

Organizational Innovation and Employee Retention in Architecture Firms: The Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership

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Abstract: Organizational innovation has become increasingly relevant to architecture firms as employees adapt to changing project requirements, work processes, and professional practices. This study examined the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention and the moderating role of transformational leadership among employees of selected architecture firms in Tarlac Province, Philippines. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 127 employees who answered a researcher-adapted questionnaire. The instrument was reviewed by experts and demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.975 for transformational leadership, 0.967 for organizational innovation, and 0.955 for employee retention. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and General Linear Model (GAMLj) moderation analysis in Jamovi. The results showed significant positive relationships between organizational innovation and employee retention ($r = .816, p < .001$), organizational innovation and transformational leadership ($r = .866, p < .001$), and transformational leadership and employee retention ($r = .779, p < .001$). The interaction between organizational innovation and transformational leadership was positive and significant (Estimate = 0.126, $p = .001$). Simple slope analysis showed that the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention increased across low, average, and high levels of transformational leadership. The findings indicate that transformational leadership significantly moderates the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention.

Keywords: Architecture Firms, Employee Retention, Organizational Innovation, Transformational Leadership

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1. Introduction

The architecture profession continues to change as firms respond to evolving client requirements, increasingly complex projects, technological developments, and changing professional standards. Architectural employees work across activities such as design development, drafting, project documentation, coordination, client communication, and site-related responsibilities. These conditions require architecture firms to maintain effective organizational practices while supporting employees who contribute to project delivery.

Organizational innovation refers to the adoption and implementation of new or improved organizational processes, structures, and practices. Damanpour (1991) identified organizational innovation as involving changes in administrative systems and organizational processes that support organizational effectiveness, while Crossan and Apaydin (2010) described innovation as a multidimensional organizational capability involving the generation and implementation of new ideas. In architecture firms, organizational innovation may be reflected in improved work processes, flexible organizational structures, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement. These practices may be experienced by employees through changes in drafting and documentation workflows, project coordination, digital work processes, and other organizational practices.

Employee retention is also an important concern in architecture firms because employees develop technical knowledge, project experience, and professional relationships through continued work with an organization. Kyndt et al. (2009) emphasized the importance of organizational and personal factors in employee retention, while Govaerts et al. (2011) highlighted the relevance of learning opportunities and the working climate. Allen et al. (2010) likewise emphasized organizational practices and workplace conditions in retaining employees. In architectural practice, retention may be reflected in employees' commitment to the firm, intention to remain, and satisfaction with their work and professional development opportunities.

Transformational leadership provides another relevant organizational perspective. Based on the work of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), transformational leadership involves idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These behaviors include providing

direction, encouraging new ideas, recognizing individual contributions, and supporting employee development. Previous research has associated transformational leadership with positive work outcomes (Judge and Piccolo 2004; Wang et al. 2011). Studies involving building and construction professionals have also examined the relationship between leadership and work outcomes (Chan and Chan 2005) and the role of leadership in fostering an innovation climate (Chan et al. 2014). In architecture, Firstaria and Anggiani (2020) examined transformational leadership in relation to job satisfaction and turnover intention among architects.

The relationship among these variables is particularly relevant in architecture firms because organizational changes often require employees to adjust their work practices. For example, a firm may introduce a new project workflow, modify documentation procedures, improve coordination systems, or adopt different approaches to project management. How employees experience these changes may be related not only to the organizational practices themselves but also to the leadership supporting their implementation. Transformational leadership may provide direction, encourage participation, support learning, and help employees adjust to organizational changes.

Despite existing studies on organizational innovation, transformational leadership, and employee retention, limited research has examined transformational leadership as a moderator of the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention among architecture firms, particularly in the Philippine and provincial context. This gap provides the basis for examining whether the strength of the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention varies according to the level of transformational leadership among employees of architecture firms in Tarlac Province.

Therefore, this study examined the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention among employees of selected architecture firms in Tarlac Province, with transformational leadership serving as the moderating variable. Specifically, it examined organizational innovation in terms of process innovation, structural innovation, and organizational culture for innovation; transformational leadership in terms of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration; and employee retention in terms of commitment, intention to stay, and job satisfaction. It also examined the relationships among the three variables and tested whether transformational leadership significantly moderated the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design

A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed to examine the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention, with transformational leadership as the moderating variable. The design was appropriate because the study examined the strength and direction of relationships among the variables without manipulating the research setting. It also provided a basis for testing whether the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention varied according to the level of transformational leadership.

Study Locale and Participants

The study was conducted in Tarlac Province, Philippines, focusing on architecture firms affiliated with the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) Tarlac Chapter and UAP Tarlac Kublahi Chapter. Based on 2025 membership and renewal records, approximately 70 architecture firms comprised the sampling frame. The firms included individual practices and small- to medium-sized architectural offices engaged in residential, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use projects.

The participants were 127 architectural employees from selected qualified firms. Eligible participants included licensed architects, architectural designers, drafters, and other full-time architectural employees with at least six months of continuous service in their current firm and involvement in architectural functions such as design development, project documentation, project coordination, and site supervision. Employees who did not meet the established qualifications were excluded. The 20 respondents who participated in pilot testing were not included in the final dataset.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured, researcher-adapted questionnaire consisting of four parts: demographic characteristics, transformational leadership, organizational innovation, and employee retention.

Transformational leadership was measured using items adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) of Bass and Avolio (2004), covering idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Organizational innovation items were adapted from the frameworks of Damanpour (1991) and Crossan and Apaydin (2010), covering process innovation, structural innovation, and organizational culture for innovation. Employee retention items were adapted from the literature on employee retention, including Mitchell et al. (2001), and covered commitment, intention to stay, and job satisfaction.

All items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Mean scores were interpreted using the following ranges: 4.50–5.00, Strongly Agree; 3.50–4.49, Agree; 2.50–3.49, Neutral; 1.50–2.49, Disagree; and 1.00–1.49, Strongly Disagree.

Instrument Validation and Reliability

The researcher-adapted questionnaire was reviewed by the research adviser and selected faculty experts to assess the clarity, relevance, appropriateness, and alignment of the items with the study objectives and variables. A pilot test involving 20 respondents with characteristics similar to the target participants was conducted, and these respondents were excluded from the final analysis.

Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's alpha in Jamovi Version 2.7. The instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with coefficients of 0.975 for transformational leadership, 0.967 for organizational innovation, and 0.955 for employee retention.

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Transformational Leadership	9	0.975
Organizational Innovation	8	0.967
Employee Retention	7	0.955

Table 1: Reliability Analysis of the Research Instrument

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained the necessary permissions from the UAP Tarlac Chapter, UAP Tarlac Kublahi Chapter, and participating architecture firms. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms and printed copies, depending on respondents' accessibility and preference. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and confidentiality provisions, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Completed questionnaires were reviewed, organized, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis. The final dataset consisted of 127 respondents.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Jamovi Statistical Software Version 2.7. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics, while means and standard deviations were used to describe organizational innovation, transformational leadership, and employee retention and their respective dimensions.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson's r) was used to examine the relationships among organizational innovation, transformational leadership, and employee retention. To test the moderating role of transformational leadership, General Linear Model (GAMLj) moderation analysis was conducted in Jamovi. The interaction between organizational innovation and transformational leadership was examined, followed by simple slopes analysis to determine the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention at different levels of transformational leadership. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose and nature of the study before completing the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained, and respondents were allowed to decline participation or withdraw without penalty. No names or personally identifiable information were required, and responses were treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

3. Results

This section presents the findings of the study based on data from 127 qualified respondents, including their demographic profile, descriptive results, relationships among the study variables, and the moderating role of transformational leadership.

Respondent's Profile

A total of 127 employees from selected architecture firms participated in the study. Most respondents were male (64.6%), had been employed in their current firms for 6 months to 2 years (57.5%), and held a bachelor's degree (91.3%).

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	82	64.6
	Female	43	33.9
	Prefer not to say	2	1.6
Length Of Employment	6 months–2 years	73	57.5
	3–5 years	21	16.5
	6–10 years	20	15.7
	More than 10 years	13	10.2
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's degree	116	91.3
	Master's degree	8	6.3
	Undergraduate/College student	3	2.4

Table 2: Profile of the Respondents

Organizational Innovation

Organizational innovation obtained an overall mean of 4.11, interpreted as Agree. Among its dimensions, structural innovation had the highest mean ($M = 4.17$), followed by organizational culture for innovation ($M = 4.11$) and process innovation ($M = 4.06$).

Variable / Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Organizational Innovation	4.11	Agree
Process Innovation	4.06	Agree
Structural Innovation	4.17	Agree
Organizational Culture for Innovation	4.11	Agree
Transformational Leadership	4.20	Agree
Idealized Influence	4.13	Agree
Inspirational Motivation	4.18	Agree
Intellectual Stimulation	4.26	Agree
Individualized Consideration	4.22	Agree
Employee Retention	3.83	Agree
Commitment	3.99	Agree
Intention To Stay	3.83	Agree
Job Satisfaction	3.67	Agree

Table 3: Descriptive Results of Organizational Innovation, Transformational Leadership, and Employee Retention

The results indicate that respondents generally agreed that organizational innovation, transformational leadership, and employee retention were evident in their respective firms.

In the architecture-firm context, organizational innovation was reflected in practices such as improvements in drafting and documentation procedures, BIM/CAD workflows, drawing checking, project coordination, file management, and opportunities for employees to suggest improvements.

Transformational leadership obtained an overall mean of 4.20. Intellectual stimulation received the highest mean ($M = 4.26$), followed by individualized consideration ($M = 4.22$), inspirational motivation ($M = 4.18$), and idealized influence ($M = 4.13$).

Employee retention obtained an overall mean of 3.83. Commitment had the highest mean ($M = 3.99$), followed by intention to stay ($M = 3.83$) and job satisfaction ($M = 3.67$).

Correlations Among the Study Variables

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation showed significant positive relationships among all three study variables. Organizational innovation was positively related to employee retention ($r = .816$, $p < .001$) and transformational leadership ($r = .866$, $p < .001$). Transformational leadership was also positively related to employee retention ($r = .779$, $p < .001$).

Variable	1	2	3
Transformational Leadership	—	.866	.779
Organizational Innovation	.866	—	.816
Employee Retention	.779	.816	—

Table 4: Correlations Among Organizational Innovation, Transformational Leadership, and Employee Retention

Note. $p < .001$.

The results show that employees who reported higher levels of organizational innovation also tended to report higher employee retention. Transformational leadership was likewise positively associated with both organizational innovation and employee retention. Because the study used a correlational design, these relationships should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership

A General Linear Model moderation analysis was conducted to determine whether transformational leadership moderated the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention. The interaction between organizational innovation and transformational leadership was positive and statistically significant (Estimate = 0.126, SE = 0.0387, $Z = 3.25$, $p = .001$).

Predictor	Estimate	Se	Z	P
Organizational Innovation	0.660	0.0741	8.91	< .001
Transformational Leadership	0.489	0.0542	9.02	< .001
Organizational Innovation $\times$ Transformational Leadership	0.126	0.0387	3.25	.001

Table 5: Moderation Analysis of Transformational Leadership

Note. SE = standard error. The interaction term represents the moderating effect of transformational leadership.

The positive and statistically significant interaction indicates that the association between organizational innovation and employee retention varied according to the level of transformational leadership. The simple slope analysis showed that the association remained positive and significant at low (Estimate = 0.545, $p < .001$), average (Estimate = 0.660, $p < .001$), and high (Estimate = 0.775, $p < .001$) levels of transformational leadership.

Predictor	Estimate	Se	Z	P
Organizational Innovation	0.660	0.0741	8.91	< .001
Transformational Leadership	0.489	0.0542	9.02	< .001
Organizational Innovation $\times$ Transformational Leadership	0.126	0.0387	3.25	.001

Table 6: Simple Slope Analysis of Organizational Innovation on Employee Retention at Different Levels of Transformational Leadership

Note. SE = standard error. $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance

Thus, the positive association between organizational innovation and employee retention was stronger at higher levels of transformational leadership.

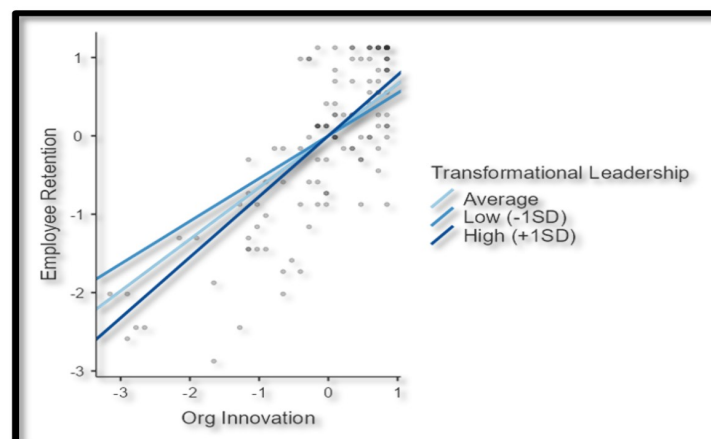


Figure 1: Simple Slopes of Organizational Innovation Predicting Employee Retention at Different Levels of Transformational Leadership

4. Discussion

Organizational Innovation and Employee Retention

The findings showed a significant positive relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention ($r = .816, p < .001$). This indicates that respondents who perceived higher levels of organizational innovation also tended to report higher levels of commitment, intention to stay, and job satisfaction. The finding supports the view that organizational innovation involves changes in organizational practices, structures, and processes that can contribute to organizational functioning and effectiveness (Damanpour, 1991; Crossan & Apaydin, 2010).

Among the dimensions of organizational innovation, structural innovation received the highest mean ($M = 4.17$), followed by organizational culture for innovation ($M = 4.11$) and process innovation ($M = 4.06$). In architecture firms, structural innovation may be reflected in flexible work arrangements, project-based assignment of responsibilities, and opportunities for employees to participate in different architectural tasks. A supportive innovation culture may also encourage employees to share ideas, collaborate, and exchange project knowledge. Process innovation may involve improvements in drafting, drawing review, BIM/CAD workflows, documentation, file management, estimating, and consultant coordination.

The relatively lower rating for process innovation suggests that although employees generally recognized improvements in work procedures, continuous improvement of day-to-day processes may still require attention. This is relevant to architecture firms because project delivery depends on coordinated workflows, accurate documentation, timely communication, and the effective use of digital tools.

The positive association between organizational innovation and employee retention also suggests that employees may be more willing to remain when organizational practices provide opportunities to learn, participate, collaborate, and adapt to changing project requirements. This interpretation is consistent with Kyndt et al. (2009) and Govaerts et al. (2011), who emphasized organizational and workplace conditions in understanding employee retention.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention

Transformational leadership was positively and significantly associated with employee retention ($r = .779, p < .001$). This indicates that employees who reported higher levels of transformational leadership also tended to report stronger commitment, intention to stay, and job satisfaction.

The overall assessment of transformational leadership was 4.20, with intellectual stimulation obtaining the highest mean ($M = 4.26$), followed by individualized consideration ($M = 4.22$), inspirational motivation ($M = 4.18$), and idealized influence ($M = 4.13$).

The relatively high assessment of intellectual stimulation is particularly relevant to architectural practice. Architectural work requires employees to develop alternative design solutions, resolve technical problems, coordinate requirements, and respond to changing client and project conditions. Leadership that encourages employees to explore alternative approaches and improve their technical work may therefore support a workplace characterized by learning and professional development.

Individualized consideration was also highly rated. In architecture firms, this may be reflected in principal architects or project leaders providing feedback on drawings, mentoring junior staff, assigning responsibilities according to competencies, and helping employees address technical challenges. Such interactions may be particularly relevant to retention because architectural skills develop through project experience, mentoring, and increasing responsibility.

Judge and Piccolo (2004) found positive associations between transformational leadership and several work outcomes, while Chan and Chan (2005) examined leadership and work outcomes among building professionals. Firstaria and Anggiani (2020) likewise examined transformational leadership in relation to job satisfaction and turnover intention among architects.

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Innovation

Transformational leadership also showed a strong positive relationship with organizational innovation ($r = .866, p < .001$). This indicates that employees who perceived stronger transformational leadership also tended to perceive greater organizational innovation within their firms.

This relationship is consistent with the multidimensional view of organizational innovation presented by Crossan and Apaydin (2010), which connects innovation with leadership, processes, and organizational outcomes. The findings are also consistent with the architecture and construction-related literature discussed, particularly Chan et al. (2014), which examined leadership in relation to an innovation climate in construction firms.

In an architecture firm, transformational leadership may support innovation when supervisors encourage employees to suggest improvements in drafting, BIM coordination, project documentation, estimating, and site-related procedures. Leaders who communicate project goals, encourage alternative solutions, and provide support during organizational changes may help employees participate more actively in innovation-related practices.

The strong association between transformational leadership and organizational innovation therefore provides an important context for understanding the moderation result. Leadership may not only be related to employee retention directly but may also be relevant to how employees experience and respond to organizational innovation.

Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership

The moderation analysis showed a positive and statistically significant interaction between organizational innovation and transformational leadership (Estimate = 0.126, SE = 0.0387, $Z = 3.25$, $p = .001$). This indicates that the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention varied according to the level of transformational leadership.

The simple slope analysis provided further evidence of this pattern. The relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention was significant at low (Estimate = 0.545, $p < .001$), average (Estimate = 0.660, $p < .001$), and high (Estimate = 0.775, $p < .001$) levels of transformational leadership. The increasing slope estimates indicate that the positive association between organizational innovation and employee retention was stronger at higher levels of transformational leadership.

This finding is particularly meaningful in the context of architecture firms, where organizational changes can directly affect how employees perform design and project-related work. For example, a firm may introduce a new BIM workflow, revise its project documentation system, establish a different drawing-review procedure, or modify project coordination practices. Such changes may require employees to learn new procedures and adjust established work habits.

Transformational leadership may provide a supportive context for these changes by communicating the purpose of the change, encouraging employees to participate, providing guidance and mentoring, and responding to difficulties during implementation. Thus, organizational innovation may be more strongly associated with employee retention when employees also perceive supportive transformational leadership.

The finding is consistent with the broader literature linking leadership with innovation-related organizational conditions. Crossan and Apaydin (2010) identified leadership as an important component within the organizational innovation literature, while Chan et al. (2014) examined the role of leadership in fostering an innovation climate in construction organizations.

Importantly, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects, given the descriptive-correlational design and cross-sectional nature of the study. The significant interaction demonstrates that the strength of the observed relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention differed across levels of transformational leadership, but it does not establish that leadership or innovation directly causes employees to remain in their firms.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention among employees of selected architecture firms in Tarlac Province, with transformational leadership examined as a moderating variable. The findings indicate that organizational innovation, transformational leadership, and employee retention were generally evident among the participating firms. Organizational innovation was significantly and positively associated with employee retention, indicating that employees' perceptions of supportive organizational structures, innovative work practices, and continuous process improvement were related to stronger retention.

Transformational leadership was also significantly associated with both organizational innovation and employee retention. More importantly, the significant interaction between organizational innovation and transformational leadership indicates that transformational leadership moderated the relationship between organizational innovation and employee retention. The simple slope results further showed that the association between organizational innovation and employee retention became stronger as the level of transformational leadership increased. Thus, leadership appears to be an important organizational condition in understanding how innovation-related practices are associated with employees' willingness to remain with their firms.

For architecture firms, the findings highlight the relevance of leadership practices that support organizational innovation while addressing employees' professional and workplace needs. Clear communication during changes in BIM and documentation workflows, constructive feedback, mentoring, employee participation, knowledge sharing, and opportunities for professional development may provide practical areas for firms to strengthen. These implications are consistent with broader research linking transformational leadership with organizational innovation and supportive innovation environments.

The findings should, however, be interpreted within the scope of the study. The research used a cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational design and self-reported data from 127 employees of selected architecture firms in Tarlac Province; therefore, the results describe associations rather than causal effects. Future studies may examine architecture firms in other regions, use larger or more diverse samples, and employ longitudinal designs to further examine how organizational innovation and transformational leadership relate to employee retention over time. Additional factors such as employee engagement, organizational culture, compensation, work-life balance, and psychological empowerment may also be examined.

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Author Contributions: Jenny M. Estrada: Conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, interpretation of results, and writing - original draft and revision. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares “No conflict of interest”.

Ethics Statement: Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to participation. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their right to participate voluntarily. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the data collection and reporting process, and no personally identifying information was disclosed.

Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available because they contain information collected from individual respondents. Data may be made available by the author upon reasonable request, subject to applicable confidentiality and privacy considerations.

AUTHOR'S BIO-NOTE

Jenny M. Estrada is a registered and licensed architect in the **Philippines** since 2012 and a Safety Officer 2. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the Tarlac State University College of Architecture and Fine Arts in 2008 and is a 2026 candidate for the Master in Business Administration at Tarlac State University. She is a practicing architect and a College Instructor at the Tarlac State University College of Architecture and Fine Arts. Her research interests include architecture, architectural practice, business, management, organizational innovation, leadership, and related areas in the built environment. She currently serves as Vice President for Operations of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) Tarlac Chapter and Section Secretary of the Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA) Tarlac Section. She is a member of the Asia Pacific Consortium of Researchers and Educators, Inc. and the Association of Safety Practitioners of the Philippines, Inc.