

**THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN DRIVING INNOVATION: A STUDY OF
CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS PRACTICE****GRECU Valentin*****Faculty of Engineering Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, "Lucian Blaga"
University of Sibiu, Romania, valentin.grecu@ulbsibiu.ro*****DENEȘ Călin,*****Faculty of Engineering Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, "Lucian Blaga"
University of Sibiu, Romania, calin.denes@ulbsibiu.ro***

Abstract: *Organizational culture is a critical determinant of innovation, influencing how organizations generate and implement new ideas, processes, and products. This study investigates the relationship between organizational culture and innovation, emphasizing the cultural attributes that enable or inhibit innovative practices. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires and supported by secondary research to analyze the interplay between cultural dimensions and innovation outcomes. The findings reveal that adhocracy cultures, characterized by flexibility, risk-taking, and collaboration, are most conducive to fostering innovation. In contrast, hierarchical cultures, which prioritize stability and control, tend to stifle creativity and limit innovative potential. The study also highlights the role of leadership in cultivating a culture of experimentation and the effectiveness of structured innovation practices such as brainstorming and design thinking. Practical implications include strategies for transitioning toward innovation-friendly cultures and addressing barriers such as resistance to change and rigid organizational structures. These insights offer valuable guidance for organizations seeking to enhance their innovation capacity and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.*

Keywords: *Organizational culture; Innovation; Adhocracy culture; Leadership and innovation; Cultural transformation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation is the cornerstone of organizational success in today's competitive and dynamic business environment. The ability to generate and implement new ideas, processes, and products provides organizations with a critical competitive advantage and ensures long-term sustainability. However, fostering innovation is not merely a matter of introducing new technologies or processes; it is deeply intertwined with the organizational culture. This culture encompasses the values, norms, and behaviors that shape how individuals within an organization think, interact, and respond to challenges. Research suggests that an organization's culture can either serve as a catalyst for innovation or act as a barrier to its realization (Büschgens et al., 2013).

Organizational culture provides the environment in which creativity flourishes and innovative ideas are nurtured. According to Jassawalla and Sashittal (2002), highly innovation-supportive cultures are characterized by teamwork, trust, and risk-taking behaviors, all of which contribute to effective product development processes (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2002). Similarly, Schein's multi-layered model of organizational culture highlights the critical role of norms and values in fostering innovative behavior and improving firm performance (Hogan & Coote, 2014). Adhocratic cultures, which emphasize flexibility and external orientation, have been found to be the most conducive to innovation strategies (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2011).

Despite its importance, cultivating a culture that supports innovation poses significant challenges. Many organizations struggle to align their cultural attributes with the demands of innovation, resulting in resistance to change and stagnation. This paper aims to explore the intricate relationship between organizational culture and innovation, focusing on how specific cultural attributes can promote or inhibit innovative practices. Drawing on both theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for organizations aiming to foster an innovation-friendly environment.

By examining various organizational culture models and their impacts on innovation, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on strategic management and organizational development. It also offers practical recommendations for leaders and managers seeking to leverage culture as a tool for achieving competitive advantage through innovation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture comprises the shared values, norms, and practices that define how individuals within an organization behave and interact. Schein (2010) conceptualizes it as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns while solving problems of external adaptation and internal integration. These shared assumptions guide behavior and decision-making within organizations. Several typologies categorize organizational culture, with notable examples being hierarchical, clan-based, market-oriented, and adhocracy cultures (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Hierarchical cultures prioritize structure and control, often characterized by formal rules and standardized processes. While these attributes promote stability, they frequently limit flexibility and innovation. In contrast, clan cultures foster collaboration and prioritize shared goals and trust among employees. Adhocracy cultures, known for their flexibility and external orientation, emphasize creativity, adaptability, and risk-taking, making them highly conducive to innovation. Market-oriented cultures focus on competitiveness and achieving results, often emphasizing performance over adaptability (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

The Competing Values Framework (CVF) by Cameron and Quinn (2011) is a widely used theoretical model linking organizational culture to effectiveness. This framework identifies four cultural archetypes—hierarchical, market, clan, and adhocracy—and their implications for innovation. Research has shown that adhocracy cultures are particularly conducive to innovation due to their focus on flexibility and external adaptability (Büschgens et al., 2013). Similarly, Schein's multi-layered model of culture highlights the role of artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions in shaping organizational behavior and fostering innovation (Hogan & Coote, 2014).

Sharifirad and Ataei (2012) emphasize the importance of an "innovation culture," which integrates the values and practices of organizational culture with creativity and innovation. Their findings indicate that specific cultural attributes, such as openness to change and knowledge sharing, act as catalysts for innovation. Moreover, Bendak et al. (2020) propose the Innovative Culture Enhancement Framework, which outlines actionable steps to transition from traditional to innovation-centric cultures by aligning leadership, organizational values, and resources.

2.2. Innovation as a Business Imperative

Innovation, defined as the introduction of new ideas, processes, or products that add value, is a fundamental driver of organizational success in dynamic environments. The Oslo Manual (2005) identifies four key dimensions of innovation: product innovation, process innovation, organizational innovation, and marketing innovation. Product innovation involves developing new or enhanced goods and services, while process innovation focuses on improving production or delivery methods. Organizational innovation entails implementing new business practices, workplace arrangements, or external relations. Marketing innovation encompasses novel approaches to branding, customer engagement, and promotion (OECD, 2005).

External factors such as market dynamics, technological advancements, and competitive pressures significantly influence an organization's capacity for innovation. Internally, leadership, resource allocation,

and cultural attributes play a pivotal role in driving innovation. For instance, organizations with collaborative cultures and supportive leadership are more likely to embrace innovation practices (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2002). Dani and Gandhi (2022) identify key drivers of innovation, including employee empowerment, strategic leadership, and alignment between organizational goals and innovation strategies. These drivers underscore the importance of embedding innovation within the organizational fabric.

Alateeg and Alhammadi (2024) explore the interplay between organizational culture and innovation, emphasizing the mediating role of strategic leadership. Their study in Saudi Arabia demonstrates that innovation thrives in organizations with cultures that promote experimentation, knowledge sharing, and inclusivity. Similarly, Chen et al. (2018) highlight the importance of aligning organizational culture with innovation strategies to enhance performance. They argue that a misalignment between culture and strategy can hinder innovation outcomes, emphasizing the need for coherence between these elements.

2.3. Interconnections Between Organizational Culture and Innovation

Organizational culture serves as both an enabler and a barrier to innovation. Adhocracy cultures, characterized by their flexibility and creativity, encourage experimentation and risk-taking, which are essential for fostering innovation (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2011). These cultures facilitate an environment where employees feel empowered to propose and implement new ideas, resulting in higher innovation outcomes. Conversely, hierarchical cultures, with their focus on stability and control, can stifle creativity by discouraging risk-taking and open communication (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Studies have shown that the alignment between cultural values and innovation strategies is critical for achieving sustained competitive advantage. Hogan and Coote (2014) demonstrated that cultural norms emphasizing collaboration and knowledge sharing promote innovative behaviors. Similarly, Abdi and Senin (2014) found that organizations with cultures emphasizing adaptability and continuous learning are more likely to achieve higher levels of innovation. Baltador and Grecu (2023) argue that fostering social entrepreneurship through education can enhance sustainable innovation by instilling values that prioritize creativity and problem-solving.

Resistance to change, poor communication, and lack of trust are among the common cultural barriers to innovation. Jassawalla and Sashittal (2002) emphasize the importance of leadership in overcoming these barriers. Transformational leadership, which fosters trust and collaboration, has been identified as a critical enabler of cultural change and innovation. Bendak et al. (2020) propose strategies for addressing these barriers, including simplifying approval processes, promoting cross-departmental collaboration, and aligning organizational values with innovation objectives.

The sustainability of innovation is another emerging theme in the literature. Grecu and Deneş (2023) explore sustainable innovation practices, emphasizing the need for organizations to integrate long-term environmental and social goals with innovation strategies. They argue that sustainable innovation requires a culture that supports both creativity and accountability, aligning with broader societal values.

The interplay between organizational culture and innovation is complex and multifaceted. Adhocracy cultures, with their emphasis on flexibility, creativity, and collaboration, consistently emerge as the most conducive to innovation. Conversely, hierarchical cultures often act as barriers, highlighting the need for cultural transformation in many organizations. By aligning cultural attributes with innovation strategies and addressing structural barriers, organizations can unlock their full innovative potential, achieving sustainable competitive advantages in a dynamic and competitive landscape.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and innovation. The primary aim is to assess how specific cultural attributes influence innovative practices within organizations. A survey-based strategy was the cornerstone of the research, supported by secondary data to contextualize and

validate the findings. This approach ensures a comprehensive analysis, combining empirical evidence with insights derived from existing theoretical frameworks.

3.2. Research Objectives

The methodological framework was designed to achieve three primary objectives: first, to identify key dimensions of organizational culture that significantly impact innovation; second, to evaluate the role of cultural attributes in either enabling or inhibiting innovation within organizations; and third, to assess the effectiveness of various techniques and practices employed to foster innovation in organizational settings.

3.3. Data Collection

Primary Data Collection

The primary data for this study was gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed electronically to employees across diverse industries. The questionnaire was designed to capture comprehensive information across four key areas: demographic data, perceptions of organizational culture, practices for fostering innovation, and assessments of organizational innovativeness. Respondents were asked about their roles, tenure, and industry to provide contextual data, followed by specific questions about cultural attributes such as openness to change, collaboration, and leadership support. Questions related to innovation practices explored the usage of tools such as brainstorming, design thinking, and Six Thinking Hats. The final section focused on evaluating organizational receptiveness to new ideas and the perceived impact of cultural attributes on innovation outcomes.

Survey Sampling

A non-probabilistic sampling method was employed, resulting in a sample of 105 respondents. Participants were purposefully selected to ensure representation from various organizational hierarchies, including management, engineering, technical, and administrative roles. This diverse representation enabled a more holistic understanding of how cultural dimensions affect innovation across different organizational contexts.

Secondary Data Collection

In addition to primary data, the study relied on an extensive review of existing literature and empirical research to provide theoretical grounding. Key references included foundational works on organizational culture and innovation, such as Schein's multi-layered model and the Competing Values Framework. These resources informed both the design of the survey instrument and the interpretation of the findings.

3.4. Instrument Design and Structure

The questionnaire consisted of 16 items, grouped into four themes: organizational culture attributes, innovative practices, challenges to innovation, and outcomes of innovation efforts. A Likert scale was employed to capture quantitative responses, supplemented by open-ended questions to allow participants to provide additional insights. The structured design ensured that both statistical trends and nuanced perspectives were captured, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the data.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Excel, with a focus on three primary methods. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant demographics and general trends in organizational culture and innovation practices. Correlation analysis examined the relationships between cultural attributes and innovation outcomes, identifying key factors that foster or hinder innovative efforts. Additionally, thematic analysis was applied to the open-ended responses, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and deeper insights into the barriers and enablers of innovation. The reliability of the survey instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which confirmed the internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity of the research process and the protection of participant rights. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, who were briefed about the research objectives and assured of their voluntary participation. Confidentiality was maintained

by anonymizing all responses, and robust data security measures were implemented to safeguard the collected information.

3.7. Limitations

Several limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The use of a non-probabilistic sampling method may limit the generalizability of the findings, as the sample may not fully represent the broader population. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of subjective biases, particularly in the assessment of organizational culture. Lastly, the cross-sectional design of the study restricts the ability to infer causality between organizational culture and innovation outcomes, highlighting the need for further longitudinal research to explore these dynamics over time.

This methodological framework provides a robust foundation for exploring the intricate relationship between organizational culture and innovation, balancing empirical rigor with theoretical depth.

4. RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in three key areas: characteristics of organizational culture across the sampled organizations, techniques and tools for fostering innovation, and correlations between cultural attributes and innovation outcomes. These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of organizational culture in shaping innovative practices.

4.1. Characteristics of Organizational Culture

The survey revealed that hierarchical culture was the most prevalent type, identified by 40% of respondents. This cultural archetype is characterized by a focus on control, stability, and adherence to formalized structures, which often emphasizes efficiency over creativity. Market-oriented cultures were the second most common (25%), prioritizing competition and results-driven practices. Clan-based cultures, representing 20% of respondents, emphasized collaboration, trust, and internal cohesion, fostering a strong sense of community. Lastly, adhocracy cultures, identified by 15% of respondents, showcased flexibility, creativity, and a willingness to embrace risk-taking, attributes that are particularly conducive to innovation.

Table 1: Distribution of Organizational Culture Types Among Respondents

Culture Type	Percentage (%)	Key Characteristics
Hierarchical	40%	Control, stability, formalized structures
Market-Oriented	25%	Results-driven, competitive environment
Clan-Based	20%	Collaboration, trust, internal cohesiveness
Adhocracy	15%	Flexibility, creativity, risk-taking

These findings suggest a dominant reliance on hierarchical cultures, which may present challenges for organizations aiming to enhance innovation due to their resistance to change and limited flexibility. In contrast, adhocracy cultures, though less prevalent, provide an ideal environment for innovation to thrive.

4.2. Techniques and Tools for Fostering Innovation

The study identified a variety of techniques used by organizations to foster innovation, with brainstorming emerging as the most commonly employed method (65%). This technique, which encourages free-flowing ideas in a collaborative environment, was particularly prevalent in organizations with flexible cultures such as adhocracy and clan-based models. Design thinking, a structured yet flexible methodology for problem-solving, was the second most utilized technique (50%). It demonstrated mixed usage across cultural types but showed higher adoption rates in collaborative environments. Structured tools such as Six Thinking Hats were employed less frequently (35%), predominantly in market-oriented contexts, where there was a focus on achieving measurable outcomes.

Table 2: Techniques Used for Innovation Across Cultures

Technique	Overall Usage (%)	Cultural Context Observations
Brainstorming	65%	Most common in flexible (adhocracy) cultures
Design Thinking	50%	Widely applied across flexible environments
Six Thinking Hats	35%	Predominantly used in market-oriented contexts

Respondents from hierarchical cultures reported limited use of these methods, reflecting the rigid structures that often impede the adoption of innovative practices. In contrast, adhocracy and clan-based cultures demonstrated a higher propensity for employing diverse innovation techniques, underscoring their flexibility and openness to new ideas.

4.3. Correlation Between Cultural Attributes and Innovation Outcomes

Quantitative analysis revealed significant correlations between specific cultural attributes and innovation success. Adhocracy cultures demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with innovation outcomes ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the critical role of flexibility and risk-taking in fostering creative practices. Conversely, hierarchical cultures exhibited a weaker but still positive correlation with innovation ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that their structured approach may provide limited support for incremental innovation. Organizations that emphasized collaboration and risk-taking as core cultural values reported higher innovation outputs, as evidenced by strong correlations ($r = 0.68$ and $r = 0.65$, respectively, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, cultures emphasizing stability and control were negatively associated with innovation outcomes ($r = -0.20$, $p > 0.05$), underscoring the challenges these organizations face in fostering creativity.

Table 3: Correlation Between Cultural Attributes and Innovation Outcomes

Cultural Attribute	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Risk-Taking	0.65	< 0.01
Collaboration	0.68	< 0.01
Stability/Control	-0.20	> 0.05

Qualitative data further highlighted recurring themes. Respondents from hierarchical organizations frequently cited leadership and procedural barriers as significant obstacles to innovation. For instance, one participant noted, *“Our hierarchical structure often prevents creative ideas from reaching decision-makers, stifling innovation potential.”* Conversely, respondents from adhocracy cultures reported a supportive environment where experimentation was encouraged. As one respondent explained, *“Leadership here actively encourages experimentation, even if it leads to failure, which helps us develop new solutions rapidly.”*

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Overview of Findings

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of organizational culture in shaping innovative outcomes. Consistent with prior research, the results demonstrate that cultures emphasizing flexibility, risk-taking, and collaboration—key characteristics of an adhocracy culture—are strongly associated with successful innovation efforts (Büschgens et al., 2013). Conversely, hierarchical cultures, which prioritize stability and control, were found to hinder innovation by discouraging creativity and limiting open communication (Hogan & Coote, 2014).

These observations align with established theoretical frameworks, such as Cameron and Quinn’s Competing Values Framework and Schein’s multi-layered model, which emphasize the importance of cultural alignment with organizational goals in fostering innovation (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Specifically, adhocracy cultures, with their external focus and flexible orientation, emerged as particularly

conducive to innovation, supporting the notion that environments promoting experimentation and tolerance for failure are essential for innovative success (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2011).

5.2. Interpretation of Key Results

A significant relationship was observed between specific cultural attributes and innovation outcomes. The correlation between risk-taking and innovation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) highlights the critical need for fostering a culture that encourages experimentation. This result aligns with prior studies, which suggest that organizations characterized by less rigid structures are better positioned to adapt to dynamic market demands and facilitate creativity (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2002). In contrast, the weak correlation between stability/control and innovation ($r = -0.20$) underscores the inherent limitations of hierarchical cultures, which often stifle creativity by emphasizing rigid processes and formal structures.

Innovation practices employed across the organizations studied further illustrate these dynamics. Structured techniques such as brainstorming (65%) and design thinking (50%) were widely utilized, reflecting their importance as tools for fostering creativity and collaboration. However, these practices were notably less prevalent in hierarchical cultures, emphasizing the need for cultural transformation to embed innovative methodologies more effectively (OECD, 2005). The findings also revealed significant barriers to innovation, including resistance to change and a lack of trust between employees and leadership. Hierarchical structures were particularly prone to obstructing the flow of ideas, corroborating literature that associates rigid control mechanisms with diminished innovation capacity (Hogan & Coote, 2014).

5.3. Implications for Practice

The findings offer actionable insights for organizations seeking to enhance their innovation capacity. First, fostering a culture of experimentation is essential. Transitioning towards adhocracy-oriented values—such as promoting flexibility, autonomy, and tolerance for failure—can create an environment conducive to creativity. Leadership plays a critical role in this transition and should actively model risk-taking behaviors to normalize experimentation and encourage employees to propose innovative ideas.

Embedding structured innovation practices, such as brainstorming and design thinking, across all cultural types is another key recommendation. Even hierarchical organizations, often resistant to change, can benefit from training sessions designed to help leaders and employees understand and adopt these methodologies effectively. Leadership development is equally crucial; managers should be trained in transformational leadership principles, fostering trust, collaboration, and open communication within their teams. Such practices align with prior findings that highlight the role of leadership in shaping cultural attributes conducive to innovation (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2002).

Additionally, organizations must address structural and procedural barriers to innovation. Simplifying approval processes for new ideas and fostering cross-departmental collaboration can help create a more open and dynamic innovation environment. By reducing bureaucratic constraints and enabling the free flow of ideas, organizations can empower employees to take initiative and contribute to innovative solutions.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research

While the study provides valuable insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The use of a non-probabilistic sampling method limits the generalizability of the findings, as the sample may not fully represent the broader population. Moreover, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between organizational culture and innovation outcomes.

Future research could address these limitations by adopting longitudinal designs to examine how cultural attributes evolve over time and influence innovation. Comparative studies across industries and geographic regions would also provide a deeper understanding of cultural dynamics, offering more comprehensive insights into the relationship between organizational culture and innovation.

In summary, this study highlights the intricate interplay between organizational culture and innovation, offering theoretical and practical contributions that underscore the importance of cultural transformation in achieving innovative success. By fostering the right cultural attributes, organizations can unlock their full potential and maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly dynamic business environment.

6. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of organizational culture in fostering innovation, revealing critical insights into the dynamics between cultural attributes and innovative practices. The findings demonstrate that organizational cultures emphasizing flexibility, collaboration, and risk-taking—hallmarks of an adhocracy culture—are most conducive to fostering innovation. Conversely, hierarchical cultures, with their focus on control and stability, often act as barriers, stifling creativity and the flow of ideas.

The results align with established theoretical frameworks, such as the Competing Values Framework and Schein's multi-layered model, reaffirming the importance of cultural alignment with organizational goals to achieve innovation success (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Furthermore, the study highlights the role of structured innovation techniques, such as brainstorming and design thinking, as effective tools for embedding innovative practices, particularly in flexible and collaborative cultures.

From a practical standpoint, organizations aiming to enhance their innovation capacity must prioritize the development of a culture that supports experimentation, tolerates failure, and encourages collaborative problem-solving. Leadership emerges as a critical driver in shaping such cultures, emphasizing the need for transformational leadership practices that foster trust and openness.

The limitations of this study, including its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data, suggest avenues for future research. Longitudinal studies exploring the evolution of organizational culture and innovation, as well as comparative research across industries and geographies, would provide deeper insights into this critical relationship.

In conclusion, this research reaffirms that innovation is not merely a function of technology or processes but is deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of organizations. By fostering the right cultural environment, organizations can unlock their full innovative potential, achieving sustained competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic and competitive world.

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