

# The Influence of Colleague Knowledge Base, Trust Capability, and Role of Trust on Employee Performance

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Education in the era of globalization and digitalization has become increasingly complex, requiring institutions to provide flexible learning and open access. Employee performance in such settings depends on internal factors, including colleagues' knowledge, trust, and trust capability. This study aims to analyze the effects of colleagues' knowledge base, the role of trust, and trust capability on employee performance. Using a quantitative approach with SEM-PLS analysis and a sample of 235 employees, the results indicate that all variables, both directly and indirectly through mediation, positively and significantly influence performance. The findings show that the Role of Trust positively affects employee performance, colleagues' knowledge base influences performance through trust, and trust capability enhances performance by strengthening trust. Practically, fostering work dedication, proper management of organizational information, conflict reduction, and adherence to instructions are essential to optimize employee performance. The study contributes empirical evidence that integrating colleagues' knowledge and trust mechanisms can significantly enhance performance in university settings, providing actionable guidance for higher education management and organizational development.*

**Keywords:** *Colleagues' Knowledge Base, Employee Performance, Higher Education, Trust Capability.*

## **ABSTRAK**

*Pendidikan di era globalisasi dan digitalisasi menjadi semakin kompleks, sehingga institusi dituntut menyediakan pembelajaran fleksibel dan akses terbuka. Kinerja karyawan dalam konteks ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal, termasuk basis pengetahuan rekan kerja, peran kepercayaan, dan kemampuan kepercayaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh Basis pengetahuan rekan kerja, peran kepercayaan, dan kemampuan kepercayaan terhadap kinerja karyawan. Dengan pendekatan kuantitatif menggunakan analisis SEM-PLS dan sampel sebanyak 235 karyawan, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua variabel, baik secara langsung maupun melalui mediasi, berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja. Temuan menunjukkan*

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*bahwa peran kepercayaan berkontribusi langsung terhadap kinerja karyawan, basis pengetahuan rekan kerja memengaruhi kinerja melalui kepercayaan, dan kemampuan kepercayaan meningkatkan kinerja dengan memperkuat kepercayaan. Secara praktis, dedikasi kerja yang tinggi, pengelolaan informasi organisasi dengan tepat, pengurangan konflik, dan kepatuhan terhadap instruksi menjadi kunci optimalisasi kinerja. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi empiris bahwa integrasi pengetahuan rekan kerja dan mekanisme kepercayaan secara signifikan meningkatkan kinerja di lingkungan universitas, sekaligus memberikan panduan bagi pengelolaan dan pengembangan organisasi pendidikan tinggi.*

**Kata kunci:** *Basis Pengetahuan Rekan Kerja, Kinerja Karyawan, Pendidikan Tinggi, Kemampuan Kepercayaan.*

## INTRODUCTION

The digital era and information and communication technology are very important for almost every aspect of daily life, including in higher education (Alenezi et al., 2023). Universitas Terbuka, a distance education institution, is one of the key actors in providing inclusive and innovative access to education (Iniesto et al., 2021). In order to achieve optimal performance, internal elements like trust, the foundation of colleague knowledge, and the capacity to tolerate a central role is crucial (Islam et al., 2022; Cao & Le, 2024). There are still some noteworthy discoveries that require discussion, despite the fact that Berraies et al. (2021) and Foroughi et al. (2023) have shown the correlation between these variables.

Menon and Suresh (2021) confirm that the value of knowledge is a strategic component, particularly in a dynamic learning environment. The colleague knowledge base is the main key in the learning process and professional growth among lecturers, researchers, and administrative staff at the university (Hallinger & Kulophas, 2022). Nonaka et al. (1996) describe knowledge as “an intangible asset contained in the human mind” and emphasize its significance in promoting innovation and increasing organizational efficiency (Bratianu et al., 2024). Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing has been found to have a positive impact on the success of organizational knowledge management, which in turn affects their innovation and financial performance (Ting, 2023).

A colleagues' knowledge base is crucial for enhancing worker performance in contemporary firms. Workers who have access to their coworkers' information are typically more productive and make wiser choices. However, the presence of trust in the organization is crucial to the success of this relationship. Trust capability, which encompasses an organization's capacity to establish and preserve trust, is a key component in fostering an atmosphere that encourages employee knowledge sharing. Employees are more inclined to provide pertinent information when there is a high level of trust in the group or company, which enhances both individual and team performance.

By lowering the fear of losing distinctive values and boosting knowledge documentation, research by Dirks and Ferrin (2001) showed that management trust promotes information sharing. According to a Polish study by Yu et al. (2018), employee interpersonal trust is positively correlated with information sharing and creative activity at work. According to research by Hao et al. (2022), trust in coworkers promotes knowledge sharing in virtual teams, with self-efficacy in sharing information acting as a moderator and psychological security acting as a mediator, and team virtuality. Trust among coworkers in Kenya's public sector positively influences knowledge sharing behavior, which can enhance organizational performance.

Higher education institutions, including Universitas Terbuka, continue to face challenges in optimizing employee performance. The characteristics of distance education such as geographically dispersed units, dependence on digital platforms, and limited direct interaction tend to impede communication and restrict informal knowledge sharing. These conditions may weaken organizational trust, constrain collaboration, and

reduce institutional effectiveness, potentially resulting in inefficiencies, diminished engagement, and lower performance.

The theoretical and practical contributions of this study are what make it significant. In the context of open and remote learning institutions, it theoretically improves the conversation about the relationship between employee performance, trust capability, and colleagues' knowledge base. It provides guidance for Universitas Terbuka and similar organizations in developing strategies that foster trust, facilitate knowledge sharing, and strengthen organizational resilience. Such efforts are vital for sustaining competitiveness and ensuring quality outcomes amid ongoing digital transformation and globalization. The purpose of this study is to investigate how employee performance at the Universitas Terbuka is impacted by team members' knowledge bases, trust capabilities, and trust roles.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **The Effect of Colleague Knowledge Base on the Role of Trust**

The colleague knowledge base functions as a collaborative learning tool that enables colleagues to gather, organize, and access personal knowledge (Barkley et al., 2014; Chen, 2023). Its core purpose is to convert implicit insights, such as intuition and personal experience, into structured and accessible explicit knowledge (Lei et al., 2021; Hoang & Le, 2025). This transformation aligns with Nonaka et al. (1996) knowledge-creation model, where socialization facilitates the sharing of tacit knowledge, externalization and combination turn tacit knowledge into documented, usable forms, and internalization embeds collective understanding into individual practice (Weldemariam, 2017; Malik et al., 2021; Seghroucheni et al., 2025). Through these processes, the knowledge base supports a transparent environment in which colleagues can rely on consistent information structures, reducing ambiguity and enabling smoother collaboration.

Trust plays a central role in strengthening these knowledge-exchange mechanisms. Rutten et al. (2016) emphasize that sustained trust enhances individuals' ability to acquire new skills, with this effect mediated by team psychological well-being, which itself depends on factors such as virtuality and the team's capacity for self-adjustment in learning. As the colleague's knowledge base expands access to shared knowledge, it reinforces the conditions that allow trust to grow, especially by increasing reliability and reducing perceived risks in knowledge sharing. In parallel, Hao et al. (2022) show that the three dimensions of trustworthiness, namely competence, integrity, and benevolence, are mutually reinforcing in learning contexts, with integrity emerging as the strongest predictor of effective knowledge exchange. Together, these perspectives indicate that the effectiveness of the colleague knowledge base is shaped not only by its ability to capture and systematize knowledge but also by the level of trust that governs how colleagues interpret, use, and contribute to that knowledge.

H1: Colleague knowledge base has a positive effect on the role of trust.

### **The Effect of Trust Capability on Colleague Knowledge Base**

Trust is essential for shaping effective interpersonal and organizational relationships, and its influence extends directly to how individuals share, store, and utilize knowledge within a collective system such as a knowledge base. By fostering collaboration, reducing uncertainty, and supporting open communication, trust creates the conditions under which employees feel secure in contributing their knowledge (Mayer et al., 1995; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In organizational settings, trust lowers transaction costs and reduces the need for supervision, allowing employees to share information more freely and make quicker decisions when engaging with a shared knowledge repository (Hosmer, 1995). Trust also enhances job satisfaction, loyalty, and performance, all of which strengthen willingness to document expertise and rely on colleagues' contributions. Stable leader-follower relationships built on trust further inspire commitment to shared goals and promote more active participation in knowledge exchange (McAllister, 1995; Kramer,

1999). In business environments, trust enhances the efficiency of partnerships and supports adaptive responses to changing conditions, reinforcing its role as a foundational capability that supports effective knowledge management (Settembre et al., 2021; Efunniyi et al., 2024).

Empirical evidence further underscores how trust capability strengthens the utilization and quality of a knowledge base by shaping work habits, interpersonal expectations, and organizational credibility. Li et al. (2007) show that employee trust positively affects long-term work orientation and ethical behavior, increasing individuals' readiness to contribute reliable information to collective systems. Johannsen and Zak (2021) demonstrate that trust within an organization enhances productivity, with higher pay, longer work hours, and greater output associated with organizational credibility, conditions that reinforce confidence in the knowledge contributed by colleagues. Trust also helps maintain strong relationships during organizational transitions, ensuring continuity in knowledge-sharing behavior when processes or technologies change (Karhapää et al., 2022). A positive trust climate improves individual performance and motivation, making employees more engaged in documenting, updating, and using knowledge resources (Carter, 2022). In addition, trust in supervisors enhances employee performance and mitigates the negative effects of workplace incivility, supporting an environment where employees feel safe accessing and contributing to a shared knowledge base (Saleem et al., 2022). Collectively, these findings indicate that trust capability expressed through credibility, reliability, and positive relational dynamics plays a decisive role in sustaining high-quality knowledge exchange and strengthening the effectiveness of organizational knowledge bases.

H2: Trust capability has a positive effect on colleague knowledge base.

### **The Effect of Trust Capability on the Role of Trust**

Trust capability refers to the ability of individuals or organizations to build, maintain, and apply trust through integrity, competence, consistency, and reliability (Mayer et al., 1995). In managerial contexts, trust capability enhances openness and consistency, enabling organizations to cultivate stakeholder confidence and strengthen cooperation and communication (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Strong leadership is central to this process, as it shapes employees' willingness to share knowledge, improves workplace productivity, and reinforces trust-based interactions (Koohang et al., 2017). Leaders who actively support information exchange create environments where trust fosters psychological security, accelerating innovation, problem solving, and task completion (Lee et al., 2010).

Research further demonstrates that trust capability enhances the effectiveness of broader organizational systems. Adhami and Timur (2025) show that managers' trust in employee representation systems mediates the positive effect of high-performance work systems on performance. Sugesti (2021) finds that while organizational trust alone does not directly influence performance, its interaction with employee engagement strengthens outcomes, and Hartono and Soerjanto (2024) emphasize that trust works alongside culture and engagement to enhance employee contributions. Deloitte (2024) also reports that trust capability boosts organizational performance by complementing technical competencies. Similarly, Malik et al. (2022) and Cao and Le (2024) identify trust capability as a mediator linking innovation, adaptability, and performance. Trust competencies further encourage proactive behavior and extra-role performance, strengthening relational and organizational outcomes (Dai et al., 2022). Collectively, these findings indicate that trust capability consistently reinforces trust-related roles, such as fostering cooperation, enhancing knowledge exchange, and strengthening performance, thereby supporting the hypothesis that higher trust capability positively amplifies the roles and functions of trust within organizations.

H3: Trust capability has a positive effect on the roles of trust.

### Factors Influencing Employee Performance

Colleagues' accessible knowledge forms a crucial foundation for cultivating trust and enhancing employee performance. A colleague's knowledge base enables employees to collect, organize, and access one another's experience-based insights, strengthening collective learning and coordination (Barkley et al., 2014; Chen, 2023). By transforming tacit knowledge, such as intuition and personal experience, into explicit, shareable information (Lei et al., 2021; Hoang & Le, 2025). The knowledge base supports the knowledge-creation cycle outlined by Nonaka et al. (1996). Through externalization and combination, tacit knowledge becomes structured and usable for others, while socialization facilitates deeper interpersonal exchange (Weldemariam, 2017; Seghroucheni et al., 2025). Internalization then allows employees to convert explicit knowledge into personal competence, strengthening individual capability and problem-solving performance (Malik et al., 2021). These mechanisms suggest that a richer colleague knowledge base directly enhances employees' learning and work outcomes.

Trust plays a central role in enabling these knowledge flows to translate into performance. Rutten et al. (2016) demonstrate that continuous trust improves employees' ability to acquire skills, mediated by psychological well-being, team virtuality, and adaptive learning. Trustworthiness, defined through competence, integrity, and benevolence, further reinforces learning relationships, with integrity identified as the strongest driver (Hao et al., 2022). Trust also influences performance directly: employees who feel valued and supported in a transparent environment communicate more openly, collaborate effectively, and deliver stronger results (Alaarj et al., 2016). Trust additionally acts as a mechanism that amplifies the positive effects of leadership, enabling guidance to translate into higher employee contributions (De Jong et al., 2016). Trust capability strengthens this dynamic by enabling organizations to build and sustain trustworthy relationships. When employees perceive consistent integrity, reliability, and competence, they feel secure in sharing knowledge and engaging in collaborative tasks, which further boosts performance. Thus, trust capability acts as a reinforcing driver of trust-based work behaviors.

H4: Colleague knowledge base has a positive effect on employee performance.

H5: Roles of trust has a positive effect on employee performance.

H6: Trust capability has a positive effect on employee performance.

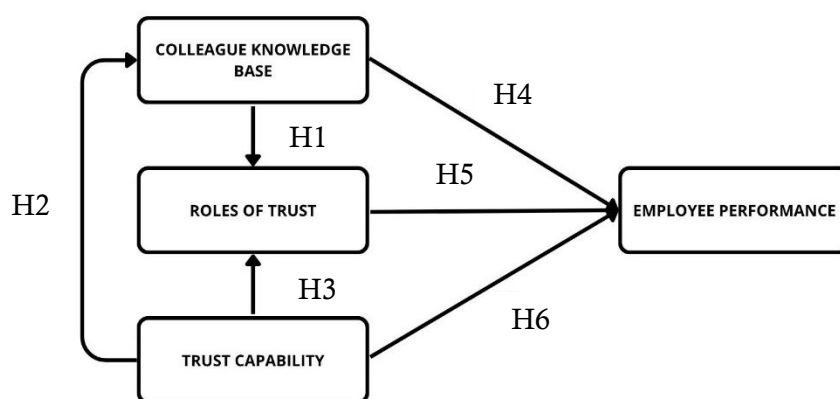


Figure 1. Research Model

Figure 1 illustrates the research model that explains the relationships among the main variables. The model shows that colleague knowledge base, roles of trust, and trust capability directly influence employee performance. Additionally, colleague knowledge base and trust capability affect the role of trust, while trust capability also positively impacts the colleague knowledge base.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This work employs a quantitative methodology, measuring the impact of exogenous latent factors on endogenous latent variables and testing hypotheses using descriptive and SEM-PLS statistical analysis. A survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires to a total of 235 civil servants from the Universitas Terbuka work unit, located across 38 different regions in Indonesia. Purposive sampling is the method employed for sampling. Without requiring specific assumptions about the data, the data analysis method makes use of SEM-PLS and descriptive statistics with Smart-PLS 3 software to analyze the effect between several variables at once (Malhotra et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2017).

The research was designed as a quantitative explanatory study, aiming to test causal relationships among latent constructs within a higher education context. The structured questionnaire served as the primary research instrument and was developed by adapting indicators from prior validated studies to ensure content validity. All items were measured using a Likert scale, enabling the capture of respondents' levels of agreement with respect to each construct. The variables investigated consisted of Colleagues' Knowledge Base (CKB), Trust Capability (TC), and the Roles of Trust (RT) as exogenous variables, with Employee Performance (EP) as the endogenous variable. Each variable was operationalized through multiple dimensions; for instance, CKB reflected access to colleagues' information and shared expertise, TC included openness, integrity, and professional credibility, RT represented the mediating function of trust in organizational interactions, and EP measured both the achievement of work targets and contributions to team tasks. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which is particularly suitable for predictive models involving mediation, complemented by descriptive statistics for profiling respondents. The use of SmartPLS 3.0 software further allowed for the evaluation of construct reliability and validity, as well as hypothesis testing within the proposed research model.

## RESULTS

The confirmatory factor and correlation since the loading value of the ideal factor for Confirmator's research is greater than 0 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must be greater than 0.5, the analyses in this study are valid because the weight value of the factor is greater than 0.60, which is related to the principle that measuring variables from a construct should have a high correlation. The loading value of the component between 0.5 and 0.6 is still regarded as adequate in the early studies on the creation of the measuring scale (Chin, 1998). Meanwhile, the reliability test was carried out to measure the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of the instrument in measuring constructs, with Composite Reliability (CR) as an indicator. In confirmatory research, the CR value must be greater than 0.7, and for exploration research, a value between 0.6 and 0.7 is still acceptable to show adequate reliability.

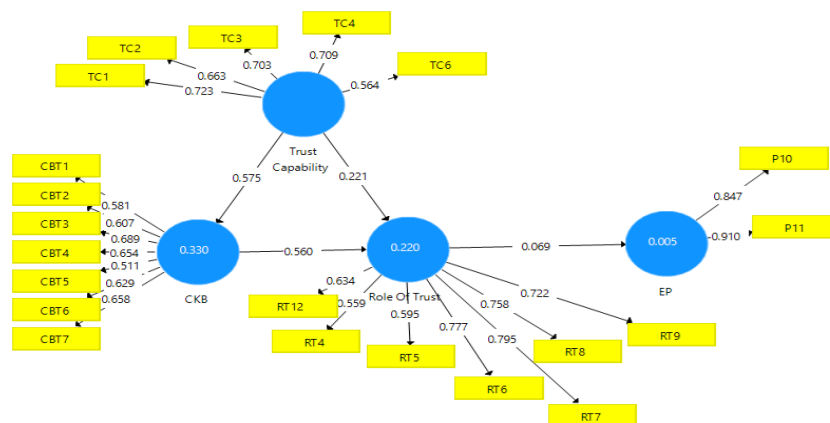


Figure 2. Identification of constructs and indicators

Figure 2 shows that the model consists of 4 latent constructs and a number of indicators that explain this concept. This concept explains how well people or organizations can establish trust. can be used to describe communication or teamwork that is competent, consistent, transparent, and honest. The indicators may reflect: Trust in colleagues or superiors (TC1), information openness (TC2), ability to maintain commitment (TC3), professional credibility (TC4), reputation and integrity (TC6). Coworkers' knowledge base, or CKB, includes the degree to which team or organizational members possess information, abilities, and experiences that can be utilized, shared, or accessed by other members who possess the necessary knowledge, are able to exchange crucial information, and can serve as resources in finishing tasks. The indicators RT4, RT5, RT6, RT7, RT8, RT9, and RT12, which stand for the role of trust construct, quantify the role that trust plays in organizational relationships and workplace procedures. It shows how much teamwork and communication are influenced by trust as a motivating element (RT6), trust in team members (RT5), and trust in leadership (RT4). It also evaluates the belief that trust has a favorable impact on work dynamics and productivity (RT7–RT12). However, the Employee Performance (EP) construct, which is represented by P10 and P11, measures the caliber of work and output produced by employees. P10 shows how consistently performance goals are met, while P11 shows how well each person contributes to tasks. The model suggests the following sequential relationship: employee performance, role of trust, colleagues' knowledge base, and trust capability. This suggests that having a better ability to establish trust fosters the growth of colleagues' knowledge, which in turn reinforces the importance of trust in the workplace and, ultimately, improves employee performance.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CKB	0.734	0.731	0.813	0.585
EP	0.709	0.739	0.871	0.772
Role Of Trust	0.832	0.877	0.867	0.586
Trust Capability	0.705	0.708	0.806	0.556

Table 1 presents the reliability and validity measurements for the study constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.705 (trust capability) to 0.832 (role of trust), all exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Similarly, rho\_A values range from 0.708 to 0.877, further confirming construct reliability. Composite Reliability (CR) values are all above 0.8, ranging from 0.806 to 0.871, demonstrating strong construct reliability according to Hair et al. (2017). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.556 to 0.772, surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.5, indicating satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 2. Composite Reliability (CR)

Construct	Value	Interpretation
Colleagues' Knowledge Base	0.813	Good internal consistency.
Employee Performance	0.871	Very strong internal consistency.
Role of Trust	0.867	Highly consistent.
Trust Capability	0.806	Acceptably consistent.

Table 2 presents the Composite Reliability (CR) values for each construct in the study. The results indicate that all constructs meet the recommended reliability threshold (>0.70), confirming their internal consistency. Specifically, the Colleague Knowledge Base (CKB) shows good consistency with a CR value of 0.813, while Employee Performance (EP) demonstrates very strong internal consistency at 0.871. The role of trust also exhibits high reliability with a CR value of 0.867. Finally, trust capability, with a CR value of 0.806, is considered acceptably consistent. These findings collectively affirm that the measurement model is reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Table 3. Model Fit Interpretation

Indicator	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Ideal Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	0.067	0.062	≤ 0.08 (ideal)	Both SRMR values are excellent, indicating that the model has a good fit between the observed data and the theoretical model.
d_ ULS (Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy)	0.459	0.421	Lower = better (no fixed threshold)	These low values suggest high consistency and minimal discrepancy between the model and the data.
d_ G (Geodesic Discrepancy)	0.444	0.491	Lower = better	Both values are within an acceptable range, indicating a good model fit.
Chi-Square	0.360	0.056	Lower is better (secondary criterion in PLS)	The very low Chi-Square value suggests excellent model fit.
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	0.906	0.974	≥ 0.90 (ideal)	Both NFI values indicate that the model is highly representative of the data, being very close to 1.0.
Rms Theta	0.110	≤ 0.12 (for reflective models)		This value confirms that the reflective constructs are valid, and there are no structural issues with the indicators.

Table 3 presents the model fit interpretation. The results show that all indicators fall within acceptable or ideal thresholds. The SRMR values (0.067 for the saturated model and 0.062 for the estimated model) are below the ideal cut-off of 0.08, confirming good model fit. Both d\_ ULS and d\_ G values are low, suggesting minimal discrepancy between the model and the data. The Chi-Square values are very small, further supporting excellent fit. In addition, the NFI values (0.906 and 0.974) exceed the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that the model is highly representative of the observed data. Finally, the rms Theta value (0.110) is below the threshold of 0.12, confirming the validity of the reflective constructs. Collectively, these results demonstrate that the model achieves a strong overall fit.

Table 3. R-Square

Endogenous Construct	R <sup>2</sup> Value	Interpretation
Colleagues' Knowledge Base (CKB)	0.330	Trust Capability explains 33% of the variance; substantial influence on CKB
Role of Trust	0.220	Trust Capability and CKB explain 22% of variance; weak to moderate influence
Employee Performance (EP)	0.005	Role of Trust explains 0.5% of variance; minimal influence

Based on Table 3, the R Square values show the percentage of each endogenous construct's variance that can be accounted for by the model's associated exogenous construct or constructs. The R Square value for the Colleague Knowledge Base (CKB) is 0.330, which indicates that trust capability accounts for 33% of the variance in CKB. This indicates that trust capability has a significant influence on colleague knowledge development, indicating a substantial level of explanatory power. With an R Square value of 0.220, the role of trust shows that Trust Capability and CKB account for 22% of the variance in this construct. This is seen as a weak to moderate level, suggesting that although a relationship exists, the role of trust may be greatly influenced by other factors not taken into account by the model. R Square value of only 0.005, the role of trust only explains 0.5% of the variance in Employee Performance (EP). This shows a very weak connection, suggesting that the current model is insufficient to explain changes in employee performance and that other factors may have a greater impact. A value of ≥

0.70 indicates that the construct is reliable and stable, as well as A value of  $\geq 0.70$  denotes high internal consistency.

**Table 5.** Hypothesis Testing

<b>Variable</b>	<b>T-Statistics</b>	<b>P Values</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Colleague Knowledge Base → Role of Trust	2.492	0.013	Accepted
Trust Capability → Colleague Knowledge Base	4.155	0.000	Accepted
Trust Capability → Role of Trust	2.867	0.003	Accepted
Colleague Knowledge Base → Employee Performance	2.644	0.004	Accepted
Role of Trust → Employee Performance	2.682	0.007	Accepted
Trust Capability → Employee Performance	3.337	0.000	Accepted

Table 5 presents the hypothesis testing results. All proposed relationships are statistically significant, as indicated by p-values below 0.05. The results reveal that the colleague's knowledge base positively influences both the Role of Trust and Employee Performance, indicating that shared knowledge and collaboration enhance trust and productivity. The Role of Trust also contributes to improving employee performance by fostering cooperation and effective communication within the organization.

Moreover, trust capability plays a vital role in strengthening the colleagues' knowledge base and the role of trust, while also directly improving employee performance. These findings highlight that trust, competence, and knowledge sharing are interconnected factors that collectively enhance organizational effectiveness and employee outcomes. The results show that all relationships are significant. The colleague's knowledge base improves employee performance and strengthens the role of trust. Trust, in turn, enhances employee performance through better cooperation and communication. Trust capability also plays a vital role, boosting both knowledge sharing and performance, while directly reinforcing the role of trust. Trust and knowledge exchange are key factors driving higher employee performance.

**DISCUSSION**

The study's conclusions make a significant contribution to a number of theoretical frameworks, especially those pertaining to leadership, interpersonal relationships, trust dynamics, organizational behavior, social capital, and human capital. First, the strong correlation between employee performance and the colleague knowledge base provides empirical evidence in favor of human capital theory, which highlights the importance of both individual and group competencies in boosting organizational productivity through team learning and knowledge exchange (Becker, 1964). The pathway from colleagues' knowledge base to the role of trust aligns with organizational behavior theory, which argues that open communication and shared knowledge foster trust at both interpersonal and team levels (Robbins et al., 2019).

The influence of the role of trust on EP further reflects the trust and performance theory by Dirks and Ferrin (2001), which emphasizes that trust enhances cooperation, reduces conflict, and improves task execution. Similarly, the strong effect of trust capability on colleague knowledge base supports social capital theory. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) highlight trust as a critical enabler of knowledge sharing and intellectual growth among colleagues. The direct relationship between trust capability and employee performance reinforces transformational leadership theory, underscoring the role of trustworthy leaders in cultivating commitment, psychological safety, and motivation (Bass, 2015).

The influence of trust capability on the role of trust is consistent with interpersonal trust theory by Rotter (1967), which views individual reliability as the foundation for broader organizational trust. Collectively, these findings present a comprehensive trust-based model where trust capability becomes a central driver of knowledge development, trust building, and employee performance, thus advancing both theoretical discourse and practical strategies in organizational management. The study's conclusions give Universitas Terbuka important direction for streamlining its organizational procedures as

a preeminent open and remote learning university (Mehrotra et al., 2001). The close relationship between colleague knowledge base and employee performance highlights the need to strengthen knowledge-sharing practices among academic and administrative staff. Peer mentoring, collaborative online tools, and regular best-practice forums can enhance collective expertise in managing distance learning effectively (Bernard et al., 2000; Mubaraq et al., 2024; Rustina et al., 2025). In addition, trust capability acts as a critical driver of performance and knowledge exchange, emphasizing the importance of leadership development that promotes psychological safety, integrity, and transparency of values, key elements for fostering collaboration and trust in a distributed learning environment (Hsu & Chang, 2014).

Moreover, the impact of the role of trust on performance necessitates the structural reinforcement of trust in hierarchical and peer interactions (De Jong et al., 2016). In addition to encouraging interdepartmental cooperation through multidisciplinary webinars and shared resource systems, Universitas Terbuka can incorporate trust-based skills into performance reviews and development initiatives. Importantly, Universitas Terbuka will be in a position to support innovation, improve institutional cohesion, and maintain a high-performing, flexible organizational culture by integrating human resource tactics with a trust-based performance model (Georgescu et al., 2024), through trust-oriented hiring, onboarding, and recognition systems. These procedures are essential for preserving the resilience and quality of education in an increasingly digital and self-directed learning environment. Despite its many shortcomings, this study provides insightful information. The fact that the model only accounts for a small percentage of the variation in employee performance ( $R^2 = 0.005$ ) suggests that other characteristics, such as job happiness, digital skills, or motivation, may be more important. These findings highlight the practical and managerial value of fostering a trust-based culture. Managers can enhance performance and collaboration by implementing mentorship programs, transparent communication, and recognition systems that reward both individual and team efforts. This approach leverages human and social capital, supports innovation, and strengthens organizational resilience in digital and complex work environments.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that trust capability plays a central role in shaping organizational dynamics, particularly by strengthening the role of trust and enhancing the colleague knowledge base. A strong ability to build and maintain trust encourages open communication, effective collaboration, and greater knowledge sharing, which together improve employee performance. Furthermore, the findings validate Human Capital Theory, showing that shared knowledge directly enhances productivity, while Social Capital Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory are supported through the positive influence of trust capability on both knowledge development and performance. Although the role of trust demonstrates a relatively small direct effect on performance, it remains an essential mediator in fostering team cohesion and commitment in an open learning environment.

For the Universitas Terbuka, the results emphasize the need to cultivate a culture of trust and structured knowledge sharing through leadership training, peer mentoring, and open communication systems. Trust-oriented human resource practices such as transparent performance evaluations and cross-department collaboration can enhance motivation and sustain organizational excellence in a digital learning ecosystem. This study is limited by its single-institution focus, cross-sectional design, and low explanatory power ( $R^2 = 0.005$ ) for employee performance. These constraints restrict causal inference and generalization beyond the observed context. Future studies should include multiple higher education institutions, adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches, and incorporate additional variables such as job satisfaction, leadership style, digital competence, and organizational culture. These expansions would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms linking trust, knowledge, and performance in distance education settings.

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*Trust, Colleague  
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