

## **Fostering Innovation in Startup: The Effect of Psychological Climate on Employees' Innovative Work Behavior**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine the influence of psychological climate on innovative behavior in startup employees. This research is based on the theoretical assumption that psychological climate represents an individual's subjective perception of the work environment which acts as a psychological mechanism in shaping the response of work attitudes and behaviors. This study uses a quantitative approach with an influence study design, where psychological climate plays a role as an independent variable and innovative behavior as a dependent variable. The research sample consisted of 117 active employees of startup companies in Indonesia with a minimum working period of six months selected through purposive sampling techniques. The data was collected through a five-point Likert scale-based online questionnaire, then tested for validity and reliability before being analyzed using simple linear regression. The results showed that psychological climate had a positive and significant effect on innovative behavior, which was shown by a t-count value of 5.960 with a significance of 0.000 and a positive regression coefficient of 0.392. The  $R^2$  determination coefficient value of 0.236 indicates that the psychological climate explains 23.6% of the variation in innovative behavior, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside of this study. Overall, this study confirms that the psychological climate is one of the important factors in increasing innovative behavior in startup employees, although innovation is still influenced by various other external factors.

**Keywords:** Psychological Climate; Innovative Behavior; Startup Employees

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Technological developments in the digital era have encouraged Indonesia to continue to adapt and increase its innovation capacity. This digital transformation has a significant impact on the growth of startups. Based on Startup ranking data as of April 27, 2025, Indonesia is ranked sixth in the world with 3,015 startups, showing that the participation in the development and creation of startups in Indonesia is quite good and growing significantly. This development is driven by the increasing use of the internet, economic digitalization, and government policies.

In contrast to multinational companies that tend to have hierarchical organizational structures and stable work cultures, startups are known for their open work culture, providing opportunities for each employee to contribute and interact directly with top management (Nugroho et al., 2025). However, having very fast business growth compared to other corporate companies makes startups must be able to quickly develop in running a business

(Ferdiansyah & Permana, 2022). Inability to manage innovation and internal performance is one of the main causes of startup failure, as Eisenmann revealed in his book entitled "Why Startups Fail: New Roadmap for Entrepreneurial Success" that weak execution, team performance, and product mismatch with market needs often lead to business failure (Boni, 2022). The inability of startups to face competition can be one of the causes of their decline (Hardiansyah & Tricahyono, 2019).

Innovation is the main element that distinguishes startups from conventional organizations. Startups are in the early phases of growth that demand adaptability, creativity, and constant renewal (Nurcahyo et al., 2018). Innovation is key to the sustainability and growth of startups because it allows organizations to respond to changes effectively and flexibly (Yusuf & Etikariena, 2023; Purwandini & Irwansyah, 2018). In the context of startups, innovation can be realized through the creation of new technology, solutions to a problem, or the development of more optimal products (Susanti & Addinpujoartanto, 2024). Innovation is not only reflected in the creation of new products or technologies, but also in the innovative behavior of employees that includes the ability to generate, develop, and realize new ideas in the context of work (Astuti et al., 2019; Hadi et al., 2020).

Innovative behavior is crucial for individuals to carry out because it will lead the organization to run effectively and achieve sustainable development (Sriwardani et al., 2022). Employees with innovative behaviors are not only able to generate new ideas, but also have the courage to realize those ideas in work practice (Hadi et al., 2020). Companies are in dire need of employees who have innovative behaviors to create a competitive advantage in the midst of a changing work environment. According to Hammond et al., factors influencing innovative behavior include individual internal factors such as personality and motivation, job demands and characteristics, as well as contextual factors such as leadership, organizational support, and psychological climate (Widiyanti & Sawitri, 2018).

Contextual factors are important because they relate to how the work environment is perceived by employees in supporting or inhibiting the emergence of innovative behaviors. One of the contextual aspects that has a significant role is the psychological climate, which is related to an individual's perception of his or her work experience and organizational environment, including a sense of security, support, freedom of expression, and other interpersonal experiences (Maulidia & Putra, 2019). Employees' perception of their work environment has an important role in employee work productivity (Dewiariasti & Prahara, 2020). Psychological climate, or psychological

climate, describes how employees interpret interpersonal experiences and work systems in their organizations, including the extent to which they feel safe, supported, and valued (Rahman & Kistyanto, 2019).

When employees feel a positive work climate, they will be more motivated to show initiative, think creatively, and engage in innovative behaviors (Susanti & Addinpujoartanto, 2024). On the other hand, a negative psychological climate can lower motivation and limit freedom of expression, thus hindering the emergence of innovation (Aditya & Ardana, 2016). Despite its high relevance, studies related to the psychological climate in startup employees are still very limited. Previous studies have generally focused on the influence of organizational climate collectively and have not explained in depth how individual perceptions of the work environment, or so-called psychological climate, play a role in driving innovative behavior of startup employees. In fact, based on the organizational psychology approach, employees' subjective perceptions of the work climate can be very different from each other, even if they are in the same organization (Toprak & Karakus 2018).

This gap shows the need for research that explores the influence of psychological climate on individual innovative behaviors in the startup environment (Etikariena & Kalimashada, 2021). Therefore, this study offers novelty by placing psychological climate as an independent variable and innovative behavior as a dependent variable understood from the perspective of individual psychological perception and testing it in the context of startups in Indonesia. National empirical research that specifically examines the role of psychological climate in encouraging innovative behavior of startup employees is still limited, so this research is expected to make an empirical contribution in enriching the study of industrial and organizational psychology, especially in the startup ecosystem.

Thus, this study was conducted to analyze the influence of psychological climate on innovative behavior in startup employees in Indonesia. Psychological climate in this context refers to an individual's perception of a work environment that is psychologically supportive, including autonomy in completing tasks, clarity of roles, support from leadership, collaborative teamwork, and organizational attributes that encourage innovation.

This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the study of industrial and organizational psychology, especially in understanding the role of individual psychological perception of innovative behavior. Practically, the findings of this research are expected to be the basis for startup management in creating a work climate that is

psychologically conducive, so that employees are encouraged to innovate and contribute optimally to the sustainability and competitiveness of the organization.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach of influence study because it aims to test the influence of psychological climate variables as independent variables on innovative behavior as a dependent variable. In this approach, the researcher measures how much the influence of free variables on bound variables is systematically and objectively through the processing of statistical data. In this study, there are two main types of variables, namely independent variables (X: Psychological Climate) and dependent variables (Y: Innovative Behavior).

### Research participation

The population in this study is active employees working in startup companies in Indonesia. In this study, startups were chosen because they generally have a dynamic, flexible, and demanding work environment with a high level of innovation, so it is very relevant to research the influence of psychological climate on innovative behavior. The respondent criteria used by the researcher were employees who had worked for at least six months at a startup company.

The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with purposive sampling, which is the selection of samples based on criteria that are in accordance with the research objectives. Since the number of startup employee population is unknown, the sample size was determined using G\*Power 3.1.9.4 with an a priori approach (Linear regression: Fixed model,  $R^2$  deviation from zero). With a power setting of 0.95, effect size  $f^2 = 0.15$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ , and 1 predictor, a minimum requirement of 89 respondents was obtained.

### Data Collection Methods

In this study, data collection will be carried out by an online questionnaire using a Google Form and given to the subjects according to the criteria in the study. The data collection method used involves two scales arranged in the form of a Likert scale of 1-5. The Likert model scale used in this study consists of five scales, namely, Highly Inappropriate (STS), Inappropriate (TS), Hesitant/Neutral (N), Appropriate (S), Highly Appropriate (SS).

Psychological climate variables were measured using CRISO-PCQ (Faisaluddin et al., 2023). The scale consists of five dimensions, with the number of items reduced from 60 to 30 based on the loading factor value.

Innovative behavior variables were measured by *the Innovative Work Behavior Scale* (IWB) developed by Ayoub et al., (2021). The scale consists of 27 items that measure five dimensions of innovative behavior.

The research procedure began with problem identification and goal setting, followed by the preparation of a Likert scale questionnaire made through Google Form and distributed to employees of startup companies online. Data collection was carried out from October to November 2025. Before filling out the questionnaire, participants were first given an explanation of the purpose of the research and asked to express informed consent. The research was not tied to one particular company, and all data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires. After the data is collected, validity and reliability tests are carried out to ensure the suitability of the instruments. The data were then analyzed using simple linear regression to test the influence of psychological climate as an independent variable on innovative behavior as a dependent variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the initial stage, this study obtained 124 respondents through the distribution of online and offline questionnaires. All incoming data is then checked through a data screening procedure, including identification of outliers and filling consistency. Based on the results of the examination, a number of responses were found that did not meet the feasibility criteria for analysis, so it needed to be removed from the dataset. After the screening process was carried out, there were 7 respondents who were eliminated. Thus, the number of data used in the final analysis was 117 respondents.

### Descriptive Demographics

This study involved respondents who were employees of various startup companies in Indonesia and had worked for at least 6 months in the company. The number of samples used in this study is 117 employees. These respondents consisted of 48 males and 69 females. The majority are aged 26-30 years (56 people), followed by 20-25 years old (50 people) and the rest are under 30 years old. The working period was dominated by the 2-5 year group (41 people) with the assurance that all respondents had worked for at least 6 months. Most of the respondents were implementing staff (81 people), and the most work status was full-time (79 people). Respondents came from various startup sectors such as technology, fintech, e-commerce, education, health, logistics, and media.

Descriptive variables contain a general overview of the research variables that will be explained through descriptive statistics. Statistical data will be presented in the form of a table containing the number of samples,

minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations. The following will explain an overview of each variable.

**Table 1. Results of Empirical Data Analysis**

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Red	Std. Deviation
Psychological Climate	117	85	142	116.66	10.869
Innovative Behavior	117	89	135	111.99	8.781

Source: Descriptive statistical analysis of survey data collected from 117 startup employees in Indonesia, 2025

Based on the table, the psychological climate variable showed an average value of 116.66, which indicates that the respondents' perception of the psychological climate is in the relatively high category. The score range between 85 to 142 shows a variation in perception between respondents. Meanwhile, the innovative behavior variable had an average score of 111.99, with a minimum score of 89 and a maximum of 135. This shows that the level of innovative behavior of employees in this study tends to be at the middle to upper level, with variation between respondents reflected in the standard deviation of 8.781.

Validity tests were carried out on all items of the psychological climate scale and innovative behavior using the corrected item-total correlation value. From the initial analysis process on 124 respondents, there was one item on the psychological climate scale that had a correlation value below the minimum limit of 0.30, so it was declared invalid. The item is then removed to make the instrument more suitable for the conditions of the research data. After the invalid items are eliminated and the number of respondents is filtered to 117, all other items show correlation values that meet the criteria so that they are suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

#### **Psychological Climate (X):**

Of the initial 30 items, 1 item was declared invalid and removed, leaving 29 items used in the study. All these items show a corrected item-total correlation value above the criterion limit of 0.30. Thus, all items on the psychological climate scale are declared valid and feasible to be used in the next data collection.

#### **Innovative Behavior Variable (Y):**

All 27 items on the innovative behavior scale showed a corrected item-total correlation value above the criterion limit of 0.30. This means that all items on the innovative behavior scale are declared valid and can be used in the data analysis process.

Before conducting further analysis, a reliability test is carried out to ensure the internal consistency of the research instrument. This reliability test uses Cronbach's Alpha, where an Alpha value of  $\geq 0.70$  is considered reliable (Hair et al., 2019). The results of the calculation showed that all variables in this study had a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70, so the research instrument was declared reliable and suitable for further data collection.

**Table 2. Reliability Test Results**

Variable	Reliability
Psychological Climate	0.862
Innovative Behavior	0.869

Source: Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis based on survey responses using SPSS 25, 2025

The normality test is carried out to find out whether the data obtained is normally distributed or not normally distributed. In this study, the normality test was used using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov technique with the help of the SPSS 25 program. The results of the analysis showed that the value of *asymp.sig* was 0.056. The data is said to be normally distributed if the significance value is  $>0.05$  and it is said to be not normally distributed if the significance value is  $<0.05$  (Sugiyono, 2023). Based on this, it can be said that the data in this study comes from a normally distributed population. The results of the analysis can be seen in the following table:

**Table 3. Normality Test Results**

Variable	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Psychological Climate and Innovative Behavior	0.056	Normally Distributed

Source: Normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, analyzed with SPSS 25, 2025.

The heteroscedasticity test aims to find out whether the regression model used in a study is able to predict bound variables using independent variables. Based on the results of the heteroscedasticity test, the significance value of variable X was obtained of 0.811, which is greater than 0.05. This means that the variable X has no effect on the residual absolute value. Thus, the regression model does not experience heteroscedasticity and can be declared to meet the regression feasibility assumption. As for the heteroscedasticity test, the Glejser method is used as stated in the following tabl

**Table 4. Heteroscedasticity Test Results**

Variable	Sig.	Remarks
Psychological Climate (X)	0.811	Does not experience heteroscedasticity

Dependent Variable: Y

Source: Heteroscedasticity test using Glejser method, analyzed with SPSS 25, 2025

The multicollinearity test was used to find out if there was too high a relationship between independent variables in the regression model. A good model must be free of multicollinearity in order for the regression coefficient estimate to remain stable and can be interpreted appropriately. Based on the table below, the values of Tolerance = 1,000 and VIF = 1,000. Both are within safe limits (Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10). Thus, it can be concluded that the regression model does not experience multicollinearity, so the X variable is feasible to use in the model.

**Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results**

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Remarks
Psychological Climate(X)	1.000	1.000	Not experiencing multicollinearity

Dependent Variable: Y

Source: Multicollinearity diagnostic using Tolerance and VIF values, calculated with SPSS 25, 2025

The linearity test is used to ensure that the relationships between the X and Y variables form a linear pattern, so that regression analysis can be used appropriately. The relationship is expressed as linear when the significance value on the Deviation from Linearity line is greater than 0.05. Based on the table below, the significance value of Deviation from Linearity = 0.094, which is greater than 0.05. This means that there is no significant deviation from linearity. Thus, it can be concluded that the relationship between variables X and Y is linear and eligible for regression analysis.

**Table 6. Linearity Test Results**

Variable	Deviation from Linearity	Remarks
Psychological Climate and Innovative Behavior	0.094	Linear

Source: Linearity test between psychological climate and innovative behavior, analyzed with SPSS 25, 2025

**Table 7. Model of Simple Linear Regression Equations**

Variable	Unstandardized B
Constant	66.206
Psychological Climate (X)	0.392

Dependent Variable: Innovative Behavior (Y)

Source: Simple linear regression output between psychological climate (X) and innovative behavior (Y), analyzed with SPSS 25, 2025

Based on the output of the SPSS (Coefficients table), the regression equation model can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = 66.206 (\alpha) + 0.392 (X) + e$$

Meaning of Regression Equation Model:

1. Constant ( $\alpha$ ): 66.206 means that if the psychological climate is constant or constant, then the innovative behavior is 66.206
2. Regression Coefficient  $\beta(X)$ : 0.392 (positive value) means that if the psychological climate is increased by one (1) unit, then innovative behavior will increase by 0.392

**Table 8. Hypothesis Test Analysis**

Variable	t	Sig
Psychological Climate (X)	5.960	0.000

Source: Hypothesis testing using t-test for psychological climate's effect on innovative behavior, analyzed with SPSS 25, 2025

Dependent Variable: Innovative Behavior (Y)

1. Significance value  $0.000 < 0.05$
2. T-calculated value  $> t\text{-table}$  ( $5,960 > 1,658$ )

Based on the 2 basis for decision-making above, it can be concluded that "Psychological Climate Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Innovative Behavior", meaning that the higher the level of Psychological Climate applied, the more innovative behavior of employees within the scope of startup companies will increase.

**Table 9. Coefficient of Determination**

Variable	R Square
Psychological Climate (X)	0.236

Source: R-squared calculation from regression analysis, indicating explained variance, analyzed with SPSS 25, 2025

The R Square value of 0.236 means that the Psychological Climate affects the employee's Innovative Behavior by 23.6% while the remaining 76.4% is influenced by other factors.

The results of this study show that there is a positive and significant influence between Psychological Climate on Innovative Behavior in employees in startup companies. Partial analysis through the t-test showed a t-count value of 5.960 with a significance of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ), and a positive regression coefficient of 0.392. This indicates that the better the employee's perception of the psychological climate in the workplace, the higher the innovative behavior they exhibit. In other words, increased support, trust, open communication, and recognition of employees' contributions can encourage them to be more active in putting forward ideas, trying new methods, and implementing innovations in their daily work. Thus, these findings support the research hypothesis (H1) which states that Psychological Climate has a positive and significant effect on Innovative Behavior.

These findings are in line with the theory of work environment psychology which states that a positive work climate will shape the sense of security, comfort, and work involvement of employees (Ehrhart et al., 2013). These results are also in line with the theory of Psychological Safety which states that a sense of psychological security allows individuals to dare to take interpersonal risks, such as conveying new ideas, experimenting, and not being afraid to make mistakes. When the psychological climate is positive, employees will be more courageous to innovate without fear of being sanctioned or blamed. The startup work environment, which usually encourages collaboration, openness of ideas, and a relatively flexible organizational structure, is suspected to have contributed to strengthening the perception of a positive psychological climate in respondents. In the context of a startup company characterized by fast work dynamics and high adaptation demands, a positive psychological climate is an important factor in encouraging employees to continue to innovate sustainably.

The value of the determination coefficient  $R^2 = 0.236$  indicates that the Psychological Climate explains 23.6% of the variation in employees' Innovative Behaviors, while the remaining 76.4% is influenced by other factors, such as the employee's personal characteristics, leadership, organizational culture, or available resources. This confirms that innovative behavior is influenced not only by the psychological environment, but also by a combination of other internal and external factors. The influence of psychological climate on innovative behavior can be explained through some of its main characteristics. The support of the organization and the perceived

positive boss makes employees feel appreciated and supported when presenting new ideas. In addition, role clarity helps employees understand job responsibilities and expectations clearly. The autonomy aspect in the psychological climate also allows employees to have the flexibility to determine how they work, which encourages the emergence of initiative and the courage to try new approaches to completing tasks. These results are in line with research that found that organizational climate has a significant influence on innovative work behaviors, along with transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Gusmayanti et al., 2023). In other studies, it is also shown that the organizational climate has a positive and significant effect on the innovative work behavior of employees (Aditya and Ardana, 2016).

Theoretically, this result can be explained through Social Exchange Theory which states that when employees feel fair treatment, support, and a positive work environment, they will reciprocate with positive work attitudes and behaviors, including innovative behavior. A good psychological climate creates a sense of security, trust, and emotional attachment of employees to the organization. This condition encourages the emergence of a sense of moral obligation in employees to make the best contribution to the organization, one of which is through the development of new ideas and innovative work behaviors.

The study also showed that although the influence of Psychological Climate was significant, most of the variation in innovative behaviors was influenced by other factors. This is in accordance with the findings of previous research, namely the Componential Theory of Creativity which states that innovation is not only determined by the work environment, but also by individual competence, motivation, and availability of resources. In another study, these results are in line with research that Susanti & Addinpujoartanto (2024) identified that the organizational climate significantly influences the innovative behavior of startup employees in Yogyakarta. Stuart & Addinpujoartanto (2024). Several other studies examined adjacent aspects, such as the influence of psychological climate on employee performance (Chandra & Saryatmo, 2022)

Therefore, companies need to consider a comprehensive strategy that focuses not only on the psychological climate, but also on the development of employee competencies, inspirational leadership, and adequate provision of resources.

Overall, the results of this study confirm the importance of Psychological Climate as one of the main factors that drive innovative employee behavior in startup companies. A supportive work environment that recognizes employee

contributions will increase motivation and creativity, so that it can increase innovations that are beneficial for the company's development.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the psychological climate has a positive effect on the innovative behavior of employees in startup companies. The better the perceived psychological climate, including the support of the boss, relationships with colleagues, and work culture, the higher the employee's tendency to take initiative, seek creative solutions, and implement new ideas. These findings underscore the importance of a supportive work environment to drive innovation. The determination coefficient value of 23.6% indicates that although the influence is significant, innovative behavior is also influenced by other factors outside of the study variable. Therefore, employee innovation is the result of various interrelated factors, not just the psychological climate. Based on these findings, startup companies are advised to strengthen the psychological climate through good communication, supervisor support, and a safe work environment to convey ideas, as well as provide development space such as training, and a fair reward system. In addition, companies need to pay attention to other factors such as competence, leadership style, and availability of resources so that innovation can develop optimally. For further research, it is recommended to add other variables such as motivation, organizational commitment, self-efficacy, and organizational culture, as well as consider different research methods or expand the number and scope of respondents to produce more comprehensive findings.

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