

## FOSTERING EMPLOYEE INNOVATION THROUGH CULTURE AND TRUST: INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL AS A KEY MEDIATOR

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### ABSTRACT

In today's fiercely competitive business landscape, companies strive to optimize profits and bolster their worth for survival. This research delves into how organizational culture and trust directly impact employee innovation performance, with intellectual capital acting as a mediator. Employing a survey-based correlational quantitative approach, data from 50 respondents were gathered via a Likert Scale questionnaire using SmartPLS version 4.0. Findings reveal trust's significant role in employee innovation performance, though organizational culture lacks a substantial effect. Intellectual capital fully mediates the link between organizational culture and innovation performance, while partially mediating the relationship between trust and innovation performance. Ultimately, fostering a supportive organizational culture and nurturing trust among employees are pivotal in driving innovation within the company.

**Keywords:** Organizational culture; Trust; Employee innovation performance; Intellectual capital

### INTRODUCTION

Innovation has become a crucial driver of competitive advantage in today's dynamic business environment. Organizations that prioritize innovation not only adapt to changing market conditions but also achieve sustainable growth. However, fostering innovation is not solely dependent on technological advancements or financial investment; it is deeply rooted in organizational culture and trust. A culture that encourages open communication, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning creates an environment where employees feel empowered to contribute new ideas (Hanafiyah et al., 2024). Similarly, trust within an organization plays a pivotal role in enhancing employees' willingness to take risks and engage in creative problem-solving.

This study explores the relationship between organizational culture, trust, and employee innovation, with a particular focus on intellectual capital as a key mediator. Intellectual capital—comprising human, structural, and relational capital—represents the collective knowledge, skills, and relationships that drive organizational success. When properly managed, intellectual capital acts as a bridge between a supportive work environment and employees' innovative potential (Saefullah et al., 2024). Human capital, which includes employees' expertise and competencies, thrives in a culture that values learning and development. Structural capital, encompassing organizational systems and processes, ensures that knowledge

is efficiently stored and disseminated. Meanwhile, relational capital—built on trust and collaboration—fosters strong internal and external networks that enhance innovation.

Trust is a fundamental enabler of knowledge exchange and creative collaboration. Employees who trust their leaders and colleagues are more likely to share ideas without fear of criticism or failure. A high-trust environment also encourages cross-functional teamwork and interdisciplinary problem-solving, both of which are essential for breakthrough innovations. Furthermore, trust enhances employees' commitment and motivation, leading to a proactive approach in seeking and implementing novel solutions (Kenedi, 2024).

In an era of increasing global competition, organizations must operate with greater efficiency and effectiveness to ensure long-term survival (Al-Kwafi et al., 2020). Achieving and maintaining competitiveness is a necessity. As organizations rely on employees to drive their production activities, maximizing workforce potential becomes critical. Employees play a central role in organizational success, and their capabilities significantly impact overall performance. Consequently, companies must recruit individuals whose skills align with business objectives while continuously fostering their development (Dachner et al., 2021).

Human resources are a vital asset in achieving corporate goals, particularly when employees exhibit innovative performance. However, research suggests that employee innovation levels often remain suboptimal (Ghani et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2023). Several challenges hinder innovation, including limited skills and inadequate encouragement to unlock creative potential. For example, some employees replace functional equipment prematurely instead of considering repairs, leading to inefficiencies (Fundin et al., 2020; Sahel, 2011).

Existing literature highlights that employee loyalty is shaped by organizational culture, which is a combination of individual experiences, knowledge, psychological attributes, and shared norms (Dutta & Dhir, 2021; Meschke, 2021; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). Additionally, trust is essential for overcoming barriers, fostering collaboration, and strengthening social relationships within organizations (Kähkönen et al., 2021; Men et al., 2022). Prior studies emphasize the critical role of cultural values and trust in employer-employee interactions, facilitating the exchange of tacit knowledge necessary for enhancing innovation through intellectual capital (Li et al., 2023; Pelzang & Hutchinson, 2018; Sun et al., 2023).

This study aims to examine how organizational culture and trust influence employee innovation, with intellectual capital acting as a mediating factor. Understanding these relationships provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to cultivate an innovative workforce. By fostering a culture of trust and strategically leveraging intellectual capital,

businesses can build a sustainable foundation for continuous innovation, securing long-term success in an increasingly competitive landscape.

## **METHODS**

This study utilizes a quantitative descriptive methodology. Quantitative descriptive research seeks to portray or elucidate the attributes or behaviors of a population or sample through the analysis of quantitative data (Kenedi, 2022). The primary focus is on gathering and analyzing numerical data derived from a survey administered to chosen participants. The outcomes of this investigation can provide enhanced insights into the attributes of the variables under observation, the interrelations among these variables, and discernible patterns or trends evident within the dataset.

This study concentrates on discerning the presence and strength of associations among the variables investigated. The main aim of associative research is to explore the connections between variables without ascertaining causality. In associative research, data are gathered from a sample of the population or a representative group through the dissemination of questionnaires to respondents, with assessments typically conducted using a Likert scale.

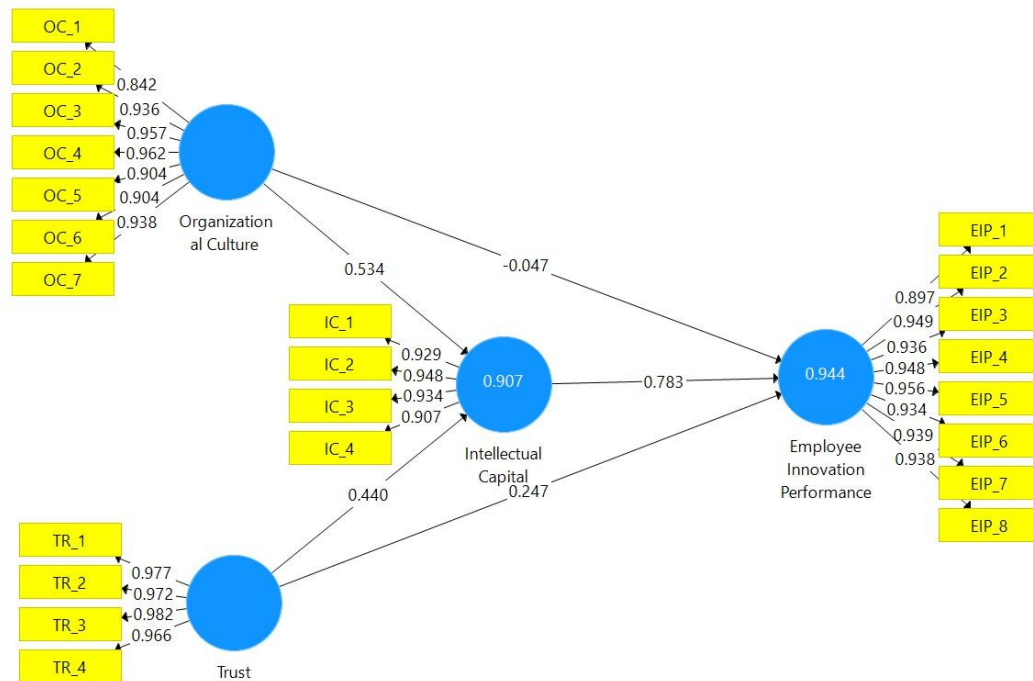
The study population consists of all employees working at PT. Freyja Telema Konstruksindo. The sample size for this research was determined based on the analytical approach utilized, namely Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). Employing the inverse square root method, considering a significance level of 5% and a minimum path coefficient of 0.2, a minimum sample size of 155 was calculated (Hair et al., 2021). Simple random sampling was employed as the sampling technique, wherein individuals from the population were chosen randomly and independently (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The operationalization of Organizational Culture construct is assessed using indicators identified in the study conducted by (Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024), a scale devised by (Castro et al., 2023) was utilized to gauge Trust, a measurement crafted by (Ali et al., 2022) was employed to evaluate Intellectual Capital and indicators from (Khan et al., 2022) were utilized to measure Employee Innovation Performance.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Evaluation of Reflective Measurement Model**

In the initial stage of assessing a reflective measurement model, the explained variance of an indicator is calculated by squaring its loading, with loadings exceeding 0.7 recommended for satisfactory reliability.



**Figure 1.** Outer Loading

This study adopted a criterion of a loading factor exceeding 0.7. As depicted in Figure 2, all constructs exhibited loading factors above 0.7, indicating strong indicator reliability. The subsequent step involves evaluating internal consistency reliability, gauged using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with a threshold set at > 0.7.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Trust	0.982	0.987	0.949
Employee Innovation Performance	0.980	0.983	0.878
Organizational Culture	0.970	0.975	0.849
Intellectual Capital	0.948	0.962	0.864

Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2024)

The results reveal that all variables surpass the threshold of 0.7, indicating high reliability and internal consistency. The next step involves assessing convergent validity,

measured by the average variance extracted (AVE). An AVE of at least 0.50 is deemed acceptable, indicating that the construct explains 50 percent or more of the variance among its indicators. Table 1 shows that AVE values for all constructs exceed 0.5, indicating satisfactory convergent validity, reinforcing their reliability.

**Evaluation of Structural Model**

**Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

The R<sup>2</sup>, indicating the variance explained in endogenous constructs, gauges the model's ability to explain dataset variation, known as in-sample predictive power. Higher R<sup>2</sup> values (0 to 1) indicate stronger explanatory capability.

Table 2. R-Square

	R Square
Employee Innovation Performance	0.944
Intellectual Capital	0.907

Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2024)

Table 2 displays the R-squared values for the endogenous constructs. Employee Innovation Performance has an R-squared value of 0.944, indicating a high level of variance explained by the model. Similarly, Intellectual Capital exhibits an R-squared value of 0.907, suggesting a substantial explanatory capability for both constructs.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis testing in this study, conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 software, relies on Inner Model testing, which involves examining parameter coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. The criteria for hypothesis acceptance include t-statistics >1.96, p-values <0.05, and positive beta coefficients, for both direct and indirect effects among variables.

**Table 3.** Direct Effect Testing

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Result
Intellectual Capital -> Employee Innovation Performance	0.783	8.891	0.000	Significant
Organizational Culture -> Employee Innovation Performance	-0.047	0.648	0.517	Not Significant
Organizational Culture -> Intellectual Capital	0.534	8.153	0.000	Significant
Trust -> Employee Innovation Performance	0.247	3.107	0.002	Significant

Trust -> Intellectual Capital	0.175	3.142	0.000	Significant
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Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2024)

Table 3 presents the outcomes of direct effect testing among variables, along with their respective interpretations:

1. Intellectual Capital -> Employee Innovation Performance: The significant result (T statistic = 8.891 > 1.96, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) indicates that Intellectual Capital has a substantial positive effect on Employee Innovation Performance. This suggests that as Intellectual Capital within the organization increases, there is a corresponding increase in employee innovation performance.
2. Organizational Culture -> Employee Innovation Performance: The non-significant result (T statistic = 0.648 < 1.96, p-value = 0.517 > 0.05) suggests that Organizational Culture does not have a significant direct effect on Employee Innovation Performance. This implies that variations in Organizational Culture do not significantly influence employee innovation performance.
3. Organizational Culture -> Intellectual Capital: The significant result (T statistic = 8.153 > 1.96, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) indicates that Organizational Culture has a significant positive effect on Intellectual Capital. This suggests that a strong and supportive Organizational Culture contributes to the development and accumulation of Intellectual Capital within the organization.
4. Trust -> Employee Innovation Performance: The significant result (T statistic = 3.107 > 1.96, p-value = 0.002 < 0.05) suggests that Trust positively influences Employee Innovation Performance. This indicates that as Trust among employees and with organizational leadership increases, there is a corresponding improvement in employee innovation performance.
5. Trust -> Intellectual Capital: The significant result (T statistic = 3.142 > 1.96, p-value = 0.002 < 0.05) indicates that Trust has a positive effect on Intellectual Capital. This suggests that higher levels of Trust among employees facilitate the accumulation and utilization of Intellectual Capital within the organization.

**Table 4.** Indirect Effect Testing

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Result
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Organizational Culture -> Intellectual

Capital -> Employee Innovation

Performance	0.418	5.731	0.000	Significant
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Trust -> Intellectual Capital -> Employee

Innovation Performance	0.345	5.695	0.000	Significant
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Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2024)

Table 4 displays the outcomes of indirect effect testing between variables, along with their interpretations:

1. Organizational Culture -> Intellectual Capital -> Employee Innovation Performance: The significant result (T statistic = 5.731 > 1.96, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) suggests that Organizational Culture indirectly influences Employee Innovation Performance through its effect on Intellectual Capital. This indicates that a supportive and conducive Organizational Culture fosters the development of Intellectual Capital, which in turn enhances employee innovation performance.
2. Trust -> Intellectual Capital -> Employee Innovation Performance: Similarly, the significant result (T statistic = 5.695 > 1.96, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) indicates that Trust indirectly affects Employee Innovation Performance through its impact on Intellectual Capital. This implies that higher levels of Trust among employees facilitate the accumulation and utilization of Intellectual Capital, leading to improved employee innovation performance.

The results of the hypothesis testing suggest a substantial positive association between Intellectual Capital and Employee Innovation. As Intellectual Capital grows within the organization, employee innovation performance also increases. This underscores the critical role of Intellectual Capital in fostering innovation within the organization, highlighting the importance of investing in knowledge, skills, and other intellectual assets to enhance overall innovation capabilities. The results of this study are consistent with prior research conducted by (Al-Husseini, 2023; Almaududi Ausat et al., 2022; Uriguen Aguirre & Avolio Alecchi, 2023), which likewise demonstrated a favorable influence of Intellectual Capital on Employee Innovation.

The test results indicate that Organizational Culture does not have a significant direct influence on Employee Innovation Performance. This implies that variations in Organizational Culture do not significantly affect employee innovation performance. This finding suggests that the observed aspects of organizational culture in this study may not be directly related to employees' ability to innovate. However, there may be other factors beyond the scope of this

study that have a greater impact on employee innovation performance. Therefore, further research may be needed to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and employee innovation performance more deeply. The results of this study are consistent with prior research conducted by (Abawa & Obse, 2024; Bendak et al., 2020), both of which similarly reported a detrimental effect of Organizational Culture on Employee Innovation Performance.

The findings from the hypothesis testing indicate a noteworthy and positive impact of the organizational culture variable on intellectual capital. This implies that when an organization fosters a robust and supportive culture, it facilitates the growth and accumulation of Intellectual Capital within its operations. A conducive Organizational Culture cultivates an environment where knowledge, skills, and innovative ideas thrive, leading to the enhancement of Intellectual Capital resources. Consequently, investing in the development and maintenance of a favorable Organizational Culture can yield significant benefits by enriching the intellectual assets of the organization. This research is consistent with prior studies conducted by (Kucharska, 2021; Radu, 2023), which identified a favorable influence of organizational culture on intellectual capital.

The test results indicate that Trust has a positive impact on Employee Innovation Performance. This implies that when there is a higher level of trust among employees and with organizational leadership, it leads to an enhancement in employee innovation performance. Increased trust fosters an environment where individuals feel more comfortable taking risks, sharing ideas, and collaborating with others. As a result, employees are more motivated to innovate and contribute creatively to the organization's goals. Therefore, building and maintaining trust within the workplace is crucial for promoting a culture of innovation and driving overall organizational success. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of previous research by (Kmieciak, 2021), indicating that Trust positively influence Employee Innovation Performance.

The results of the hypothesis testing suggests that Trust positively influences Intellectual Capital. This implies that when there is a higher level of trust among employees, it fosters an environment conducive to the development and utilization of Intellectual Capital within the organization. Increased trust enhances collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovative thinking among employees, leading to the creation and leveraging of intellectual assets. Consequently, organizations with a strong culture of trust are better positioned to harness their intellectual resources effectively, driving innovation, problem-solving, and overall organizational performance. Thus, investing in building and maintaining trust among

employees is essential for nurturing Intellectual Capital and fostering organizational success. These findings corroborate prior studies by (Nhon et al., 2020; Uriguen Aguirre & Avolio Alecchi, 2023), indicating that Trust positively affects Intellectual Capital.

For the results of the hypothesis testing on indirect effects, the significant result indicates that Organizational Culture indirectly influences Employee Innovation Performance through its impact on Intellectual Capital. This finding underscores the pivotal role of Organizational Culture in shaping Intellectual Capital, which subsequently drives employee innovation performance. Essentially, a supportive and conducive organizational culture cultivates an environment where intellectual resources are developed, nurtured, and effectively utilized. Consequently, employees are empowered to innovate, collaborate, and contribute creatively to organizational goals. From a practical standpoint, organizations should prioritize initiatives aimed at fostering a positive and empowering organizational culture to stimulate the accumulation and utilization of intellectual capital. By doing so, they can enhance their capacity for innovation and adaptability, ultimately leading to improved performance and competitiveness in today's dynamic business landscape.

The results of the hypothesis testing suggests that Trust indirectly influences Employee Innovation Performance through its impact on Intellectual Capital. This implies that when there are higher levels of Trust among employees, it facilitates the accumulation and utilization of Intellectual Capital within the organization. As a result, this enhanced Intellectual Capital contributes to improved employee innovation performance. Essentially, fostering a culture of Trust within the organization can lead to the development of Intellectual Capital, which serves as a crucial resource for promoting innovation among employees. This highlights the importance of nurturing Trust to enhance overall innovation capabilities within the organization, ultimately contributing to its success and competitive advantage in the market.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study shed light on the complex interplay between organizational culture, trust, intellectual capital, and employee innovation performance. While organizational culture was found to have no significant direct effect on innovation performance, it positively influenced intellectual capital, which in turn indirectly enhanced employee innovation. Trust emerged as a critical factor positively impacting both intellectual capital and innovation performance, indicating its pivotal role in fostering a conducive work environment for innovation. These results underscore the importance of cultivating a supportive organizational culture and fostering trust among employees to nurture intellectual capital and drive innovation.

Organizations can leverage these insights to implement strategies aimed at promoting collaboration, knowledge sharing, and risk-taking, thereby enhancing their innovation capabilities and overall performance in today's competitive landscape. Further research may delve deeper into specific organizational practices and interventions that can effectively foster a culture of trust and intellectual capital accumulation to fuel innovation and sustained success.

One limitation of this study is its focus on a specific industry or organization type, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Additionally, the use of self-reported data via surveys may introduce response bias and social desirability bias. For future research, employing a longitudinal design to capture changes over time and incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups can provide deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms of the relationships examined. Exploring the moderating effects of contextual factors such as organizational size, industry dynamics, and cultural differences may also enrich our understanding of the complex dynamics at play. Furthermore, investigating the role of leadership styles or specific organizational practices in shaping trust, organizational culture, and intellectual capital can offer valuable insights for practitioners aiming to foster innovation and organizational success.

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