertake innovative and challenging tasks. This is because psychological safety is a determining factor for individuals to take action (Cao & Zhang, 2020). When psychological safety in the workplace is at a high level, individuals are more likely to innovate and explore new methods because psychological safety greatly reduces their fear of possible failure and its negative outcomes (Hirak et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2016). This condition makes employees involved in workplace friendship consider friends as "supporters" to support their creative ideas, so that workplace friendship is positively related to psychological safety, and in turn, increases innovative work behavior (Helmy & Wiwoho, 2020).

These findings lend support to earlier studies which demonstrated that the relationship between workplace friendship and innovative behavior is also mediated by psychological safety, where the research results show that individuals with strong friendships in the workplace will feel high psychological safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Empirically, having friendly relationships with coworkers can result in greater psychological safety (Rahmaningtyas et al., 2022). In line with this, Cao & Zhang (2020) found that workplace friendship has a positive indirect effect on employee innovative behavior through psychological safety.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research analysis that has been carried out, the following are some research conclusions that can be drawn. First, workplace friendship has a positive and significant

effect on employee knowledge sharing, so H1 is accepted. Second, workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on employee innovative behavior, so H2 is accepted. Third, workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect on employee psychological safety, so H3 is accepted. Fourth, knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on employee innovative behavior, so H4 is accepted. Fifth, psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on employee innovative behavior, so H5 is accepted. Sixth, knowledge sharing positively mediates the effect of workplace friendship on employee innovative behavior, so H6 is accepted, with the form of mediation being complementary mediation (partial mediation). Seventh, psychological safety positively mediates the effect of workplace friendship on employee innovative behavior, so H7 is accepted, with the form of mediation being complementary mediation (partial mediation).

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing, several recommendations can be submitted to the management of BPTD KELAS II West Sumatra as evaluation material for improving employee innovative behavior. First, in terms of strengthening employee interpersonal relations. The agency is advised to organize programs to strengthen interpersonal relations, either semi-formal or informal, on a regular basis. Activities such as team building, gatherings, or group sports can be used to break down emotional tensions among ASN employees. This is important for fostering mutual trust and fostering social motivation so that employees feel more inclined to look forward to positive interactions in the work environment without sacrificing official professionalism. Second, regarding the optimization of inter-departmental coordination. Management is advised to optimize inter-departmental coordination routines to break down barriers of individual task silos. This can be achieved by providing a short, formal daily forum, such as a morning stand-up meeting in each sub-department. This forum functions so that each employee can continuously and routinely communicate daily work progress, obstacles encountered, and what is being done. Third, in implementing inclusive leadership. Meeting leaders or top management are advised to adopt a more inclusive and open leadership style. Agencies need to create more democratic mechanisms for expressing opinions in meetings, for example by providing equal opportunities to speak regardless of rank, or providing anonymous digital suggestion boxes/evaluation forums. This step is considered effective in assuring employees that every open view is valued and protected from bureaucratic risks. Fourth, for developing SOPs for submitting innovation ideas. Management is advised to develop specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to submitting innovation ideas. Agency leaders must act proactively as protectors and structural facilitators who help integrate employee innovative ideas into the organization's official budget proposals legally. This clarity in internal regulations will provide safe space for employees to champion and implement their innovation action plans under a clear legal umbrella.

6. Reference

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