



Culture at Work: What Drives Employee Performance in Romanian Multinationals?

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Abstract: With an emphasis on multinational corporations doing business in Romania, this article investigates the connection between organizational culture and worker performance. The analysis is predicated on the idea that individual effectiveness is directly and significantly influenced by the structure and characteristics of organizational culture in a setting marked by constant change and adaptation. In line with this goal, the study sought to determine the relationships between key aspects of organizational culture and elements of employee engagement and performance. The research's empirical component is based on a 33-item online survey distributed via Google Forms to a sample of 121 respondents (all of whom worked for multinational corporations in Romania). The results show that employee performance in Romanian multinational corporations is positively correlated with an organizational culture that prioritizes collaboration among its employees. The findings also emphasize how crucial it is to adopt a transformational leadership style in order to boost professional commitment and motivation within the teams. Thus, multinational corporations operating in Romania must invest in employee development programs and adapt to local culture to be successful and sustainable in the long run.

Keywords: Organizational culture; performance; leadership; employees; multinational companies.

Introduction

A company's success is fundamentally based on its organizational culture, which includes the norms and values that guide employee performance and shape internal procedures. Organizational culture is a crucial factor in determining efficiency and competitiveness for multinational corporations operating in Romania, a country that emerged from globalization. Aligning local cultural values with those promoted by multinational corporations has become crucial for long-term organizational success, as one in four Romanian workers is employed by multinational corporations (Oancea, 2021). Previous research demonstrates that organizational culture influences performance and job satisfaction in addition to serving as a model for professional values and behaviors (Aggarwal, 2024).

The present study investigates the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance and engagement in Romanian multinationals, addressing a timely and pertinent topic given the rapid growth of multinational corporations and the increasing number of Romanians working for them. The goal of the study is to understand better how foreign businesses modify their organizational cultures in Romania, the leadership philosophies they adopt, and how these factors affect worker performance, engagement, and retention. The current literature emphasizes the critical role of appropriate leadership styles in achieving organizational goals (Khalid, Bibi, & Akhtar, 2020), as well as the significance of collaborative cultures, shared values, and constructive feedback in fostering improved employee outcomes (Udochukwu, 2024). Nonetheless, research on Romanian multinational corporations remains scarce and dispersed in investigating how organizations adapt their cultures to national values.

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According to the study's conceptual framework, it employs a quantitative methodology to investigate theoretically the links between an open-minded organizational culture and important employee-related outcomes in multinational corporations headquartered in Romania. This research specifically examines the correlation between employee motivation, performance, and retention levels and collaboration-oriented culture, leadership practices, values and expectations, and professional development opportunities. The methodological framework provides an immediate link between the theoretical framework presented in the introduction and the empirical analysis, operationalizing these notions through employees' views gathered via a standardized questionnaire.

To close this gap, the study examines how Romanian workers in multinational corporations perceive organizational culture and how this perception affects performance, motivation, commitment, and retention. Using a standardized questionnaire completed by Romanian employees of multinational corporations, a quantitative research design was employed to gather information on organizational culture, leadership style, motivation, satisfaction, and performance.

The current study takes an empirical method that converts organizational culture and leadership into quantifiable variables, building on theoretical viewpoints that highlight how these factors influence employee behavior. To ensure consistency between the study's conceptual justification and methodological design, it examines explicitly employees' perceptions of organizational culture and leadership style and quantitatively evaluates their relationships with performance-related outcomes in multinational corporations operating in Romania.

Literature review

Organizational culture: theoretical foundations and relevance in multinationals

Over time, the idea of organizational culture has become essential to understanding how businesses operate and succeed. Its significance was initially recognized in Japan following World War II, when the nation—despite its lack of natural resources and significant wartime losses—became a major economic force worldwide. Researchers emphasized this "Japanese miracle," demonstrating that a well-developed culture determines organizational performance and functionality at both the macro and micro levels (Popa, Furdui, & Edelhauser, 2019). As a result, the idea became well-known in the middle of the 20th century and developed into a significant topic in sociology and psychology.

According to Zagaria (2021), culture is a collection of traits a group possesses, such as customs, artwork, religion, and shared social ideals passed down through the generations. According to Gutterman (2023) and Mughal (2019), organizations, on the other hand, are entities created to create value through people who coordinate operations to meet organizational objectives. When these viewpoints are combined, corporate culture can be viewed as a system of shared values, objectives, and expectations among participants (Fernandes, Pereira, & Wiedenhöft, 2023). Organizational culture, according to Morelli and Wang (2020), is a cooperative process by which workers match the company's values with their own. According to Popa Furdui, and Edelhauser (2019), it is also referred to as a type of social energy—an unseen force that directs people to behave in ways that align with organizational needs. Although often difficult to observe, cultural norms significantly influence organizational performance and profitability (Akpa, Asikhia, & Nneji, 2021).

Since organizational culture serves as a strategic resource for competitiveness and differentiation in international business, an understanding of its significance is crucial for the growth of multinational firms (Miao, 2022). Multinational corporations must adapt their organizational cultures to the host nation's features, as culture influences

how businesses function at all levels of management. This alignment enables stronger employee engagement, effective cross-cultural teamwork, and improved organizational performance (Guseva, 2021). According to Nemashkalo and Jianping (2023), organizational culture is a crucial tool that multinational corporations use to influence employee behavior and performance through common norms and values.

Several typologies can be used to categorize organizational culture, but Cameron and Quinn's four models (clan, hierarchy, market, and adhocracy) are the most popular (Basar, Ilkan, & Mutair, 2025). Clan cultures prioritize communication, teamwork, and a strong sense of belonging (Udochukwu, 2024), where workers feel encouraged to contribute to group objectives (Makaryan, 2023). Often found in public administration and sectors such as oil and gas that require close supervision, hierarchical cultures rely on formal communication, control systems, and structured procedures (Assens-Serra et al., 2021; Jupitawati & Kadiyono, 2021). Adhocracy cultures, common in tech firms such as Google, Facebook, and Apple, encourage creativity, experimentation, and adaptability (Makaryan, 2023; Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė et al., 2022). Market cultures place a high value on achieving goals and competing externally, which often results in stressful workplaces with lower levels of satisfaction and productivity (Olynick & Li, 2020; Krisprimandoyo, 2020). Managers may choose and implement the best strategies for their firms by having a thorough understanding of these classes (Zoska, Kravchenko, & Stadnyk, 2022).

Multinational corporations contribute significantly to Romania's economy by incorporating the nation into international supply chains (Jipa-Muşat, 2024; Burciu et al., 2022). As already mentioned, one in four Romanians is employed by a global corporation (Oancea, 2021); therefore, workers must adjust to the company's policies and values. Employees required excellent intercultural communication skills and strong adaptability to navigate heterogeneous teams and rapidly changing environments, as organizational culture in Romania developed later than in other nations (Constantin, 2023). To improve this flexibility and guarantee both individual and organizational performance, training tools are crucial (Constantin, 2023). Thus, multinational corporations in Romania can achieve their strategic goals with the support of a clearly defined culture, which serves as an unseen mechanism that facilitates productive collaboration across diverse teams. Therefore, optimizing employee engagement and performance requires balancing corporate culture with Romania's national business culture (Guseva, 2021). According to Ghaleb (2024), organizational culture serves as a multinational's "immune system," requiring both complexity and clarity to meet the demands of workers across a variety of markets, including Romania, where the idea is still evolving.

Employee performance and organizational culture

Over the past few decades, employee performance has undergone a substantial conceptual shift from a limited, task-focused view to a multidimensional approach that encompasses contextual behaviors, counterproductive acts, and task achievement (Patnaik, 2020). Numerous new definitions that capture the complexity of performance in contemporary companies have resulted from this process. According to Triansyah, Hejin, and Stefania (2023), employee performance is a crucial factor in determining a business's success and is defined as the extent to which an employee completes tasks. In a similar vein, Okolie and Kawedo (2019) contend that performance is a quantifiable behavior that shows how an employee contributes to the company's effectiveness. By highlighting the significance of organizational and individual skill development for satisfying stakeholder expectations and achieving strategic goals, Khilukha (2021) extends this idea.

Businesses that invest in improving employee performance see increases in output, higher product and service quality, and higher levels of customer and employee satisfaction (Triansyah, Hejin, & Stefania, 2023). As a result, these organizations are more likely to succeed in the long run (Okolie & Kawedo, 2019). Individual performance levels differ based on personal traits, organizational context, and temporal

circumstances (Chiriță et al., 2023). According to Nugraha, Handayani, and Safitri (2024), the work environment, organizational support, and employee motivation and leadership are the three main categories of factors that affect employee performance. Organizations can apply targeted measures to increase staff efficiency by gaining a deeper understanding of these factors (Nugroho & Reza, 2020).

It is important to underline that the workplace has a significant impact since it affects employee motivation and vitality. According to Kumala (2023), a positive workplace encourages workers to put in more effort, whereas a negative one reduces their efficacy. The work environment encompasses both psychological and physical elements, such as interpersonal interactions, organizational culture, and workplace climate, as well as elements like lighting, noise, layout, and temperature (Arbyan & Riyanto, 2023). Chiriță et al. (2023) claim that the workplace atmosphere is the primary factor influencing workers' capacity to focus, which, in turn, directly affects job satisfaction and productivity (Maulana, Fahriz, & Asbari, 2023).

Performance is also greatly influenced by motivation. Mafrudoh (2023) emphasizes the critical role of communication in sustaining engagement and a positive work environment. According to Safitri and Patrisia (2019), democratic leadership, which prioritizes employee needs, encourages serious and independent effort, thereby raising performance levels. Since excessive demands diminish employee tenacity and engagement, motivation is enhanced when leaders set reasonable expectations and refrain from imposing unachievable goals (Cuandra & Candy, 2024). Therefore, it is the duty of leaders to implement awards, recognition, and continuous support to ensure high performance (Nasrudin, 2020).

Another factor influencing performance is organizational support, which refers to the company's dedication to the growth and well-being of its workforce (Mughal, 2019). Colleagues' and upper management's support enables workers to overcome obstacles and boost their own productivity. Organizations guarantee alignment with strategic objectives through feedback and developmental opportunities. According to Mughal (2019), this type of support encourages workers to focus on performance objectives and remain dedicated to the company's success.

Employee behavior is further shaped by organizational culture, which influences job satisfaction and performance. According to Mafrudoh (2023), culture is a functional system that influences interactions between workers, clients, and the larger community. According to Aggarwal (2024), behavioral standards are shaped by culture and directly impact workplace outcomes. 83% of firms view the relationship between culture and performance as a significant challenge, according to Mafrudoh (2023). As a result, businesses spend money creating encouraging work environments that boost staff commitment and motivation (Munir & Arifin, 2021).

Moreover, performance is affected differently by various organizational culture types. By promoting congruence between individual and organizational goals and through constructive feedback mechanisms, clan cultures, defined by cooperation, shared values, and a strong sense of belonging, have a positive impact on employee happiness and performance (Udochukwu, 2024). Hierarchical cultures, on the other hand, place strong emphasis on strict regulations and organized processes, which often result in worse performance due to punitive measures and restricted autonomy. Employees may resort to "tacit quitting" in these environments, putting in little effort, which can lead to stagnation (Ozcan & Ozturk, 2020). The same authors note that adhocracy cultures enhance employee performance and satisfaction by fostering adaptability, creativity, and decentralized decision-making. Therefore, establishing a suitable organizational culture is crucial to guaranteeing efficiency and motivation (Chauhan & Sagar, 2020).

Furthermore, to shape culture and promote performance, leaders are essential. Because organizational culture is dynamic, it must adapt to both internal and external changes.

According to Jerab and Mabrouk (2023), leaders can create environments that encourage innovation and sustainable growth by serving as catalysts for cultural change. According to Khalid, Bibi, and Akhtar (2020), employee satisfaction, retention, and performance enhancement all depend on effective leadership. Leaders can support employees in developing critical professional traits and promote actions that increase productivity (Peli et al., 2024). Managing cultural differences becomes essential for creating a cohesive corporate culture in global corporations (Jerab & Mabrouk, 2023).

In this way, combining influence, common objectives, and deliberate change, leadership is crucial in determining how well employees perform (Lavanya, 2021). According to Indriasari et al. (2023), transformational leadership fosters creativity, lowers stress levels, and supports professional progress by inspiring, intellectually stimulating, and providing individualized consideration to employees. When tasks are effectively accomplished, transactional leadership uses open communication and contingent rewards to enhance performance (Fauziyah, 2021). Although both approaches have a good impact on performance, transformational leadership typically yields greater results, with psychological autonomy acting as a mediating factor (Raveendran & Gamage, 2019). The strategic relevance of leadership is demonstrated by its ability to explain up to 79.1% of performance variance in businesses (Hudalil & Ahmaluddin, 2022).

Because transformational leadership has significant theoretical and empirical connections to employee motivation, engagement, and performance, it has been chosen as the study's emphasis among the numerous approaches to leadership. According to previous research, transformational leaders—those who inspire, encourage, and cultivate a shared vision—are more successful in multicultural, dynamic organizational settings, such as multinational corporations operating in Romania (Indriasari et al., 2023; Karimi et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is strongly aligned with collaboration-oriented corporate cultures and the employee outcomes of interest in this study because it emphasizes customized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspiring motivation. Focusing on transformational leadership enables a more accurate analysis of the interaction among organizational culture, leadership, and employee outcomes in this setting, even though other leadership philosophies may also affect worker performance.

Improving employee performance requires a company culture to change with the times. Cultural adaptation combines creativity and tradition to match behaviors, attitudes, and practices with environmental needs (Brahm & Poblete, 2024). Understanding cultural differences, collecting information, testing initial solutions, and improving processes are all necessary for effective adaptation (Waseem & Hasan, 2020). Leaders incorporate cultural values into decision-making, communication, and hierarchy in order to affect efficiency and change capacity (Yadav, 2024). By raising understanding of various values, cultural intelligence training improves performance, team cohesion, and mutual respect (Wang & Goh, 2020).

By fostering creativity and inspiring staff to face obstacles head-on, flexible leadership facilitates adaptation in culturally varied environments (Fauziyah et al., 2024). Personalized training, diversity promotion, and recruiting modifications are examples of customized HR methods that boost motivation, engagement, and productivity (Abe & Abe, 2019). Employee engagement and alignment are further strengthened by organizational ambidexterity and digitization (Arunga, 2023). In summary, leadership, culture, motivation, support networks, and flexibility all affect how well employees perform. Businesses that use transformational leadership and adaptable, culturally sensitive tactics increase productivity, contentment, and engagement—all of which contribute to long-term success (Brahm & Poblete, 2024).

Organizational culture in Romania: challenges and specificities

Romanian organizational culture reflects the complex relationship between fundamental historical beliefs and modern globalization-related factors that have transformed the country's work environment. Koray (2023) highlights the legacies of tradition, economic transition, post-communist policies, European Union integration, and more recent changes driven by globalization and digitalization as the four historical periods that have shaped Romanian organizational culture, each with both visible and latent effects.

In this way, a hybrid organizational culture that combines cultural legacy with modern global tendencies is the product of Romanian organizations' ongoing modernization and development. According to Vlaicu et al. (2019), Romanian firms have a hierarchical culture that limits open communication and favors formal channels. Decision-making is centralized at the top management level, and employees are frequently unwilling to voice dissenting viewpoints. On the other hand, Dobrin, Dinulescu, and Dima (2021) highlight the impact of clan-type organizational culture, marked by strong interpersonal ties, employee loyalty, and respect for authority, which may occasionally take precedence over merit-based considerations. Koray (2023) highlighted that European integration and the transition from a centrally planned to a market-based economy have fostered more open and participative organizational models, with leaders embracing more adaptable and cooperative strategies. However, modernization efforts still face challenges in several areas, indicating a slow adjustment to global forces.

Romanian organizations struggle to balance the demands of a worldwide economy with traditional values. Within this background, modern changes occur with little state engagement, limiting creativity and adaptability. Rigid hierarchies continue to hinder transparency in decision-making and restrict flexibility (Vlaicu et al., 2019). Additionally, integrating cultural diversity remains challenging because pre-existing values may clash with international corporate principles (Chua, Sun, & Sinha, 2023). Because traditional training methods can no longer fully meet the expectations of the modern market, this gap highlights a need for professional development and ongoing learning (Iliescu et al., 2020).

Overall, Romanian organizational culture, characterized by formal communication, strong loyalty, and hierarchical structures, combines traditional and modern elements, offering both benefits and limitations. Organizations must implement flexible management techniques, build adaptive leadership, encourage ongoing staff development, and cultivate an innovative and transparent culture to improve performance and sustain competitiveness (Tidor & Morar, 2022).

Methodology

The empirical research aims to examine the impact of organizational culture on employee performance in multinational companies operating in Romania, based on employees' responses. The specific research objectives define the variables to be measured and analyzed, forming the foundation for the case study conducted in this research. The objectives are as follows:

- O1: To identify the relationship between a collaborative organizational culture and employee performance in Romanian multinational companies.
- O2: To assess the relationship between transformational leadership style and employee engagement and motivation within multinational organizations.
- O3: To investigate the relationship between organizational culture aligned with the values and expectations of Romanian employees and employee retention.
- O4: To examine the relationship between professional development programs offered by multinational companies in Romania and employee performance.

Based on these objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: A collaborative organizational culture is positively associated with increased employee performance in Romanian multinationals.

H0: No significant positive relationship exists between a collaborative organizational culture and employee performance.

H2: Transformational leadership significantly influences employee engagement and motivation in Romanian multinationals.

H0: No significant correlation exists between transformational leadership and employee engagement or motivation.

H3: Organizational culture aligned with the values and expectations of Romanian employees is positively associated with higher levels of employee retention.

H0: No significant correlation exists between organizational culture alignment and employee retention.

H4: The provision of professional development programs in multinational companies significantly enhances employee performance.

H0: No significant correlation exists between professional development programs and employee performance.

To operationalize these hypotheses, specific research questions were formulated for each hypothesis. For H1, the questions addressed how employee performance is measured and what factors define a collaborative organizational culture. For H2, the questions focused on measuring employee engagement, evaluating employee motivation, and identifying transformational leadership behaviours. For H3, the questions explored employee retention assessment and the identification of employee values and expectations. For H4, the questions focused on measuring the impact of professional development programs on employee performance.

A quantitative research approach was adopted due to its ability to yield objective, precise results from respondents, thereby minimizing subjective interpretation. This method also allows for data collection from a larger sample and hypothesis testing. Limitations of the approach include potential social desirability bias, superficial responses, and a reduced representation of complex organizational realities.

The data collection instrument was an online questionnaire implemented via Google Forms, comprising 33 items distributed to a convenience sample of 121 employees of multinational companies in Romania. Data collection occurred between April 25 and May 10, 2025. Inclusion criteria required respondents to be employed by a multinational company in Romania, have at least a high school education, and be at least 18 years old. The questionnaire collected information on employee performance, factors influencing performance, the interplay between organizational culture and leadership style, and employee motivation and satisfaction. Respondents completed the survey anonymously, providing only demographic information, including age, gender, education level, and organizational sector.

The questionnaire was structured into five sections: (1) organizational culture and employee performance (Q1–Q8); (2) transformational leadership and employee engagement and motivation (Q9–Q17); (3) employee values and expectations and their relationship with retention (Q18–Q23); (4) professional development programs and performance outcomes (Q24–Q26); and (5) demographic information (Q30–Q33).

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 30.0.0. Arithmetic means were calculated to identify general trends in responses, while standard deviations measured response consistency. Hypotheses were tested using Spearman's correlation coefficient, as data did not meet the assumption of normality according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. All Likert-scale responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), providing a measure of attitudes and perceptions regarding the statements presented in the questionnaire.

Sample characteristics

The research sample comprised 121 employees from multinational companies in Romania. Demographic variables included gender, age, educational level, and the sector of the employing organization.

Regarding gender distribution (Table 1), female respondents slightly predominated, representing 51.2% (62 participants), while males accounted for 48.8% (59 participants), indicating an almost balanced distribution.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	62	51.2
Male	59	48.8
Total	121	100.0

Source: Authors' work

The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 55 years (Table 2). The largest group was aged 35–44 years, accounting for 38.8% (47 participants), followed by participants under 25 years (28.9%, 35 respondents), reflecting the presence of Generation Z in multinational organizations. The 25–34 age group accounted for 24% of respondents (29 individuals), while the smallest proportion (8.3%, 10 respondents) was in the 45–54 age group.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 25	35	28.9
25-34	29	24.0
34-44	47	38.8
45-54	10	8.3
Total	121	100.0

Source: Authors' own work

The sample also exhibited sectoral diversity (Table 3). The financial-banking and IT & Telecom sectors were equally represented with 32 respondents each (26.4%). The retail industry accounted for 20.7% (25 participants), while production/industrial companies represented 19.8% (24 respondents). The remaining sectors comprised the smallest proportion, totaling 6.6% (8 respondents).

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by sector of work

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Production/industry	24	19.8
Financial/banking	32	26.4
Commerce/retail	25	20.7
IT	32	26.4
Another	8	6.6
Total	121	100.0

Source: Authors' work

Data regarding the impact of professional development programs were collected through specific questionnaire items (Q24–Q26), measuring employees' access to training, perceived improvement in performance following participation, and the contribution of company-supported professional development to individual success.

Data analysis

To achieve the research objectives and test the proposed hypotheses, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted. In particular, the standard deviation was used to assess response dispersion, and the arithmetic mean was computed to gauge respondents' opinions for each assessed dimension. According to Shapiro-Wilk normality tests, which showed that the data varied from a normal distribution, the Spearman correlation coefficient (ρ) was used to assess the hypotheses. Two aspects were examined for the first hypothesis (H1), which proposed a positive correlation between employee performance and a collaboration-oriented organizational culture in Romanian multinational corporations. Four questionnaire items (Q1–Q4) measuring individual work productivity and engagement were used to gauge employee performance, while four more items (Q5–Q8) assessed the existence of a collaborative culture. The findings showed that a collaboration-oriented culture had a mean score of 4.35 (SD = 0.586), indicating that this cultural component was highly prevalent across the respondents' organizations. Employee performance showed a somewhat lower mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.606), suggesting moderately variable, generally positive assessments. The idea that management in Romanian multinationals frequently promotes and facilitates collaboration, hence contributing to individual efficiency, is supported by the fact that both aspects scored above the midpoint of the Likert scale.

Because the data were non-normal (Shapiro-Wilk test, $p < 0.001$), the Spearman correlation was used to assess the relationship between the two variables. A statistically significant positive correlation ($\rho = 0.482$, $p < 0.001$) was found, indicating that employee performance is positively correlated with an organizational culture that prioritizes cooperation. As a result, the research hypothesis was supported, and the null hypothesis was rejected. These results are consistent with the body of research emphasizing the value of supportive peer relationships and workplace collaboration in enhancing employee motivation, engagement, and performance (Kumala, 2023; Mughal, 2019). As a result, the analysis demonstrates that encouraging a collaborative organizational culture greatly enhances worker performance in Romanian multinational corporations.

Table 4. Descriptive data analysis for hypothesis 1

Item	No. of respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Collaboration-oriented organisational culture	121	2.00	5.00	4.3533	.58690
Employee performance	121	2.00	5.00	4.1632	.60614

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

Table 5. Spearman correlation for H1

			Collaboration-oriented organisational culture	Employee performance
Spearman's rho	Collaboration-oriented organisational culture	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.482**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
		N	121	121
	Employee performance	Correlation Coefficient	.482**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
		N	121	121

** Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

Two factors were examined to assess the second hypothesis (H2), which suggested that employee engagement and motivation in Romanian multinational corporations are

influenced by transformational leadership. Employee engagement, job satisfaction, and motivational drivers were evaluated using six questionnaire items (Q9–Q14), while three items (Q15–Q17) assessed elements of transformational leadership, reflecting leaders' actions and methods within the company. The descriptive analysis showed comparable mean scores for transformational leadership ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.736$) and motivation and engagement ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.643$), with a slight variance in standard deviation (0.093), indicating some heterogeneity in workers' opinions of the efficacy of their leaders. These results show that motivation and engagement at work are increased by leaders who actively involve staff in decision-making, foster creative settings, and offer support and encouragement.

The Spearman correlation coefficient was used for inferential analysis after Shapiro-Wilk tests revealed a non-normal data distribution ($p < 0.001$). The study hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected, as the data ($\rho = 0.562$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrated a statistically significant positive association between transformational leadership and employee engagement and motivation. These results align with other studies that highlight the vital role transformative leadership plays in inspiring teams. While Raveendran and Gamage (2019) emphasize the beneficial effects of transformational leadership on employee performance and engagement, Karimi et al. (2023) define transformational leaders as those who motivate subordinates to surpass expectations via autonomy and flexibility. When taken as a whole, the results confirm that workers' motivation and engagement levels in Romanian multinational corporations are directly correlated with transformative leadership.

Table 6. Descriptive data analysis for hypothesis 1

Item	No. of respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Motivation	121	2.00	5.00	4.2052	.64326
Leadership	121	2.00	5.00	4.1928	.73630

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

Table 7. Spearman correlation for H2

			Motivation	Leadership
Spearman's rho	Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.562**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
		N	121	121
	Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.562**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
		N	121	121

** Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

Two variables were examined to investigate the third hypothesis (I3), which proposed that staff retention improves when the organizational cultures of Romanian multinational corporations align with the values and expectations of Romanian employees. These dimensions were employee values and expectations, and retention levels. Three measures (Q18–Q20) that addressed workers' desire to stay with the company, overall job happiness, and perceived progression possibilities were used to measure retention. Three measures (Q21–Q23) that focused on personal and professional attitudes were used to measure employee values and expectations. The mean retention score was 4.13 ($SD = 0.689$) according to descriptive statistics, indicating generally strong intents to stay despite substantial heterogeneity in the replies. Employee values and expectations had a higher mean of 4.57 ($SD = 0.426$), indicating a high degree of agreement among respondents about their requirements and values. These results imply that although multinational corporations often meet employees' expectations, organizational factors beyond value alignment also affect retention.

The Spearman correlation coefficient was used for inferential analysis because the data were not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk test, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis was rejected since the results ($\rho = 0.247$, $p = 0.006$) showed a small but statistically significant positive connection between employee values alignment with company culture and retention levels. Despite the small impact size, it shows that workers' intention to stay with the company is influenced by alignment. These results are corroborated by other studies that highlight how corporate culture, leadership techniques, and chances for professional growth all influence employee retention (Chatzoudes & Chatzoglou, 2022). All of these findings point to value alignment as a contributing factor in maintaining employee engagement in Romanian multinational environments, even though it is not the only factor that determines retention.

Table 8. Descriptive data analysis for hypothesis 3

Item	No. of respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Retention level	121	1.00	5.00	4.1377	.68943
Values and expectations	121	3.00	5.00	4.5758	.42601

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

Table 9. Spearman correlation for H3

			Retention level	Values and expectations
Spearman's rho	Retention level	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.247**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
		N	121	121
	Values and expectations	Correlation Coefficient	.247**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
		N	121	121

** Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

The fourth hypothesis (H4) examined the relationship between professional development programs and employee performance in Romanian multinationals, focusing on the impact of training, workshops, and recognition initiatives. Four items (Q1–Q4) measuring self-perceived effectiveness and contribution within the organizational context were used to assess employee performance, while three items (Q24–Q26) measuring the impact of professional development assessed respondents' perceptions of opportunities for skill development and career advancement. For professional development programs, descriptive statistics showed a mean of 4.32 (SD = 0.649), indicating that employees usually see these opportunities as effective and accessible. Although employee performance had a slightly lower mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.635), responses remained favorable, indicating that development programs have a significant impact on performance outcomes and individual efficiency.

The Spearman correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis since the data had a non-normal distribution (Shapiro-Wilk test, $p < 0.001$). The findings showed a mild-to-moderate positive correlation between employee performance and professional development programs ($\rho = 0.337$, $p < 0.001$). Despite the low effect size, the statistical significance demonstrates that these activities have a real influence on improving employee performance and contributing to organizational success. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that professional development and recognition initiatives significantly enhance employee performance in Romanian multinational settings.

Table 10. Descriptive data analysis for hypothesis 3

Item	No. of respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Professional development	121	1.00	5.00	4.3278	.64976
Employee performance	121	1.00	5.00	4.1433	.63512

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

Table 11. Spearman correlation for H3

			Professional development	Employee performance
Spearman's rho	Professional development	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.337**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
		N	121	121
	Employee performance	Correlation Coefficient	.337**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
		N	121	121

** Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' work (SPSS)

In addition, Ismael et al. (2021) argue that participation in training programs and workshops enhances employees' intellectual capacities, thereby improving performance and developing skills necessary to achieve organizational objectives. Furthermore, as employees constitute the most valuable asset of a company, they must engage in professional development initiatives to strengthen their competencies (Kuruppu, Kavirathne, & Karunarathna, 2021). Based on these considerations, the research hypothesis is supported.

Conclusions

The results of this study highlight the critical role that organizational culture plays as a dynamic process in Romanian multinational firms, serving as the company's "immune system". The literature now available highlights Romanian multinational corporations' efforts to align employee values with organizational values shaped by international norms. Organizational performance and workforce engagement are significantly influenced by strategies that promote flexibility, an innovative and open culture, and investments in staff development.

With a focus on factors such as collaborative organizational culture, transformational leadership, employee retention, personal and professional values, professional development programs, motivation, and overall performance, this study investigated how organizational culture affects employee performance in Romanian multinational corporations. The study's overall goal was accomplished, according to the data analysis. The research assumptions are validated by the Spearman correlation results, which show that a collaborative corporate culture significantly improves employee productivity and increases engagement and involvement. Furthermore, the results emphasize the significance of transformational leadership in inspiring workers, and the weak yet positive correlation between employee retention and alignment of personal values with organizational culture suggests the presence of other moderating factors influencing workers' decisions to stay with the company. In a similar vein, the correlation between professional development programs and perceived performance suggests that career development opportunities have a favorable impact on both individual performance and the accomplishment of organizational goals.

These findings align with the body of research highlighting the significant impact of organizational culture on employee outcomes and organizational processes (Akpa et al., 2024). In the context of Romanian multinational corporations, this study supports Guseva's (2021) emphasis on aligning employee requirements with corporate culture. According to Mughal (2019) and current empirical findings, collaborative cultures marked by active involvement and mutual support further improve individual performance. The results show that organizational culture and leadership style are real factors that affect employee engagement and performance, with significant implications for multinational enterprises. By creating culturally sensitive leadership development programs, strengthening evaluation processes, and promoting inclusive organizational principles that resonate with local workers, multinational managers operating in Romania can leverage these results. Thus, higher motivation, better performance, and reduced turnover rates in global subsidiaries might all be attributed to such techniques.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of 121 respondents, while demographically diverse, is relatively small, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. Second, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential subjectivity, as responses reflect personal perceptions and experiences that could affect the accuracy and validity of the results. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample size and incorporating greater diversity to enhance representativeness. Additionally, comparative studies across different industries or organizational contexts could provide deeper insights into sector-specific cultural dynamics. Investigating generational differences in perceptions of organizational culture and its impact on employee performance would further enrich understanding and offer practical guidance for multinational corporations seeking to optimize workforce engagement and effectiveness.

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