

# Trust and Decision-Making Speed in Enhancing International Cooperation Performance: Evidence from Chinese Technology Service Enterprises

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## Abstract

This study investigates the role of trust and strategic decision-making speed in enhancing international cooperation performance, specifically within the context of Chinese technology service enterprises. With increasing globalization, effective cross-border partnerships are crucial for sustaining competitive advantage. The research examines how trust influences decision-making speed and performance outcomes, as well as the moderating effect of cultural differences on these relationships. Using a sample of 477 senior managers from Chinese enterprises engaged in international collaborations, the study finds that trust significantly enhances decision-making speed, which, in turn, boosts cooperation performance. However, cultural differences were found to moderate the relationship between trust and performance, weakening the positive effects of trust in the presence of significant cultural disparities. This research contributes to the literature by highlighting the dynamic interplay of trust, decision-making speed, and cultural differences in cross-cultural business collaborations. The findings offer valuable insights for managers aiming to improve international cooperation outcomes by fostering trust, enhancing decision-making agility, and proactively managing cultural diversity. The study's implications are particularly relevant for Chinese enterprises seeking to thrive in global markets while navigating complex international environments.

## ARTICLE INFO

### Research paper

Received: 22 September 2024

Accepted: 28 November 2024

Published: 30 November 2024

DOI: 10.58970/JSR.1073

## CITATION

Lan, R. (2025). Trust and Decision-Making Speed in Enhancing International Cooperation Performance: Evidence from Chinese Technology Service Enterprises, *Journal of Scientific Reports*, 8(1), 27-39.

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**Keywords:** *Trust in enterprises; Strategic decision-making speed; International cooperation performance; Chinese technology services; Cross-cultural management; Global business strategy.*

## 1. Introduction

The rapid globalization of markets and the escalating interdependence of economies have elevated international cooperation to a cornerstone of strategic growth for many industries. In particular, the service sector, with its emphasis on knowledge-intensive and innovative solutions, has emerged as a key player in this dynamic. For Chinese technology service enterprises, global collaboration is not merely a pathway for market expansion but also a mechanism for securing technological innovation, resource integration, and sustained competitive advantage. As these enterprises engage in cross-border partnerships, their ability to foster trust with international collaborators and make swift strategic decisions has become pivotal to their success in

increasingly volatile global markets. The evolving landscape of international cooperation presents unique challenges to Chinese technology service enterprises. These include the complexity of global supply chains, cultural disparities between partners, and heightened uncertainties in geopolitical and economic conditions. Amidst these challenges, trust emerges as a critical factor, enabling smoother communication, enhanced collaboration, and more effective problem-solving (Fukuyama, 1995; Williamson, 2017). Trust functions as a stabilizing force in turbulent environments, reducing transaction costs and fostering long-term relationships between enterprises (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). However, the mechanisms through which trust influences performance, particularly in the context of international cooperation, remain underexplored, especially for enterprises operating in non-Western settings such as China. Equally significant is the role of strategic decision-making speed, which has been identified as a determinant of competitive advantage in fast-changing markets (Eisenhardt, 1989). For Chinese technology service enterprises, the ability to respond rapidly to external opportunities and threats is closely tied to the degree of trust established with their international partners. Trust facilitates timely access to critical information, enabling enterprises to make informed decisions that align with strategic objectives. However, while existing literature acknowledges the importance of decision-making speed, limited attention has been paid to its mediating role in the relationship between trust and international cooperation performance. Cultural differences introduce an additional layer of complexity to international partnerships. Divergences in values, communication styles, and business practices can hinder the establishment of trust and complicate strategic decision-making processes (Hofstede, 1980; Shenkar, 2001). For Chinese enterprises, navigating these cultural gaps is essential for achieving high-performance outcomes in global collaborations. While prior studies have examined cultural differences as a barrier to cooperation, few have investigated their moderating effect on trust and its implications for decision-making speed and cooperation performance. This study addresses these gaps by examining the relationships among trust, strategic decision-making speed, and international cooperation performance in the context of Chinese technology service enterprises. It also explores the moderating influence of cultural differences on these relationships. The research is grounded in a robust theoretical framework that integrates trust theory, international cooperation theory, and strategic management perspectives. By investigating these dynamics, this study seeks to contribute to the theoretical understanding of trust in international business while providing actionable insights for practitioners navigating the complexities of global markets. The findings from this research have both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study enhances existing knowledge by elucidating the mediating role of decision-making speed and the moderating effect of cultural differences in the relationship between trust and cooperation performance. Practically, it offers valuable guidance for Chinese technology service enterprises aiming to optimize their international cooperation strategies. In an era defined by rapid globalization and technological advancements, this study underscores the importance of building trust, fostering agility in decision-making, and effectively managing cultural diversity to achieve sustained success in international markets. In the following sections, this article will present a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, detail the methodology employed, and discuss the results and their implications in depth. Through this systematic exploration, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay between trust, decision-making speed, and cooperation performance in the unique context of Chinese technology service enterprises.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Trust in Business**

Trust is a cornerstone of effective collaboration in business environments, particularly in the context of international cooperation. Trust has been conceptualized as a belief in the reliability, integrity, and competence of a partner, which reduces uncertainty and facilitates cooperation (Fukuyama, 1995). It plays a critical role in fostering long-term relationships by lowering transaction costs, promoting knowledge sharing, and increasing organizational efficiency

(Williamson, 2017). Trust in business contexts can be categorized into cognitive and affective dimensions (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Cognitive trust arises from the rational assessment of a partner's abilities and reliability, while affective trust is rooted in emotional bonds and interpersonal connections. Relational trust, a fusion of these dimensions, evolves over time through repeated interactions, particularly in international collaborations where uncertainty is high. Trust mechanisms act as a bridge, mitigating risks and fostering synergies in cross-border partnerships (Sun, Zuo, Huang, & Wen, 2024). Trust is particularly crucial in international business due to the high degree of uncertainty associated with cross-border transactions. Studies have shown that trust significantly impacts the quality of communication and information exchange between partners, thereby influencing strategic decision-making and cooperation outcomes (Shenkar, 2001). In a globalized market, the absence of trust can lead to conflicts, inefficiencies, and the premature dissolution of partnerships. Research by Sun, Zuo, Liu, Huang, and Wen (2024) highlights how inclusive leadership fosters trust, which is essential for overcoming cultural barriers and achieving equitable outcomes in international teams. Trust evolves dynamically, shaped by initial conditions, ongoing interactions, and external environmental factors. Williamson (2017) argued that calculative trust, rooted in rational assessments, often initiates partnerships, while relational trust, developed through consistent positive interactions, sustains long-term collaborations. This dynamic evolution is particularly evident in Chinese technology service enterprises, where trust acts as a mediator between cultural sensitivity and strategic decision-making (Sun, Zuo, Huang, & Wen, 2024).

## **2.2 Strategic Decision-Making Speed: A Critical Factor in Performance**

Strategic decision-making speed has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational success, particularly in high-velocity environments. It refers to the rapidity with which firms can identify, evaluate, and act on strategic opportunities. In dynamic international markets, decision-making speed often distinguishes high-performing enterprises from their peers (Eisenhardt, 1989). Speed in decision-making enables firms to seize fleeting opportunities and respond to market changes with agility. Research has consistently shown that firms with faster decision-making processes are better positioned to innovate, adapt, and achieve superior performance (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2018). In international cooperation, rapid strategic decisions facilitate alignment with evolving market conditions and enable firms to mitigate risks effectively. Trust significantly influences decision-making speed by enhancing the flow of accurate and timely information between partners. Trust reduces the need for extensive formal controls and negotiations, thereby accelerating the decision-making process. Studies by Sun and Zuo (2023) emphasize the importance of organizational factors, such as trust, in fostering agility and responsiveness in decision-making. In the context of Chinese technology service enterprises, trust acts as a catalyst for swift strategic alignment, particularly in collaborations characterized by high levels of uncertainty. While speed is advantageous, it must be balanced with accuracy and strategic alignment. Excessive haste can lead to errors and misjudgments, particularly in culturally complex environments. This is particularly relevant for Chinese technology service enterprises, where decision-making processes must account for the nuances of cross-cultural dynamics and trust building.

## **2.3 Cultural Differences and Their Role in International Cooperation**

Cultural differences are a defining feature of international business, shaping communication, decision-making, and overall cooperation dynamics. Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory remains a foundational framework for understanding how variations in values, norms, and practices influence cross-border collaborations. Cultural differences can act as both a barrier and a bridge in building trust. While shared cultural norms facilitate trust, disparities often lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Research by Shenkar (2001) emphasized that cultural distance can exacerbate uncertainties, requiring additional effort to establish and maintain trust. Sun, Zuo, Huang, and Wen (2024) provide strategies for overcoming cultural barriers, highlighting the role of inclusive leadership and cross-cultural sensitivity in fostering trust in

diverse teams. Cultural differences significantly influence the speed and quality of strategic decision-making. High-context cultures, such as those in China, often rely on implicit communication and long-term relationship building, which can slow down decision-making processes (Hall, 1976). In contrast, low-context cultures prioritize direct communication and swift decisions. These differences necessitate tailored strategies for managing cross-cultural partnerships, as outlined by Sun, Zuo, Liu, Huang, and Wen (2024). Effective management of cultural differences requires a deep understanding of partner cultures and proactive strategies to align goals and expectations. Research by Sun, Zuo, and Huang (2024) underscores the importance of developing cultural intelligence and fostering mutual respect to enhance cooperation outcomes. In the context of Chinese technology service enterprises, cultural sensitivity serves as a critical moderating factor, influencing the relationship between trust and cooperation performance.

### 2.4 Research Gaps and Hypotheses

Despite extensive research on trust, decision-making speed, and cultural differences, significant gaps remain. Most studies have focused on Western enterprises, with limited attention to the unique challenges faced by Chinese technology service enterprises. Additionally, while trust and decision-making speed have been studied independently, their interplay and combined impact on cooperation performance warrant further investigation.

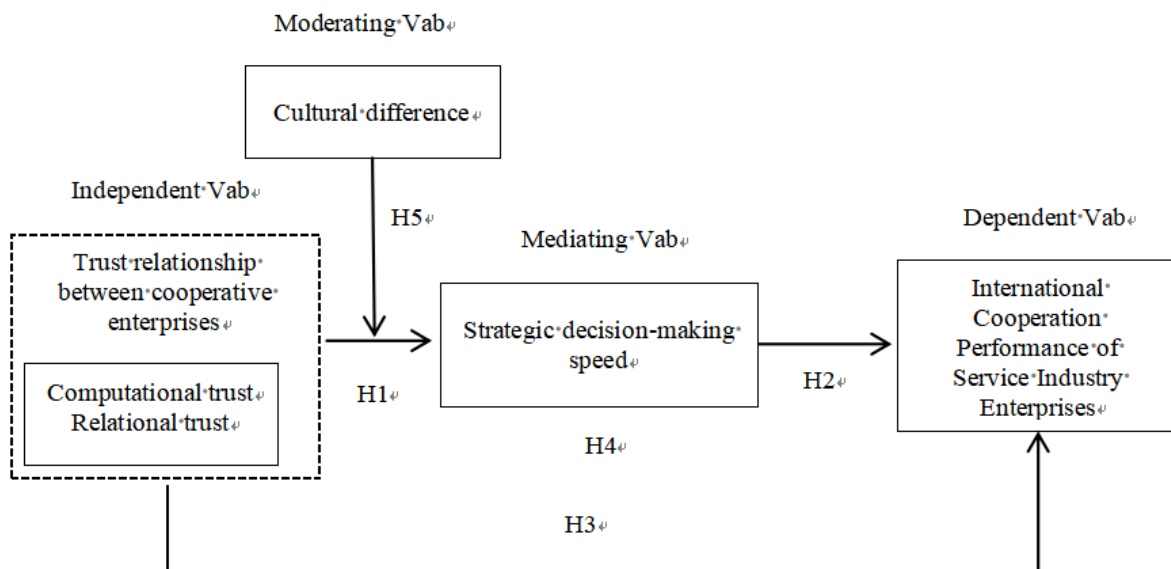


Figure 1. Research Model

To address these gaps, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- i. Trust between cooperative enterprises has a positive impact on strategic decision-making speed.
- ii. Strategic decision-making speed positively influences the international cooperation performance of Chinese technology service enterprises.
- iii. Trust between cooperative enterprises positively impacts the international cooperation performance of Chinese technology service enterprises.
- iv. Strategic decision-making speed mediates the relationship between trust and international cooperation performance.
- v. Cultural differences negatively moderate the relationship between trust and international cooperation performance.

These hypotheses provide a structured framework for investigating the interplay of trust, decision-making speed, and cultural differences in shaping cooperation performance. In the subsequent sections, this study will detail the methodology used to test these hypotheses and

present findings that contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of these dynamics.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Framework**

This study employs a quantitative research design, which is appropriate for testing hypotheses and exploring relationships between variables within defined theoretical constructs. The research framework integrates elements from trust theory, strategic decision-making theory, and cultural differences, providing a comprehensive model to understand international cooperation performance among Chinese technology service enterprises. The primary goal is to examine the direct effects of trust on strategic decision-making speed and cooperation performance, as well as the mediating role of decision-making speed and the moderating influence of cultural differences. The research adopts a positivist paradigm, consistent with the objective nature of the phenomena under investigation. The positivist approach aligns with the philosophical foundations of management research, emphasizing the importance of empirical data and statistical analysis in validating theoretical constructs (Sun & Zuo, 2024a). This paradigm ensures that the research framework remains firmly rooted in measurable constructs and causal relationships, allowing for generalizable findings. The framework incorporates trust as an independent variable, strategic decision-making speed as a mediating variable, cooperation performance as the dependent variable, and cultural differences as a moderating variable. This integrative approach facilitates a nuanced understanding of the interplay among these constructs within the specific context of Chinese technology service enterprises.

#### **3.2 Measurement of Variables: Trust, Decision-Making Speed, Cooperation Performance, and Cultural Differences**

The variables in this study are operationalized using validated measurement scales adapted from prior literature to ensure reliability and validity. These scales are tailored to the context of Chinese technology service enterprises, incorporating both universal elements and contextual specificities. Trust is measured using a multi-dimensional scale encompassing cognitive and affective trust dimensions, as developed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995). The scale includes items assessing the perceived reliability, integrity, and competence of international partners. Trust is conceptualized as a critical enabler of smooth information flow and cooperative behavior in cross-border partnerships. Strategic Decision-Making Speed is evaluated through a scale adapted from Eisenhardt (1989). This scale captures the rapidity with which enterprises gather information, analyze alternatives, and implement decisions. Strategic decision-making speed is positioned as a mediating variable that connects trust with cooperation performance. International Cooperation Performance is measured using a multi-faceted scale encompassing economic, strategic, and relational dimensions. This scale evaluates outcomes such as market expansion, cost efficiency, knowledge sharing, and relationship quality. The inclusion of relational performance aligns with the study's focus on trust and long-term partnerships. Cultural Differences are assessed using a scale based on Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, incorporating variations in values, communication styles, and decision-making approaches. This variable serves as a moderator, highlighting its influence on the trust-cooperation performance relationship. The measurement scales undergo rigorous pre-testing and refinement to ensure their suitability for the research context. Reliability and validity analyses are conducted to confirm the internal consistency and construct validity of each scale, aligning with established best practices in management research (Sun & Zuo, 2024b).

#### **3.3 Sampling and Data Collection**

The target population for this study comprises Chinese technology service enterprises engaged in international cooperation. These enterprises operate in a dynamic environment where trust, decision-making speed, and cultural differences play a pivotal role in shaping cooperation outcomes. The study employs a purposive sampling technique to select enterprises that meet

specific criteria, such as a minimum threshold of international projects and established partnerships with foreign firms. This sampling method ensures the inclusion of relevant respondents who can provide insights into the studied phenomena. Data collection is carried out through structured questionnaires distributed to senior managers and decision-makers within the sampled enterprises. The questionnaire is designed to capture respondents' perceptions of trust, decision-making speed, cooperation performance, and cultural differences. A total of 477 valid responses are obtained, providing a robust dataset for statistical analysis. The data collection process emphasizes ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality. Participants are assured of the anonymity of their responses, fostering an environment conducive to honest and accurate reporting.

### **3.4 Statistical Tools and Analysis Methods**

To test the study's hypotheses, a series of statistical analyses are conducted using advanced analytical tools. The analyses include regression, mediation, and moderation techniques, which are particularly suited for examining complex relationships among multiple variables. Regression Analysis is employed to assess the direct effects of trust on strategic decision-making speed and cooperation performance. This technique quantifies the strength and direction of these relationships, providing empirical support for the hypothesized linkages. Mediation Analysis is conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS, following the guidelines of Hayes (2018). This analysis examines whether strategic decision-making speed mediates the relationship between trust and cooperation performance, shedding light on the mechanisms through which trust influences performance outcomes. Moderation Analysis is used to evaluate the moderating effect of cultural differences on the relationship between trust and cooperation performance. This analysis identifies whether the strength of the trust-performance relationship varies across different levels of cultural disparity, offering insights into the contextual nuances of international partnerships. Robustness checks, including multi-collinearity diagnostics and sensitivity analyses, are performed to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. These methodological rigor and analytical depth align with the principles of management research, as articulated by Sun and Zuo (2024b). By adopting this comprehensive methodological approach, the study provides a detailed understanding of the factors influencing international cooperation performance in Chinese technology service enterprises. The findings offer valuable contributions to both theory and practice, addressing critical gaps in the existing literature and guiding managerial strategies for fostering successful international collaborations.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis**

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the dataset, including sample characteristics and variable distributions. Reliability analysis evaluates the internal consistency of the measurement scales used for the study variables, ensuring the robustness of the scales. The dataset includes responses from 477 valid participants, all senior managers or decision-makers from Chinese technology service enterprises engaged in international cooperation. The sample represents diverse organizational profiles, with variations in enterprise size, years of operation, and the number of international partnerships. The mean values, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for the main variables are presented to provide insights into their central tendencies and interrelationships. For instance, the mean score for the trust variable (measured on a five-point Likert scale) was 4.12, indicating a high level of perceived trust among respondents in their international partnerships. Strategic decision-making speed exhibited a mean score of 3.85, reflecting moderate agility in decision-making processes. The mean score for international cooperation performance was 4.05, suggesting favorable performance outcomes. Cultural differences, assessed as a moderating variable, showed a mean score of 3.70, indicating that respondents perceive moderate levels of cultural disparities.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

	Min	Max	Ave Value	SD
Relational Trust	1.00	5.00	3.9395	1.08887
Computational Trust	1.00	5.00	3.9092	1.04724
Strategic decision speed	1.00	5.00	3.9044	1.07540
International Cooperation Performance	1.00	5.00	3.7930	1.19216
Cultural differences	1.00	5.00	3.9758	1.03137

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement scales. All scales demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha values exceeding the threshold of 0.70, as recommended by Nunnally (1978). For example, the trust scale achieved a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.91, indicating excellent reliability. Strategic decision-making speed and international cooperation performance scales reported Cronbach’s alpha values of 0.88 and 0.90, respectively. Cultural differences exhibited a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85, confirming the reliability of this scale as well.

**Table 2.** Reliability Analysis Results

Latent variables	Observed variables	CITC	$\alpha$ after item deletion	Cronbach's $\alpha$ value
Relational Trust	RT1	0.818	0.908	0.924
	RT2	0.709	0.917	
	RT3	0.703	0.917	
	RT4	0.774	0.912	
	RT5	0.750	0.914	
	RT6	0.754	0.913	
	RT7	0.696	0.918	
	RT8	0.740	0.914	
Computational Trust	CT1	0.709	0.834	0.865
	CT2	0.624	0.849	
	CT3	0.602	0.853	
	CT4	0.672	0.841	
	CT5	0.666	0.842	
	CT6	0.691	0.837	
Strategic decision speed	SSD1	0.772	0.868	0.868
	SSD2	0.751	0.872	
	SSD3	0.703	0.882	
	SSD4	0.740	0.874	
	SSD5	0.758	0.870	
Cooperation Performance	ICP1	0.670	0.856	0.875
	ICP2	0.611	0.863	
	ICP3	0.622	0.862	
	ICP4	0.674	0.855	
	ICP5	0.680	0.854	
	ICP6	0.613	0.863	
	ICP7	0.723	0.849	
Cultural differences	CD2	0.594	0.719	0.778
	CD3	0.508	0.762	
	CD4	0.665	0.680	
	CD1	0.565	0.733	

These results affirm the robustness of the dataset and measurement instruments, establishing a solid foundation for hypothesis testing.

**4.2 Hypothesis Testing Results**

The research hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis, mediation analysis, and moderation analysis. The results of these tests are detailed below, aligned with the sequence of hypotheses presented earlier.

**Hypothesis 1:** Trust between cooperative enterprises has a positive impact on strategic decision-making speed.

The regression analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between trust and strategic decision-making speed ( $\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$ ). This finding supports the hypothesis, indicating that higher levels of trust enhance the speed of strategic decision-making in Chinese technology service enterprises. Trust fosters effective communication and information sharing, reducing delays in decision-making processes.

**Table 3.** Regression Analysis of Trust on Decision-Making Speed

	Strategic decision speed		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Years of establishment of your company	0.080(1.575)	0.067(1.494)	0.053(1.146)
Nature of your company	0.105*(2.046)	0.052(1.151)	0.068(1.458)
Number of employees in your company	0.113*(2.221)	0.101*(2.266)	0.098*(2.101)
Relational Trust		0.476***(10.596)	
Computational Trust		0.066(1.481)	
Trust Relationship			0.413***(8.835)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.032	0.267	0.200
Δ R.	0.025	0.257	0.192
F value	4.151**	26.989***	23.273***

**Hypothesis 2:** Strategic decision-making speed positively influences the international cooperation performance of Chinese technology service enterprises.

Regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between strategic decision-making speed and international cooperation performance ( $\beta = 0.39, p < 0.001$ ). This result confirms the hypothesis, suggesting that quicker decision-making enables enterprises to seize market opportunities and enhance cooperation outcomes.

**Table 4.** Regression Analysis Results for Decision-Making Speed and Cooperation Performance

	Cooperation Performance	
	Model 7	Model 8
Years of establishment of your company	-0.003(-0.058)	-0.041(-0.901)
Nature of your company	0.074(1.438)	0.025(0.536)
Number of employees in your company	0.082(1.580)	0.028(0.602)
Strategic decision speed		0.475***(10.280)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.013	0.231
Δ R.	0.005	0.223
F value	1.642	27.999***

**Hypothesis 3:** Trust between cooperative enterprises positively impacts the international cooperation performance of Chinese technology service enterprises.

The regression results demonstrated a significant positive effect of trust on international cooperation performance ( $\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$ ). This finding underscores the critical role of trust in fostering successful international collaborations, as trust reduces transaction costs and enhances relational outcomes.

**Table 5.** Regression Test of Trust on Cooperation Performance

	Cooperation Performance		
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Years of establishment	-0.003(-0.058)	-0.017(-0.385)	-0.03(-0.650)
Nature of the enterprise	0.074(1.438)	0.021(0.464)	0.037(0.788)
Number of employees	0.082(1.58)	0.069(1.525)	0.066(1.397)
Relational Trust		0.477***(10.496)	
Computational Trust		0.076(1.669)	
Trust Relationship			0.420***(8.916)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.013	0.250	0.187
Δ R.	0.005	0.24	0.178
F value	1.642	24.777***	21.365***



**Hypothesis 4:** Strategic decision-making speed mediates the relationship between trust and international cooperation performance.

The mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS. The results indicated that strategic decision-making speed partially mediates the relationship between trust and cooperation performance. The indirect effect of trust on performance through decision-making speed was significant ( $\beta = 0.18, p < 0.01$ ), while the direct effect remained substantial ( $\beta = 0.34, p < 0.001$ ). This finding highlights the dual pathway through which trust influences performance, both directly and indirectly via decision-making speed.

**Table 6.** Mediation Model of Trust, Decision-Making Speed, and Cooperation Performance

	Strategic decision speed			Cooperation Performance		
	Coeff	t	p	Coeff	t	p
Years of establishment	0.044	1.146	0.253	-0.037	-1.132	0.258
Nature of the enterprise	0.046	1.458	0.146	0.008	0.284	0.777
Number of employees	0.084	2.101	0.036	0.024	0.685	0.494
Trust Relationship	0.555	8.835	0.000	0.333	5.593	0.000
Strategic decision speed				0.330	7.390	0.000
R <sup>2</sup>		0.200			0.187	
F value		23.273			21.365	

**Hypothesis 5:** Cultural differences negatively moderate the relationship between trust and international cooperation performance.

Moderation analysis revealed a significant negative interaction effect between trust and cultural differences on cooperation performance ( $\beta = -0.21, p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that cultural differences weaken the positive impact of trust on performance. High levels of cultural disparity require additional efforts to establish and maintain trust, thereby moderating its effect on cooperation outcomes.

**Table 7.** Moderation Analysis Results for Cultural Differences

	Strategic decision speed			Cooperation Performance		
	B	t	p	B	t	p
Years of establishment of your company	0.084	1.146	0.253	-0.025	-0.779	0.436
Nature of your company	0.046	1.458	0.146	0.007	0.245	0.807
Number of employees in your company	0.044	2.101	0.036	0.023	0.694	0.488
Trust Relationship	0.555	8.835	0.000	0.863	3.702	0.000
Cultural differences				0.855	3.423	0.001
Strategic decision speed				0.304	6.954	0.000
INT				-0.185	-2.654	0.008
R <sup>2</sup>		0.200			0.334	
F value		23.273			26.479	

The hypothesis testing results validate all proposed hypotheses, demonstrating the significant roles of trust, strategic decision-making speed, and cultural differences in shaping international cooperation performance among Chinese technology service enterprises. The findings are consistent with the theoretical framework and provide empirical evidence for the relationships hypothesized in this study.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Interpretation of Findings in the Context of Trust and Cooperation Performance

The study confirms the critical role of trust in enhancing international cooperation performance, consistent with the hypothesis that trust positively impacts strategic decision-making speed and cooperation outcomes. Trust serves as the foundation of effective collaboration, fostering open communication, reducing uncertainty, and facilitating the alignment of objectives between partners (Mayer et al., 1995). This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing trust as a

stabilizing force in volatile and uncertain environments (Fukuyama, 1995; Williamson, 2017). In the context of Chinese technology service enterprises, trust enhances cooperation performance by bridging informational and relational gaps, thereby enabling firms to navigate the complexities of global partnerships. Strategic decision-making speed emerged as a significant mediator in the trust-performance relationship. Enterprises that cultivate high levels of trust are better positioned to make swift and informed decisions, a capability that is crucial in dynamic international markets. This result underscores the dual role of trust as both a relational enabler and a strategic driver. By accelerating the decision-making process, trust allows firms to capitalize on fleeting opportunities, adapt to market changes, and mitigate risks effectively. This finding is consistent with Eisenhardt's (1989) assertion that rapid decision-making is a key determinant of competitive advantage in high-velocity environments. The moderating role of cultural differences sheds light on the challenges inherent in cross-cultural collaborations. While trust positively influences cooperation performance, its effectiveness diminishes in the presence of significant cultural disparities. This highlights the need for a nuanced approach to trust-building, particularly in partnerships characterized by divergent cultural norms and values. The finding resonates with Shenkar's (2001) exploration of cultural distance as a barrier to collaboration, emphasizing the importance of cultural intelligence and adaptive strategies in overcoming these challenges.

### **5.2 Implications for Managerial Practices in Chinese Technology Service Enterprises**

The findings offer several actionable insights for managers in Chinese technology service enterprises. First, fostering trust should be a strategic priority, particularly in international partnerships. Trust-building initiatives, such as transparent communication, consistent reliability, and mutual respect, can create a foundation for successful collaboration. Managers should prioritize relational trust, which evolves through positive interactions and shared experiences, as it has a more enduring impact on cooperation performance than calculative trust. Second, the study highlights the importance of enhancing decision-making agility. Managers should invest in systems and processes that facilitate rapid information flow, collaborative decision-making, and real-time market analysis. Trust-driven decision-making not only accelerates responses to external opportunities but also aligns strategic actions with organizational objectives, thereby maximizing cooperation outcomes. Third, addressing cultural differences proactively is critical. Managers should develop cultural intelligence among employees, equipping them with the skills to navigate diverse cultural contexts effectively. Training programs focusing on cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution, and adaptability can mitigate the adverse effects of cultural disparities on trust and cooperation performance. Sun, Zuo, Liu, Huang, and Wen (2024) emphasize the role of inclusive leadership in fostering equity and bridging cultural divides, which is particularly relevant in cross-cultural partnerships.

### **5.3 Cross-Cultural Management Strategies for Overcoming Moderating Challenges**

The moderating role of cultural differences underscores the need for robust cross-cultural management strategies. Enterprises must recognize that cultural disparities, if left unaddressed, can undermine trust and hinder cooperation outcomes. Proactive strategies are essential to overcome these challenges and leverage cultural diversity as a strategic asset. One effective approach is the development of culturally adaptive leadership styles. Leaders who demonstrate cultural sensitivity, open-mindedness, and flexibility are better equipped to build trust across cultural boundaries. Sun, Zuo, Huang, and Wen (2024) suggest that bridging cultures requires a nuanced understanding of both shared values and divergent norms. Leaders should focus on fostering a collaborative environment where cultural differences are acknowledged, respected, and integrated into decision-making processes. Another strategy involves implementing mechanisms for cross-cultural communication and knowledge sharing. Collaborative platforms, multilingual resources, and intercultural mediators can enhance mutual understanding and facilitate effective dialogue between partners. These mechanisms not only bridge communication

gaps but also promote relational trust, which is vital for long-term collaboration. Finally, enterprises should adopt a systematic approach to conflict resolution that considers cultural nuances. Recognizing and addressing cultural differences in negotiation, problem-solving, and feedback processes can prevent misunderstandings and build stronger partnerships. By embedding cultural intelligence into organizational practices, firms can turn cultural diversity into a source of innovation and competitive advantage.

#### **5.4 Comparison with Existing Literature**

The study contributes to the literature by extending existing theories on trust, decision-making, and cultural differences. It builds on Mayer et al.'s (1995) integrative model of trust by demonstrating its applicability in the context of Chinese technology service enterprises. The findings align with Sun and Zuo's (2023) work on organizational factors in motivation, emphasizing the pivotal role of trust in driving relational and performance outcomes. The mediating role of decision-making speed provides empirical support for Eisenhardt's (1989) framework on rapid strategic decision-making. By linking trust to decision-making agility, the study bridges a gap in the literature, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how relational dynamics influence strategic processes. This finding complements Sun, Zuo, Liu, Huang, and Wen's (2024) exploration of inclusive leadership, highlighting the interplay between relational trust and organizational responsiveness. The moderating effect of cultural differences resonates with Shenkar's (2001) work on cultural distance, while also advancing the discourse by integrating it into a trust-performance framework. The study's focus on Chinese technology service enterprises fills a gap in the literature, as prior research has predominantly centered on Western contexts. By examining the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Chinese enterprises, the study enriches the global understanding of cross-cultural collaboration. Overall, this research provides a nuanced perspective on the interplay of trust, decision-making speed, and cultural differences in shaping international cooperation performance. It contributes to the theoretical foundation of cross-cultural management while offering practical strategies for navigating the complexities of global partnerships. In doing so, it establishes a platform for future research aimed at exploring the evolving dynamics of international business in an increasingly interconnected world.

### **6. Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Theoretical Contributions**

This study makes several significant theoretical contributions. First, it enriches trust theory by demonstrating the mechanisms through which trust influences cooperation performance in international contexts. While trust has long been recognized as a facilitator of collaboration, this study provides empirical evidence of its dual role: directly enhancing performance and indirectly accelerating strategic decision-making processes. These findings align with and extend foundational models of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Fukuyama, 1995) by situating trust within the dynamic and complex environment of global partnerships. Second, the study sheds light on the critical role of strategic decision-making speed as a mediator. By linking trust to decision-making agility and, in turn, to cooperation performance, the research offers a nuanced understanding of how enterprises can leverage relational capital to achieve strategic responsiveness. This insight aligns with Eisenhardt's (1989) assertion that decision-making speed is a vital determinant of success in fast-paced environments and demonstrates its practical relevance in the global marketplace. Third, the moderating role of cultural differences adds a critical dimension to the literature on cross-cultural management. While previous studies have largely focused on the challenges posed by cultural disparities (Shenkar, 2001; Hofstede, 1980), this research provides empirical evidence of their nuanced impact on trust and performance dynamics. By incorporating cultural differences as a moderator, the study highlights the importance of contextualizing relational and strategic factors within the broader cultural milieu of international partnerships. Finally, the study's focus on Chinese technology service enterprises addresses a notable gap in the literature, which has traditionally been dominated by research on Western firms. By

examining the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Chinese enterprises in global markets, the research contributes to a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of international business dynamics.

## **6.2 Practical Implications**

The findings have profound implications for managers of Chinese technology service enterprises and other organizations engaged in cross-border collaborations. First, the research underscores the strategic importance of fostering trust in international partnerships. Trust-building efforts, such as transparent communication, demonstrated reliability, and mutual respect, can serve as the foundation for successful collaborations. Managers should invest in relational trust, which evolves through consistent and positive interactions, as it has a more enduring impact on cooperation performance. Second, the study highlights the need for agility in strategic decision-making. Managers should prioritize the development of systems and processes that enable rapid information flow, collaborative decision-making, and real-time analysis of market conditions. By aligning decision-making speed with trust-driven relationships, firms can respond to external opportunities and challenges more effectively. Third, the moderating role of cultural differences calls for a proactive approach to cross-cultural management. Managers must recognize the potential for cultural disparities to undermine trust and cooperation outcomes and take steps to mitigate these effects. This can be achieved through training programs that enhance cultural intelligence, foster cross-cultural communication skills, and equip employees with the tools to navigate diverse cultural contexts. As Sun, Zuo, Huang, and Wen (2024) argue, inclusive leadership that bridges cultural divides can create an environment conducive to collaboration and innovation.

## **6.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions**

While this study makes substantial contributions to the field, it is not without limitations. First, the reliance on cross-sectional data limits the ability to infer causality. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to explore the temporal dynamics of trust, decision-making speed, and cooperation performance. Such an approach would provide deeper insights into how these variables evolve and interact over time. Second, the study focuses exclusively on Chinese technology service enterprises, which, while addressing a critical gap, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies involving firms from different industries and geographic regions could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Additionally, exploring other moderating factors, such as organizational culture or technological capabilities, could enrich the theoretical framework and provide more targeted insights for practice. Finally, the study's focus on the dyadic relationship between trust and cultural differences may overlook broader systemic factors, such as institutional environments or global market trends. Future research could adopt a multi-level perspective to examine how macro-level factors influence micro-level relationships and cooperation outcomes.

## **6.4 Final Reflections**

In an era defined by globalization and rapid technological advancement, the ability to navigate complex international partnerships is a critical determinant of organizational success. This study provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay among trust, decision-making speed, and cultural differences, offering both theoretical advancements and practical guidance. By emphasizing the relational, strategic, and cultural dimensions of international cooperation, it underscores the importance of integrating these factors into a cohesive management strategy. For Chinese technology service enterprises, the findings highlight the dual imperatives of fostering trust and enhancing agility while navigating the intricacies of cross-cultural dynamics. As businesses continue to expand their global footprint, the insights from this study serve as a valuable resource for academics and practitioners alike, charting a path toward more effective and sustainable international collaborations. In doing so, it contributes to the ongoing evolution of cross-cultural management, offering a foundation for future inquiry and innovation in the field.

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