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The Effect Of Empowering Leadership On Innovative Work Behavior With Knowledge Sharing As A Mediating Variable (A Case Study Of Religious Court Institutions In The Lampung Region)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of empowering leadership on innovative work behavior with knowledge sharing as a mediating variable among employees of the Religious Courts in the Lampung region. The population of this study consists of all employees across 13 Religious Court work units in Lampung, with a total sample of 330 respondents selected using an appropriate sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with SmartPLS version 4 software.

The results indicate that empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior. This finding suggests that higher levels of empowering leadership practices lead to increased innovative behavior among employees in performing their tasks. Furthermore, knowledge sharing is proven to significantly mediate the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative work behavior. Thus, empowering leadership enhances employees' innovative behavior through effective knowledge sharing processes within the organization. This study implies that organizations, particularly judicial institutions, should promote empowering leadership practices and foster a knowledge-sharing culture to enhance employee innovation in responding to dynamic work demands.

Keywords: ***Empowering Leadership, Knowledge Sharing, Innovative Work Behavior, PLS***

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations need to maintain and optimize human resource competence to improve innovation performance in the digital era (Estensoro et al., 2021). Companies are required to maximize innovative work behavior, even in critical situations (Hermundsdottir et al., 2021). This is important because environmental changes, globalization, and increasing competition require organizations to be more adaptive (Woods et al., 2018). Innovative work behavior has become an essential element in creating competitive advantage and sustaining organizational continuity (Rao Jada et al., 2019). Organizations that encourage employees to be innovative will be better prepared to address technological developments, regulatory changes, and evolving societal needs.

The relevance of innovative work behavior is not limited to the private sector, but also applies to public organizations that are required to provide fast, transparent, and responsive services. Afsar and Umrani (2019) found that employees' innovative behavior significantly improves an organization's ability to respond to policy changes and service expectations. Therefore, innovative behavior is not merely an added value but a key pillar of modern organizational adaptation strategies. Innovative work behavior refers to employees' actions in actively generating, promoting, and implementing new ideas that are useful for the organization (Escribá-Carda et al., 2017). In the public sector, such behavior is important for improving bureaucratic efficiency, adapting to new policies, and optimizing the use of digital technology in service delivery (Afsar et al., 2020).

The Religious Courts in Lampung Province, as part of the judicial institution, face increasingly complex performance demands, both in terms of legal certainty and public service quality. Court employees are expected to use technologies such as e-court and e-litigation, streamline work procedures, and creatively and adaptively solve service-related problems. However, several challenges remain, including rigid bureaucratic culture, limited competency development, and resistance to change. These conditions underscore the importance of examining the factors that influence employees' innovative work behavior in the Religious Courts of Lampung Province.

The urgency of this study is reinforced by the increasing number of cases handled by the Religious Courts. Based on the 2024 Annual Report of the Directorate General of Religious Courts, Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, the total number of cases in Lampung Province reached 18,235, an increase of approximately 7.4% from the previous year. This increase was mainly due to divorce, inheritance, and Islamic economic dispute cases. Such workload pressures require employees to work faster, more accurately, and more innovatively to maintain service quality. Without innovative

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work behavior, the increasing caseload may reduce service quality and prolong case resolution time.

One factor presumed to influence innovative work behavior is empowering leadership. This leadership style emphasizes employee empowerment through involvement in decision-making, autonomy in completing tasks, and support for individual capacity development. Leaders who empower employees can strengthen motivation for self-development and proactive task performance (Rao Jada et al., 2019). Empowering leadership also fosters trust, a sense of ownership, and constructive risk-taking behavior (Bhatti et al., 2022). Studies by Hanafy et al. (2025), Kandasamy (2024), Hassi et al. (2022), and Vuong and Hieu (2022) found that empowering leadership positively affects innovative behavior.

However, previous findings remain inconsistent. Li et al. (2022) found that empowering leadership has a double-edged effect, increasing innovation through work engagement while also potentially causing emotional exhaustion. Wijaya et al. (2023) and Wang et al. (2022) reported that empowering leadership does not significantly influence innovative work behavior. These inconsistencies indicate the possibility of mediating mechanisms that explain the relationship.

One relevant mediating variable is knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is an important process in knowledge management and organizational success (Kozhakhmet et al., 2020). Employees, as the main organizational resource, need to have their knowledge managed effectively to create added value (Yepes & Lopez, 2023). Knowledge sharing can stimulate new ideas, creativity, and problem-solving, thereby positively affecting innovative work behavior (Ben Arfi et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2020).

Knowledge sharing may also mediate the influence of empowering leadership on innovative work behavior. Jabid et al. (2023) found that employees actively involved in knowledge sharing demonstrate higher levels of innovation. Rao Jada et al. (2019) showed that empowering leadership positively affects innovative behavior through knowledge sharing. Empowering leaders creates an open, trust-based, and collaborative climate that encourages employees to share experiences, information, and work solutions. Such conditions strengthen organizational adaptability and capacity for innovation (Al-Emran et al., 2020).

The Religious Courts in Lampung Province provide a relevant research context because they are bureaucratic, rule-based institutions oriented toward public service. Of the 13 Religious Court units in Lampung, eight had implemented at least one technology-based service innovation in 2024, including digital queue systems, automatic hearing

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calls, online consultation services, and case information applications integrated with social media. These innovations suggest the potential for innovative work behavior among court employees. Therefore, this study is important for examining the effect of empowering leadership on innovative work behavior, with knowledge sharing as a mediating variable, among employees of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW, HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT, AND RESEARCH METHODS

Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership is a leadership style in which leaders delegate authority to team members, encourage participation and collaboration, and focus on developing employees' potential. Empowering leadership provides employees with self-confidence and space to participate actively. It is a process of sharing power, conveying autonomy, and assigning responsibility to subordinates, groups, or collectives through specific leadership behaviors that enhance employees' intrinsic motivation and work success (Tabara *et al., 2021).*

Empowering leadership is also defined as a leadership style in which leaders delegate power, provide autonomy in work, and share information with subordinates, thereby increasing employee motivation (Ahluwalia et al., 2020). Purnama et al. (2022) further define empowering leadership as leaders' efforts to understand and motivate followers, demonstrate care and concern for them, and inspire them to perform better.

Innovative Work Behavior

Janssen (2000) defines innovative work behavior as intentional behavior aimed at initiating and implementing new ideas to solve problems or improve work efficiency. Innovative work behavior involves not only idea generation but also the promotion and realization of those ideas to create meaningful changes in work practices. Hughes et al. (2018) state that innovative work behavior is a key element of future-oriented organizational transformation, especially in the context of digitalization, globalization, and rapid market changes.

Innovative work behavior refers to all individual activities directed toward creating, developing, and implementing new ideas related to how work is performed. These ideas may include products, technologies, procedures, or new work processes that improve efficiency and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals (Nicolescu & Rîpa, 2024).

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Innovative work behavior can also be reflected in the use of different problem-solving approaches and the proposal of creative ideas for organizational advancement.

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing refers to interactions among individuals within an organization that involve the exchange of information and ideas to enhance collective understanding and foster innovation (Usmanova et al., 2020). This process is not only related to interpersonal communication but also reflects the organization's systematic effort to build a learning culture and continuously create knowledge (Ahokangas et al., 2021). According to Eslami (2020), knowledge sharing is the process of systematically transferring and distributing knowledge among individuals within an organization through various methods and media.

A study by Nguyen et al. (2021) states that knowledge sharing is a learning procedure among employees to help one another improve capabilities, solve problems, and enhance work performance. The study emphasizes that knowledge sharing has three main characteristics: first, it involves a process or procedure for sharing; second, individuals share expertise and experience with others; and third, it aims to find solutions to organizational problems or generate new ideas, which in turn promote innovation and sustainable performance.

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with a causal-comparative (ex post facto) design. This design was selected to examine the causal relationships among existing variables without direct researcher manipulation. The study also employed a survey research method, in which quantitative data were collected from individuals within the organization via questionnaires. The variables examined in this study were empowering leadership, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behavior. Relationships among these variables were analyzed using relevant statistical techniques to test the proposed hypotheses (Ghadani et al., 2022).

The population of this study comprised all employees of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province, across 13 work units, totaling 467 employees. Using an appropriate sampling technique, the required sample size was 330 respondents. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 4. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for analyzing complex relationships among latent variables simultaneously.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Discriminant Validity Test Results (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Table 1 presents the results of the Discriminant Validity Test using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

Table 1. Results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Test

Variable	Empowering Leadership	Innovative Work Behavior	Knowledge Sharing
Empowering Leadership	0.84		
Innovative Work Behavior	0.636	0.878	
Knowledge Sharing	0.73	0.834	0.799

Based on Table 1, the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test show that the square root of AVE for each variable is higher than its correlations with other variables, namely empowering leadership at 0.840, innovative work behavior at 0.878, and knowledge sharing at 0.799. This condition indicates that each construct has good discriminant validity because it explains its own indicators more strongly than it does its relationships with other constructs. Therefore, the three variables in this study are empirically distinct, with no measurement overlap, indicating that the measurement model is adequate and that structural model testing can proceed.

Discriminant Validity Test Results (Cross Loadings)

Based on the cross-loading table 2, each indicator has the highest loading value on its respective construct relative to other constructs. The indicators of the Knowledge Sharing variable (code M) show the highest loadings in the Knowledge Sharing column, the indicators of Empowering Leadership (code X) have the highest loadings on the Empowering Leadership variable, and the indicators of Innovative Work Behavior (code Y) have the highest loadings on the Innovative Work Behavior variable. This demonstrates that each indicator better represents its own construct than other constructs. Therefore, the discriminant validity criterion using the cross-loading approach has been met, and the measurement model is considered valid for further structural model testing.

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Table 2. Cross Loading Results

Item	*Empowering Leadership*	*Innovative Work Behavior*	*Knowledge Sharing*	*Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*	Conclusion
M1	0.595	0.62	0.838	0.706	Valid
M10	0.594	0.565	0.804		Valid
M11	0.563	0.835	0.864		Valid
M12	0.574	0.846	0.894		Valid
M13	0.571	0.823	0.878		Valid
M14	0.57	0.83	0.839		Valid
M15	0.54	0.828	0.851		Valid
M2	0.638	0.54	0.817		Valid
M3	0.584	0.541	0.795		Valid
M4	0.614	0.587	0.823		Valid
M5	0.562	0.554	0.814		Valid
M6	0.6	0.526	0.788		Valid
M7	0.546	0.557	0.829		Valid
M8	0.612	0.552	0.817		Valid
M9	0.571	0.568	0.83		Valid
X10	0.835	0.483	0.553	0.771	Valid
X11	0.851	0.529	0.588		Valid
X12	0.621	0.551	0.785		Valid
X1	0.856	0.523	0.575		Valid
X2	0.86	0.488	0.579		Valid
X3	0.856	0.551	0.599		Valid
X4	0.885	0.548	0.602		Valid
X5	0.868	0.549	0.586		Valid
X6	0.857	0.506	0.593		Valid
X7	0.85	0.576	0.598		Valid
X8	0.842	0.517	0.586		Valid
X9	0.872	0.532	0.618		Valid

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Discriminant Validity Test Results (HTMT Test)

Based on Table 3, the results of the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test show that the ratio values among variables are below the threshold of 0.90, namely the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative work behavior at 0.665, empowering leadership and knowledge sharing at 0.750, and knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior at 0.757. These values indicate that each construct has an adequate level of distinction and that there is no conceptual overlap among the variables. Therefore, the discriminant validity test based on the HTMT criterion has been satisfied, indicating that the measurement model is sound and appropriate for use in structural relationship analysis in this study.

Table 3. HTMT Results

Variable	Empowering Leadership	Innovative Work Behavior	Knowledge Sharing
Empowering Leadership			
Innovative Work Behavior	0.665		
Knowledge Sharing	0.75	0.757	

Construct Reliability Test Results

Based on Table 4, the construct reliability results indicate that all research variables have very high reliability. This is reflected in the Cronbach's Alpha (rho_A) and Composite Reliability values for the variables Empowering Leadership, Innovative Work Behavior, and Knowledge Sharing, all of which exceed the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70. Furthermore, the obtained values are above 0.90, indicating very strong internal consistency among the indicators within each construct. It can therefore be concluded that the instruments used in this study are reliable and capable of measuring the variables consistently, making them appropriate for further analysis.

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Table 4 Construct Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Conlusion
Empowering Leadership	0,961	0,961	0,966	Reliabel
Innovative Work Behavior	0,94	0,941	0,953	Reliabel
Knowledge Sharing	0,96	0,961	0,964	Reliabel

Predictive Relevance Test Results (Q^2)

The predictive relevance test (Q^2) is used to assess the predictive capability of the research model, particularly in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. The Q^2 value is calculated using the formula $Q^2 = 1 - (SSE/SSO)$, where SSE (sum of squared errors) represents the total prediction error and SSO (sum of squares total) represents the total variation of the data. If the Q^2 value is greater than zero, the model has good predictive relevance for the endogenous variables, whereas values close to zero or negative indicate low predictive capability. Therefore, this test provides an overview of how well the constructs in the model explain the observed variation in the data and serves as an important indicator for evaluating the adequacy of the research model.

Based on Table 5, the predictive relevance (Q^2) test results show that the Innovative Work Behavior variable has a Q^2 value of 0.532 and the Knowledge Sharing variable has a Q^2 value of 0.336, both of which are greater than zero, indicating that the model has good predictive capability for these endogenous variables. A Q^2 value of 0.532 indicates strong predictive relevance, while a value of 0.336 indicates moderate predictive relevance. Meanwhile, the Empowering Leadership variable does not have a Q^2 value because it is an exogenous variable (not predicted by other variables in the model). Therefore, the research model can explain and predict employees' innovative work behavior and knowledge-sharing activities with an adequate level of accuracy.

Table 5. Predictive Relevance (Q^2) Test Results

Variable	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Empowering Leadership	3960	3960	
Innovative Work Behavior	1980	926.487	0.532
Knowledge Sharing	4950	3288.239	0.336

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SRMR Test Results

Model fit in SmartPLS refers to the extent to which the tested research model fits the empirical data. The measurement of model fit includes several main indicators, such as the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which is used to evaluate overall model fit (a cut-off value of ≤ 0.08 indicates a good fit), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), which assesses the relative fit of the model compared with the baseline model, and the Chi-Square statistic, which examines the discrepancy between the model and the observed data.

Based on the model fit test results (Table 6), the SRMR value of 0.091 indicates that the model's residual error is still within an acceptable range (≤ 0.10), suggesting the model is reasonably good. The d_ULS value of 4.618 and d_G value of 1.072 indicate relatively small discrepancies between the empirical covariance matrix and the model, reflecting an adequate model fit. The Chi-Square value of 2020.892 in PLS-SEM is not considered the primary indicator of model adequacy because it is sensitive to sample size. In contrast, the NFI value of 0.824 indicates a fairly good level of model fit (close to 0.90). Overall, these results suggest that the research model has an adequate level of goodness-of-fit and is appropriate for further hypothesis testing.

Table 6. SRMR Test Results

Indicator	*Saturated Model*	*Estimated Model*
SRMR	0.091	0.091
d_ULS	4.618	4.618
d_G	1.072	1.072
Chi-Square	2020.892	2020.892
NFI	0.824	0.824

Partial Least Squares (PLS) Model Results

Figure 1 presents the Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis model used in this study.

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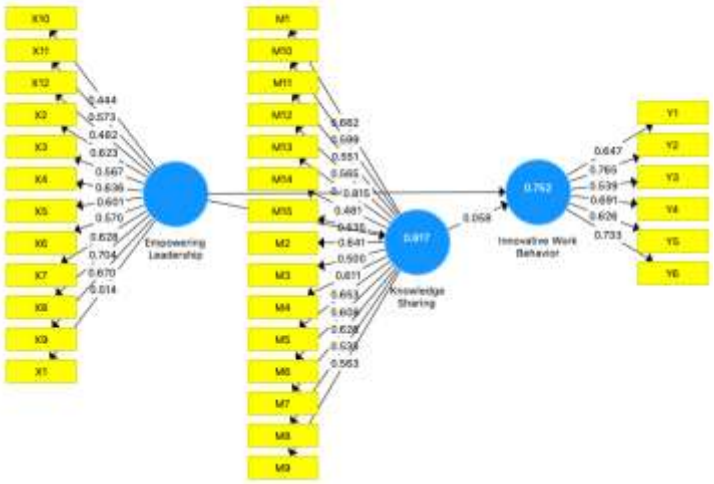


Figure 1. Partial Least Squares Model

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis testing is a statistical process used to evaluate assumptions or claims about a population based on sample data. In research, hypothesis testing is applied to determine whether the relationships or effects among variables proposed in the model can be accepted or rejected. This process involves formulating the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no effect or relationship, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which states that an effect or relationship exists. Using analyses such as the t-test, p-value, or confidence interval, researchers determine whether the data support rejecting the null hypothesis. If the p-value is lower than the significance level (e.g., 0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hypothesis testing ensures that conclusions are based on objective statistical evidence.

Based on Table 7, the path coefficient test results show that all relationships among variables are positive and significant, as indicated by T-statistics > 1.96 and p-values < 0.05. Empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior, with a coefficient of 0.658 (T = 21.370; p = 0.001), indicating that higher levels of empowering leadership are associated with greater employees' innovative work behavior. In addition, empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on knowledge sharing, with a coefficient of 0.730 (T = 29.139; p = 0.000), indicating that

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leaders who provide trust, authority, and involvement can encourage a culture of knowledge sharing. Furthermore, knowledge sharing has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior with a coefficient of 0.792 (T = 24.318; p = 0.000), suggesting that the exchange of information and work experience is an important factor in enhancing employee innovation. Therefore, the research model is structurally consistent with the proposed direct relationships among variables.

Table 7. Path Coefficient Test Result

Effect	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Empowering Leadership -> Innovative Work Behavior	0.658	0.66	0.042	21.37	0.001
Empowering Leadership -> Knowledge Sharing	0.73	0.73	0.025	29.139	0.000
Knowledge Sharing -> Innovative Work Behavior	0.792	0.791	0.033	24.318	0.000

In addition to examining the direct effects among variables, this study also aims to investigate indirect effects (mediation). An indirect effect occurs when one variable influences another variable through an intervening third variable, so the relationship does not occur directly. In this study, knowledge sharing acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative work behavior. The analysis not only evaluates the direct effect of empowering leadership on innovative work behavior but also examines whether such leadership enhances employee innovation through increased knowledge-sharing activities.

Based on Table 8, the indirect effect results show that the effect of empowering leadership on innovative work behavior through knowledge sharing has a coefficient of 0.578, with a T-statistic value of 18.347 and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a positive and significant effect. This finding demonstrates that knowledge sharing serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' innovative work behavior. In other words, leaders who provide trust, involvement, and authority to employees will encourage knowledge-sharing activities, and, through this process, employees' innovative work behavior will further increase.

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Table 8. Indirect Effect Result

Effect	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Empowering Leadership -> Knowledge Sharing -> Innovative Work Behavior	0.578	0.577	0.031	18.347	0

The Effect of Empowering Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior among Employees of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province

The results of the hypothesis test indicate that empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior among employees of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province, with a coefficient of 0.658, a T-statistic of 21.370, and a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05). This means that the stronger the leadership behavior characterized by trust, delegation of authority, and employee involvement in decision-making, the greater employees' tendency to generate ideas, seek new methods, and improve work processes. Empowering leaders creates a sense of ownership and psychological responsibility that encourages innovative behavior.

This finding is consistent with the descriptive results, in which the highest mean score for the empowering leadership variable was observed for the statement that leaders help employees understand the alignment between job goals and organizational goals (mean = 4.909). This suggests that clear direction and leadership support motivate employees to contribute more innovatively. Likewise, the highest mean score for innovative work behavior was observed for the statement that employees actively seek new ways, methods, or procedures to improve service effectiveness (mean = 4.855). Thus, empowering leadership not only increases employee understanding and involvement but also stimulates initiative and creativity to improve organizational performance.

Previous studies support these findings. Amundsen and Martinsen (2021) found that empowering leadership increases employees' psychological autonomy, which encourages the emergence of new ideas and willingness to try different work methods. Kim and Beehr (2022) also reported that empowering leadership strengthens psychological ownership, which in turn enhances employees' innovative behavior. These

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studies confirm that when leaders provide trust, participation, and room for creativity, employees are more likely to propose procedural improvements, develop new methods, and generate innovation in their work.

In the context of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province, this result is reflected in employee involvement in case management services, simplification of work procedures, and utilization of judicial information systems. Leaders who help opportunities to participate in decision-making help employees better understand organizational goals and their role in public service delivery. An open and trust-based work environment encourages employees to seek solutions to administrative and technical problems, improve service mechanisms, and accelerate case resolution. Employees, therefore, do not merely follow routine procedures but actively contribute ideas and innovations relevant to public needs.

This study is in line with Psychological Empowerment Theory proposed by Spreitzer (1995) and Social Exchange Theory by Blau (1964). From the psychological empowerment perspective, leaders who provide trust, autonomy, participation, and opportunities for idea development enhance employees' sense of meaning, competence, and responsibility, thereby fostering innovative behavior. Meanwhile, according to Social Exchange Theory, when employees feel valued and supported by their leaders, they reciprocate through positive contributions such as creativity, process improvement, and the generation of new ideas. Therefore, empowering leadership not only increases intrinsic motivation but also stimulates experimentation and innovation in public service tasks.

Knowledge Sharing Mediates the Effect of Empowering Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior among Employees of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province

The hypothesis testing results indicate that knowledge sharing significantly mediates the effect of empowering leadership on innovative work behavior among employees of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province. The indirect effect coefficient is 0.578 with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This means that empowering leadership not only directly affects innovative work behavior but also indirectly enhances innovation by increasing knowledge sharing among employees. Leaders who foster trust, participation in decision-making, and autonomy at work encourage employees to exchange experiences, information, and work-related solutions, thereby strengthening collective organizational knowledge and stimulating new ideas, procedural improvements, and creativity.

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This finding is consistent with the descriptive results. The highest mean score for empowering leadership was found in the statement that leaders help employees understand the alignment between job goals and organizational goals (mean = 4.909), indicating clear direction and support. Meanwhile, the highest mean score for knowledge sharing was found in the statement that employees actively participate in training, technical guidance, or discussion forums (mean = 4.915), reflecting a strong culture of knowledge exchange. This was followed by innovative work behavior, where employees actively seek new ways or methods to improve service effectiveness (mean = 4.855). These results confirm that empowering leadership contributes to innovation both directly and indirectly through stronger knowledge-sharing practices.

Previous studies also support this finding. Khan et al. (2023) found that knowledge sharing acts as a mediator between self-leadership and innovative work behavior, in which knowledge exchange enhances employees' ability to generate innovation. Similarly, Fatah and Dudija (2025) reported that leadership positively affects innovation primarily through knowledge-sharing mechanisms and that its direct influence is stronger when supported by effective knowledge sharing. These studies confirm that employee innovation generally emerges not only from leadership style itself, but from the flow of knowledge facilitated by that leadership.

In the context of the Religious Courts in Lampung Province, this condition is reflected in daily operations that rely heavily on coordination among clerks, judges, and administrative staff. Leadership that promotes open discussion and communication encourages employees to exchange experiences regarding case management, public services, and the use of electronic court applications. This process helps employees understand best practices, reduce procedural errors, and generate service improvements. Coordination meetings, technical consultations, and work discussions transform knowledge from an individual resource into a collective organizational asset. As a result, employees become more willing to propose simplified service procedures, improve case administration, and optimize judicial information systems. Therefore, innovation in public service within the Religious Courts is influenced not only by leadership characteristics but especially by the intensity of knowledge exchange fostered by empowering leadership.

This finding is in line with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Psychological Empowerment Theory (Spreitzer, 1995). Empowering leadership fosters a positive, reciprocal relationship between leaders and employees through trust, autonomy, and participative support, prompting employees to share knowledge with colleagues. This

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exchange process improves collective understanding, enriches problem-solving perspectives, and ultimately fosters innovative work behavior. Thus, innovation arises not only from direct leadership influence but also through the social mechanism of exchanging cognitive resources within the organization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data processing and the discussion that has been done, this research can be concluded as follows:

1. Empowering leadership has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on employees' innovative work behavior, indicating that the higher the practice of empowering leadership, the greater the employees' innovative behavior in carrying out their work.
2. Knowledge sharing acts as a significant and positive mediating variable in the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative work behavior. This means that empowering leadership can enhance employee innovation through knowledge exchange within the organization.

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