

Knowledge Sharing Behavior and Job Satisfaction: Exploring the Psychological Function of Employee Counseling in Indonesian Bureaucracy

Vizra Hukama¹, Arum Etikariena², Alya Aqilah Madhani³, Nor Shafrin Ahmad⁴

Master Program in Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia¹

Master Program in Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia²

Master Program in Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia³

Master in Counseling, School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia⁴

Email: vizra.hukama@ui.ac.id¹, arum.etikariena@ui.ac.id², alya.aqilah@ui.ac.id³, sham@usm.my⁴

Correspondent Author: Vizra Hukama, vizra.hukama@ui.ac.id

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction among Indonesian civil servants, with hierarchical organizational culture as a moderator. Set within Indonesia's context of bureaucratic reform, this research highlights how structural and cultural changes shape public sector performance. While knowledge sharing is linked to innovation and well-being, inconsistent findings suggest that contextual factors, especially hierarchy, influence its effect on satisfaction. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, 203 civil servants from various institutions with at least two years of experience participated. Data from an online survey were analyzed using Pearson correlation and moderated regression (Hayes PROCESS Model 1). Results show that knowledge sharing positively predicts job satisfaction ($b = .1691, p < .01$), meaning exchanging knowledge enhances psychological fulfillment. However, hierarchical culture significantly and negatively moderates this relationship ($b = -0.1161, p < .05$), indicating that rigid, authority-driven environments reduce the benefits of knowledge exchange. Additionally, older and longer-tenured employees report higher satisfaction and alignment with hierarchical norms, while better-educated individuals show lower satisfaction and weaker cultural alignment. These findings emphasize the psychological role of knowledge sharing in public institutions and highlight the need for reforms promoting autonomy, open communication, and counseling-based support to improve employee well-being and performance within Indonesia's bureaucracy.

Keywords: bureaucratic reform, civil servants, hierarchical culture, Indonesia, job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, organizational psychology

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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of public administration in Indonesia relies fundamentally on the performance and integrity of civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN). As mandated by Presidential Regulation (Perpres) No. 81 of 2010, bureaucratic reform emphasizes three pillars of transformation: strengthening organizational structure, enhancing human resources, and cultivating progressive work culture (Republic of Indonesia, 2010). In this context, ASN serves as a pivotal element within the national governance ecosystem. However, despite its importance, the number of civil servants in Indonesia has decreased by 435,690 individuals between 2020 and 2023 (Ministry of PANRB, 2023), revealing underlying structural and managerial challenges that may impact organizational effectiveness and employee well-being. Such systemic shifts inevitably shape job satisfaction, particularly in a bureaucracy undergoing continuous reform.

Job satisfaction refers to employees' cognitive and affective evaluations of their work conditions and experiences. Prior studies identify dimensions such as compensation, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support as determinants of job satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2022; Susanto et al., 2022; Gaur & Tarkar, 2025). Importantly, job satisfaction has been linked to improved employee performance and organizational productivity. A study in Surat, India, found that satisfied employees demonstrated higher efficiency and commitment, strengthening overall performance outcomes (Proya, 2025). These findings underscore the critical role of job satisfaction in driving individual and organizational success, especially in public-sector environments where performance accountability is paramount.

Alongside job satisfaction, knowledge-sharing behavior has attracted scholarly attention for its influence on innovation, decision-making, and service quality. Knowledge sharing enables employees to exchange information that assists problem-solving, fosters creativity, and promotes organizational learning (Le & Tuyen, 2025; Meher & Mishra, 2022). Empirical evidence confirms that knowledge sharing contributes positively to innovation and service performance (Kumar et al., 2024). Truong et al. (2024) found a positive association between knowledge sharing and job satisfaction in Syrian universities, suggesting that conducive knowledge environments enhance psychological fulfillment. However, contradictory evidence exists: Usmanova et al. (2020) reported a negative association between knowledge sharing and job satisfaction among multinational employees in Kazakhstan, attributed to language barriers and cultural misalignment. These inconsistencies suggest that contextual or structural factors may influence the relationship between knowledge sharing and job satisfaction.

Although these contradictory findings enrich the debate, they also indicate that the knowledge sharing–job satisfaction link is highly contingent on contextual forces, particularly organizational structures and cultural arrangements. Importantly, most evidence has been generated from corporate, educational, or multinational settings, while empirical attention to Asian public bureaucracies remains limited. In bureaucratic systems where formal authority, rigid procedures, and compliance norms are dominant, the psychological meaning and consequences of sharing knowledge may differ substantially from those observed in more flexible organizational contexts. This limitation is especially salient for Indonesia, where bureaucratic reform is continually reshaping institutional structures and employee demands, yet research explaining how knowledge-sharing behavior translates into job satisfaction in this context remains scarce.



In the Indonesian bureaucratic environment, hierarchical organizational culture is a dominant structural feature. Government agencies typically adopt formal hierarchies to ensure compliance, regulate decision-making, and maintain procedural uniformity (Kurniawati & Saprudin, 2025). A hierarchical culture establishes explicit authority, reporting lines, and control mechanisms, shaping communication norms and employee behaviors. However, this formality may also restrict employee autonomy, inhibit cross-role collaboration, and constrain communication outside formal channels (Harun et al., 2026). Thus, hierarchical norms may affect both knowledge-sharing processes and employees' psychological outcomes within public institutions (Dalimunthe et al., 2023).

From a psychological resource perspective, job satisfaction can be understood as an outcome of employees' evaluation of the availability, protection, and accumulation of work-related resources. Resource Conservation Theory (COR) posits that employees strive to obtain and safeguard valued resources such as competence, social support, recognition, and knowledge to maintain well-being and motivation (Kim et al., 2023). Therefore, workplace practices that generate resource gains are likely to enhance job satisfaction, while environments that trigger resource loss or depletion may reduce it.

In line with COR theory, knowledge sharing can be conceptualized not only as an organizational learning mechanism but also as a resource exchange process. When employees share knowledge, they potentially gain reciprocal information, social approval, and enhanced self-efficacy resource gains that may strengthen satisfaction, yet they may also face risks of resource loss, such as time depletion, increased workload, or reduced personal advantage, depending on organizational conditions.

Resource Conservation Theory (COR) provides a lens to analyze knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction from a psychological resource perspective. COR theory posits that individuals strive to acquire and preserve valuable resources, including knowledge, which functions as a psychological asset that enhances coping, resilience, and workplace well-being (Kim et al., 2023). Loss of resources is more salient than gain, leading individuals to seek environments where resource conservation is attainable. Within this framework, knowledge sharing may increase job satisfaction by enabling employees to gain supportive resources, recognition, and competence, thereby strengthening psychological well-being. Conversely, restrictive organizational environments may diminish the benefits of knowledge sharing, reducing its motivational and emotional rewards.

The antecedent literature emphasizes the direct link between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction. However, research that examines how hierarchical organizational culture influences this relationship remains scarce, particularly in the Indonesian public sector. Prior inconsistencies, such as the negative associations found by Usmanova et al. (2020), suggest the presence of a moderating variable that shapes how knowledge-sharing behavior translates into job satisfaction. In hierarchical systems where authority and control are prioritized, employees may experience psychological strain or be inhibited from disclosing, thereby weakening the positive effects of knowledge-sharing practices (Luqman et al., 2023). Conversely, supportive hierarchical cultures may facilitate structured communication channels that strengthen knowledge sharing and satisfaction.

Despite the growing body of research on knowledge sharing and job satisfaction, a critical gap remains: studies testing hierarchical organizational culture as a moderating mechanism are still largely concentrated outside the context of Indonesian public institutions. To the best of our knowledge, no previous empirical study has explicitly



examined this moderation model among Indonesian civil servants (ASN) during the contemporary phase of bureaucratic reform. This gap is theoretically important because Indonesian bureaucracy is characterized by strong hierarchical control, formalized procedures, and accountability pressures, which may alter the psychological resource dynamics of knowledge sharing. It is also practically significant, as reform agendas increasingly require collaborative work practices, yet rigid structures may unintentionally weaken employees' well-being and satisfaction.

To address this gap, the present study examines the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction among Indonesian civil servants, with hierarchical culture as a moderating variable. This study proposes that: (1) knowledge-sharing behavior positively affects job satisfaction, and (2) hierarchical culture weakens this relationship, such that stronger hierarchical influence reduces the positive impact of knowledge sharing on satisfaction. This focus is particularly relevant within Indonesia's ongoing bureaucratic reform, where organizational performance depends not only on structural redesign but also on psychological well-being, collaborative culture, and resource sustainability (Satika, 2024). The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically by clarifying the psychological mechanisms underlying knowledge-sharing dynamics in rigid bureaucratic environments and practically by offering policy insights to strengthen public-sector human resource management.

METHOD

This study received ethical approval from the Committee on Research Ethics at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, and was declared to comply with the ethical standards of psychological research, the Research Ethical Code of Conduct of Universitas Indonesia, and the Ethical Code of Conduct of the Indonesian Psychological Association, under approval number 178/Fpsi.Komite Etik/PDP.04.00/2024. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and provided informed consent electronically before completing the online questionnaire.

The research employed a quantitative cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction, with hierarchical culture as a moderating variable. Participants were Indonesian civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN) working in various government institutions at both national and regional levels. Eligibility criteria required participants to (1) hold an active civil servant status and (2) have worked in their current organization for at least two years at the time of data collection. This criterion was applied on the assumption that a minimum of two years of tenure allows employees to adapt to and internalize organizational norms, particularly in Indonesian government institutions, which are commonly characterized by formal procedures and hierarchical structures. A non-probability sampling approach was used, combining purposive sampling with a snowball recruitment strategy. The online questionnaire was distributed through several widely used social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, and Facebook, as well as professional networks of civil servants via group communication channels (e.g., institutional or community groups). The invitation message contained a brief description of the study objectives, participation criteria, estimated completion time (approximately 10–12 minutes), and the online survey link. To increase the survey's reach, respondents were encouraged to forward the survey link to other eligible civil servants in their networks (snowball dissemination). Data collection was conducted between [Month–Month, Year]



using a secure online survey form. Sample size estimation using G Power 3.1 indicated that a minimum of 119 participants was required to achieve 95% power, assuming a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$) and a significance level of 0.05. A total of 217 responses were initially obtained. After excluding 14 responses due to failing eligibility criteria (e.g., tenure < 2 years or not holding ASN status), a final sample of 203 participants was retained for analysis.

Knowledge-sharing behavior was measured using the scale developed by de Vries et al. (2006), which had been adapted into Indonesian by Shadewi (2017). The instrument consisted of two dimensions, namely knowledge donating and knowledge collecting, with items rated on a Likert scale. Example items included “When I learn something new, I share it with my colleagues” and “When I need certain knowledge, I ask my colleagues.” The Indonesian adaptation demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.83$. Job satisfaction was assessed using the 36-item Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1985) and adapted into Indonesian by Rusdi et al (2021). Responses were recorded on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater job satisfaction. An example item was “I feel myself being paid an amount that corresponds to the work I do.” Reliability testing of this instrument showed excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.94$.

Hierarchical culture was measured using five items from the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011) and translated into Indonesian by Tindaon and Hidayat (2020). Items assessed perceptions of structure, formality, and procedural emphasis within the organization, and were measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. An example item was “My workplace is a very organized and structured place. Members of the organization do things according to official procedures.” The reliability analysis indicated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.78$.

Data analysis was conducted in RStudio, including demographic analysis, reliability testing of measurement instruments, and correlational analysis between control variables and job satisfaction. To test the hypotheses, the study employed moderated regression analysis using Hayes’ PROCESS Model 1 to examine the moderating effect of hierarchical culture on the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction, with a significance level set at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Hayes, 2017). Given that all variables were collected from the same respondents at a single time point, the potential for common method bias (CMB) was assessed using Harman’s single-factor test, which revealed that a single factor accounted for 31% of the variance, below the 50% threshold, indicating that common method bias did not meaningfully affect the study’s results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Participant Characteristics

A total of 203 Indonesian civil servants (ASN) from various government institutions participated in this study. The majority of respondents held a bachelor's degree (55.7%), with the dominant age range being 25-44 years. More than half of the respondents (51.7%) had worked for 2–10 years, indicating that the sample consisted of relatively experienced employees who had not yet entered the pre-retirement stage.



Table 1.
 Participant Characteristics

Category	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	127	62.6
Female	76	37.4
Age		
≤24	3	1.5
25 – 34	70	34.6
35 – 44	63	31
45 – 54	35	17.4
55 – 64	31	15.3
≥65	1	0.5
Education		
Highschool/Vocational school	4	2
Diploma III (D3)	19	9.4
Bachelor (S1)	113	55.7
Postgraduate (S2)	54	26.6
Doctoral (S3)	13	6.4
Working Period		
2 – 10 years	105	51.7
11 – 20 years	44	21.6
21 – 30 years	37	18.2
31 – 39 years	17	8.3

The demographic profile of participants is presented in Table 1, which indicates that the majority of respondents held a bachelor's degree (55.7%). This suggests that more than half of the civil servants in this sample possess undergraduate qualifications, which broadly reflects the dominant educational attainment within Indonesian government institutions. The age distribution shows that most participants were between 25 and 44 years old, while more than half had worked in their current institution for 2–10 years. These characteristics demonstrate a relatively educated and experienced workforce, which may influence how individuals interpret organizational norms and engage in workplace behavior.

Correlation Analysis with Control Variables

Pearson correlation analysis showed that knowledge-sharing behavior did not correlate significantly with any demographic variables, including age, gender, education, or working period. In contrast, hierarchical culture was positively correlated with age ($r = .249$) and working period ($r = .182$), but negatively correlated with education ($r = -.151$). Job satisfaction was also positively correlated with age ($r = .228$) and working period ($r = .167$), and negatively correlated with education ($r = -.156$). The complete correlation coefficients are presented in Table 2.



Table 2.
 Correlation Matrix Among All Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Age	-						
Gender	-.050	-					
Education	.347**	-.028	-				
Working Period	.861**	.024	.357**	-			
Knowledge Sharing	-.005	-.046	-.062	-.049	-		
Hierarchical Culture	.249**	-.013	-.151*	.182**	.215**	-	
Job Satisfaction	.228**	.049	-.156*	.167*	.262**	.707**	-

Note: $p < .05$; $p < .01$; $p < .001$

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between control variables (age, gender, education, and working period) and the primary variables of the study. As summarized in Table 2, knowledge-sharing behavior showed no significant correlations with any control variables. This lack of association indicates that demographic or educational characteristics alone do not explain variability in knowledge-sharing behavior among civil servants. It is likely that other factors, such as leadership practices, organizational support, or psychological motivation, play a more substantial role in shaping knowledge-sharing behaviors in government settings, consistent with findings by Lin (2007) and Kim & Ko (2014), who reported that contextual and cultural conditions often overshadow demographic predictors.

Relationships Among Main Variables

Knowledge-sharing behavior showed significant positive correlations with both hierarchical culture ($r = .215$) and job satisfaction ($r = .262$). Hierarchical culture itself demonstrated a very strong positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r = .707$). These preliminary findings indicate that employees who actively share knowledge tend to perceive their work environment as more structured and simultaneously report higher levels of job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for the three main variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
 Means and Standard Deviations of Main Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Knowledge Sharing	4.93	0.57
Hierarchical Culture	4.48	1.05
Job Satisfaction	4.11	0.80

The results of the moderated regression analysis are presented in Table 3. Knowledge-sharing behavior significantly predicted job satisfaction ($b = .1691$, $p < .01$), supporting. This indicates that civil servants who engage in knowledge sharing are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. These results are consistent with the findings of Dalati and Alchach (2018), who concluded that the exchange of ideas, information, and expertise fosters social connection, a sense of contribution, and psychological fulfillment elements which contribute to positive work experiences (Ritonga et al., 2024).



Moderation Analysis (Hayes PROCESS Model 1)

Moderated regression analysis proved that knowledge-sharing behavior positively predicted job satisfaction ($b = .1691, p < .01$). However, the interaction between knowledge-sharing behavior and hierarchical culture was negative and significant ($b = -.1161, p < .05$). This means that a rigid hierarchical culture weakens the positive effect of knowledge sharing on job satisfaction. In other words, in highly authoritarian environments, the psychological benefits of knowledge sharing are diminished.

Table 4.

Moderation Regression Results (Hayes PROCESS Model 1)				
Predictor	b	SE	t	p
Knowledge Sharing (KS)	0.1691	0.062	2.727	< .01
Hierarchical Culture (HC)	0.5362	0.034	15.771	< .001
KS × HC (Interaction)	-0.1161	0.058	-2.002	< .05

Note: Dependent variable = Job Satisfaction. $R^2 = 0.51$

The interaction term between knowledge-sharing behavior and hierarchical culture was significant and negative ($b = -0.1161, p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 2. This suggests that hierarchical culture weakens the positive relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction. Although knowledge sharing is generally associated with positive outcomes, its benefits appear diminished in contexts where organizational culture is rigid, formal, and authority-driven. Hierarchical cultures may restrict discretionary behavior, limit horizontal communication, and impose penalties for deviations from standardized procedures, which, in turn, may reduce opportunities for knowledge exchange that contribute to meaningful outcomes (Whetsell et al., 2021).

Additional Interpretation

Employees with higher educational attainment tended to have lower job satisfaction and weaker alignment with hierarchical culture. Conversely, older employees and those with longer working periods reported higher satisfaction and greater alignment with hierarchical norms. These findings support the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, suggesting that knowledge functions as a valuable resource only when supported by autonomy and enabling cultural conditions. No additional table is presented in this paragraph as it contains interpretive conclusions drawn from the previous results.

These findings can be interpreted through the lens of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Kim et al., 2023), which posits that individuals seek to obtain, retain, and protect valuable resources. Knowledge sharing can be understood as a mechanism for both acquiring resources (knowledge seeking) and preserving resources (knowledge donating), as described by van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004). Employees who engage in knowledge sharing may gain instrumental benefits, such as problem-solving capacity, and relational benefits, such as social capital. Both types of resources contribute to increased feelings of competence, belonging, and job satisfaction.

However, in hierarchical contexts, employees may lack the autonomy to apply the knowledge they acquire, or face organizational constraints that limit the utility of knowledge exchange. From a COR perspective, this reduces the value of knowledge as a resource, thereby diminishing its contribution to job satisfaction. This theoretical explanation also accounts for why contradictory findings appear in the literature. For example, Dalati and Alchach (2018) found a positive link between knowledge sharing and job satisfaction in higher education contexts with lower hierarchical constraints,



whereas Usmanova et al. (2020) found negative associations in corporate environments with stronger structural control. The current findings confirm that cultural context significantly moderates the psychological effects of knowledge-sharing behavior.

The relationship between education level, hierarchical culture, and job satisfaction also provides meaningful insight into inconsistencies in previous research. The negative correlations suggest that highly educated workers may experience frustrations in highly structured environments that limit autonomy, creativity, and role expansion. This mismatch between expectations and workplace realities may lead to weaker alignment with hierarchical norms and reduced job satisfaction, particularly among professional or knowledge-based employees.

Taken together, the findings of this study show that while knowledge-sharing behavior tends to enhance job satisfaction, its effects are contingent upon the broader organizational culture. In supportive environments, knowledge sharing functions as a valuable psychological resource that enhances individual well-being and organizational cohesion. In restrictive environments, however, the benefits of knowledge sharing are dampened by structural and cultural constraints that limit freedom, openness, and agency.

These results offer important theoretical and practical implications. First, they demonstrate the need to consider cultural and structural variables when evaluating the psychological benefits of workplace behavior. Second, they suggest that efforts to promote knowledge sharing within the Indonesian bureaucracy may be most effective when accompanied by organizational reforms that foster autonomy, open communication, and participatory decision-making (Indainanto et al., 2023). Finally, the findings highlight the importance of tailored intervention strategies, recognizing that different employee groups, especially those with higher education levels may have unique psychological needs and expectations. Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The data were collected from a general pool of civil servants, without focusing on specific institutions, which may mask contextual variations. Additionally, the sample distribution was uneven across Indonesia, which may limit generalizability. Future research would benefit from institutional or regional comparative studies to capture more nuanced cultural dynamics within the Indonesian bureaucracy.

This suggests that demographic characteristics alone are insufficient to explain how and why civil servants engage in knowledge sharing. Rather than being a function of static personal attributes, knowledge-sharing behaviors appear to be driven by psychosocial and organizational conditions, such as motivation, leadership support, trust climate, or perceived psychological safety, all of which are commonly developed and reinforced through employee counseling, coaching, and internal communication practices. This finding aligns with the idea that knowledge sharing is largely a volitional and relational process, rooted in psychological readiness rather than demographic predispositions (Adwan et al., 2020).

In contrast, organizational culture demonstrated significant correlations with certain control variables. A positive relationship with age ($r = .249$, $p < .001$) and length of service ($r = .182$, $p < .01$) indicates that employees with more time in the organization tend to exhibit greater alignment with the norms, values, and structural arrangements of Indonesian bureaucratic culture. Longer exposure allows employees to decode unwritten rules, navigate hierarchical structures, and internalize expected behaviors. This process of cultural internalization may reflect a gradual adaptation to bureaucratic routines rather than active acceptance (Donate & Depablo, 2015).



Organizational culture demonstrated a negative correlation with educational attainment ($r = -.151, p < .05$), suggesting that more highly educated employees may hold different expectations regarding autonomy, innovation, and communication. Within bureaucratic environments characterized by formality, centralization, and rule enforcement, those with higher educational backgrounds may perceive cultural rigidity as misaligned with their professional identity. This mismatch can lead to psychological distance, lower engagement, or even subtle resistance toward prevailing norms. From an employee counseling perspective, this highlights the need for differentiated interventions to address cognitive dissonance among highly skilled employees, helping them reconcile expectations with bureaucratic reality (Judge, 2012; Lin, 2007).

A similar pattern emerges in the analysis of job satisfaction. Positive and significant correlations were observed between job satisfaction and age ($r = .228, p < .01$) and employment period ($r = .167, p < .05$). These findings suggest that stability, tenure, and accumulated organizational knowledge contribute to greater emotional comfort and satisfaction in bureaucratic roles. Older and longer-serving employees may have developed effective coping strategies, role mastery, and expanded professional networks all of which are associated with psychological well-being. Such employees are also more likely to derive a sense of continuity and belonging, enhancing job satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

Job satisfaction showed a negative correlation with educational attainment ($r = -.155, p < .05$), indicating that employees with higher educational qualifications tend to report lower levels of satisfaction. This trend may reflect discrepancies between met expectations and employees' perceptions of gaps between personal aspirations and the structural constraints inherent in public sector work. Highly educated individuals may expect more autonomy, recognition, or meaningful participation in decision-making, yet encounter rigid hierarchical systems that limit creative expression and career progression.

These findings underscore the complexity of psychological functioning within Indonesian government institutions. Employees who have adapted to bureaucratic systems, particularly older or long-tenured individuals, are more satisfied, whereas those with higher educational aspirations may struggle to find psychological fulfillment. Critically, these results highlight the potential role of employee counseling as a mediating psychological function in bureaucratic reform. Counseling practices such as mentoring, performance coaching, reflective dialogue, and career guidance can help employees navigate structural constraints, construct meaning in their work, and develop adaptive strategies for managing role expectations (Han et al., 2016). For less satisfied, highly educated employees, counseling can provide pathways for expression, validation, and personalized development, thereby mitigating dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, for employees already embedded within the system, counseling can reinforce positive coping strategies and support the maintenance of psychological resources.

The findings suggest that job satisfaction in the Indonesian bureaucracy is not solely a function of structural characteristics or demographic variables, but also reflects employees' psychological adaptation to organizational culture. Knowledge-sharing behavior, despite being unaffected by demographics, may act as a mechanism for building social resources, empowerment, and meaning, but only when supported by culture, leadership, and counseling structures that encourage openness, reflection, and interpersonal support. Thus, the intersection of knowledge sharing, organizational culture, and job satisfaction illustrates the importance of developing psychological support systems within bureaucratic reform agendas. By integrating counseling-based



approaches, organizations can facilitate adaptive functioning, reduce value dissonance, and promote psychological well-being among diverse groups of civil servants.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the view that job satisfaction within Indonesian bureaucratic institutions is shaped by a complex interplay between individual behavior, organizational culture, and structural conditions. While knowledge-sharing behavior demonstrates a direct positive relationship with job satisfaction, its effectiveness is contingent upon the broader cultural and structural environment in which employees operate. This result aligns with the growing body of literature emphasizing that employee well-being is inseparable from contextual organizational variables, such as the work environment, leadership practices, and institutional support systems (Aruldoss et al., 2022; Susanto et al., 2022).

The positive association between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction confirms prior research suggesting that the exchange of ideas enhances relational capital, psychological belonging, and perceived competence. Meher and Mishra (2022) argue that knowledge sharing stimulates organizational learning processes, which subsequently improve employee performance and satisfaction. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2024) demonstrate that organizational IT support strengthens knowledge-sharing behavior, thereby fostering innovation and positive work experiences. Within the Indonesian bureaucracy, knowledge sharing may function as a mechanism for building professional identity and social recognition. However, as indicated in the moderation analysis, these benefits are significantly reduced under strong hierarchical cultural conditions.

The moderating role of hierarchical culture reveals a crucial structural constraint. In highly bureaucratic environments characterized by formal authority, rigid procedures, and centralized decision-making, the autonomy required for knowledge exchange to generate meaningful outcomes becomes limited. This finding resonates with Le and Tuyen (2025), who highlight that a knowledge-centered culture strengthens the positive effects of knowledge sharing, whereas rigid power structures suppress its developmental potential. Furthermore, Luqman et al. (2023) explain that power dynamics influence emotional responses during knowledge exchange. When authority-driven systems dominate, employees may experience anxiety or fear of judgment, which reduces the intrinsic satisfaction of sharing knowledge. Thus, hierarchical culture acts as a boundary condition that weakens the psychological returns of collaborative behavior.

The negative relationship between educational attainment and job satisfaction adds another critical dimension to the discussion. Highly educated civil servants appear to experience lower satisfaction, likely due to a misalignment between professional expectations and bureaucratic realities. Priya (2025) emphasizes that employee satisfaction is closely linked to perceived growth opportunities and meaningful engagement. In bureaucratic contexts where promotion pathways and decision-making authority are limited, highly qualified employees may encounter frustration. This tension is further contextualized by Kurniawati and Saprudin (2025), who argue that Indonesian bureaucratic ethics and historical administrative traditions emphasize compliance and procedural conformity over innovation and autonomy. Such structural norms may create psychological strain among employees whose educational backgrounds foster critical-thinking and independent problem-solving orientations.



Age and tenure, conversely, show positive correlations with both hierarchical culture and job satisfaction. This pattern suggests adaptive alignment over time. As employees spend longer periods within bureaucratic systems, they gradually internalize institutional routines and develop coping mechanisms that enhance emotional stability. This observation parallels Gaur and Tarkar's (2025) systematic review, which indicates that long-term employment stability is often associated with higher job satisfaction due to reduced uncertainty and increased role mastery. Additionally, Susanto et al. (2022) highlight that contextual supports such as supervisory behaviors and structured environments can buffer stress and improve well-being, particularly among senior employees who are deeply embedded in institutional networks.

From a Conservation of Resources (COR) theory perspective, these findings can be interpreted as resource gain and loss dynamics (Kim Quy et al., 2023). Knowledge sharing is a resource-generating activity that provides social capital, competence validation, and problem-solving capability. However, when hierarchical constraints limit employees' ability to utilize acquired knowledge, the perceived value of these resources diminishes. In rigid bureaucratic contexts, the inability to translate knowledge into action may create resource-loss spirals, ultimately undermining job satisfaction. This interpretation also complements Truong et al. (2024), who demonstrate that government support and knowledge management success are critical in transforming knowledge into performance outcomes. Without supportive structures, knowledge sharing remains symbolic rather than transformative.

The role of organizational reform becomes particularly significant in light of these findings. Satika (2024) notes that public service reform initiatives in Indonesia aim to enhance welfare and institutional performance, yet structural rigidity often persists. The present findings suggest that bureaucratic reform should not only focus on procedural efficiency but also on psychological infrastructure. Training and development programs, as emphasized by Aruldoss et al. (2022), can moderate the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. By integrating structured leadership training, mentoring systems, and participatory decision-making frameworks, bureaucratic institutions may reduce the negative moderating impact of hierarchical culture.

Harun et al. (2026) highlight the importance of institutional maturity in organizational systems, particularly in structured environments such as IT governance. Similarly, bureaucratic systems require cultural maturity to balance control with flexibility. Knowledge sharing can flourish when organizational governance ensures clarity without suppressing initiative. Therefore, fostering a semi-structured culture where accountability coexists with autonomy may optimize both stability and psychological satisfaction.

This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and job satisfaction in public-sector organizations is not universally linear. Instead, it is shaped by cultural boundaries, power structures, and individual expectation alignment. While knowledge sharing serves as a valuable psychological and social resource, its benefits are conditional upon the presence of supportive cultural climates. For Indonesian bureaucratic institutions undergoing reform, the findings underscore the need to integrate structural transformation with human-centered strategies that promote autonomy, continuous learning, and meaningful participation. In essence, sustainable bureaucratic reform must move beyond procedural restructuring toward cultivating a knowledge-centered and psychologically supportive culture. Only by aligning hierarchical governance with empowerment-oriented practices



can public institutions enhance both organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that knowledge-sharing behavior positively influences job satisfaction among Indonesian civil servants, yet this effect weakens in rigid hierarchical cultures. In highly centralized environments, the psychological benefits of knowledge exchange are constrained, reducing its contribution to employee well-being. Older, longer-tenured employees tend to report higher satisfaction and stronger cultural alignment, whereas highly educated employees tend to report lower satisfaction due to unmet expectations for autonomy and meaningful participation. These results underscore the importance of employee counseling mechanisms, such as mentoring and reflective dialogue, to help individuals adapt and sustain their psychological resources. The findings also support the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, suggesting that knowledge functions as a valuable resource only when supported by autonomy and enabling cultural conditions. Therefore, bureaucratic reform should combine structural transformation with psychological support systems to optimize knowledge-sharing practices and employee well-being.

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