

FACTORS INFLUENCING INNOVATION PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN HUAWEI COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

The rapidly evolving global business landscape, characterized by technological advancements and intensifying market competition, necessitates continuous innovation for companies to remain competitive. In this context, human capital, comprising the expertise, abilities, and experiential knowledge of the workforce, plays a pivotal role in driving innovation. This study explores the influence of employees' cultural quotient (CQ), employee inclusion, and knowledge sharing on innovation performance within Huawei, a leading global technology firm. Utilizing a quantitative research methodology, the research examines how these factors interconnect and affect innovation outcomes at Huawei's headquarters in Shenzhen, China. The findings reveal that CQ significantly impacts innovation performance both directly and through its positive effects on employee inclusion and knowledge sharing, which serve as critical mediators. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural quotient and organizational practices interact to enhance innovation, offering actionable insights for companies seeking to leverage human capital for competitive advantage.

Keywords: Cultural Quotient (CQ), Employee Inclusion, Knowledge Sharing

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INTRODUCTION

The modern business landscape is swiftly evolving due to rapid advancements in technology, expanding global connections, and intensified market competition. These changes necessitate that firms continuously innovate to sustain competitiveness and viability over the long term. Scholars such as ALHussan et al. (2021) and Broadstock et al. (2020) argue that beyond technical and financial capabilities, a firm's innovation potential significantly hinges on its human capital, namely, the collective expertise, abilities, and experiential knowledge of its workforce.

In this context, recent academic interest has surged around the elements influencing employees' innovation performance. Particular attention has been paid to cultural quotient (CQ), employee inclusion, and knowledge sharing—factors believed to critically shape the innovative capabilities within organizations.

Cultural quotient or cultural quotient, as defined by Yang (2021), measures an individual's ability to grasp and adapt to various cultural contexts. With workplaces becoming more diverse, the ability of employees to effectively navigate and collaborate across different cultural landscapes is paramount. High CQ enables employees to merge varied perspectives into their workflow, which is essential for generating rich, diverse ideas—an indispensable component of innovation.

Similarly, inclusion within the workplace is increasingly seen as a cornerstone for fostering an innovative environment. According to Mark et al. (2019), an inclusive setting is one where all employees feel valued, respected, and positioned to succeed equally. This sense of security and belonging encourages employees to express their ideas freely, contributing to a culture where innovation can thrive. Inclusive environments have been linked to enhanced job satisfaction, heightened creativity, and a more robust willingness among staff to exchange knowledge—each fostering an atmosphere conducive to innovation.

Moreover, knowledge sharing is recognized as a critical organizational process. Singh et al. (2021) highlight that the act of exchanging knowledge, ranging from technical skills to industry insights, among employees facilitates the spread of innovative ideas across the organization. Effective knowledge sharing is particularly vital for innovation as it allows for the combination and recombination of ideas, potentially leading to groundbreaking solutions.

Despite the growing body of literature exploring these individual factors, there remains a relative scarcity of research examining the interconnections between Cultural quotient, employee inclusion, and knowledge sharing, and their collective impact on innovation performance. This research endeavor seeks to address this gap by exploring how these elements interact within various organizational contexts to shape innovation outcomes. This exploration is crucial for crafting strategies that effectively leverage these dynamics to bolster innovation. In summary, as businesses strive to navigate the complexities of a globalized and competitive environment, understanding and harnessing the potential of human capital through CQ, employee inclusion, and knowledge sharing becomes increasingly crucial. This research not only aims to elucidate the synergies between these factors but also to offer actionable guidance for organizations looking to sustain and enhance their innovative capacities. Through this, it hopes to contribute valuable perspectives to the ongoing discussions on fostering innovation in the modern corporate landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Studies on employees' cultural quotient and innovation performance

Zhao (2024) investigates the relationship between cultural quotient (CQ) and innovation performance in organizations, focusing on the cognitive and motivational dimensions of CQ. The study employs a rigorous methodology, administering standardized tests to evaluate the CQ of employees and analyzing how these scores correlate with their contributions to

innovation in product development and process improvements. The research finds that employees with higher CQs tend to possess enhanced problem-solving skills and greater adaptability when working in culturally diverse environments. These capabilities facilitate more effective collaboration within multicultural teams, which is essential for driving innovation. The findings underscore the importance of CQ in fostering an innovative organizational culture and suggest that companies should prioritize CQ development as part of their strategic initiatives to boost innovation performance.

Irfan and Siddiqui (2020) explore how cultural quotient influences creativity and the capacity for innovation among employees in global settings. They argue that CQ not only aids in adapting and thriving in diverse environments but also enhances an individual's capacity to synthesize varying cultural perspectives into unified, innovative outcomes. The study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining case studies with empirical research to gather insights. The results indicate that high levels of CQ correlate with increased creativity and innovation, as employees proficient in cultural intelligence are better equipped to navigate and amalgamate diverse cultural viewpoints. This skill is particularly valuable in global research and development teams, where the integration of diverse perspectives is crucial. The research highlights CQ as a critical asset for organizations seeking to enhance their innovative capabilities in a globalized business landscape.

These studies contribute significantly to the existing literature by illustrating the tangible benefits of CQ on innovation and creativity within companies. They provide a compelling argument for the strategic enhancement of CQ among employees to foster a more innovative and adaptive workforce capable of meeting the challenges of a global market.

Studies on cultural quotient and employee inclusion

Alexandra (2023) presents a thorough examination of how cultural quotient acts as a bridge to employee inclusion in diverse organizational settings. The research uses a mixed-methods approach, employing both surveys and interviews to gather data as well as argues that managers with high levels of CQ are notably effective at recognizing and utilizing the varied skills and perspectives of their team members. This capability is key to forming inclusive teams where every member feels valued and understood. The results suggest that CQ not only facilitates better interpersonal relationships but also boosts organizational commitment and job satisfaction among employees from diverse backgrounds. The findings emphasize the importance of cultural quotient in enhancing inclusive practices, suggesting that CQ training for managers could significantly improve team dynamics and overall workplace cohesion.

Paiuc (2021) adopts a purely quantitative research approach to explore the direct impacts of cultural quotient on employee inclusion. By measuring CQ levels across a spectrum of employees and correlating these levels with their self-reported feelings of inclusivity, Paiuc finds a positive association between high CQ and enhanced perceptions of being valued within the organization. According to the study, employees with higher CQ scores demonstrate a superior ability to navigate cultural differences, which plays a fundamental role in cultivating an inclusive atmosphere. This competency enables them to engage more effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, thus promoting a sense of belonging and mutual respect. The study concludes that for organizations aiming to bolster inclusion, it is essential to focus on enhancing the cultural quotient at all hierarchical levels.

Both studies underscore the transformative impact of cultural quotient on creating and sustaining inclusive workplaces. These studies furnish a comprehensive understanding of how CQ not only facilitates day-to-day interactions but also aligns closely with broader organizational goals of diversity and inclusion.

Studies on employee inclusion and innovation performance

Chaudhry et al. (2021) explore the relationship between inclusive organizational practices and their effects on innovation performance across various industries. Their study posits that

inclusivity, defined as the degree to which employees feel valued and actively included in key organizational processes, plays a critical role in boosting collective creativity and openness to sharing innovative ideas. Utilizing a broad multi-industry survey, the study presents compelling evidence that teams characterized by high levels of inclusivity tend to exhibit superior performance in tasks requiring innovation. The underlying mechanism, according to their findings, is the empowerment of employees from diverse backgrounds to contribute their unique insights, thereby catalyzing creative solutions and fostering a robust culture of innovation. This research substantiates the notion that cultivating an inclusive environment is pivotal for enhancing an organization's innovative capacities.

Javed et al. (2021) analyze the nexus between diversity management, employee inclusion, and innovation outcomes, emphasizing the importance of inclusive management practices in harnessing the potential of a diverse workforce. Their research underscores that merely having a diverse team is insufficient for achieving high innovation performance. Instead, how diversity is managed and integrated into the innovation process plays a decisive role. The study demonstrates that organizations with strong inclusion practices not only heighten their innovation output but also maintain these high levels consistently over time. Key insights from the research suggest that inclusive practices serve as a critical mediating factor between workforce diversity and innovative performance, reinforcing the idea that effective management of diversity through inclusive practices is essential for fostering sustainable innovation within organizations.

Both studies reinforce the critical role of inclusion as a mediator in translating diversity into tangible innovative performance, advocating for proactive inclusion strategies in organizational processes.

Studies on cultural quotient and knowledge sharing

Li et al. (2011) explore the connection between cultural quotient and knowledge sharing and propose that employees with higher CQ are more likely to engage in knowledge sharing due to their ability to overcome cross-cultural barriers and their greater understanding of different cultural norms and practices. The research utilizes a mixed-method approach, incorporating both surveys and interviews, to assess the levels of CQ among employees and their participation in knowledge sharing activities. The findings indicate that particularly the metacognitive and motivational components of CQ play significant roles in facilitating knowledge exchange across cultural divides. This research underscores the importance of cultural quotient in managing and harnessing the diverse knowledge bases present within global organizations.

Stoermer et al. (2021) analyze how cultural quotient affects interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing among team members in culturally diverse teams. They argue that high CQ enables individuals to more effectively interpret and respond to the cultural cues of their colleagues, which builds interpersonal trust. The study uses statistical analysis to link CQ scores with measures of trust and the frequency and quality of knowledge sharing within teams. Results reveal that individuals with higher CQ are better equipped to build trust with culturally diverse team members, which in turn significantly enhances knowledge sharing practices. The study contributes to the understanding of how cultural quotient serves as a pivotal factor in fostering effective communication and collaboration in diverse teams.

Both studies underscore the importance of developing high cultural quotient within organizations to enhance collaborative efforts and optimize knowledge management processes. These insights are valuable for global companies seeking to harness the full potential of their culturally diverse workforce and for training programs aimed at enhancing employees' cultural competencies.

Studies on knowledge Sharing and Innovation Performance

Setini et al. (2020) investigate the impact of knowledge sharing on innovation performance across various industries. They theorize that the dissemination of knowledge within organizations leads to increased innovation by fostering an environment where ideas can be combined and improved upon. Their methodology includes a survey distributed to employees across different sectors, analyzing the correlation between the extent of knowledge sharing practices and the rate of innovative outputs. The findings reveal that organizations with structured processes for sharing knowledge experience a higher incidence of successful innovation projects. The study emphasizes that the sharing of tacit knowledge, such as personal experiences and insights, is particularly influential in enhancing innovation performance.

Singh et al. (2021) focus on how knowledge sharing contributes to innovation performance by enhancing the creative processes within firms. This research examines the cultural and motivational factors that encourage or inhibit knowledge sharing and how these, in turn, affect innovation. The study utilizes a comprehensive questionnaire to assess employees' attitudes toward knowledge sharing, including perceived benefits and organizational support, alongside measures of innovation performance. The analysis indicates a strong link between active knowledge sharing and the level of creativity in product development and problem-solving processes. Key findings suggest that fostering a supportive culture for sharing knowledge is crucial for stimulating innovative thinking and execution.

Both studies contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of knowledge sharing as a critical lever for innovation. These findings not only reinforce the necessity for organizations to implement effective knowledge management strategies but also spotlight the broader implications of organizational culture and employee motivation in sustaining innovation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs the quantitative research method, utilizing a structured, systematic approach to understand the relationships and impacts among Cultural Quotient, Employee Inclusion, Knowledge Sharing, and Innovation Performance at Huawei's headquarters in Shenzhen, China. This methodological choice aligns with the research objective to quantify the interactions between these variables and to generalize the findings across a larger population. Quantitative research method is essential in this study to provide measurable and statistically valid results that can be generalized to the broader population of Huawei's multinational environment. The quantitative approach allows for the precise measurement of relationships between variables, employing statistical techniques to validate hypotheses and infer causations. This method's strength lies in its ability to produce reliable data that can support evidence-based conclusions and decisions within organizational contexts.

The population consists of Huawei's employees at its Shenzhen headquarters. Given the company's extensive employee base, which includes a diverse mix of cultural backgrounds, this setting is ideal for exploring the dynamics of CQ, employee inclusion, knowledge sharing and their effects on innovation performance. The sample size has been strategically calculated to be 300 employees, based on Ma et al.'s (2022) recommendation of having a sample size at least 20 times the number of observational variables, which totals 13 in this study.

Stratified random sampling will be employed to ensure representation across different departments, levels, and backgrounds, reflecting the company's diverse workforce. This method improves the study's accuracy and reduces sampling bias, providing a more precise estimate of population parameters. The data will be collected using a structured questionnaire, administered through the online platform Wenjuanxing, ensuring efficient distribution and ease of participation for the employees. The questionnaire will be divided into sections to capture both demographic data and responses to the observational variables, using a Likert scale for response consistency and analysis simplicity.

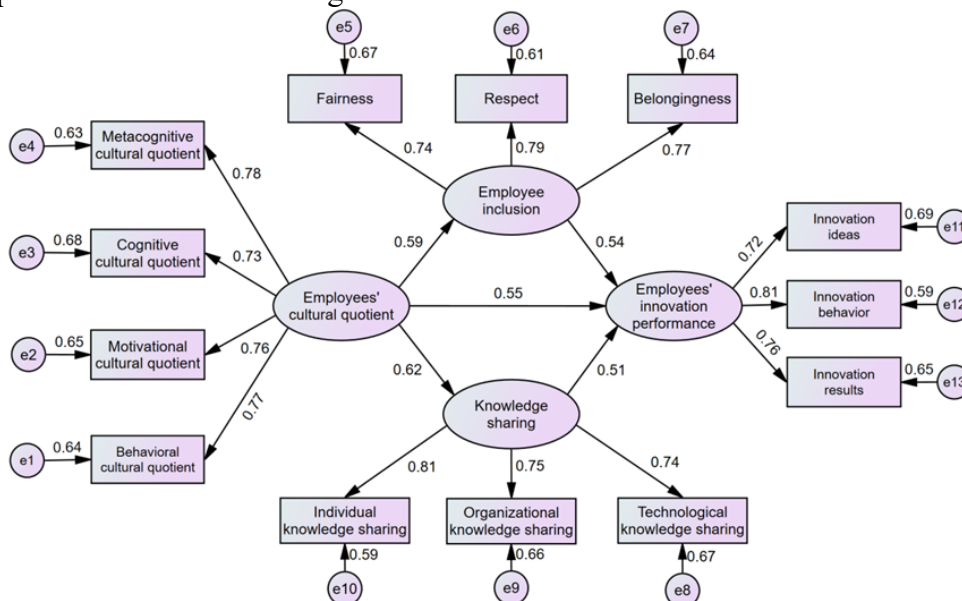
Variable measurement will focus on the detailed operationalization of the four main constructs, including CQ, Employee Inclusion, Knowledge Sharing, and Innovation Performance. Each construct will be broken down into observable dimensions, such as Metacognitive and Cognitive CQ or individual and organizational knowledge sharing, with items developed from validated scales and adapted for this specific context. The design of the questionnaire items will reflect the theoretical underpinnings discussed in the literature review, ensuring that they accurately measure the intended constructs.

The primary data analysis will be conducted using SEM to explore the structural relationships between the variables and to test the hypothesized model. This technique is suitable for complex models involving multiple variables and can elucidate both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. Preliminary data handling, including cleaning and initial analyses, will be performed using Microsoft Excel, while SPSS will be employed for detailed statistical testing, including tests of normality, descriptive statistics, and the computation of reliability indices.

The quantitative research design is crafted to robustly test the relationships between Cultural Quotient, Employee Inclusion, Knowledge Sharing, and Innovation Performance within a major global technology firm. The careful consideration of sampling methods, data collection procedures, and statistical analyses ensures that the findings will be reliable and can significantly contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of these dynamics within multinational corporate settings. This comprehensive methodological approach not only addresses the primary research objectives but also sets a foundation for future research in similar contexts.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In order to conduct the subsequent analysis process, the study utilized some symbols to represent latent variables of the study, including ECQ (employees' cultural quotient), EI (employee inclusion), KS (knowledge sharing) and EIP (employees' innovation performance). The study employed SEM (structural equation model) path analysis to investigate the influence of employees' cultural quotient on employees' innovation performance with the mediating roles of employee inclusion and knowledge sharing in Huawei Company, with analysis results presented in table 1 and figure 1.



Chi-Square = 578.743; df = 128; Chi-Square/df = 4.521; p-value = .000; GFI = .977; AGFI = .954; NFI = .966; CFI = .994; RMR = .038; RMSEA = .045

Figure 1 Structural equation model

Table 1 SEM path analysis results

Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Std path coefficient	Results
ECQ--->EIP	0.651	0.056	11.625	***	0.549	Confirmed
ECQ--->EI	0.692	0.061	11.344	***	0.588	Confirmed
EI-->EIP	0.639	0.059	10.831	***	0.537	Confirmed
ECQ--->KS	0.722	0.068	10.618	***	0.618	Confirmed
KS---> EIP	0.613	0.060	10.217	***	0.507	Confirmed

In analyzing the structural equation modeling (SEM) path results from Huawei's data, the study confronts an intricate web of relationships among several latent variables: Employees' Cultural Quotient (ECQ), Employee Inclusion (EI), Knowledge Sharing (KS), and Employees' Innovation Performance (EIP). This analysis not only reveals the empirical robustness of these relationships through statistical validation but also compels one to consider the underlying dynamics of organizational behavior and its implications for innovation.

The path from Employees' Cultural Quotient to Employees' Innovation Performance, with a coefficient of 0.651, strongly indicates that a high cultural quotient among employees significantly enhances their innovative capabilities. Supported by a critical ratio of 11.625 and a highly significant p-value, this finding highlights the fundamental role of cultural quotient in the innovative processes within the firm. It suggests that the ability to understand and integrate diverse cultural perspectives is central to fostering an environment conducive to innovation.

Furthermore, the pathway from ECQ to EI, with a coefficient of 0.692, demonstrates that a strong cultural quotient markedly boosts feelings of inclusion within the workforce. The high critical ratio and the significance level underscore that cultural quotient is instrumental in creating an inclusive atmosphere where employees from diverse backgrounds feel valued and integrated. This pathway suggests that cultural quotient is not merely a facilitator but a critical driver of inclusive practices within corporate culture, which are essential for nurturing a supportive environment that is ripe for innovation.

The analysis also delineates a significant positive impact of Employee Inclusion on Innovation Performance, as evidenced by a coefficient of 0.639. This statistically significant relationship, affirmed by a critical ratio of 10.831, indicates that inclusion directly enhances the innovative output of employees. It reveals that practices fostering an inclusive environment are not just ethically desirable but are strategically vital in maximizing the innovative potential of the workforce, leveraging a diverse array of ideas and perspectives that drive creative solutions.

The relationship between ECQ and KS, represented by the highest path coefficient of 0.722, asserts that a high cultural quotient is crucial for facilitating effective knowledge sharing across the organization. The strong critical ratio and p-value affirm the significant role of cultural quotient in promoting the flow of knowledge, which is foundational to innovation. This suggests that a well-developed cultural quotient enables employees to more effectively share, interpret, and utilize knowledge across cultural boundaries, enhancing the organization's overall innovative capacity.

The path from Knowledge Sharing to Innovation Performance, with a coefficient of 0.613, underscores the vital role of knowledge sharing in fostering innovation. The statistical robustness of this path demonstrates that the mechanisms enabling knowledge sharing within the organization are critical mediators that transform cultural quotient and inclusivity into tangible innovative outcomes.

Each path elucidated by the SEM model highlights the pivotal role of cultural quotient in shaping organizational dynamics that foster innovation. The findings compel us to consider how structural elements and cultural practices interconnect to create an environment where innovation is not just possible but actively encouraged and sustained. This reflection on the

data invites broader consideration of how enhancing cultural quotient, inclusivity, and knowledge sharing can serve as strategic levers for boosting innovation within corporate settings.

The research aims to investigate the effects of employees' cultural quotient, employee inclusion, and knowledge sharing on Huawei's innovation performance, focusing on the roles of employee inclusion and knowledge sharing as mediators. The study applied the Bootstrap technique as delineated by Kim et al. (2023), which involves 5,000 iterations of resampling to provide a statistically solid foundation for the mediation analysis. According to the criteria set forth by Kim and colleagues, a mediation effect is considered statistically significant if the 95% confidence interval for the point estimate does not encompass zero. The findings from this analysis are presented in Table 2, detailing the mediating impacts of employee inclusion and knowledge sharing on innovation performance.

Table 2 Mediating effect analysis results

Standard effect	Path	Effect coefficient	95% confidence interval		S.E.	P-value	Results
			Lower	Upper			
Total effect	ECQ--->EIP	0.865	0.812	0.918	0.027	***	Mediation effect
Direct effect	ECQ--->EIP	0.549	0.502	0.596	0.024	***	
Indirect effect	ECQ--->EI--->EIP	0.316	0.275	0.357	0.021	***	
Total effect	ECQ--->EIP	0.862	0.811	0.913	0.026	***	Mediation effect
Direct effect	ECQ--->EIP	0.549	0.502	0.596	0.024	***	
Indirect effect	ECQ--->KS--->EIP	0.313	0.270	0.356	0.022	***	

In analyzing the relationship between employees' cultural quotient (ECQ) and their innovation performance (EIP), employee inclusion (EI) was considered as a potential mediating factor. The statistical analysis yielded significant results, all confirmed with a 95% confidence level. Specifically, the total effect of ECQ on EIP, inclusive of EI, presented a confidence interval ranging from 0.812 to 0.918. The direct effect of ECQ on EIP, independent of EI, showed a narrower confidence interval from 0.502 to 0.596. Additionally, the indirect effect through EI was quantified with a confidence interval between 0.275 and 0.357. The exclusion of zero from all these confidence intervals confirms the substantial mediating role of employee inclusion in strengthening the connection between employees' cultural quotient and their innovation performance.

Considering knowledge sharing (KS) as a mediating factor in the relationship between employees' cultural quotient (ECQ) and their innovation performance (EIP), the study yields significant results, validated with a 95% confidence level. The total effect of ECQ on EIP, incorporating the mediating role of KS, reveals a confidence interval between 0.811 and 0.913. This interval confirms the substantial overall influence of ECQ on EIP through KS. The direct effect of ECQ on EIP, independent of KS, is also significant, with a confidence interval ranging from 0.502 to 0.596. Furthermore, the indirect effect via KS shows a confidence interval from 0.270 to 0.356. The exclusion of zero from all these intervals robustly supports the hypothesis that KS significantly mediates the relationship between ECQ and EIP.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study at Huawei reveal a significant positive impact of employees' cultural quotient (ECQ) on their innovation performance (EIP), a relationship that resonates with prior research in the field. According to Earley and Ang (2003), cultural quotient or cultural quotient is a critical determinant that enhances an individual's adaptability to diverse cultural contexts, thus fostering innovative behaviors. This is relevant in multinational corporations where diverse cultural interactions are commonplace. Ott and Michailova (2018) also confirm that individuals with high cultural quotient are better equipped to generate novel ideas and apply

creative solutions in multicultural environments, a conclusion that mirrors the outcomes observed in Huawei's workforce.

Moreover, the relationship between cultural quotient and innovation performance is further supported by Bückner and Poutsma (2010), who argue that cultural quotient facilitates the cognitive processes necessary for creative thinking and problem-solving in international business settings. These perspectives collectively underscore the results from Huawei, suggesting that investing in cultural quotient training could significantly bolster innovation outcomes.

The findings highlight employee inclusion (EI) as a significant mediator between ECQ and EIP, which aligns with the theoretical perspectives suggested by Shore et al. (2011). They propose that inclusion in the workplace leads to higher levels of employee engagement and motivation, which are crucial for innovation. The psychological safety that inclusive environments provide allows employees to express their ideas freely and contribute uniquely, thereby enhancing the overall innovative capacity of the organization. This mediation effect is further corroborated by Mor Barak and Cherin (1998), who demonstrate that an inclusive workplace encourages a diversity of thoughts and ideas, significantly impacting the organization's ability to innovate and adapt to market changes. Therefore, the findings at Huawei provide practical insights into how fostering an inclusive culture can be a strategic approach to amplify innovation performance.

The mediating role of KS in the relationship between ECQ and EIP is significant. This mediation aligns with the findings of Lin (2007), who indicates that knowledge sharing acts as a bridge that links various individual competencies (like cultural quotient) to organizational performance outcomes such as innovation. The ability of culturally intelligent employees to navigate and bridge diverse cultural understandings greatly enhances their capability to share relevant knowledge, which in turn fosters an innovative organizational climate.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant impact of employees' cultural quotient (CQ), inclusion, and knowledge sharing on enhancing innovation performance at Huawei. The findings demonstrate that a high CQ not only directly contributes to innovation but also facilitates it through fostering inclusive environments and robust knowledge exchange among employees. This mediation effect, substantiated through statistical analysis, underscores the strategic importance of nurturing a culturally intelligent workforce, fostering inclusivity, and promoting a knowledge-sharing culture as essential drivers of innovation. These insights provide actionable strategies for organizations like Huawei, suggesting that enhancing employee CQ and supporting a collaborative and inclusive corporate culture are pivotal for sustaining competitive advantage in the dynamic global market.

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