

Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between nurses' job well-being and innovative behavior: A cross-sectional study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Innovative behavior among nurses is essential for improving healthcare quality; however, its underlying mechanisms remain insufficiently understood. This study aimed to examine the relationship between nurses' job well-being and innovative behavior, and to test the mediating role of knowledge sharing.

Research Methodology: A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 nurses selected using stratified random sampling from public and private hospitals. Data were collected using validated Likert-scale instruments measuring job well-being, knowledge sharing, and innovative behavior. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess direct and indirect effects.

Results: Job well-being was significantly associated with innovative behavior ($\beta = 0.21$; 95% CI: 0.08–0.34; $p = 0.002$) and knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.48$; 95% CI: 0.35–0.61; $p < 0.001$). Knowledge sharing showed a strong effect on innovative behavior ($\beta = 0.50$; 95% CI: 0.36–0.64; $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of job well-being on innovative behavior through knowledge sharing was significant ($\beta = 0.24$; 95% CI: 0.15–0.36; $p < 0.001$), indicating partial mediation.

Conclusion: Knowledge sharing plays a critical mediating role in translating nurses' job well-being into innovative behavior. Strengthening psychological well-being and institutionalizing knowledge-sharing practices are essential strategies to enhance innovation capacity in healthcare organizations.

Keywords: innovation; knowledge dissemination; nurses; occupational health; workplace well-being.



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INTRODUCTION

Healthcare organizations increasingly rely on nurses not only as care providers but also as key agents of innovation to improve quality, safety, and efficiency (Abdullah Sharin et al., 2024). However, sustaining innovative behaviour among nurses remains challenging, particularly in high-pressure clinical environments characterised by heavy workloads, emotional strain, and resource constraints (Addanki et al., 2026). Job well-being encompassing psychological satisfaction, work engagement, and emotional balance has been identified as a critical determinant of positive work outcomes (Al-Balushi et al., 2025). Evidence indicates that nurses with higher well-being levels demonstrate greater adaptability, creativity, and proactive problem-solving (Alhojairi et al., 2024). Conversely, diminished well-being is associated with burnout, reduced motivation, and limited engagement in innovation-oriented activities. Despite its recognised importance, the mechanisms by which job well-being translates into innovative behavior among nurses remain poorly understood (Andrews & Haskell, 2024).

The existing literature has explored the direct relationship between job well-being and innovative behavior, often grounded in theories such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and social exchange theory (Borozdina, 2024). These frameworks suggest that individuals with sufficient psychological and organizational resources are more likely to invest discretionary effort in innovation. Empirical studies have shown that work engagement, a core component of well-being, positively predicts idea generation and implementation (Ari Setiawati et al., 2026). However, findings are not entirely consistent, and some studies report weak or context-dependent associations, indicating the presence of intervening variables (Candelario et al., 2024). In parallel, knowledge sharing has been widely recognized as a critical organizational process that facilitates learning, collaboration, and innovation (Chambel & Pueyo, 2026). Within nursing contexts, effective knowledge sharing enables the dissemination of clinical insights, best practices, and experiential learning, which are essential for continuous improvement and innovation (Chatzichristos et al., 2025).

Recent studies have begun to examine the role of knowledge sharing as a behavioral mechanism linking individual and organizational outcomes (Chen et al., 2025). Evidence suggests that employees with higher well-being are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors, including sharing knowledge with colleagues (Duxbury et al., 2026). Knowledge sharing, in turn, enhances collective intelligence and fosters an environment conducive to innovation. Nonetheless, most prior studies have treated knowledge sharing either as an independent predictor of innovative behavior or as an outcome variable, rather than as a mediating mechanism (Evans-Agnew et al., 2025). Furthermore, research specifically focusing on nurses remains limited, with many studies conducted in corporate or non-healthcare settings, thereby limiting contextual applicability. The complexity of clinical environments, hierarchical structures, and interprofessional dynamics in healthcare necessitates a more nuanced understanding of these relationships (Ji et al., 2024).

A critical gap, therefore, exists in integrating job well-being, knowledge sharing, and innovative behavior within a unified analytical framework in nursing contexts. Few studies have empirically tested the mediating role of knowledge sharing in this relationship, particularly using robust quantitative approaches in real-world healthcare settings. Additionally, existing research often overlooks contextual factors, such as teamwork dynamics and organizational culture, that may influence these pathways. Addressing this gap is essential to developing evidence-based strategies to enhance nurses' innovation capacity.

This study offers a novel contribution by explicitly examining knowledge sharing as a mediating mechanism between nurses' job well-being and innovative behavior within a cross-

sectional design. By positioning knowledge sharing as a behavioral conduit, this research advances theoretical understanding beyond direct-effect models. It provides a more comprehensive explanation of how psychological states translate into innovation outcomes. Moreover, focusing on nurses in clinical settings enhances the contextual relevance and practical implications of the findings for healthcare management. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between nurses' job well-being and innovative behavior, and to test whether knowledge sharing mediates this relationship. The findings are expected to inform organizational interventions that strengthen well-being and foster a culture of knowledge sharing, thereby promoting sustainable innovation in healthcare systems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design to examine the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between nurses' job well-being and innovative behavior. A cross-sectional approach was selected due to its suitability for testing associative and mediation models within a defined time frame, allowing simultaneous measurement of all variables and efficient hypothesis testing in real-world clinical settings.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in selected public and private hospitals over three months (January–March 2026). The target population comprised registered nurses providing direct patient care. Inclusion criteria were: (1) registered nurses with a minimum of one year of clinical experience, (2) actively working in inpatient or outpatient units, and (3) willingness to participate. Exclusion criteria included: (1) nurses in managerial-only roles, (2) those on leave during data collection, and (3) incomplete questionnaire responses. A probability sampling approach using stratified random sampling was applied to ensure representation across hospital units. The sample size was determined using a minimum requirement for multivariate analysis, considering an anticipated medium effect size, statistical power of 0.80, and $\alpha = 0.05$. A total sample of 100 nurses was deemed adequate to test the proposed mediation model.

Variables and Measurement

Three main variables were assessed:

Job Well-Being (independent variable): Defined as the psychological and emotional state reflecting nurses' satisfaction, engagement, and positive functioning at work. Measured using a validated job well-being scale adapted for healthcare settings.

Knowledge Sharing (mediating variable): Defined as the extent to which nurses exchange information, skills, and experiences with colleagues. Assessed using a structured knowledge-sharing behavior questionnaire.

Innovative Behavior (dependent variable): Defined as the intentional generation, promotion, and implementation of new ideas in clinical practice. Measured using a validated innovative work behavior scale. All instruments used Likert-scale responses (1–5). Content validity was evaluated by a panel of experts (Content Validity Index ≥ 0.80). Construct validity was assessed using factor analysis. Reliability testing showed acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas > 0.70 for all scales. Data were collected as primary data through self-administered questionnaires.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using structured questionnaires distributed in either paper or electronic format. Participants were briefed on the study objectives and procedures before participation. To ensure data quality, several measures were implemented: (1) pilot testing of the

instrument, (2) standardized instructions for respondents, (3) monitoring completeness of responses at the point of collection, and (4) double-checking data entry accuracy.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics and variable distributions (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage). Bivariate analysis was performed using Pearson correlation to assess relationships between variables. Multivariate analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized mediation effect of knowledge sharing. Path analysis was used to estimate direct and indirect effects. Model fit was evaluated using standard indices (e.g., CFI, TLI, RMSEA). All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS software. The level of statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Ethical Approval

This study received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Islam Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. All participants provided written informed consent before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

RESULT

The results present the study's empirical findings, beginning with the descriptive characteristics of participants and then moving to bivariate correlations among key variables. Subsequently, multivariate analysis using structural equation modeling evaluates the direct and indirect effects, specifically testing the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between job well-being and innovative behavior.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents (n = 100)

Variable	Category	n	%
Age	≤30 years	45	45.0
	>30 years	55	55.0
Gender	Female	78	78.0
	Male	22	22.0
Education	Diploma	40	40.0
	Bachelor/Ners	60	60.0
Work Experience	1–5 years	42	42.0
	>5 years	58	58.0

The majority of respondents were aged over 30 years (55%), female (78%), held a bachelor/Ners degree (60%), and had more than five years of work experience (58%), indicating a relatively experienced nursing workforce.

Table 2. Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Correlation)

Variables	r	p-value
Job Well-Being → Innovative Behavior	0.45	<0.001
Job Well-Being → Knowledge Sharing	0.52	<0.001
Knowledge Sharing → Innovative Behavior	0.60	<0.001

Significant positive correlations were observed among all variables. Job well-being was moderately correlated with innovative behavior ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$) and strongly associated with knowledge sharing ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). Knowledge sharing showed the strongest relationship with innovative behavior ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3. Multivariate Analysis (SEM Path Analysis)

Pathway	β	95% CI	p-value
Job Well-Being $\rightarrow$ Innovative Behavior	0.21	0.08–0.34	0.002
Job Well-Being $\rightarrow$ Knowledge Sharing	0.48	0.35–0.61	<0.001
Knowledge Sharing $\rightarrow$ Innovative Behavior	0.50	0.36–0.64	<0.001
Indirect Effect (Mediation)	0.24	0.15–0.36	<0.001

Job well-being had a significant direct effect on innovative behavior ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.002$) and a strong effect on knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$). Knowledge sharing significantly influenced innovative behavior ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.24$, 95% CI: 0.15–0.36), confirming that knowledge sharing partially mediates the relationship.

The findings demonstrate a consistent and theoretically coherent pattern linking job well-being, knowledge sharing, and innovative behavior among nurses. Descriptive results indicate that the sample predominantly comprises experienced, professionally trained nurses, thereby strengthening the reliability of behavioral responses related to workplace dynamics. Bivariate analysis reveals that all key variables are significantly and positively correlated, with knowledge sharing exhibiting the strongest association with innovative behavior. This suggests that interpersonal and collaborative processes are central to fostering innovation in clinical settings.

Multivariate analysis using SEM further clarifies these relationships by identifying both direct and indirect effects. Job well-being exerts a statistically significant direct influence on innovative behavior, indicating that psychologically healthy nurses are more likely to engage in creative and proactive practices. More importantly, the mediation analysis confirms that knowledge sharing acts as a critical mechanism through which job well-being translates into innovation outcomes. The significant indirect effect indicates partial mediation, suggesting that while well-being directly contributes to innovation, its impact is substantially amplified through knowledge exchange processes. Overall, these results highlight the importance of fostering both individual well-being and a collaborative knowledge-sharing culture to enhance innovation capacity in healthcare organizations.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that nurses' job well-being is significantly associated with innovative behavior, both directly and indirectly through knowledge sharing. The findings confirm that knowledge sharing functions as a partial mediator, amplifying the effect of well-being on innovation. Among the examined relationships, knowledge sharing exhibited the strongest influence on innovative behavior, highlighting its central role as a behavioral mechanism in clinical settings.

The results can be interpreted through the lens of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that adequate psychological resources enhance motivation and proactive work behaviors (Kelly et al., 2025). Nurses with higher job well-being are more likely to possess the emotional energy and cognitive flexibility necessary for innovation (Kim, 2024). Additionally, social exchange theory provides further explanatory power, suggesting that individuals who experience positive work conditions are more inclined to reciprocate through discretionary behaviors such as knowledge sharing (Körgemaa et al., 2024). In this context, knowledge sharing acts as a conduit that transforms internal psychological states into observable innovative outcomes (Li et al., 2024). The mediation effect identified in this study supports an integrative framework in which individual well-being influences collective processes, which, in turn, drive innovation (Mansour, 2025).

The present findings are consistent with global evidence indicating that employee well-being is positively associated with innovative work behavior across various sectors (McKenna et al., 2026). Studies conducted in Europe and East Asia have similarly identified work engagement and psychological well-being as predictors of creativity and innovation (Peeters et al., 2026). In healthcare contexts, previous research has shown that collaborative practices and knowledge exchange among nurses enhance clinical innovation and patient care quality (Rushton et al., 2025). Regionally, studies in Southeast Asia have emphasized the importance of teamwork and communication in promoting innovation, particularly in resource-constrained settings. However, few of these studies have explicitly tested mediation mechanisms, making the current findings a valuable addition to the literature (Suprpto, 2024).

The convergence of findings with prior studies may be attributed to the universal role of psychological resources in shaping work behavior (Truscott, 2024). Regardless of context, individuals with higher well-being are more likely to engage in proactive and collaborative activities (Wang et al., 2026). The strong effect of knowledge sharing observed in this study may reflect the inherently interdependent nature of nursing work, where information exchange is critical for decision-making and patient safety (Zink et al., 2025). Contextual differences, such as organizational culture, leadership style, and workload intensity, may explain divergent findings from studies reporting weaker associations. In settings with hierarchical barriers or limited communication channels, the mediating role of knowledge sharing may be diminished (Zorzenon et al., 2025).

The findings have several important implications for healthcare management and policy. First, interventions aimed at improving nurses' job well-being, such as workload management, psychological support, and recognition systems, can have downstream effects on innovation. Second, fostering a culture of knowledge sharing is essential for translating individual well-being into organizational performance. This can be achieved through structured mechanisms such as interdisciplinary meetings, digital knowledge platforms, and mentoring systems. From a systemic perspective, integrating well-being and knowledge management strategies can enhance healthcare organizations' adaptive capacity, ultimately improving the quality of care and patient outcomes.

Strengths and Limitations

This study offers several strengths, including the integration of psychological and behavioral constructs within a single analytical framework and the use of SEM to test mediation effects. The focus on nurses in real-world clinical settings enhances the ecological validity of the findings. However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and the use of self-reported data may introduce common method bias. Additionally, the sample size, while adequate for SEM, may limit generalizability to broader populations. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, larger samples, and multi-source data to validate and extend these findings. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature by elucidating the mechanism by which job well-being influences innovative behavior and emphasizing the pivotal role of knowledge sharing in healthcare environments.

CONCLUSION

This study provides clear evidence that nurses' job well-being is a significant determinant of innovative behavior, both directly and indirectly through knowledge sharing. The findings confirm that knowledge sharing serves as a critical mediating mechanism, strengthening the translation of positive psychological states into innovation-related actions in clinical practice.

Nurses who experience higher levels of well-being are more likely to engage in collaborative knowledge exchange, which in turn enhances their capacity to generate and implement new ideas.

These results underscore the importance of adopting an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses individual well-being and organizational knowledge processes. Healthcare institutions should prioritize policies that support nurses' psychological well-being, including optimizing workload, fostering supportive leadership, and providing mental health resources. In parallel, structured knowledge-sharing systems such as regular interdisciplinary meetings, digital platforms, and peer-learning initiatives should be institutionalized to facilitate continuous learning and innovation. From a policy perspective, embedding well-being and knowledge-sharing strategies into organizational frameworks can strengthen health system resilience and improve service quality. Future interventions should be designed to operationalize these elements in a sustainable and scalable manner.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Syahrir: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing.

Dewi Nurhanifah: Data Curation, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft.

Cheristina: Formal Analysis, Validation, Visualization.

Yunita Kristina: Data Collection, Project Administration, Writing – Review & Editing.

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Declaration of Generative AI Use

Generative artificial intelligence tools were used to support language refinement and improve clarity of expression during manuscript preparation. All conceptual development, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and final content decisions were performed by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the work.

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