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## Supervisory Justice, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Innovative Behavior: The Mediating Role of Tacit Knowledge Sharing among Nurses

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### Abstract

**Aims:** Using the perspective of social exchange theory, this study aims to provide insight on the relationship between supervisory justice, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and innovative behavior using mediation approach of tacit knowledge sharing. Research on the justice, OCB, and tacit knowledge sharing relationship has received minimal research attention although the role of justice and OCB is influencing the social exchange relationship quality between the employee and supervisor is well established. **Method:** Data were collected on a sample of 339 nurse dyads in 3 major disciplines in a Malaysian public teaching hospital. The data analyses were performed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) which confirmed using Partial Least Square (PLS 3.0). PLS is applied to test the research model as it has a less critical requirement of the sample size to validate. **Findings:** For the direct effect, the results provide support for the acceptance of all hypotheses because there are statistically significant relationships. For the indirect effect, following the mediation analysis procedure, it is concluded that tacit knowledge sharing partially mediates the relationship since both the direct and indirect effects are significant. **Conclusion:** This study provides a new perspective on the mediating effect of tacit knowledge sharing in predicting innovative behavior from individual factors (supervisory justice and OCB) among nurses. **Contributions:** From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by introducing the mediating effect of tacit knowledge sharing on the relationships between individual factors and innovative behavior. From a practical perspective, this study provides empirical evidence on the proposed framework and provides an

understanding of the relationships within a workplace allows teaching hospitals to initiate appropriate steps towards achieving their organizational goals.

**Keywords:** Tacit Knowledge Sharing, Supervisory Justice, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Innovative Behavior

### Introduction

Teaching hospitals are one of the most complex organizations within the healthcare sector (Fahey & Burbridge, 2008; Gagnon et al., 2015) because its main objective is to train new doctors and nurses. In such a context, tacit knowledge sharing (e.g. communication and training) is crucial for the nurses to behave innovatively in providing the best quality of healthcare (Tasselli, 2015). An important issue in Malaysia and other countries is the shortage of nurses. In Malaysia, the nurse to population ratio is 1:308 (Ministry of Health, 2017) instead of the recommended 1:200 for developing countries. The statistics by Malaysian Department of Statistics also reveal that nurses living abroad accounted for a critical 20 percent of Malaysia's 84,000 nurses (Ling, 2012) and the shortage is expected to increase by an alarming rate of 25 percent from 92,681 in the year 2014 to 130,000 in the year 2020.

The current shortfall affects the work of nurses which resulted in double duty and perform non-nursing functions which impeded direct patient care (Pillay, 2017). The problem is worsened by the active recruitment of qualified nurses by foreign countries such as Singapore and Saudi Arabia (Pillay, 2017). Based on the nursing shortage, it is significant for a teaching hospital to understand the individual factors affecting nurses' performance (Xerri, 2012). Supervisory justice and OCB are grouped under individual factors as it considered as personality or person-specific factors that contribute to innovativeness (Parzefall et al., 2008). Research suggests that tacit knowledge sharing within an organization can stimulate mutual learning which leads to innovative behavior (Scott & Bruce, 1995; Ying et al., 2016). Tacit knowledge drives innovative behavior when it is shared, a different perspective could stimulate "energy that is channeled into new ideas" (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998, p. 118). Moreover, tacit knowledge sharing has been found to contribute to innovativeness through a high level of social exchanges (Radaelli et al., 2014). According to Hu and Randel (2014), tacit knowledge sharing across organizations resulted in increased organizational innovativeness. The same effect may be found between individuals. For such reasons, this research attempts to focus on the mediating effect of tacit knowledge sharing on the relationship between individual factors and innovative behaviour among nurses.

This study contributes by investigating the mediating effect of tacit knowledge sharing on the relationships between supervisory justice and OCB and innovative behaviour. Several researchers (Lin, 2007, Mura et al., 2013; Ying et al., 2016) have only examined the direct effect of individual factors on innovative behaviour and the direct effect of supervisory justice and OCB on tacit knowledge sharing, and this has limited the understanding of the overall the causal relationship. Recognizing this gap, this study introduces a mediating effect that hypothesized supervisory justice and OCB influence tacit knowledge sharing, which in turn influences nurses' innovative behaviour.