

Does Market Orientation Drive Organisational Social Innovation as A Rescuer for Economic Growth? The Mediating Role of Knowledge Creation

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Abstract

Organisational social innovation is important especially among developing countries for economics growth. This paper finds that organisational social innovation (OSI) is the most contemporary solution for businesses in implementing new methods for economic benefits and social benefits from the perspective of market orientation and knowledge creation. Organisational social innovation and market orientation relates to knowledge creation in overarching goal of this study. This descriptive study relied on a survey-style questionnaire to gather data. A total of 171 managers from research and development companies participated in this survey. A basic random sample method was employed for the sampling process. Findings reveal market orientation and organisational social innovation are significantly related, and knowledge creation plays a positive mediation role in this relationship.

Keywords: *Market orientation, knowledge creation, economic growth, organisational social innovation.*

Introduction

Economic crises continue to intensify poverty and widen income inequality across the globe (Morris et al., 2022; Mohammad et al., 2025a; Hujran et al., 2023). Although Malaysia's official poverty rate is reported to be less than 1%, a large segment of the population still falls within the B40 income group, representing approximately 2.7 million households (Ab Rahman et al., 2021, Mohammad 2025; Al-Rahmi et al., 2023). Recognizing this challenge, the United Nations (UN) has urged all countries to take immediate and effective action to end poverty as part of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2018). In response, the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK12) includes targeted strategies to eliminate hardcore poverty, address income disparities, and support socioeconomic development aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of Malaysians in line with the SDGs.

Social innovation has emerged as a transformative approach to address complex societal challenges. In many countries, social innovation is increasingly recognized as a key driver of inclusive and sustainable progress especially in emerging economies striving to balance growth with equity and resilience. In Malaysia, the government has underscored the importance of social innovation as part of its Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (SPV 2030) and the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK12) aiming to drive economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and social restructuring since the implementation of the 11th Malaysia Plan (RMK11), the government has committed approximately RM260 billion toward initiatives focused on enhancing both economic and social sectors. In order to create a more sustainable world, the government has emphasised the significance of innovation, sustainability, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) programmes (Abdul-Halim et al., 2019; Mohammad et al., 2025b; Yaseen et al., 2023).

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Organisational social innovation involves creating new ways to solve social problems and business. 'Social' is at the heart of the interaction between social and innovation. According to businesses, social innovation is often seen as a chance to put a lot of money into making social outcomes that people need (Von Jacobi et al., 2024; Mohammad et al., 2025c). Nonetheless, according to Adro and Fernandes (2021), a thorough evaluation of social innovation's actual effects can help in developing long-term, strong responses to the environmental, social, and economic problems that have arisen in the modern era. This causes a lot of controversy in the academic community, especially when discussing the many ways in which social innovations meant to solve environmental, social, or economic problems bring in money (Guerrero et al., 2020; Grilo & Moreira, 2022; Amran et al., 2021; Mohammad et al., 2025d).

Abbas & Sağsan (2019) and Ji Bo (2022) state that organisations in the knowledge-intensive industry have new difficulties due to the ever-changing nature of the business landscape and the transformational processes including environmental, social, and economic concerns. Not only that, but there is a disparity between innovation and knowledge creation, especially in Malaysia (Tung Soon Seng & Magiswary Dorasamy, 2021; Tung Soon Seng, Magiswary Dorasamy, and Ruzanna Ab Razak, 2022; Mohammad et al., 2025e; Asadi et al., 2025). This is especially problematic in an economy where progress is dependent on having more information. It is critical that Malaysia makes the difficult transition to a knowledge-based economy. These new challenges are a result of the fact that organisations in this sector have a greater reliance on knowledge in market oriented. Few studies have focused on how KC contributes to OSI, even though many have studied OSI and KC from different perspectives (Lim et al., 2017; Mohammad et al., 2025f; Nessar et al., 2025). Mardani et al. (2018) have highlighted the need to increase the existing research on KC and OSI. This work aims to address that gap by investigating the complex interplay of MO, KC, and OSI.

Considering the above discussion, the current study focuses on answering the following questions:

- What is the role of market orientation in Organisational social innovation?
- What is the role of knowledge creation as a mediator between market orientation and Organisational social innovation?

Literature Review

Organisational Social Innovation (OSI)

Research on social innovation is still in the early stages of development (Von Jacobi et al., 2024; Guerrero et al., 2020; Grilo & Moreira, 2022; Amran et al., 2021). Kanter (1999) established a distinction between the concepts of social innovation and Organisational social innovation in response to the fact that the major focus of discussion is on the impact that businesses have on society (Tabares, 2020; Dionisio and de Vargas, 2020). This was done in order to emphasise the importance of the impact that corporations have on society. Since there is no agreement on an official definition of OSI, Dionisio and de Vargas 2020 suggest that the term "Organisational social innovation" (OSI) refers to the implementation of the concepts and theories of social innovation at the level of the corporation. Xulan Zhang and Lei Yao (2021), Amran et al. (2021), and Von Jacobi et al. (2024) are just a few examples of the academic works that have focused on social innovation and how it relates to businesses that aim to provide value rather than maximise profits.

Both the academic community and the general public have recently engaged in a heated debate on Organisational social innovation (Von Jacobi et al., 2024; Esen & Maden-Eyiusta, 2019). The body of literature social innovation was lacking in a solid basis and was immature (Cunha & Benneworth, 2020). Research from past years suggested that social innovation within companies is a relatively new idea. Some studies have found that the lack of clarity around social innovation is the main reason why the concept of Organisational social innovation is not fully understood. Due to the greater interest in social innovation, less research has focused on Organisational social innovation (Tabares, 2020; Mohammad et al., 2025g; Tago et al., 2024; Alfiyah et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the literature did not provide a robust basis and appeared to be lacking in maturity (Cunha & Benneworth, 2020). According to the research that has come before, the idea of social innovation within corporations is still in its formative stages. (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016) suggested that there is a lack of clarity on the notion of Organisational social innovation due to the grey area that is associated with social innovation. Some of the literature argued that this lack of clarity is due to social innovation. Research on social innovation at corporations has not been found in the existing body of work (Tabares, 2020; Mohammad et al., 2025h). This is most likely due to the fact that the current focus is on social innovation rather than Organisational social innovation. Based on the prior

literature, the present research does not appear to attain a unified understanding, and owing to the interdisciplinary nature of the area, it is extremely difficult to establish any consensus in the academic community. There is still a great deal of scepticism, in particular with regard to the effect that social activities have on workers and many other stakeholders (Van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016; Dionisio and de Vargas, 2020), despite the fact that several organisations have implemented Organisational social innovation.

Market Orientation

Market orientation may relate to a number of different aspects, one of which is an organization's capacity to react to changes in the market and the expectations that consumers have both now and in the foreseeable future (Rokkan, 2023). As meeting consumers' demands and expectations both now and in the future is a key motivator for innovation, businesses must adapt their degree of innovation to suit changing market conditions (Zafer Acar, 2020). In order to stay ahead of the competition, businesses nowadays are shifting their focus to the market and catering to customer wants and demands. Historically, market orientation has been seen as a guiding principle for businesses, outlining how they intend to meet consumer and shareholder demands while simultaneously growing their own bottom line. According to Rokkan, 2023, a crucial component of the market orientation business philosophy is the process of determining the requirements and wants of customers and then providing them with the appropriate goods and services. Companies should embrace market orientation since it enables them to achieve a sustainable advantage over their competitors (Rokkan, 2023). According to Bozpolat (2020), market orientation is when a corporation studies and identifies present and predicted customer needs before attempting to service those demands in a more efficient manner. An organisation can anticipate innovation in its environment, adapt to those changes, and improve its capacity and ability to benefit from those changes by using the integrated perspective of market orientation (Von Jacobi et al., 2024; Bozpolat, 2020).

Knowledge Creation

According to Mustapha et al. (2022), knowledge is an intangible asset that greatly influences an organization's success or failure. Getting to know something or being known is a process that requires doing, practicing, and interacting with other people (Maravilhas and Martins, 2019). An important source of competitive advantage and the principal process for creating new information is knowledge creation (Mustapha et al., 2023; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Knowledge creation and its impact on company success is a hotly debated subject in the academic community. Nonaka (1994) posits that competent people's aptitudes, talents, and cultural precepts constitute a non-uniform collection, and that this collection undergoes a spiral as it produces new knowledge. Despite the difficulty in exercising power over tacit knowledge management, Nonaka (1994) found that the growth of tacit knowledge significantly affects the performance of the business. This is because competent individuals are able to generate new knowledge and share the knowledge with the organisations (Mustapha et al., 2022; R.Abdullah, 2015). Research conducted by Yang and Zheng (2022) suggests that knowledge creation has a significant impact on the efficiency and quality of innovations (Chamba & Rueda, 2021; Dávila, 2021). Companies place a high value on their expertise and see it as a valuable strategic resource. However, achievement is contingent on the workers' ability to generate and use knowledge, which enables them to provide a sustainable competitive advantage for their firm (Mustapha et al., 2022).

Theoretical and hypotheses development

This research investigates the scope of social innovation activities in R&D organisations in relation to market orientation and the significance of knowledge creation on Organisational social innovation. The conceptual framework for this work was developed using the European Commission Social Innovation Principles (2013) and the Malaysian Social Innovation Model (Raja Suzana, 2017).

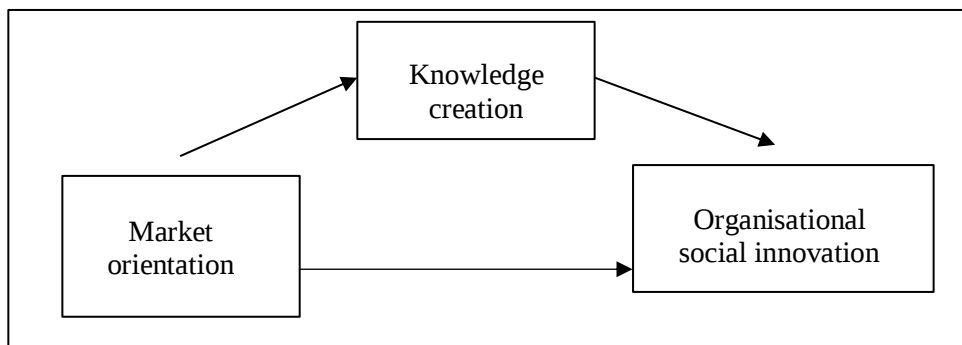


Figure 1: Research Model

Market Orientation Influence Organizational Social Innovation

The relationship between a focus on the market and innovative practices has been the subject of a significant amount of research. Market orientation and innovation have been the focus of attention not just from businesses but also from authors and academics (Bozpolat, 2020). Karaev & Mercan, (2023) investigated the independent influence that different market-orientation aspects have on innovation results. Karaev and Mercan (2023),

Businesses that create innovative goods and services with a focus on the market have a strong motivation to ensure customer satisfaction as well as to make better decisions as they shape the supply to meet consumer wants. According to Karaev & Mercan (2023), one possible line of reasoning is that market-driven innovation is a formidable instrument that organisations may employ to achieve a competitive edge. Consequently, market orientation serves as the principle for innovation (Karaev & Mercan, 2023). Combine market orientation with innovation, and businesses may gain a competitive edge, adapt rapidly to changes in their environment, and cultivate skills that lead to high-performance operations (Mustapha et al. 2022).

Rakthin et al. (2016) found a favourable correlation between a focus on the market and innovation outputs. The ability to learn about the external market, such as consumer wants, expectations, and service habits, is thought to be crucial for new inventions. An even greater correlation between market-orientation traits and innovation was seen in competitive contexts compared to non-competitive ones. However, a company may end up with less creative goods or services if it focuses too much on the market. An overemphasis on market orientation (MO) can indeed constrain a company's innovation efforts, limiting them to customer-driven incremental innovations.

H1. Market orientation is significant to Organisational social innovation.

Knowledge Creation and Organisational Social Innovation

Knowledge creation in business research continues to rise, so does fragmentation, with various research gaps and academic debates highlighted (Grilo & Moreira, 2022). During the last two decades, social innovation and knowledge creation are important in the business environment (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Ji Bo, 2022). The current research looks at the function of knowledge creation in social innovation. Learning has become an essential process for economic development due to the transition towards a knowledge economy (Ji Bo, 2022).

Knowledge creation is critical in innovation processes because it serves as the foundation for research and analytical operations (Mustapha et al., 2022; Sesay et al., 2018; Breznik, 2018). By taking knowledge theory and practice into account, we may better understand how to apply social innovation by identifying the many approaches to knowledge generation in these types of projects. But first, we need to define SI and its features so that we may study social innovations and their knowledge-creation processes (Mustapha et al., 2023). So, to sum up, social innovations are new approaches to old problems that aim to solve a social need and are mostly created and spread by groups whose primary mission is to improve society. Companies that base their operations on information, says Breznik (2018), are better equipped to innovate and find new sustainable ways to do things. The reasoning for this is the belief that fresh inventions cannot be effective without this knowledge.

Thus, knowledge creation is significant to Organisational social innovation.

H2. Knowledge creation is significant to Organisational social innovation.

Mediating Role of Knowledge Creation between Market Orientation and Organisational Social Innovation

Market orientation is important in gaining market knowledge for decision-making processes that increase their customers' experiences and understanding (Karaev & Mercan, 2023). Businesses can innovate more effectively when they combine well-internalized information with current knowledge already present in the system (Mustapha et al., 2023). This is in continuation of the earlier assertion that there is a positive correlation between a company's market orientation and its knowledge creation process, which has a positive effect on the company's innovation potential.

H3. The knowledge creation mediates the impact of market orientation and Organisational social innovation.

Research Method

The target samples in this paper were 171 R&D organisations in Malaysia. The research hypotheses and recommended model served as inspiration for the development of the survey instrument that was utilised in this investigation. Because the substances are what drive innovation activities for Malaysian firms, the R&D organisations were the primary focus of the sample selection process using Smart -PLS.

Result

A value for OSI, KC and MO were found when the reliability of the measurement was examined using Cronbach's alpha. were 0.712, 0.843 and 0.802 respectively which is more than 0.8 as shown in Table 1. The results showed sufficient dependability and were in line with the minimal 0.8 value proposed by Pearson.

Table 1: Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha
OSI	0.712
KC	0.843
MO	0.802

All of the constructions should have an AVE greater than 0.5 as their lowest value. All constructs had an AVE value more than 0.5 and item loadings greater than 0.6 according to the convergent validity results. However, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method was used to evaluate the discriminant validity. This method states that some constructs should have a larger variation with their indicators than others. Equally indicative of discriminant validity are square root AVE values that point to increased correlation between the pair indicators. The results of the discriminant validity test are not problematic in this paper (Table 2).

Table 2: Discriminant Validity Test

	Fornell and Larcker		
	OSI_	KC	MO
OSI	0.735		
KC	0.512	0.781	
MO	0.411	0.478	0.704

Next, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was calculated to see whether the results were susceptible to multicollinearity. Therefore, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to test multicollinearity. Predictor structures with VIFs greater than 5 were more prone to collinearity issues. Those with a VIF value between 3 and 5 on the other hand frequently have collinearity concerns, researchers should aim for a VIF value of 3 or less (Hair et al., 2013). Table 3 shows that the VIF values are within acceptable ranges (1.297 to 1.512), which means that there is no substantial multicollinearity bias in the estimates and that multicollinearity is not present.

Table 3: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	OSI	KC	MO
OSI	1.297		
KC	1.512		
MO	1.411		

Validation of path hypotheses was made easier by the statistical significance value of each structural parameter. The first hypothesis tests the hypothesis that there is a substantial relationship between market orientation and Organisational social innovation, and the second hypothesis tests the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between knowledge generation and Organisational social innovation. Thirdly, we test the hypothesis that knowledge creation acts as a mediator between a focus on the market and CSR initiatives undertaken by corporations.

In this study, market orientation has a significant effect on the success of Organisational social innovation ($\beta = 0.199$, $t = 3.802$, $p = 0.000$). All of the indicators meet the required criteria of a rule of thumb, with a beta value between 0 and 1, a t-value greater than 1.96, and a p-value less than 0.05. Therefore, H1 is supported in this study.

Next, the results indicated that knowledge creation has a significant impact on Organisational social innovation. In this study, knowledge creation has a significant effect on the success of organisational social innovation ($\beta = 0.215$, $t = 2.787$, $p = 0.004$). Again, all of the indicators meet the required criteria of a rule of thumb, with a beta value between 0 and 1, a t-value greater than 1.96, and a p-value less than 0.05. Therefore, H2 is supported in this study. This is because market orientation and knowledge creation play a significant role in Organisational social innovation respectively ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$).

Thirdly, the paper tested whether knowledge creation mediates the relationship between market orientation and CSR initiatives in corporations. This is how the bootstrapping test was used to evaluate the mediation effect for the Structural Equation Model (SEM) by Hayes and Scharkow (2013). The study revealed that these hypotheses met the necessary criteria to set up the mediation connection, as evidenced by their strong indirect effects (t-value > 1.96 , thus significant at p-value < 0.01), which led to the outcome ($\beta = 0.178$ $t = 3.388$, $p = 0.001$). Hence, the H3 is accepted.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Result

	Path Coefficient, β	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H1 MO -> OSI	0.199	0.105	3.802	0.000	Sig
H2 KC -> OSI	0.215	0.124	2.787	0.004	Sig
H3 MO -> KC -> OSI	0.178	0.053	3.388	0.001	Sig

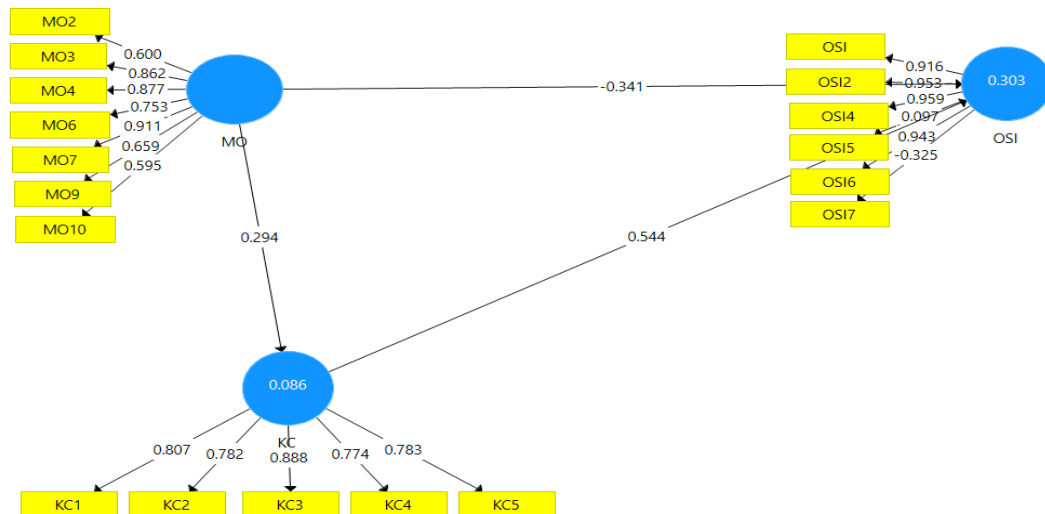


Figure 2: Result of Research Model

Discussion

In response to the first research question, this study found that a market focus is one of the most important factors for R&D firms to accomplish Organisational social innovation. Thus, this study lends credence to the idea that market orientation and Organisational social innovation are often beneficial. Organisations should guarantee the application of all market orientation, according to the report, if they want to achieve Organisational social innovation. According to the data, a company's market orientation greatly influences its social innovation. Yang and Zheng (2022) state that proactive market orientations and social innovation work hand in hand, and that this association is good and successful.

Besides, the findings provide substantial connection that exists between knowledge creation and Organisational social innovation. As stated by Mustapha et al. (2021), social innovation is the process of creating new and long-lasting solutions for social groups, communities, or society as a whole by applying knowledge to social problems in a collaborative and participatory manner. This study found that knowledge generation significantly improves economic and environmental sustainability. Alshanty and Emeagwali (2019) discovered a connection between knowledge creation and Organisational social innovation, which is consistent with our findings. The result is consistent with the findings of Abbas & Sağsan (2019) study, which found that knowledge creation considerably improves organisational skills, resulting in improved innovation, which eventually affect the environmental and financial performance. In order to attain economic sustainability and increase the quality of their products and services, the companies that were studied emphasise knowledge development, according to the findings. Organisations may guarantee their competitiveness in Organisational social innovation by having knowledge creation in organisations.

Last but not least, the findings point to a substantial link between knowledge creation mediating influence on market orientation and Organisational social innovation. The result is consistent with previous studies in which demonstrates a substantial connection between MO and OSI, as agreed by Alshanty & Emeagwali (2019). According to Mustapha (2022), responsive market orientation and knowledge both have a major role in innovation.

Future Research

In the course of this investigation, R&D organisations were chosen to serve as the sample. The integrated paradigm of other variable responses should be evaluated in future research. To fill up the gaps in our understanding of this area of study, our study calls for more researchers focusing on other

industries. Despite this, the research was carried out in Malaysia; nevertheless, further studies might be carried out in other countries.

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