

# External Responsibility and Internal Innovation: Drivers of Innovative Performance in Indonesian SMEs

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**Abstract:** *In the contemporary global economy, innovative performance of firms is increasingly driven by the effective management of human resources, as employees' knowledge, skills, and behaviors play a central role in improving processes, and responding to dynamic market demands. Despite the critical contribution of SMEs to the Indonesian economy, many continue to exhibit low levels of innovative performance, thereby constraining their competitiveness and long-term sustainability. Addressing this issue, this study adopts a human resource perspective to investigate how corporate social responsibility (CSR) orientations influence innovative performance through employee-driven organizational mechanisms. Using data collected from 297 SME owners and managers in Indonesia, this study employs partial least squares structural equation modeling to examine the proposed relationships. The findings indicate that environmental CSR orientation and social CSR orientation positively influence innovative performance by strengthening pro-social and pro-environmental values and supporting HR-driven organizational practices. Organizational innovation significantly enhances SMEs' ability to develop and implement new products and processes and mediates the relationship between CSR orientations and innovative performance. However, innovative work behavior, as an employee-level discretionary behavior, does not significantly moderate these relationships. This study contributes to the literature by integrating stakeholder and dynamic capability perspectives with HRM insights, demonstrating that CSR orientations function as internal signals that shape employee attitudes and behaviors, which in turn drive innovation outcomes. From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the importance for SME managers and policymakers to align CSR initiatives with HR practices*

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*such as employee development and engagement to effectively translate social responsibility into innovation performance.*

**Keywords:** SME development, Dynamic Capability Perspective, Human Resource Management, organizational innovation, Employee Innovation Capability

## Introduction

In the contemporary dynamic and competitive business environment, innovation is widely recognized as a critical determinant of firm performance and long-term sustainability (Awwad et al., 2026). From a human resource perspective, innovation is fundamentally driven by employees' knowledge, skills, and creative behaviors, which enable organizations to develop new products, improve processes, and adapt to rapidly changing market conditions. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role in emerging economies such as Indonesia, contributing significantly to employment generation, economic growth, and technological advancement (Anggraeni et al., 2026). Despite their dominant economic contribution, many SMEs in Indonesia continue to face substantial sustainability challenges, largely due to limited internal capabilities, including underdeveloped human capital and insufficient support for employee-driven innovation. These challenges are evident in the increasing number of business closures and the low survival rate of newly established firms, with more than 50% of SMEs failing within the first three years of operation (Kurniasari et al., 2025). This alarming trend underscores the critical need to understand how organizations can leverage human resources more effectively to foster innovation and enhance long-term business viability.

A central problem underlying this issue is the low level of innovative performance among SMEs, which constrains their ability to adapt to evolving market conditions and intensifying competition (Babar et al., 2025). This challenge is closely linked to limitations in employee capabilities, behaviors and the effective utilization of human capital. Specifically, the problem is associated with several structural constraints, including the innovation gap between SMEs and large firms, weak integration within the national innovation ecosystem, shortages in skilled human resources, and restricted access to innovation financing (Liu et al., 2025). Many SMEs continue to rely on traditional business practices, reflecting not only technological limitations but also insufficient emphasis on employee creativity and behaviors. In addition, limited collaboration with research institutions and industry partners reduces opportunities for employees to acquire new competencies and engage in innovative activities (Kurniasari et al., 2025). Consequently, the low level of innovative performance not only threatens the sustainability and competitiveness of SMEs but also has broader implications for Indonesian economic development, as it slows productivity growth, constrains industrial upgrading, and weakens the country position in global value chains. These challenges highlight the need to strengthen employee work behaviors and foster a work environment that supports innovation.

These challenges highlight the importance of examining the factors that shape the innovative performance of Indonesian SMEs. Existing literature has explored various determinants of SME innovative performance, including innovation strategies and market orientation (e.g., Ismail & Mohamad, 2025; Yaqub et al., 2025); however, empirical studies that integrate broader organizational and sustainability-oriented factors remain limited. In

particular, research examining sustainability-related dimensions such as environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) and social CSR orientation (SCSR) as drivers of innovation in SMEs remains relatively scarce. This is despite the fact that these orientations reflect a firm's strategic commitment toward environmental and social responsibility, which can foster employee work behavior and strengthen stakeholder relationships (Yikilmaz et al., 2025). Such orientations act as important organizational signals that shape employee behaviors, thereby influencing their willingness to participate in and support innovative activities.

Consequently, there remains a significant gap in understanding how environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) and social CSR orientation (SCSR), together with internal organizational factors such as organizational innovation and innovative work behavior, collectively contribute to enhancing innovative performance among Indonesian SMEs. Addressing this gap is essential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which employee capabilities, organizational processes, and sustainability-oriented strategic orientations interact to drive innovation outcomes. Therefore, this study proposes an integrated framework that examines the combined influence of environmental CSR orientation (ECSR), social CSR orientation (SCSR), organizational innovation, and innovative work behavior on innovative performance. By doing so, it offers a novel contribution by linking sustainability-oriented strategic orientations with internal innovation dynamics and employee-driven behaviors in the context of Indonesian SMEs.

To accomplish the aims of this study, it is theoretically underpinned by Stakeholder Theory and Dynamic Capability Theory. These theoretical perspectives provide a coherent foundation for explaining how SMEs respond to the expectations of diverse stakeholders while simultaneously developing internal capabilities that support innovation and adaptability. Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop and empirically test a comprehensive framework that explains the mechanisms and boundary conditions linking CSR initiatives to innovative performance in Indonesian SMEs. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do Environmental CSR orientation and Social CSR orientation influence innovative performance in SMEs?
2. Does organizational innovation mediate the relationship between CSR initiatives (ECSR and SCSR) and innovative performance?
3. Does innovative work behavior moderate the effects of CSR initiatives on innovative performance?

The remainder of this study is structured as follows. The next section presents a detailed literature review, highlighting theoretical perspectives, key constructs, and gaps in prior research. This is followed by the methodology, which outlines the sample, measures, and analytical procedures. The results section reports the empirical findings, while the discussion interprets these results in light of theory and prior studies, provide actionable insights for practitioners. Finally, the paper concludes with theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

## **Literature Review**

The literature on CSR and SME innovative performance can be understood through several complementary theoretical perspectives that explain why organizations adopt socially responsible practices and how these practices translate into innovation outcomes. Among these, Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) emphasizes that firms engage in responsible environmental and social practices to address the expectations of key stakeholders, including customers, employees, communities, and regulators. Within this perspective, environmental

CSR orientation (ECSR) and social CSR orientation (SCSR) reflect a firm's strategic commitment to meeting stakeholder expectations, which in turn strengthens relationships, enhances organizational legitimacy, and facilitates access to valuable knowledge and resources. Importantly, these orientations also shape employee perceptions and engagement, encouraging greater involvement in knowledge sharing and innovation-related activities that contribute to improved innovative performance (Wang et al., 2025).

Complementing this view, Dynamic Capability Theory (Teece et al., 1997), explains how firms transform these stakeholder-driven resources into innovation outcomes by developing the ability to integrate, reconfigure, and deploy internal processes in response to changing market conditions. In this context, organizational innovation represents a critical mechanism through which ECSR and SCSR are translated into enhanced innovative performance, as firms leverage employee knowledge, skills, and collaborative processes to develop new products, services, and practices. Furthermore, innovative work behavior reflects the extent to which employees actively engage in idea generation, experimentation, and implementation, thereby supporting the development of innovation capabilities within SMEs (Afsar et al., 2014). Taken together, these theoretical perspectives provide a robust foundation for understanding how sustainability-oriented strategic orientations (ECSR and SCSR), internal innovation mechanisms, and employee-driven behaviors interact to influence innovative performance in SMEs.

Environmental corporate social responsibility has increasingly become a strategic priority for firms seeking to balance economic objectives with environmental stewardship (Abidin et al., 2025). From the perspective of Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), organizations adopt environmentally responsible practices to address the expectations and pressures of key stakeholders such as customers, regulators, communities, and environmental groups. For SMEs, engaging in ECSR practices such as reducing environmental impacts, adopting eco-friendly production processes, and promoting sustainable resource use can enhance organizational legitimacy, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and improve access to external knowledge and resources (Tao, 2026). These stakeholder interactions not only provide firms with insights into environmental challenges and emerging market opportunities but also shape employees' awareness, values, and engagement toward sustainability, which are essential for fostering innovative thinking and problem-solving.

However, integrating environmental responsibility into business operations can present significant challenges for SMEs due to their limited financial, technological, and human resource capacities. While ECSR may encourage firms to rethink existing processes and explore environmentally sustainable solutions, the successful implementation of such initiatives often depends on employees' behaviors to engage in innovation-related activities (García-Piqueres & García-Ramos, 2024). This requires firms to effectively mobilize and develop their internal capabilities to translate environmental initiatives into actionable outcomes (Abidin et al., 2025). Consequently, the direct impact of ECSR on firms' innovative performance may vary depending on how effectively SMEs align environmental practices with internal processes and employee-driven innovation efforts. Empirical findings in prior research remain mixed. Some studies suggest that environmental responsibility stimulates innovation by encouraging firms to develop cleaner technologies and environmentally friendly products, thereby enhancing innovative performance (Fosu et al., 2024; Mukhtar et al., 2025). In contrast, other studies report weaker or inconsistent relationships, particularly among SMEs where resource constraints and limited employee capabilities may hinder the realization of innovation benefits from environmental initiatives (Ferraro et al., 2025; Dikova & Ciszewska-Mlinaric, 2026). These inconsistencies highlight the need for further empirical investigation into how ECSR influences innovative performance in SMEs, particularly by examining the mechanisms through which it is translated into innovation outcomes.

Social corporate social responsibility (SCSR) reflects a firm's commitment to addressing the social needs and expectations of stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, and local communities (Khalil et al., 2023). Grounded in Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), SCSR initiatives such as promoting employee well-being, supporting community development, ensuring fair labour practices, and engaging in social programs enable firms to strengthen stakeholder relationships, enhance legitimacy, and build a positive reputation. For SMEs, which often operate in close-knit communities and rely heavily on relational networks for resources, social CSR can facilitate access to knowledge, trust, and collaboration opportunities that are critical for fostering innovation (Yikilmaz et al., 2025). By responding to stakeholder expectations, firms may uncover unmet social needs or market gaps that can be addressed through creative solutions, thereby stimulating the development of new products, services, or processes.

Nonetheless, integrating social responsibility into operational practices presents challenges for SMEs due to limited managerial capacity, financial resources, and formalized processes. While SCSR has the potential to generate innovative ideas and enhance performance, the extent to which it translates into tangible innovative outcomes depends on the firm's ability to mobilize resources effectively and implement social initiatives (Omidvar et al., 2025). From an HR perspective, employee engagement, knowledge sharing, and collaborative behaviors are key mechanisms through which social responsibility can drive innovation (Nishat & Haque, 2025). Empirical evidence on the relationship between SCSR and innovative performance remains mixed. Some studies indicate that socially responsible practices promote innovation by facilitating learning, collaboration, and the exchange of knowledge both within and outside the firm (Broccardo et al., 2025; Yikilmaz et al., 2025). In contrast, other studies report weak or inconsistent effects, particularly in resource-constrained SMEs (Ferraro et al., 2025; Dikova & Ciszewska-Mlinaric, 2026). These inconsistencies underscore the need for further research to investigate how social CSR initiatives influence innovative performance and under what conditions such practices are most likely to translate into meaningful innovation outcomes.

Organizational innovation, which encompasses the development and implementation of new processes, products, or managerial practices, is widely recognized as a critical driver of firms' innovative performance (García-Piqueres & García-Ramos, 2024). Grounded in Dynamic Capability Theory (Teece et al., 1997), organizational innovation represents a key capability that enables firms to sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure internal resources in response to changing market and environmental conditions. For SMEs, the ability to innovate internally through process improvements, adoption of new technologies, or introduction of novel products is particularly crucial, as it allows them to maximize the value of limited resources while meeting stakeholder expectations and responding to competitive pressures (Kahveci, 2025). From an HR perspective, organizational innovation relies heavily on employee knowledge, creativity, and collaborative behaviors, as these human-driven capabilities determine a firm's ability to translate ideas into actionable solutions. Firms with strong organizational innovation capabilities are therefore better positioned to convert knowledge and creativity into tangible outcomes, resulting in higher levels of innovative performance (Bich Do et al., 2026).

In the context of the current study, while environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) and social CSR orientation (SCSR) provide SMEs with stakeholder-driven resources, legitimacy, and knowledge, these inputs alone may not automatically translate into enhanced innovative performance. Grounded in Dynamic Capability Theory, organizational innovation serves as a critical mechanism that converts CSR initiatives into tangible innovation outcomes, highlighting its intervening role between both. This mediating effect also helps explain the

mixed findings in prior research on the direct relationship between CSR and innovation, suggesting that the impact of CSR on innovative performance largely occurs through the firm's internal innovation capabilities.

Innovative work behavior (IWB), defined as employees' intentional efforts to generate, promote, and implement novel ideas, plays a critical role in enhancing a firm's innovative performance (Nishat & Haque, 2025). Employees who engage in IWB actively contribute to the creation and execution of new products, services, processes, or managerial practices, bridging the gap between organizational resources and tangible innovation outcomes (Çera et al., 2025). From an HR perspective, IWB reflects the discretionary behaviors of employees that transform knowledge, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving into measurable innovation performance. Firms with higher levels of IWB among employees are better equipped to respond to dynamic market demands, experiment with new approaches, and continuously improve internal processes, leading to superior innovation outcomes (Nishat & Haque, 2025). Prior studies suggest that when employees are encouraged and supported to engage in IWB, their contributions directly influence the firm's ability to translate ideas into actionable results, thereby strengthening innovative performance (Nguyen et al., 2026).

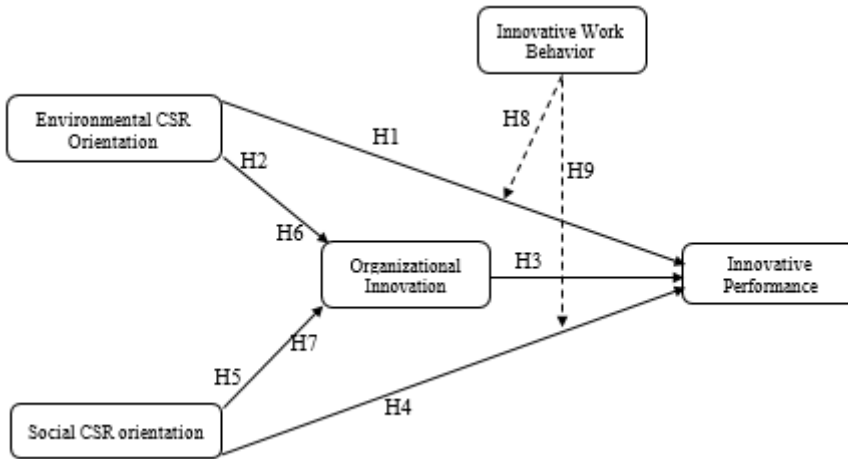
While ECSR and SCSR provide SMEs with stakeholder-driven resources, legitimacy, and knowledge, these alone may not consistently enhance innovative performance (Calado & Veloso, 2026). This suggests that the effect of CSR orientations on innovation can depend on firm-level contextual or behavioral factors. Innovative work behavior (IWB) represents a key boundary condition, potentially strengthening or weakening these relationships. As a moderator, IWB determines the extent to which employees translate CSR-driven resources into actionable innovations (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Zastempowski & Ciechan-Kujawa, 2026). High IWB enables firms to convert environmental and social practices into tangible innovation outcomes, whereas low IWB may constrain CSR's potential benefits, highlighting the critical role of employee-driven behaviors in leveraging sustainability initiatives for innovation.

To conclude, although prior research demonstrates that CSR initiatives and organizational capabilities can enhance innovative performance, much of the existing literature has focused on large firms in developed economies, with limited attention to SMEs operating in emerging markets such as Indonesia. SMEs in these contexts face unique challenges, including resource constraints, limited technological infrastructure, and weaker institutional support, which may affect the way CSR translates into innovation outcomes. Furthermore, while ECSR and SCSR are increasingly recognized as important drivers of innovation, their indirect effects on innovative performance through organizational innovation remain underexplored in SMEs, particularly in contexts where CSR practices are often informal or resource-constrained. In addition, although innovative work behavior (IWB) is acknowledged as a critical facilitator of employee creativity, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving, its moderating role in shaping the effectiveness of CSR initiatives on innovation outcomes has received limited empirical attention. Moreover, most studies have examined direct CSR-innovation relationships without adequately considering the mediating mechanisms and contingent factors that enable stakeholder-oriented CSR to be converted into tangible innovation results. These gaps highlight the need for a holistic framework that integrates CSR dimensions, organizational innovation as a mediator, and innovative work behavior as a moderator, providing a more nuanced understanding of how SMEs in emerging economies can leverage sustainability-oriented practices to achieve superior innovative performance.

Building on the preceding literature and the research framework illustrated in figure 1, the study develops a set of hypotheses. Particularly, the following hypotheses are put forward:

- H1: Environmental CSR orientation positively influences the innovative performance of the firm.*
- H2: Environmental CSR orientation positively influences the organizational innovation in the firm.*
- H3: Organizational innovation positively influences the innovative performance of the firm.*
- H4: Social CSR orientation positively influences the innovative performance of the firm.*
- H5: Social CSR orientation positively influences the organizational innovation in the firm.*
- H6: Organizational innovation mediates the relationship between environmental CSR orientation and innovative performance of the firm.*
- H7: Organizational innovation mediates the relationship between social CSR orientation and innovative performance of the firm.*
- H8: Innovative work behavior moderates the relationship between environmental CSR orientation and innovative performance of the firm.*
- H9: Innovative work behavior moderates the relationship between social CSR orientation and innovative performance of the firm.*

**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework



**Methodology**

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationships among environmental CSR orientation, social CSR orientation, organizational innovation, innovative work behavior, and innovative performance of firms. To ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument, all constructs were operationalized using items adapted from well-established and previously validated scales in the existing literature. Specifically, environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) and social CSR orientation (SCSR) were included as independent variables, organizational innovation (OI) as a mediating variable, innovative work behavior (IWB) as a moderating variable, and innovative performance (IP) as the dependent variable. The selection of measurement indicators was drawn upon prior studies (Fosu et al., 2024; Khalil et al., 2023; Migdadi, 2021; Afsar et al., 2014). In this study, all measurement items were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 =

strongly agree. Demographic questions were also included to profile respondents and contextualize the sample.

The study population consisted of approximately 243,972 micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises registered under the Jakarta Entrepreneur (Jakpreneur) program in 2023. Using Yamane’s (1967) formula, the minimum required sample size was 260 respondents, which is sufficient for large populations and meets the requirements for multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Purposive sampling was employed to target SME owners and managers in Jakarta during March, ensuring that participants had decision-making authority and direct experience with sustainability and innovation practices. While this non-random approach limits generalizability, it is appropriate for capturing relevant insights (Tajik et al., 2025).

The study adhered to established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, participants were clearly informed about the study’s purpose, objectives, and procedures, and assured that their participation was entirely voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents. As the study posed minimal risk, did not collect sensitive personal data, and maintained anonymity and confidentiality, formal ethical approval from an institutional review board was not required, in line with guidelines for low-risk social science research (British Psychological Society, 2021). A total of 304 responses were collected via an online survey, with 297 deemed valid after data cleaning. This sample size meets the recommended threshold for robust PLS-SEM analysis (Henseler et al., 2016).

To ensure the robustness of the findings, several checks were conducted. Multicollinearity among predictor constructs was assessed using VIF values, all below the threshold of 3.3. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was performed to validate the stability of path coefficients and significance levels. Reliability metrics were also examined, confirming that the results remained consistent across these tests. These procedures collectively enhance the credibility and reliability of the empirical findings of the study.

The final sample consisted of 297 respondents, with their demographic distribution presented in table 1. The sample was primarily composed of service-sector firms (54.5%), mostly medium and small-sized enterprises, and generally young firms, with the majority operating for less than two years (42.4%). Respondents were largely General Managers (50.2%), with most having 1-5 years of managerial experience (63.6%), and holding bachelors degrees (64%). The demographic profile was predominantly female (70%) and young, with the majority aged between 21-34 years (51.9%), indicating the growing involvement of relatively young and educated professionals in managerial roles within the surveyed firms.

**Table 1. Background Information of the Respondents (N = 297)**

Demographic variables	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	89	30
	Female	208	70
Age	Below 21 years	111	37.4
	21-34 years	154	51.9
	35-44 years	26	8.80
	45-54 years	4	1.3
	55-65 years	2	0.70
Educational level	No formal education	14	4.7
	Primary school	8	2.7
	High school	44	14.8

	Professional training/certification	29	9.8
	Bachelors degree	190	64
	Masters degree	12	4.0
Job position	CEO	61	20.5
	General Manager	149	50.2
	Operations Executive	20	6.70
	Marketing Executive	62	20.9
	R & D Executive	5	1.7
Managerial Experience	1-5 years	189	63.6
	6-10 years	79	26.6
	11-15 years	17	5.70
	Over 15 years	12	4.0
Industry Type	Manufacturer	135	45.5
	Services	162	54.5
Firm age	Less than 2 years	126	42.4
	3 to 5 years	104	35.0
	6 to 8 years	25	8.40
	9 to 11 years	21	7.10
	12 years or older	21	7.10
Number of employees	6-29 (Small)	131	44.1
	30-99 (Medium)	134	45.1
	100 or more (Large)	32	10.8

In addition, the study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the primary analytical technique. This method was selected due to its strong capability in managing complex research frameworks, particularly those involving multiple constructs, mediators, and moderators in line with Irawan et al. (2025). PLS-SEM not only facilitates simultaneous assessment of direct and indirect effects but is also well-suited for prediction-oriented studies with medium-sized samples (Henseler et al., 2016).

## Results

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4 following a two-stage procedure. In the first stage, the reliability and validity of the constructs was examined. Indicator reliability was assessed through factor loadings, which measure the degree to which each item reflects its underlying latent construct. Following Ghazali and Fauzi (2025), factor loadings of 0.70 or above are regarded as acceptable. All items in this study surpassed this threshold, confirming strong indicator reliability.

Construct-level internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR). As shown in table 2, all constructs exceeded the recommended CA and CR benchmarks (Chinnaraju, 2025), indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability. Convergent validity was further assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where values greater than 0.50 indicate that a construct accounts for more than half of the variance in its indicators (Cheung et al., 2024). The findings demonstrate that all constructs meet this criterion, confirming adequate level of convergent validity.

**Table 2. Reliability Analysis**

Variables	Items	Loadings	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
ECSR	ECSR1	0.778	0.901	0.906	0.923	0.633
	ECSR2	0.784				
	ECSR3	0.628				
	ECSR4	0.845				
	ECSR5	0.803				
	ECSR6	0.854				
	ECSR7	0.854				
SCSR	SCSR1	0.854	0.796	0.845	0.878	0.706
	SCSR2	0.777				
	SCSR3	0.887				
OI	OI1	0.734	0.866	0.871	0.900	0.600
	OI2	0.840				
	OI3	0.846				
	OI4	0.697				
	OI5	0.767				
	OI6	0.753				
IWB	IC1	0.851	0.882	1.192	0.912	0.722
	IC2	0.813				
	IC3	0.940				
	IC4	0.786				
IP	IP1	0.846	0.810	0.812	0.888	0.725
	IP2	0.830				
	IP3	0.879				

Discriminant validity was evaluated using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations, satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Furthermore, all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2016). These results confirm that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. Collectively, the measurement model demonstrates strong reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, affirming that the constructs are both conceptually robust and statistically sound, and suitable for subsequent structural model analysis.

**Table 3. Validity Analysis**

Variables	ECSR	IWB	IP	OI	SCSR
ECSR	0.796				
IWB	0.071	0.850			
IP	0.745	0.113	0.852		
OI	0.708	0.141	0.740	0.775	
SCSR	0.668	0.111	0.690	0.774	0.840

Upon completion of the measurement phase requirements, evaluation of model fit indicators and hypothesized relationships within the structural model can be assessed. Nevertheless, it is crucial to first identify and address any potential multicollinearity and common method bias (CMB), since their existence can negatively affect the validity of research findings (Hair et al., 2019). In PLS-SEM, multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with values below 5 considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). As

presented in table 4, the highest VIF value observed was 3.037, well within the recommended limit, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern in this study. Additionally, common method bias (CMB) was evaluated using Harman's single-factor test, which examines whether a single latent factor accounts for a substantial portion of the variance and could potentially distort the estimated relationships. Following Howard et al. (2024), CMB is considered negligible when a single factor explains less than 50% of the total variance. In this study, the first factor accounted for 41.12% of the variance, confirming that common method bias does not significantly affect the validity of the results. Furthermore, endogeneity was assessed using the Gaussian Copula approach (Park & Gupta, 2012). As the copula terms were not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), endogeneity is unlikely to bias the estimated relationships.

The overall model fit was evaluated using three widely accepted criteria: the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the Stone-Geisser predictive relevance statistic ( $Q^2$ ). The  $R^2$  value indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct accounted for by the exogenous variables. In business and management research, an  $R^2$  exceeding 0.20 is generally considered meaningful (Hair et al., 2019). In the present study, the proposed model accounts for 66.3% of the variance in innovative performance of the firm, demonstrating strong explanatory power.

Model fit was further assessed using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), which evaluates the discrepancy between the observed and model-implied correlation matrices (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The SRMR value obtained was 0.073, below the recommended threshold of 0.080, indicating an acceptable model fit. Predictive relevance was examined using the  $Q^2$  statistic through the blindfolding procedure, where values greater than zero indicate adequate predictive capability. As shown in Table 4, the  $Q^2$  value exceeds zero, confirming the model's strong predictive relevance in line with established guidelines (Hair et al., 2019). Overall, based on assessment of  $R^2$ , SRMR, and  $Q^2$ , the model demonstrates satisfactory fit and predictive ability and is therefore suitable for hypothesis testing.

Table 4 presents the structural model results for the hypothesized relationships among the variables examined in this study. The findings indicate that environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) positively and significantly influences innovative performance (H1). Likewise, ECSR shows a positive and highly significant effect on organizational innovation (H2). Furthermore, organizational innovation significantly and positively affects innovative performance (H3). In addition, the results demonstrate that social CSR orientation (SCSR) has a positive and significant impact on innovative performance (H4). Similarly, SCSR exhibits a strong positive and highly significant influence on organizational innovation (H5).

Regarding the mediating relationships, the findings reveal that organizational innovation mediates the relationship between ECSR and innovative performance (H6). Likewise, organizational innovation mediates the relationship between SCSR and innovative performance (H7). These results indicate that CSR initiatives enhance innovative performance partly through their ability to foster organizational innovation.

However, the results do not support the moderating role of innovative work behavior (IWB). The interaction term  $IWB \times ECSR$  does not significantly influence innovative performance (H8). Similarly,  $IWB \times SCSR$  does not significantly moderate the relationship with innovative performance (H9). Therefore, both moderating hypotheses are rejected, indicating that innovative work behavior does not significantly strengthen or weaken the effects of CSR dimensions on innovative performance in this study.

**Table 4. Results from PLS Bootstrapping**

Hypothesis		Std. Beta	Std. Dev.	t-values	p-values	Decision	VIF	SR MR	Q <sup>2</sup>
H1	ECSR → IP	0.393	0.079	4.971	p<0.001 (0.000)	Accepted	2.190	0.073	0.468
H2	ECSR → OI	0.345	0.054	6.430	p<0.001 (0.000)	Accepted	1.807		
H3	OI → IP	0.328	0.087	3.785	p<0.001 (0.000)	Accepted	1.028		
H4	SCSR → IP	0.175	0.085	2.062	p<0.05 (0.039)	Accepted	3.037		
H5	SCSR → OI	0.544	0.053	10.225	p<0.001 (0.000)	Accepted	2.692		
H6	ECSR → OI → IP	0.113	0.033	3.468	p<0.05 (0.001)	Accepted	2.061		
H7	SCSR → OI → IP	0.178	0.054	3.293	P<0.05 (0.001)	Accepted	2.059		
H8	IWB x ECSR → IP	-0.085	0.074	1.157	P>0.10 (0.247)	Rejected			
H9	IWB x SCSR → IP	0.078	0.070	1.114	p>0.10 (0.265)	Rejected			

## Discussion

This study investigates the factors affecting the innovative performance of SMEs. Consequently, this study adopts a comprehensive approach by incorporating multiple factors, including environmental CSR orientation, social CSR orientation, organizational innovation, and innovative work behavior to evaluate their collective effect on innovative performance of SMEs. With 66.3% of the variance in innovative performance explained, the model shows substantial explanatory strength and enhances the understanding of innovative performance drivers beyond previous studies that examined these variables in isolation. In pursuit of this aim, a research model encompassing nine hypotheses was proposed. As shown in previous section, seven out of nine hypothesized relationships were supported in this study.

For analytical clarity, the hypotheses were organized into two groups, with the first addressing the direct associations between constructs. The findings show that environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) has a significant positive effect on innovative performance, supporting H1. This suggests that SMEs engaging in ECSR achieve higher innovation outcomes, indicating that environmental responsibility functions as a strategic driver rather than mere compliance. From a capability-based perspective, ECSR promotes process redesign, adoption of cleaner technologies, and development of eco-friendly products, thereby enhancing learning, collaboration, and problem-solving. These activities build sustainability-oriented capabilities that improve product and process innovation. This result is consistent with prior studies highlighting the positive role of environmental initiatives in strengthening innovation, particularly when ECSR is strategically integrated rather than symbolic (Wu & Yu, 2024; Fosu et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the results indicate that environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) has a significant positive effect on organizational innovation, supporting H2. SMEs engaging in

ECSR are more likely to enhance innovation in structures, processes, and managerial systems. This relationship reflects the internal adjustments required for ECSR implementation, including changes in routines, coordination, and decision-making, which promote new management practices, collaboration, and employee development. The finding aligns with prior research showing that sustainability-oriented strategies foster organizational innovation through improved managerial practices and knowledge networks (Fiandrino et al., 2025). The stronger effect observed suggests that ECSR is implemented strategically rather than merely for compliance.

Meanwhile, the results show that organizational innovation has a significant positive effect on firms' innovative performance, supporting H3. SMEs that adopt new structures, managerial practices, and processes achieve higher innovation outcomes. This effect reflects the role of organizational innovation in creating an enabling environment through improved coordination, workflows, and knowledge sharing. The finding aligns with prior studies emphasizing that innovation performance depends not only on technology but also on organizational arrangements that support learning and collaboration (Turoń, 2025; Wang et al., 2025). The stronger effect suggests that well-aligned organizational changes substantially enhance innovation performance.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that social CSR orientation (SCSR) has a significant positive effect on firms' innovative performance, supporting H4. Although moderate, the effect suggests that SMEs engaging in socially responsible practices enhance innovation outcomes. This can be attributed to improved employee well-being, inclusiveness, and stakeholder engagement, which strengthen motivation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. The result aligns with prior studies showing that socially responsible firms achieve better innovation through enhanced trust and collaboration, particularly when CSR is implemented substantively rather than symbolically (Nguyen et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025).

Besides, the results indicate that social CSR orientation (SCSR) has a strong and significant positive effect on organizational innovation, supporting H5. This suggests that SCSR is a key driver of innovation within SMEs. The relationship reflects the supportive environment created by practices such as employee well-being, fair labour, and community engagement, which enhance trust, commitment, and psychological safety, encouraging idea sharing and collaboration. The finding is consistent with prior research showing that socially responsible practices foster innovation through stronger stakeholder relationships and knowledge exchange (Yikilmaz et al., 2025; Bich Do et al., 2026). The strong effect indicates that strategically embedded SCSR significantly enhances organizational innovation.

Meanwhile, the mediation analysis shows that organizational innovation significantly mediates the relationship between environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) and innovative performance, supporting H6. This indicates that ECSR improves innovation both directly and indirectly by strengthening internal innovation processes. Environmentally responsible practices promote learning, experimentation, and the development of new processes and products, enhancing knowledge sharing and problem-solving. These capabilities translate into higher innovative performance. The finding is consistent with prior studies highlighting the role of innovation as a key mechanism linking CSR to performance (Anzola-Román et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2025). It also suggests that, when strategically embedded, ECSR generates innovation benefits despite concerns about potential cost constraints (Zhang et al., 2025).

Moreover, the mediation analysis indicates that organizational innovation significantly mediates the relationship between social CSR orientation (SCSR) and firms' innovative performance, supporting H7. This suggests that SCSR enhances innovation

indirectly by strengthening internal innovation capabilities. Practices such as employee well-being, ethical standards, and stakeholder engagement foster trust, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, encouraging idea generation and problem-solving. These conditions enhance organizational innovation, which in turn improves innovative performance. The finding aligns with prior research highlighting innovation as a key mechanism linking CSR to performance through enhanced learning and collaboration (Badar & Siddiquei, 2025; Shatila et al., 2025) and shows that SCSR can drive innovation when strategically embedded..

Furthermore, the results indicate that innovative work behavior does not significantly moderate the relationship between environmental CSR orientation (ECSR) and innovative performance, rejecting H8. This suggests that the positive effect of ECSR is relatively stable and not contingent on employees' innovative behaviors. A possible explanation is that ECSR initiatives are typically driven by strategic decisions, formal policies, and resource allocation, making their impact less dependent on discretionary employee actions. In SMEs, limited employee autonomy may further constrain such moderating effects. This finding contrasts with expectations but aligns with prior studies indicating that CSR effectiveness may rely more on formal organizational systems than individual behaviors (Bedoya et al., 2025; Yikilmaz et al., 2025), highlighting that ECSR influences innovation primarily through organizational mechanisms.

Likewise, the findings show that innovative work behavior does not significantly moderate the relationship between social CSR orientation (SCSR) and innovative performance, leading to the rejection of H9. This suggests that the positive effect of SCSR is not dependent on employees' innovative behaviors. SCSR initiatives—such as promoting well-being, ethical practices, and stakeholder engagement—primarily shape organizational climate and relational dynamics, fostering trust, collaboration, and access to external knowledge. Thus, SCSR supports innovation through organizational practices and stakeholder interactions rather than through variations in employee behavior. This aligns with prior research indicating that CSR effects can operate independently of individual behaviors when embedded in organizational systems (Silvestre et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by integrating Stakeholder Theory and Dynamic Capability Theory to explain innovative performance. Environmental and social CSR orientations are framed as stakeholder-focused practices that enhance relationships and access to valuable resources and knowledge. Consistent with Dynamic Capability Theory, these resources are converted into innovation outcomes through organizational innovation, which serves as a key mediating mechanism. Although innovative work behavior was expected to strengthen these effects, the findings suggest that CSR impacts innovation mainly through organizational processes rather than employee-level behavioral contingencies.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that managers should align CSR initiatives with internal innovation processes and reinforce organizational systems that promote knowledge sharing, collaboration, and experimentation. Embedding CSR into core operations and fostering an innovation-supportive environment can enhance firms' innovative performance and sustain long-term competitive advantage.

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations should be noted. First, the sample includes a high proportion of younger managers with limited experience, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research should involve more diverse managerial profiles, especially senior executives, to examine how experience and leadership maturity influence the CSR–innovation relationship. Second, the study focuses on small and medium-sized, relatively young firms. Extending the analysis to larger and more mature

organizations could clarify the role of size, maturity, and resource availability. Finally, this study emphasizes internal organizational factors, suggesting that future research should incorporate external contextual variables such as regulatory environments, industry competition, technological turbulence, and stakeholder pressures.

## Conclusion

This study investigates the drivers of SMEs' innovative performance by integrating environmental CSR orientation, social CSR orientation, organizational innovation, and innovative work behavior within a unified framework. The findings indicate that both environmental and social CSR orientations enhance innovative performance primarily through organizational innovation, highlighting that responsible practices create conditions that stimulate innovation activities and outcomes. The non-significant moderating role of innovative work behavior suggests that, although an innovation-supportive culture is beneficial, it does not necessarily amplify the direct impact of CSR on innovative performance in this context. Overall, the results emphasize that firms aiming to improve innovation should focus on strengthening organizational innovation processes to translate CSR initiatives into tangible outcomes. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs and cross-country or cross-industry comparisons to examine how CSR-driven innovation develops across diverse organizational and institutional contexts.

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