

Original Research

Received 24 May 2026

Revised 27 June 2026

Accepted 19 July 2026

Natural Resources for Human Health 2026, Vol. 6 (10s): 975–984

KEYWORDS:

organizational culture; strategic leadership; employee engagement; organizational innovation; Class IIA Kendari Detention Center.

The Mechanism of the Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Innovation: The Mediating Role of Strategic Leadership and Employee Involvement

Herianto^{1*}, Sudirman Zaid², Heryanti³, Laode Asfahyadin Aliddin⁴, Wahyuniati Hamid⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Halu Oleo University, Kendari, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: aheri9573@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the influence of organizational culture on organizational innovation through the mediation of strategic leadership and employee engagement at the Class IIA Kendari Detention Center. The study used a quantitative approach with a survey method of 73 employees and was analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results showed that organizational culture had a positive and significant effect on strategic leadership, employee engagement, and organizational innovation. Strategic leadership and employee engagement also had a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation and partially mediated the influence of organizational culture on organizational innovation. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening organizational culture, strategic leadership, and employee engagement in driving sustainable organizational innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of modern organizations requires every institution to be able to adapt to environmental changes through competent, adaptive, and innovative human resource management. Armstrong (2020) explains that human resource management is a strategic approach to achieving organizational goals. Barney (1991) through the *Resource-Based View* emphasizes that human resources are a valuable and difficult-to-imitate source of competitive advantage, while Schuler et al. (1992) place employees as the organization's primary asset. Furthermore, *Social Exchange Theory* by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) and Burgess and Issa (2015) explains that reciprocal relationships based on trust and organizational support can encourage employee engagement and organizational innovation. Organizational culture is an important factor in driving innovation because it functions as a system of values, norms, and beliefs that guide the behavior of organizational members. Daft (2005), Denison (2000), Cameron and Quinn (2011), Wallach (1983), Heskett (2011), and Schermerhorn et al. (2012) emphasize that a strong, adaptive, and goal-oriented organizational culture can increase employee engagement, strengthen strategic leadership, and encourage organizational innovation. Findings from Watunglawar and Christiananta (2015), Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024), Ababneh (2021), Abdullahi et al. (2021), Haryono and Eryanto (2021), Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022), Uyuğ Şengün and Tuğrul (2023), Abduraimi et al. (2023), Ashley and Brijball Parumasur (2024), Ismail et al. (2024), Mohammed et al. (2024), Liu and Hussain (2025), Soltani et al. (2011), Chen et al. (2018), Aman (2019), Azeem et al. (2021), Setyawasih and Buchdadi (2022), and Zhang et al. (2025) support this relationship, although Franata (2025) found different results.

In addition to organizational culture, strategic leadership and employee engagement are important factors in enhancing organizational innovation. Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2007) and Ireland and Hitt (1999) explain that strategic leadership is a leader's ability to anticipate change, maintain flexibility, empower employees, and direct the organization towards a sustainable future. Findings by Acosta-Prado et al. (2020), Ashkevari and Ghasemi (2023), and Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024) indicate that strategic leadership has a positive effect on organizational innovation and acts as a mediator. Meanwhile, Katz and Kahn (1978), Eldor (2016), and Rakhmah (2020) emphasize that employee engagement reflects the physical, emotional, and cognitive

attachment that drives innovative behavior. Research by Aman (2019), Palumbo (2021), Setyawasih and Buchdadi (2022), Dalain (2023), and Shkurti and Mustafa (2024) also demonstrates that employee engagement positively influences organizational innovation and acts as a mediator. This research expands on Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024) by adding employee engagement as a mediating variable and developing a more comprehensive measurement of organizational innovation through indicators, thus providing a key novelty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is essentially a set of values, beliefs, norms, assumptions, and principles that are mutually agreed upon and serve as guidelines for the behavior of organizational members in achieving common goals. Wallach (1983) explains that organizational culture is reflected in a bureaucratic, innovative, and supportive culture that shapes the character of the organization. Triandis (1994), Denison (1990), and Robbins (1994) emphasize that culture functions as a collective identity that unites the thought patterns, actions, and behaviors of organizational members. In line with this, Trompenaars et al. (2004), Schein (2004; 2010), and Daft (2005) view organizational culture as a shared personality and pattern of assumptions that guide the way members think, act, and adapt to change. Furthermore, Poškienė (2006) and Stone et al. (2007) emphasize that organizational culture is a source of excellence, innovation, and shaping the social and psychological environment of the organization. Cameron and Quinn (2011) also stated that a positive and adaptive culture can increase innovation and performance, while Heskett (2011) positions culture as a behavioral control mechanism that maintains the consistency and sustainability of the organization.

2.2 Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership is essentially a leader's ability to create direction, anticipate change, manage resources, and drive an organization toward long-term sustainability. House and Aditya (1997), Ireland and Hitt (1999), and Rowe (2001) emphasize that strategic leadership focuses on creating vision, flexibility, and the ability to influence individuals in support of organizational goals. Guillot (2003), Amos (2007), Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2007), and Bass (2007) add that strategic leaders must be able to understand complex environments, empower employees, and integrate resources effectively. Meanwhile, Rowe and Nejad (2009), Carter and Greer (2013), and Hooijberg and Lane (2015) emphasize that strategic leadership is not only related to the ability to communicate vision and drive change, but also translate that vision into concrete actions through learning, adaptation, collaboration, and strong interpersonal skills to create an innovative and sustainable organization.

2.3 Employee Engagement

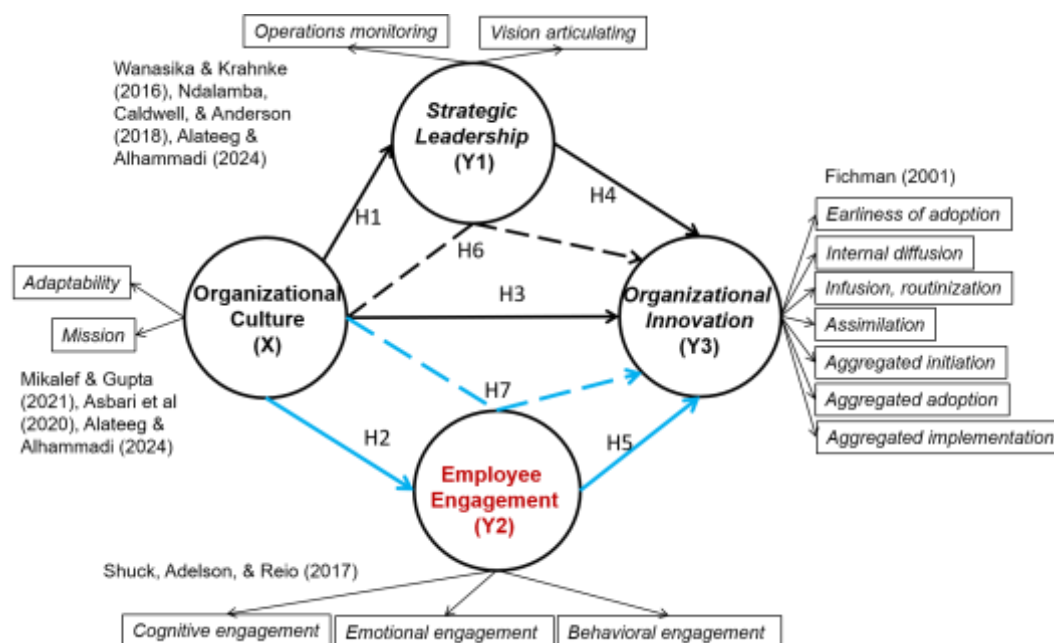
Employee engagement is a condition where individuals demonstrate positive attitudes, commitment, and active participation in their work and the organization where they work. Kular et al. (2008) explain that engaged employees have a positive attitude towards their work, while Purcell et al. (2003) emphasize the importance of a clear division of responsibility between management and employees in decision-making. Truss et al. (2006) and Lucas et al. (2006) emphasize that the opportunity to express opinions (employee voice) is an important factor in increasing employee engagement and organizational performance. Robinson (2006), Beardwell and Claydon (2007), Hyman and Mason (1995), and Blyton and Turnbull (2004) state that employee engagement is related to the level of employee participation, empowerment, and influence in their work. In addition, Appelbaum et al. (2005), Robinson (2006), and Fox (1974) explain that employee involvement is reflected through the use of discretion, initiative, and responsibility in carrying out work, so as to encourage greater contributions to the effectiveness and success of the organization.

2.4 Organizational Innovation

Organizational innovation is an organization's ability to create, develop, adopt, and implement new ideas, methods, processes, or practices that benefit the organization. Peters and Waterman (1982) view innovation as an organization's response to environmental change, while West and Farr (1990), Damanpour (1991), Rogers (1995), and West and Anderson (1996) emphasize that innovation encompasses the process from creation to implementation of new ideas that provide value to both individuals and the organization. Subramanian and Nilakanta (1996) categorize innovation into technological and administrative innovation, while Johannessen, Olsen, and Lumpkin (2001) emphasize that innovation is not only related to technology, but also management practices. Fichman (2001) states that the ability to innovate is a critical factor for organizational success.

Similarly, the OECD (2005) defines organizational innovation as the application of new methods in business practices, organizational management, and external relations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and competitiveness of an organization.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



2.5 Research Hypotheses

- H1. Organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on strategic leadership.
- H2. Organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement.
- H3. Organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation.
- H4. Strategic leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation.
- H5. Employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation.
- H6. Strategic leadership plays a role in mediating the influence of organizational culture on organizational innovation.
- H7. Employee engagement plays a role in mediating the influence of organizational culture on organizational innovation.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the relationship between organizational culture, strategic leadership, employee engagement, and organizational innovation at the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. The study population consisted of 73 employees, all of whom were respondents through a census method. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method using SmartPLS. The analysis includes testing the outer model (validity and reliability) and the inner model (R^2 , Q^2 , and hypothesis testing). Organizational culture was measured through adaptability and mission, strategic leadership through operations monitoring and vision articulating, employee engagement through cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement, and organizational innovation through eight indicators of organizational innovation.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Discriminant Validity

Table 1. AVE, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$, and correlation values between latent variables

Variabel Penelitian	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	Korelasi			
			X	Y1	Y2	Y3
Organizational culture (X)	0.993	0,996	1,000			
Strategic leadership (Y1)	0.981	0,991	0.952	0.822		
Employee engagement (Y2)	0.787	0,887	0.889	0.934	1,000	
Organizational innovation (Y3)	0.972	0,986	0.961	0.822	0,892	1,000

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

Based on Table 1, all variables have met the discriminant validity criteria because they have a higher $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ value compared to the correlation with other variables. The $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ value for organizational culture is 0.996, strategic leadership 0.991, employee engagement 0.887, and organizational innovation 0.986. Thus, all constructs are declared valid and suitable for use in further analysis.

4.2 Composite Reliability

Table 2. Results of measurement model reliability testing

Variabel Penelitian	Composite Reliability	Hasil
Organizational culture (X)	0.996	Reliabel
Strategic leadership (Y1)	0.991	Reliabel
Employee engagement (Y2)	0.917	Reliabel
Organizational innovation (Y3)	0.996	Reliabel

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

Based on Table 2, all variables have composite reliability values above 0.70, namely organizational culture (0.996), strategic leadership (0.991), employee engagement (0.917), and organizational innovation (0.996). Thus, all constructs are declared reliable and suitable for use in further analysis.

4.3 R Square

Table 3. R-square test results

Model Struktural	Variabel Penelitian	R-square
1	Strategic leadership (Y1)	0.904
2	Employee engagement (Y2)	0.786
3	Organizational innovation (Y3)	0.934

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

Based on the calculation results, a Q^2 value of 0.998 was obtained, indicating that the model has very high predictive power. This means that the variables of organizational culture, strategic leadership, and employee engagement are able to explain variations in organizational innovation very strongly. Thus, the research model has excellent predictive relevance and is suitable for use in hypothesis testing and drawing research conclusions.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Hypothesis testing

Direct influence between research variables		Path Coefficient	P Value	Results
H1	Organizational culture on strategic leadership	0.952	0.000	Accepted
H2	Organizational culture on employee engagement	0.889	0.000	Accepted
H3	Organizational culture on organizational innovation	0.532	0.002	Accepted
H4	Strategic leadership on organizational innovation	0.258	0.040	Accepted
H5	Employee engagement on organizational innovation	0.207	0.014	Accepted
H6	The Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Innovation, Mediated by Strategic Leadership	0.246	0.038	Accepted
H7	The Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Innovation, Mediated by Employee Engagement	0.184	0.016	Accepted

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The Influence of Organizational Culture on Strategic Leadership

Based on the research results, organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on strategic leadership at the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. A strong organizational culture, reflected in mission clarity and adaptability, enhances leadership effectiveness in directing and communicating organizational goals. The dominance of the mission indicator and vision articulating indicator indicates alignment between organizational values and leadership direction. These findings support Social Exchange Theory and the views of Schein (2004), Wallach (1983), Omama Koranteng et al. (2022), Shea et al. (2021), Serfontein (2010), and Ashkevari and Ghasemi (2023), and reinforce previous studies by Watunglawar and Christiananta (2015) and Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024).

5.2 The Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Engagement

Based on the research results, organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement at the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. A strong organizational culture, particularly through mission clarity and adaptability, encourages employees to be more focused, committed, and actively involved in their work. This finding is reflected in the dominance of the mission indicator in organizational culture and cognitive engagement in employee engagement. The results support the views of Stone et al. (2007), Kular et al. (2008), Cameron and Quinn (2011), Benthall (2006), Hewitt (2008), and Robbins and Coulter (2016), and are consistent with previous studies that found organizational culture significantly enhances employee engagement.

5.3 The Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Innovation

Based on the research results, organizational culture has a positive and significant influence on organizational innovation in the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. This finding indicates that a strong organizational culture, particularly through mission clarity and adaptability, can encourage the creation of an innovative work environment. The dominance of mission indicators in organizational culture and aggregate implementation on organizational innovation indicates that a clear organizational direction supports the successful implementation of sustainable innovation. This finding is in line with the views of Poškienė (2006), West and Farr (1990), Cameron and Quinn (2011), Heskett (2011), Damanpour (1991), and Rogers (1995), and strengthens the research results of Soltani et al. (2011), Chen et al. (2018), Aman (2019), Azeem et al. (2021), Setyawasih and Buchdadi (2022), Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024), and Zhang et al. (2025).

5.4 The Influence of Strategic Leadership on Organizational Innovation

Based on the research results, strategic leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation at the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. This finding indicates that leadership's ability to oversee operations and communicate the

organization's vision can encourage sustainable innovation. The dominance of the vision articulation and aggregated adoption indicators indicates that clarity of organizational direction supports the successful adoption and implementation of innovation. These results align with the views of Serfontein (2010), House and Aditya (1997), Ireland and Hitt (1999), Razavi and Attarnezhad (2013), and Büschgens et al. (2013), and reinforce the findings of Acosta-Prado et al. (2020), Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024), and Ashkevari and Ghasemi (2023).

5.5 The Influence of Employee Engagement on Organizational Innovation

Based on the research results, employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on organizational innovation at the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. This finding indicates that the higher the employee engagement, both cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally, the higher the organization's ability to create, adopt, and implement innovation. The dominance of cognitive engagement and aggregated implementation indicators indicates that employee focus, commitment, and active participation are important factors in the success of organizational innovation. This finding aligns with the views of Katz and Kahn (1978), Hewitt (2008), Damanpour (1991), Schneider (2008), Soane et al. (2012), and strengthens the research findings of Aman (2019), Palumbo (2021), Setyawasih and Buchdadi (2022), Dalain (2023), and Shkurti and Mustafa (2024).

5.6 The Mediating Role of Strategic Leadership

Based on the research results, strategic leadership was proven to mediate the influence of organizational culture on organizational innovation at the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. This finding indicates that a strong organizational culture, particularly through mission clarity and adaptability, can encourage innovation directly and through the leadership's role in articulating the vision and directing the organization. The dominance of mission, vision articulation, and aggregated adoption indicators indicates a synergy between organizational culture, strategic leadership, and innovation. This finding aligns with the views of Wallach (1983), Schein (2004), Serfontein (2010), Ireland and Hitt (1999), House and Aditya (1997), Damanpour (1991), and West and Farr (1990), and strengthens the research findings of Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024), although the mediation found in this study is partial.

5.7 The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

Based on the research results, employee engagement was proven to mediate the influence of organizational culture on organizational innovation at the Kendari Class IIA Detention Center. This finding indicates that a strong organizational culture, particularly through mission clarity, can increase employee engagement, reflected in high cognitive engagement, thereby encouraging the successful adoption and implementation of innovation. However, the direct influence of organizational culture on innovation is greater than the indirect influence through employee engagement, so the mediation is partial. This finding supports the views of Schein (2004), Robbins and Coulter (2016), Kahn (1990), Soane et al. (2012), Schneider (2008), Damanpour (1991), Rogers (1995), West and Farr (1990), Young (2012), and Wellins and Concelman (2004), and strengthens the research findings of Setyawasih and Buchdadi (2022).

6. RESEARCH NOVELTY

The novelty of this study lies in the addition of employee engagement as a mediating variable in the relationship between organizational culture and organizational innovation, which is an extension of the research by Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024) which only used strategic leadership as a mediator. The results demonstrate that employee engagement acts as a partial mediator, thus indicating that organizational innovation is influenced not only by leadership but also by the level of employee engagement in their work. Furthermore, this study develops a more comprehensive measurement of organizational innovation through several indicators, thus providing a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of organizational innovation formation.

7. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study need to be understood so that the results can be interpreted more proportionally. First, the study was conducted only at the Class IIA Kendari Detention Center, so the generalizability of the results to other organizations is still limited. Second, the use of a quantitative approach through questionnaires causes the data to rely heavily on respondents' perceptions, potentially introducing subjective bias. Third, the research model only accommodates the variables of organizational culture, strategic leadership, employee engagement, and organizational innovation, thus failing to consider other variables that could potentially influence organizational innovation, such as the work environment and emotional intelligence.

Fourth, the study used a cross-sectional design, thus not being able to describe the dynamics of relationships between variables in the long term.

8. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on strategic leadership, employee engagement, and organizational innovation. Furthermore, strategic leadership and employee engagement also have a positive effect on organizational innovation and act as partial mediators in the relationship between organizational culture and organizational innovation. Based on these findings, the Class IIA Kendari Detention Center needs to improve aspects of adaptability, operations monitoring, behavioral engagement, and internal diffusion through ongoing training, strengthening communication, increasing employee participation, and disseminating innovations between work units to support the creation of more effective, sustainable, and performance-oriented organizational innovations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors acknowledge the institutional support provided during the completion of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, investigation, analysis, writing, review, and approval of the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study involved a non-interventional organizational survey. Participant responses were handled confidentially and used solely for research purposes.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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