



# That's the Way we do Things Around Here: Achieving the Company's Innovation Through Organizational Innovation Culture

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*innovation. Ultimately, these efforts can significantly influence the achievement of various innovations within the company. This research highlights the necessity of adopting a managerial approach that actively fosters a culture of innovation within the company. By doing so, organizations can create an environment that not only supports but also inspires creative thinking and innovation.*

**Abstract:** *This paper aims to gain an understanding of the role of organizational innovation culture in achieving a company's innovation. The inability to understand how the role of organizational culture can lead to problems such as unproductive behavior, the failure of innovation, and a reluctance to collaborate. Therefore, building an organizational innovation culture is crucial to achieving a company's innovation. Attention is directed to the determining factors that must be considered to strengthen the company's innovation culture. The content of the paper primarily draws on observations and in-depth interviews with top leaders and other organizational members. These individuals embody both the organizations and the personnel engaged in innovation activities, as well as participating in efforts to cultivate organizational culture. The findings indicate that fostering a culture of organizational innovation through the development of family-like connections, cooperation, and mentorship can create a supportive work environment that encourages the generation of innovative ideas. Furthermore, cultivating both the infrastructure for innovation and a commitment to innovation is essential for advancing an organizational culture that prioritizes*

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## Introduction

Rapid changes in business and technology pose significant challenges to maintaining organizational sustainability (Drucker, 1999). Various competitive pressures compel companies to reassess their business processes and develop innovative solutions to their myriad challenges. Consequently, innovation is crucial for both the survival and long-term growth of an organization (Santos-Vijande & Álvarez-González, 2007). It is therefore unsurprising that many industries today are focused on implementing radical new business models in a bid to remain competitive and navigate the intense competition (Chesbrough, 2010).

Previous research indicates that organizational culture is a critical element of organizational functioning that drives effectiveness (Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008). It lies at the heart of innovation. A pivotal question is how organizational culture contributes to the enhancement of corporate innovation. Much of the existing literature suggests that

creativity and innovation are influenced by culture in several ways, including socialization processes and the value propositions communicated through structures, politics, artifacts, and the daily practices and procedures within the organization (O' et al., 2011; Tushman et al., 1996).

Research on organizational culture is extensive, demonstrating that a well-established culture aligned with organizational strategy has a positive impact on overall performance. However, the multitude of cultural variables studied has led to a fragmented understanding of the concept of innovation culture, and its integration into management theory remains limited (Büschgens et al., 2013). In practice, managerial decision-making requires a foundational framework to determine the appropriate cultural approach that fosters corporate innovation. Thus, a systematic framework is essential for classifying practices within an organization to better understand the development of an innovation culture that supports corporate innovation.

While numerous studies have examined the connection between culture and innovation, there has been limited focus on identifying the organizational practices that can cultivate an innovation-oriented culture and their significance in driving corporate innovation. Woodman et al. suggested that elements such as organizational culture, rewards, and resources are critical determinants of creative behavior within organizations (Woodman et al., n.d.). In a similar vein, Amabile (1997) and Amabile et al. (1996) found that the perceived work environment has a significant impact on creativity levels in organizations (Amabile, 1997; Amabile et al., 1996). Given the importance of organizational culture in fostering innovation, this study aims to investigate managerial and human resource practices that contribute to a "culture that supports innovation." It acknowledges the need for a deeper understanding of how daily organizational practices encourage innovative behavior within companies. The authors of this research delve into various components of organizational innovation culture to identify key factors that can stimulate innovation in an international manufacturing setting.

## Literature Review

### Organizational Innovation Culture

Organizational culture can be understood as "a complex set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols" that shape the way a company operates. (Barney, 1986). It plays a crucial role in the collective programming of the mind, influencing behavior (Hofstede, n.d.). Consequently, it is essential to internalize organizational values to align management objectives with those of individual employees.

Managers require a foundational framework to determine which culture to embrace to foster innovative behavior or serve as an effective coordination tool. Despite efforts by academics to establish a comprehensive structure for value classification that advances theory and elucidates its connection to organizational innovation, the range of values that can characterize organizational culture remains theoretically limitless (Denison, 1996).

### Innovation as a culture

Innovation has emerged as a fundamental pillar in fostering organizational sustainability in the contemporary business landscape. The rapid evolution of technology, coupled with shorter product life cycles and increased demands for product development, necessitates strong innovation capabilities. Consequently, innovation has become an integral component of organizational strategies aimed at achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage in the market (Shahzad et al., 2017).

Each industry possesses its own unique culture, which is believed to significantly influence organizational performance. In today's corporate landscape, a strong corporate culture encourages employees to maximize their efficiency. Consequently, organizational culture is a critical factor in determining the success of an organization. For instance, the creation of an innovative program necessitates an open and relaxed atmosphere that fosters the development of innovative ideas into practical initiatives with positive social and economic impacts. Such a creative environment can be further cultivated through a targeted approach to organizational culture (Aryanto et al., 2015).

In the realm of knowledge, Harkema defines innovation as a knowledge process aimed at generating new insights, particularly those related to the advancement of commercial knowledge and the resolution of issues (Harkema, 2003). Additionally, innovation can be broadly viewed as the application of discoveries and interventions, resulting in the emergence of new outcomes, whether they manifest as products, systems, or processes.

A well-established organizational culture can actively encourage employees to engage in the decision-making process, allowing them to share their innovative ideas alongside management to enhance overall performance. This highlights that innovation can be likened to a seed that requires the appropriate environment to flourish. Consequently, an innovation culture is viewed as a multidimensional framework that encompasses the desire to innovate, the necessary infrastructure to facilitate innovation, the operational behaviors required to impact the market, and the value systems and environment conducive to implementing innovation (Sharifirad & Ataei, 2012).

In light of the understanding outlined above, the innovation process also necessitates managerial control to shape employee behavior in a way that fosters innovation, from the generation of ideas to their implementation. To effectively encourage and guide behavior towards achieving desired objectives, various approaches are essential (Cardinal et al., 2010). Existing literature identifies three primary prototypes for controlling behavior: outcome, behavior, and clan. An example of outcome-based control involves establishing quantitative performance goals and rewarding individuals based on the degree to which they meet these targets (Turner & Makhija, n.d.). One example of behavioral control emphasizes the procedures and rules that individuals are expected to follow when performing a specific task. Their performance is evaluated based on their adherence to these specified procedures (Cardinal et al., 2010). In contrast, clan control pertains to the mechanisms employed by controllers to ensure that those being managed align with shared values and goals, fostering a strong commitment to collective objectives (Cardinal et al., 2010; Kirsch et al., 2010).

This paper primarily examines clan control as a cultural framework for fostering innovation. According to Wilkins and Ouchi, a clan represents a localized culture that can manifest within any social or organizational context (Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983). Clan control leverages organizational culture to influence employee behavior. While it's recognized that organizational change is essential to adapt to a dynamic environment (Simpson et al., 2006) It often necessitates the behavioral adjustments required for such change. The clan control system operates informally, allowing employees some flexibility to pursue creative endeavors, including the development of innovations they conceive themselves. In an organizational context, "clan control" denotes a system that prioritizes a familial culture, fostering cooperation and trust among employees. Within this framework, management assumes a mentoring role rather than imposing strict regulations. Instead, control is rooted in shared values and beliefs prevalent throughout the organization.

In a clan control system, the organization strives to cultivate a comfortable work environment, akin to a family setting, characterized by warm and supportive interpersonal relationships. Such an atmosphere, rich in familial feelings, fosters relaxation and comfort, which are essential for enhancing employee creativity. Appreciation and trust in teamwork and collaboration among employees are also vital for achieving organizational objectives. Beyond feeling valued, the presence of trust between employees and between management and staff creates a robust foundation for individual contributions. This environment is believed to nurture both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, aligning efforts toward shared goals and the overall success of the organization.

Fostering a work environment that nurtures creativity is often inadequate without backing from management. Organizational leaders should act more as mentors, providing guidance and support, rather than as controllers who merely issue directives. This perspective is rooted in the idea that effective control relies significantly on trust and organizational culture, resulting in a reduced need for stringent rules and policies. Organizations characterized by clan control typically exhibit strong shared values and beliefs, which in turn influence behaviors and decision-making processes.

## Research Method

Triangulation methodology is used in this qualitative research to gain a deep and broad understanding of the issues in the research problem. This method is chosen to explore how innovation capability is built through organizational culture.

Triangulation methodology is recognized for enhancing the depth of data collected (Manganelli et al., 2014). The importance of this methodology is emphasized in qualitative research design. Consequently, this study employed various data collection techniques to uncover the meanings participants assign to their experiences in understanding their world (Forsey, 2010). The techniques utilized in this study comprised interviews, direct observation, document analysis (including Internet, Intranet, company documents, and other media), participant observation, and field notes.

Data collection for this qualitative study involved unstructured interviews with key local informants, specifically the Company's top leaders, called the President Director, along

with various staff members. These unstructured interviews were conducted through informal discussions that resembled light conversations. During these interactions, a series of unplanned questions was developed on the spot to elicit in-depth information, rather than adhering to a predetermined set of questions.

In addition to conducting interviews, observations were carried out through direct engagement with participants during various activities, including gatherings, presentations of innovative programs, and the development of employee training initiatives. These observation sessions aimed to gather data through meticulous observation and the recording of field notes while actively participating in multiple activities as part of the study.

A documentation study is conducted by examining various documents related to activities, such as photos showcasing accomplishments or company profile materials that outline the vision, mission, symbols, and their meanings. It may also include information about the organization's culture, typically gathered from the company's website.

Once the data collection process is completed, the researcher compiles and uploads all identified records, ensuring that any duplicates are removed. The filtered data is then organized according to specific themes or criteria.

The subsequent stage involves compiling, summarizing, and reporting the research findings. During this phase, the researcher extracts relevant information and provides a narrative summary of the analysis conducted in this study.

## **Result and Discussion**

This section will describe the findings of a study that utilized a flexible data collection process. Researchers conducted observations and interviews during various activities over a sustained period. The focus was on two specific events organized by the company: gatherings and presentations showcasing innovative programs.

The first activity is a gathering event, known as "Halal Bihalal." This routine gathering serves as an opportunity to ask for forgiveness and strengthen connections among not only members of the organization but also various external stakeholders. As such, the event brings together employees and stakeholders alike. In this gathering, the top leader takes on the role of Master of Ceremonies, assisted by a staff member to enhance the festivities, which include leading a quiz and distributing various prizes. All employees participate, from management and operators to the cleaning staff. Throughout the event, the interactions between leaders and subordinates were lively and engaging, filled with humor and laughter—a sentiment that the researcher also experienced during the occasion. As the gathering drew to a close, company leaders engaged with stakeholders in a light discussion about the event's preparation, the execution of this routine activity, and its overarching purpose. During this informal conversation, the company leader elaborated on the significance of the specially ordered lights positioned in the main room, a space that every employee passes daily. The discussion took place in a cozy setting, adorned with decorations that eschewed formality. Additionally, a range of equipment was set up for employees to prepare their favorite beverages, such as coffee and tea, as well as ice cream.

In the second activity, researchers had the opportunity to observe the presentation of

an innovative program implemented by the Company, specifically the wastewater processing initiative that turns wastewater into clean, reusable water with significant economic benefits. This program not only helps reduce the volume of water consumed by PDAM (regional drinking water company) and alleviates the financial burden of clean water costs, but it also plays a vital role in environmental preservation, as the resulting liquid waste does not harm the surrounding environment. What made this activity particularly engaging was the unique way the program presentation was organized, resembling a gathering filled with humor, a familial atmosphere of mutual support, constructive feedback, entertainment, and lighthearted discussions. The appreciation for the program was evident, not only from the company's leadership but also from other employees. During the event, the company's top leader showcased two of his original songs, which were performed collectively by a choir of employees, led by him. After the event, the leader facilitated a discussion session to gather diverse input and reactions from participants. As the event wrapped up, the leader personally escorted the guests to the front gate of the Company, accompanied by several staff members, engaging in casual conversations about the management approach toward employees.

The text presented above summarizes research conducted through observations and interviews, aimed at elucidating the practices and environments within the organization that foster a sense of belonging among its members, akin to a supportive family. This research has revealed key themes related to cultural aspects, including "family," "cooperation," and a focus on "mentoring" rather than mere supervision. Furthermore, the study underscores elements that nurture a culture of innovation, such as the "infrastructure for innovation" and the "intention for innovation." The following section will explore these findings in greater detail.

### **Foster Family Values, Cooperation, and Mentoring**

The observations from the various activities conducted by the Company highlight how innovative programs are developed, taught, and subsequently shared among the organization's members. The description of these activities demonstrates the active support provided by both the Company's management and its members, fostering collaboration and teamwork. In this environment, individual accomplishments contribute to team success, which in turn leads to overall organizational achievement. This commitment to innovation is further underscored by the awards presented by the Company for the programs developed.

Efforts to instill family values are also evident in the songs created, taught, and sung together during innovative program presentation events. These activities aim to embed these values in the minds of every member of the organization. As one song emphasizes, "Whoever said they work here...they make you suffer...the family is good; they respect one another...they care for each other...someone like that...I've worked here for years..." Additionally, unique terms or "special nicknames" for company employees, such as "Kieviters," signify that they are part of the Company's extended family.

The presentation activity of the innovative program produced is packed in a situation

full of familiarity, where all members gather to listen, give input, and celebrate the innovation produced, far from the formal impression and far from the impression of being evaluated. The results of observation and discussion with the leader and some existing employees show that what is being practiced is part of the company's efforts to build a humanistic work environment, full of family feeling, so that employees feel comfortable and happy at work. The leader does not act as a "boss" who always gives work instructions but rather as a mentor who asks questions or consults with colleagues.

These practices align with the literature that emphasizes the importance of fostering a work environment characterized by a sense of family, mutual support, and mentoring. In such settings, leaders are viewed not merely as "bosses," but as collaborators. This atmosphere enables co-workers to contribute innovative ideas that inspire one another to strive for excellence, ultimately ensuring the organization's long-term success (Aryanto et al., 2015; Cardinal et al., 2010; Kirsch et al., 2010).

### **Infrastructure for Innovation**

Based on the findings from interviews and observations, it is clear how the organization fosters various innovations initiated by its employees. The innovation programs developed by staff align with the Company's strategic objectives. In this context, management guides desired outcomes while granting employees the autonomy to translate those objectives into innovative programs that yield positive impacts for individuals, teams, the organization, and the broader community, for instance, the wastewater treatment initiative that transforms water into a clean, consumable resource. The support offered is comprehensive, extending beyond mere consultation to include budgeting for programs and facilitating their socialization through organized events. Additionally, recognition is provided in the form of both financial incentives and social acknowledgment during events mentioned in the previous section of Activity 2. This framework is designed to encourage and steer employee behavior, ensuring they remain motivated to innovate and contribute their best to the organization. The diverse forms of support underscore the existence of a robust "innovation infrastructure" aimed at facilitating creativity (Sharifirad & Ataei, 2012).

### **Intention for Innovation**

Based on observations and interviews regarding the company's logo, the leader shared insights into his journey in guiding the organization. The new logo, which features a bird's egg that hatches, runs, and ultimately flies, symbolizes the company's aspirations. This concept is conveyed through the movement of both palms forming wings, accompanied by the phrase "run...until you fly..." This imagery represents the hope of the entire corporate family and embodies the organization's commitment to continuous learning, growth, and overcoming limitations to move forward. This philosophy is mirrored in the consistent increase in performance achievements within the company. To foster a comfortable work environment, several coworking spaces have been created to help employees alleviate monotony and collaborate with colleagues. A variety of humanistic approaches are employed to enhance learning motivation, including the introduction of

habits and new behaviors that promote contribution. This underscores the company's dedication to the "learning process," which is crucial for nurturing a desire to improve. Such an ethos ultimately leads to innovative program developments that align with the company's strategic objectives. Encouraging innovation among organizational members is essential for maintaining progress and adaptability (Sharifirad & Ataei, 2012; Simpson et al., 2006).

## Discussion

Culture is understood as the normative values and beliefs that shape relatively uniform behavior, encapsulating "the way we do things around here." Over time, culture has been redefined as the "significant shared meanings that enable managers to collectively comprehend their actions and those of others." Consequently, strategy and strategic management play integral roles in the process of cultural development. Senior executives often pursue strategic change while being mindful of the messages they intend to convey, as well as how these messages will be received by organizational members. This involves the careful use of language and symbolic actions to facilitate influence over strategic change (Hallett, n.d.). As such, artifacts, adopted values, and the underlying assumptions of the strategy are essential components in the development of organizational culture (Martin, 1999).

While the culture within the organization is relatively stable, the external environment is highly dynamic, demanding adaptability to various technological advancements. This necessitates that companies develop sustainable innovation capabilities to survive and remain competitive. Innovation can be compared to a seed that requires fertile soil, here, embodied in an organizational culture that continually fosters and nurtures innovation. Thus, the ability to modify the organizational culture is essential for cultivating an innovative environment. This study highlights that both the intention to innovate and the necessary infrastructure for innovation are critical components in establishing a company's culture of innovation (Sharifirad & Ataei, 2012).

In fostering a culture of innovation, the incorporation of artifacts, such as logos that embody the organization's core values, like "run until you fly," serves to inspire every member to pursue continuous learning and exceptional achievements. Instilling these values through various rituals, including regular gatherings for diverse purposes, helps cultivate a sense of kinship, support, and appreciation for the resulting innovative performance. This approach is integral to how organizations align their values with the overarching company strategy.

Ultimately, fostering the right culture can help employees feel at ease and comfortable, enabling them to focus and enhance productivity. A culture rooted in family and trust can bolster employee loyalty to the organization, which is reflected in their commitment to delivering optimal performance. Additionally, cultivating a culture of innovation can create an environment that encourages new initiatives and ideas, allowing employees to be more creative and resourceful.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into how organizational culture is cultivated through the integration of family values, collaboration, and leadership styles that emphasize support among colleagues rather than traditional hierarchical relationships. This is achieved through the use of symbols, human resources practices, and the creation of a conducive work environment. Such conditions are essential for every member of the organization to feel that their coworkers are akin to family, deserving of support and respect. Additionally, these favorable circumstances can foster innovative ideas that contribute to achieving organizational objectives.

In addition to fostering values through various human-centric HR practices, management support, such as establishing infrastructure for innovation and demonstrating a commitment to innovative efforts, plays a crucial role in cultivating an organizational culture that embraces innovation. This creates a conducive environment for the seeds of innovation to flourish, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability of the organization.

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