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The Role of Communication Self-Efficacy in Innovative Work Behavior among Manufacturing Employees in Medan City

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ABSTRACT

Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) has become an essential factor enabling organizations to adapt to environmental changes and maintain long-term competitiveness. One psychological factor that may promote innovative behavior is Communication Self-Efficacy, which refers to employees' confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in the workplace. This study aimed to examine the role of Communication Self-Efficacy in predicting Innovative Work Behavior among manufacturing employees in Medan, Indonesia. A quantitative correlational design was employed involving 217 employees selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Communication Self-Efficacy Scale and the Innovative Work Behavior Scale and were analyzed using Pearson correlation and simple linear regression with IBM SPSS Statistics 27. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior ($r = .61, p < .001$). Regression analysis further demonstrated that Communication Self-Efficacy significantly predicted Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = .61, t = 11.31, p < .001$), explaining 37.3% of the variance ($R^2 = .373$). These findings indicate that employees with greater confidence in their communication abilities are more likely to generate, promote, and implement innovative ideas in the workplace. Theoretically, this study extends the application of Social Cognitive Theory by highlighting communication self-efficacy as an important psychological antecedent of Innovative Work Behavior. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should strengthen employees' communication self-efficacy through communication skills training, coaching, and supportive communication climates to foster sustainable innovation and organizational performance.

Keywords: Communication Self-Efficacy, Innovative Work Behavior, Social Cognitive Theory, Manufacturing Employees, Workplace Innovation.

I. Introduction

Innovation has become a critical determinant of organizational sustainability and competitiveness in the era of digital transformation and increasingly dynamic business environments. Organizations are expected to continuously adapt to technological advances, changing customer demands, and global competition by developing innovative products, services, and work processes. Consequently, innovation is no longer viewed solely as the responsibility of research and development units but also depends on employees who actively contribute ideas and implement improvements in their daily work (Anderson et al., 2014; West &

Farr, 1990). Employee innovation is commonly conceptualized as Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), which refers to employees' intentional efforts to generate, promote, and implement new ideas that improve individual, team, and organizational performance (Janssen, 2000; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that Innovative Work Behavior enhances organizational adaptability, productivity, service quality, and long-term competitiveness. Consequently, understanding the factors that encourage employees to engage in innovative behavior has become an important issue in Industrial and Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management.

Despite its importance, fostering Innovative Work Behavior remains challenging for many organizations. Employees often hesitate to express ideas, participate in discussions, or advocate innovative solutions because they fear negative evaluation, rejection, or criticism from supervisors and colleagues. Since innovation requires collaboration and continuous interaction among organizational members, communication plays a central role throughout the innovation process. Effective communication enables employees to exchange knowledge, obtain support, persuade others, and transform creative ideas into practical organizational improvements (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). However, communication competence alone may not be sufficient to encourage employees to engage in innovative behavior. Employees must also possess confidence in their ability to communicate effectively under various workplace situations. This confidence is conceptualized as Communication Self-Efficacy, which refers to individuals' belief in their capability to perform effective interpersonal communication in professional contexts (Axboe et al., 2016). According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997), efficacy beliefs influence individuals' motivation, persistence, and behavioral performance. Employees with high Communication Self-Efficacy are therefore more likely to express opinions, seek feedback, persuade colleagues, and champion innovative ideas.

Although previous research has identified numerous antecedents of Innovative Work Behavior, including transformational leadership, organizational support, psychological empowerment, work engagement, knowledge sharing, and creative self-efficacy, the specific role of Communication Self-Efficacy has received relatively limited empirical attention. Most existing studies have focused on organizational or creativity-related factors, whereas employees' confidence in communicating innovative ideas remains underexplored, particularly within manufacturing organizations in developing countries such as Indonesia. This limitation represents an important research gap because communication is fundamental to every stage of the innovation process, from idea generation to implementation. The present study addresses this gap by examining Communication Self-Efficacy as a direct predictor of Innovative Work Behavior among manufacturing employees in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize organizational characteristics or creative self-efficacy, this research highlights communication-related efficacy beliefs as an important psychological mechanism underlying employee innovation. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by extending Social Cognitive Theory into the domain of workplace innovation and providing empirical evidence regarding the importance of communication confidence in promoting Innovative Work Behavior.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) refers to employees' intentional behaviors aimed at generating, promoting, and implementing new ideas that improve individual, team, or organizational performance (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Unlike creativity, which primarily focuses on idea generation, Innovative Work Behavior encompasses the entire innovation process, including identifying opportunities, developing ideas, gaining organizational support, and implementing innovations (Janssen, 2000). De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) further conceptualized IWB into four dimensions: opportunity exploration, idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation. This perspective emphasizes that innovation requires not only

creative thinking but also employees' willingness to communicate and translate ideas into practical organizational improvements.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that Innovative Work Behavior positively influences organizational effectiveness, productivity, service quality, and competitive advantage (Anderson et al., 2014). Employees who actively engage in innovative behaviors contribute to organizational adaptability by identifying work-related problems, proposing creative solutions, and facilitating continuous organizational improvement. Consequently, identifying psychological factors that encourage Innovative Work Behavior has become an important research focus in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

2.2. Communication Self-Efficacy

Communication Self-Efficacy refers to individuals' confidence in their ability to communicate effectively during interpersonal and professional interactions (Axboe et al., 2016). As a domain-specific form of self-efficacy, Communication Self-Efficacy influences how individuals express opinions, exchange information, persuade others, and participate in collaborative discussions. Employees with high communication self-efficacy are generally more confident in initiating conversations, providing constructive feedback, negotiating differences, and expressing innovative ideas. Bandura (1997) argued that self-efficacy shapes individuals' motivation, persistence, and behavioral performance. Employees with stronger efficacy beliefs tend to approach challenging situations with greater confidence, persist despite obstacles, and recover more quickly from setbacks. Within organizational settings, communication self-efficacy enables employees to engage more actively in teamwork, knowledge sharing, and organizational decision-making, thereby creating conditions that support innovation.

2.3. Social Cognitive Theory

The relationship between Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior can be explained using Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). This theory proposes that human behavior is determined through reciprocal interactions among personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioral experiences. Self-efficacy represents one of the central cognitive mechanisms affecting how individuals think, feel, and behave when facing challenging situations. According to Social Cognitive Theory, individuals with higher efficacy beliefs are more likely to initiate behaviors, exert greater effort, persist when encountering difficulties, and achieve better performance outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Within organizational contexts, employees who possess high Communication Self-Efficacy are expected to communicate ideas more confidently, seek feedback proactively, collaborate effectively with colleagues, and persuade others to support innovative initiatives. Consequently, communication self-efficacy functions as an important psychological resource that facilitates innovative behavior in the workplace.

2.4. Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior

Innovation is fundamentally a social process that requires employees not only to generate ideas but also to communicate, advocate, and implement those ideas within organizational environments. Employees frequently interact with supervisors and colleagues to obtain support, exchange knowledge, and coordinate innovation activities. Therefore, confidence in communication abilities becomes an essential prerequisite for successfully translating creative ideas into innovative outcomes. Previous studies have shown that various psychological resources, including creative self-efficacy, psychological empowerment, and knowledge sharing, positively influence Innovative Work Behavior (Afsar & Masood, 2018; Tierney & Farmer, 2002). However, relatively few studies have specifically examined Communication Self-Efficacy as a direct antecedent of Innovative Work Behavior. This represents an important research gap because communication competence and confidence are fundamental throughout the innovation process.

Based on Social Cognitive Theory, employees who believe they can communicate effectively are more likely to express new ideas, participate in collaborative discussions, convince others of the value of their ideas, and persist in implementing innovative solutions. Accordingly, Communication Self-Efficacy is expected to positively influence Innovative Work Behavior among employees. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: *Communication Self-Efficacy has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior.*

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the role of Communication Self-Efficacy in promoting Innovative Work Behavior among manufacturing employees in Medan City. A quantitative approach was chosen because it enables the objective examination of relationships between variables through statistical analysis based on numerical data collected from respondents. The correlational design was used to investigate both the relationship and the contribution of Communication Self-Efficacy to Innovative Work Behavior without manipulating the research variables.

3.2. Participants

The participants consisted of 217 manufacturing employees in Medan City who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who met specific criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) permanent or contract employees, (2) employed at the manufacturing company for at least six months, (3) at least 18 years of age, and (4) willing to participate voluntarily by signing an informed consent form. All participants met the established inclusion criteria and voluntarily participated in the study.

3.3. Research Instruments

Data were collected using two psychological questionnaire-based instruments: the Communication Self-Efficacy Scale and the Innovative Work Behavior Scale. The Communication Self-Efficacy Scale was used to assess employees' confidence in their ability to communicate effectively with supervisors and colleagues in the workplace. The instrument was developed based on the concept of Communication Self-Efficacy proposed by Axboe et al. (2016) and grounded in Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory. Innovative Work Behavior was measured using the scale developed by Janssen (2000), which consists of three dimensions: idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. All items were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior.

3.4. Instrument Validity and Reliability

Prior to the main study, the instruments were evaluated for content validity through expert judgment involving three Industrial and Organizational Psychology lecturers who assessed the relevance of each item to the intended construct. Instrument reliability was subsequently examined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to evaluate the internal consistency of each scale. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered indicative of satisfactory internal consistency, demonstrating that the items within each instrument reliably measured the intended construct.

3.5. Research Procedure

The study began with obtaining research permission from the management of the participating manufacturing companies. After approval was granted, the researcher coordinated with the Human Resources Department (HRD) to determine the schedule and procedures for data collection. Before completing the questionnaires, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the potential benefits of the research, data confidentiality, their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and the informed consent process. Data collection was conducted directly at the workplace using printed questionnaires distributed according to the agreed schedule. Participants required approximately 15–20 minutes to complete the questionnaires. All collected data were used solely for academic purposes and were treated confidentially in accordance with established research ethics principles.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistics were first performed to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants, including age, gender, educational level, length of employment, and employment status, as well as the distribution of scores for each research variable. Assumption testing, including tests of normality and linearity, was subsequently conducted as prerequisites for parametric analysis. The relationship between Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior was examined using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation. To determine the contribution of Communication Self-Efficacy in predicting Innovative Work Behavior, simple linear regression analysis was performed. All hypothesis testing was conducted at a significance level of 5% ($p < .05$).

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

a. Participant Characteristics

This study involved 217 manufacturing employees in Medan City. Based on gender, the majority of respondents were male, totaling 139 employees (64.1%), while 78 respondents (35.9%) were female. In terms of age, most respondents were between 26 and 35 years old, totaling 96 employees (44.2%), followed by those aged 36–45 years with 62 employees (28.6%), those aged 18–25 years with 43 employees (19.8%), and those older than 45 years with 16 employees (7.4%). Regarding educational attainment, most respondents were senior high school or vocational high school graduates, totaling 132 employees (60.8%). Based on length of employment, the largest proportion of respondents had worked for 5–10 years, totaling 89 employees (41.0%).

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N = 217)

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Male	139	64.1
Female	78	35.9
Age		
18–25 years	43	19.8
26–35 years	96	44.2
36–45 years	62	28.6
>45 years	16	7.4
Educational Attainment		

Senior/Vocational High School	132	60.8
Diploma	34	15.7
Bachelor's Degree	48	22.1
Postgraduate Degree	3	1.4
Length of Employment		
<5 years	74	34.1
5–10 years	89	41.0
>10 years	54	24.9

b. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis showed that Communication Self-Efficacy had a mean score of 3.86 with a standard deviation of 0.52. This result indicates that manufacturing employees in Medan City tended to have relatively high confidence in their communication abilities. Meanwhile, Innovative Work Behavior had a mean score of 3.78 with a standard deviation of 0.49. This finding suggests that respondents frequently demonstrated innovative behaviors, such as proposing new ideas, identifying more effective work methods, and attempting to implement ideas in their work.

c. Instrument Reliability

The results showed that the Communication Self-Efficacy Scale had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89, while the Innovative Work Behavior Scale had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .91. Both coefficients exceeded the minimum criterion of .70, indicating that the instruments had good internal consistency and were reliable for use in this study.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Communication Self-Efficacy	2.31	4.92	3.86	0.52
Innovative Work Behavior	2.28	4.85	3.78	0.49

d. Normality Test

Normality was examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The results showed that Communication Self-Efficacy had a significance value of .200, while Innovative Work Behavior had a significance value of .165. Because both significance values were greater than .05, the data for both variables were considered normally distributed.

Table 3. Normality Test Results

Variable	K–S Statistic	Sig.
Communication Self-Efficacy	0.052	.200
Innovative Work Behavior	0.064	.165

e. Linearity Test

A linearity test was conducted to determine whether the relationship between Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior was linear. The results showed that the linearity component was statistically significant at $p < .001$, while the deviation from linearity had a significance value of .312, which was greater than .05. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables was considered linear, allowing the correlation and regression analyses to proceed.

Table 4. Linearity Test Results

Relationship	F	Sig.
Linearity	87.64	<.001
Deviation from Linearity	1.09	.312

f. Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis showed that Communication Self-Efficacy was positively and significantly related to Innovative Work Behavior among manufacturing employees in Medan City, $r = .61$, $p < .001$. This result indicates that employees with greater confidence in their communication abilities were more likely to demonstrate innovative behavior in the workplace. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient indicates a strong relationship between the two variables.

Table 5. Pearson Correlations Between Variables

Variable	1	2
1. Communication Self-Efficacy	—	.61***
2. Innovative Work Behavior	.61***	—

g. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the role of Communication Self-Efficacy in predicting Innovative Work Behavior. The results showed that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 215) = 127.83$, $p < .001$. The correlation coefficient of $R = .61$ and the coefficient of determination of $R^2 = .373$ indicate that Communication Self-Efficacy explained 37.3% of the variance in Innovative Work Behavior. The remaining 62.7% of the variance was associated with other factors that were not examined in this study. The regression coefficient analysis further demonstrated that Communication Self-Efficacy had a positive and significant effect on Innovative Work Behavior, $B = 0.58$, $\beta = .61$, $t = 11.31$, $p < .001$. This result indicates that every one-unit increase in Communication Self-Efficacy was associated with a 0.58-unit increase in Innovative Work Behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Communication Self-Efficacy positively promotes Innovative Work Behavior among employees was supported.

Table 6. Simple Linear Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	1.54	0.20	—	7.70	<.001
Communication Self-Efficacy	0.58	0.05	.61	11.31	<.001

Table 7. Regression Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
.61	.373	.370	127.83	<.001

Overall, the results demonstrate that Communication Self-Efficacy was positively and significantly associated with Innovative Work Behavior among manufacturing employees in Medan City. Employees with greater confidence in their communication abilities tended to be more willing to express ideas, engage in discussions with colleagues, propose work-related improvements, and support the implementation of new ideas. The regression analysis further showed that Communication Self-Efficacy explained 37.3% of the variance in Innovative Work Behavior. These findings indicate that confidence in workplace communication represents an important psychological factor in promoting employee innovative behavior.

4.2. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the role of Communication Self-Efficacy in promoting Innovative Work Behavior among manufacturing employees in Medan City. The findings showed that Communication Self-Efficacy was positively and significantly related to Innovative Work Behavior, $r = .61$, $p < .001$. The regression analysis further demonstrated that Communication Self-Efficacy explained 37.3% of the variance in Innovative Work Behavior. These findings indicate that employees with greater confidence in their communication abilities are more likely to generate, promote, and implement new ideas in the workplace. The findings support the Social Cognitive Theory proposed by Bandura (1986, 1997), which explains that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities constitute an important determinant of behavior. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to select challenging tasks, exert greater effort, persist when encountering obstacles, and manage psychological pressure more effectively during the process of goal attainment. In the context of organizational communication, confidence in communication abilities enables employees to express opinions, provide suggestions, deliver constructive criticism, and engage in discussions with colleagues and supervisors. These capabilities represent important psychological resources throughout the stages of innovative behavior, from idea generation to idea implementation.

The strength of the relationship found in this study also demonstrates that communication is not merely a means of transmitting information but an integral component of the innovation process. Innovative Work Behavior does not end with the ability to generate creative ideas. It also requires employees to obtain social support, build collaboration, and persuade others that an idea is valuable and feasible. Employees with high Communication Self-Efficacy are therefore more likely to identify opportunities for improvement, propose solutions to work-related problems, and defend innovative ideas when facing criticism or rejection. Conversely, employees who doubt their communication abilities may choose to withhold potentially valuable ideas because they fear negative evaluation or believe that they will be unable to convince others. The results are also consistent with the perspective of MacIntyre et al. (1998), who identified confidence in communication ability as an important predictor of willingness to communicate. Individuals who believe in their communication capabilities are more willing to participate in conversations, group discussions, and problem-solving forums. In organizational settings, this willingness to communicate creates more opportunities for employees to exchange knowledge, receive feedback, and refine ideas through social interaction. Communication Self-Efficacy can therefore function as a psychological mechanism that promotes Innovative Work Behavior by increasing employees' active participation in workplace communication.

The findings extend previous research on the antecedents of Innovative Work Behavior. Earlier studies have predominantly focused on organizational factors, including transformational leadership, innovation climate, organizational support, and psychological empowerment (Afsar & Masood, 2018; Newman et al., 2018). Other studies have emphasized creative self-efficacy as a predictor of employee creativity and innovation (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). The present study offers a complementary perspective by demonstrating that confidence in communication ability also represents a psychological resource that contributes significantly to Innovative Work Behavior. Thus, this study extends the application of self-efficacy theory to interpersonal communication and identifies communication-related efficacy beliefs as a relevant factor in explaining innovative behavior in the workplace. The coefficient of determination of 37.3% indicates that Communication Self-Efficacy is a substantial predictor of Innovative Work Behavior, although it is not the only factor that determines such behavior. The remaining 62.7% of the variance may be associated with factors that were not examined in the present study. This finding is consistent with the Innovative Work Behavior model proposed by De Jong and Den Hartog (2010), which suggests that innovative behavior results from interactions among individual characteristics, job characteristics, leadership, and the organizational environment. Therefore, in addition to strengthening employees' communication confidence, organizations should establish climates that support innovation, provide supervisory support, facilitate knowledge-sharing opportunities, and develop psychological safety so that employees feel secure when proposing new ideas.

From a practical perspective, these findings have important implications for human resource management, particularly in manufacturing organizations facing continuous demands to improve operational efficiency and work-process innovation. Employee development programs often emphasize technical competencies or hard skills, while confidence in workplace communication receives comparatively limited attention. However, strong technical competence may not lead to innovation when employees lack the confidence to express their ideas or discuss possible improvements to existing work processes. Organizations may therefore develop programs such as communication skills training, presentation training, public speaking, structured group discussions, coaching, and constructive feedback to strengthen employees' Communication Self-Efficacy. Managers should also establish an open communication culture that provides employees with opportunities to express ideas without fear of punishment or negative evaluation. Through such initiatives, organizations can improve employees' willingness to communicate, collaborate, and participate actively in innovation-related activities.

Despite its theoretical and practical contributions, this study has several limitations. First, its correlational and cross-sectional design does not permit firm causal conclusions regarding the relationship between Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior. Second, all data were collected using self-report measures, which may increase the possibility of common method bias and socially desirable responses. Third, the study was limited to manufacturing employees in Medan City; therefore, the findings should be generalized cautiously to employees in other industries or geographical contexts. Future studies should employ longitudinal or experimental designs to provide stronger evidence regarding causal relationships. Researchers may also develop more comprehensive models by examining mediating or moderating variables such as psychological safety, knowledge sharing, employee voice, leader-member exchange, and organizational innovation climate. Such investigations would provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which Communication Self-Efficacy influences Innovative Work Behavior.

Overall, this study demonstrates that Communication Self-Efficacy constitutes an important psychological resource for promoting Innovative Work Behavior. Employees with greater confidence in their communication abilities are better able to express ideas, develop collaboration, obtain workplace support, and implement innovative solutions. These findings strengthen the application of Social Cognitive Theory within the context of organizational innovation and provide evidence that enhancing employees' communication confidence may serve as an effective strategy for developing a sustainable culture of workplace innovation.

V. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Communication Self-Efficacy positively and significantly predicts Innovative Work Behavior among manufacturing employees. Employees with greater confidence in their communication abilities are more likely to generate, promote, and implement innovative ideas within the workplace. Communication Self-Efficacy explained 37.3% of the variance in Innovative Work Behavior, indicating that communication-related efficacy beliefs constitute an important psychological resource for fostering employee innovation. These findings extend Social Cognitive Theory by demonstrating that confidence in communication abilities contributes to innovative workplace behavior beyond organizational factors traditionally emphasized in previous studies. Consequently, Communication Self-Efficacy should be considered an important individual antecedent of employee innovation within organizational settings.

The present study contributes to the literature by extending the application of Social Cognitive Theory to the domain of workplace innovation. While previous studies have predominantly emphasized transformational leadership, organizational support, and creative self-efficacy as antecedents of Innovative Work Behavior, this study demonstrates that Communication Self-Efficacy represents an additional psychological mechanism that facilitates employee innovation. These findings enrich the theoretical understanding of how efficacy beliefs influence employees' willingness to communicate, collaborate, and implement innovative ideas within organizations. From a managerial perspective, organizations should not

only invest in employees' technical competencies but also strengthen their confidence in workplace communication. Communication skills training, coaching programs, structured feedback, mentoring, and psychologically safe communication climates may enhance employees' willingness to express ideas and participate in innovation initiatives. Managers should encourage open communication and provide supportive environments where employees feel confident sharing innovative suggestions without fear of negative evaluation.

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference between Communication Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behavior. Second, the use of self-report questionnaires may increase the possibility of common method bias. Third, the participants were limited to manufacturing employees in Medan, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are encouraged to employ longitudinal or experimental designs, involve more diverse industrial sectors, and examine additional variables such as psychological safety, knowledge sharing, leader-member exchange, and organizational innovation climate to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of employee innovative behavior.

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