



How Organizational Culture Shapes Innovation Behavior among Employees: A Case Study of Pakistani Firms

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ABSTRACT

A qualitative multiple-case study approach was used in this study to examine the influence of organizational culture on the behaviour of employees in the field of innovation. Three organizations working in different sectors in Pakistan were purposively chosen for their contrasting organizational environments including an information technology organization, a manufacturing organization, and a banking and financial services organization. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from employees, team leaders and managers in the three organizations, with the use of organizational documents, whenever available. Interview recordings were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis processes of initial coding, categorisation and identification of super-ordinate themes within each case followed by a cross case analysis which resulted in the identification of similarities and differences between the three organisational contexts. The five broad themes that rose to the surface were: leadership support for innovation, structural flexibility and hierarchy, communication and idea sharing, tolerance for risk and failure, and recognition and reward systems. The findings of the cross case analysis showed that the flat structure and the psychologically safe leadership style of the information technology company were most likely to foster employee innovation behavior, whereas a rigid hierarchy, risk-averse norms and formalized communication channels most strongly inhibited it in the manufacturing company, whereas the banking company was intermediate in that regard and was influenced by both compliance-driven caution and pockets of innovation leadership within its units. The results indicate that organization culture does not influence the employee's innovation behavior in isolation, but through the interaction of a number of cultural dimensions, such as leadership behavior and the tolerance for risk in the organization are more consistently influential in the contrasting organizational settings.

Keywords: organizational culture; innovation behavior; innovative work behavior; multiple-case study; thematic analysis; cross-case analysis; Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Innovation is at the heart of organizational competitiveness in almost all industry sectors and organizations are increasingly realizing that any innovation that has meaning is the result of the daily innovative practices of ordinary people who perform everyday work roles, in which they create, champion and implement innovative ideas. It has been established that the organizational context in which employees are working is one of the most important factors affecting employee innovative behaviour (see Büschgens et al., 2013), where organisational culture (the shared assumptions, values and taken-for-granted ways of working of a given organisation) is consistently found to be among the most influential of the organizational context (Cohen and Marsh, 2019; McNeil and Cole, 2013; Sheinberg and Sheinberg, 2015). Identifying exactly how organizational culture affects, facilitates, or hinders employee innovation behavior is therefore a topic





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of great practical and theoretical significance, especially in developing economies like Pakistan, where firms are under increasing pressure to innovate as they strive to be competitive on a regional and global scale, but where organizational culture may differ significantly from that usually discussed in the West, in which much of innovation theory is based.

A large amount of quantitative research has investigated the relation between organizational culture and innovation-related outcomes, and this research has largely confirmed that there is a strong positive association, with findings also indicating that the relation between organizational culture and innovation-related outcomes is not straightforward or uniform. Büschgens et al. (2013) identified in their meta-analytical review of the organizational culture and innovation literature that the results of the literature were consistent with the relationship between flexible, risk-tolerant, and external-oriented types of culture and positive innovation outcomes, and that there was also a significant degree of heterogeneity in the way the organizational culture had been conceptualized and measured. Naranjo-Valencia et al. (2011) hypothesized that cultural dimensions, in particular, influence innovation-relevant outcomes in organizations, rather than organizational culture as such, and found that organizational cultures with the emphasis on flexibility, risk taking, and collaboration were highly correlated with innovation-oriented strategic postures, whereas organizational cultures with the emphasis on hierarchy and control were highly correlated with imitation-oriented strategic postures.

The quantitative literature has generally used survey-based measures, which measure cultural aspects as a whole without revealing the particular way in which culture is manifested and lived in the organization by the employees who try to perform innovatively. Understanding how abstract cultural values become concrete elements of organizational conditions, like the norms of communication, tolerances for failure, and resource allocation procedures, which employees face and react to in their daily work lives is especially important in the context of motivating innovative behavior, according to Hartmann (2006), who discussed the role of organizational culture in motivating innovative behavior specifically in construction companies. This interest in the lived enacted aspect of organizational culture drives the choice of the qualitative multiple-case study method used in this study.

There are some specific cultural mechanisms that have been suggested to play a central role in how employees act in terms of innovation. Leadership behaviour has been found to be of key importance, as leaders and managers, they model the values of the organization, and they also directly influence the psychological safety of the employees when proposing new ideas, which in turn affected innovative work behaviour, as revealed by Afsar and Umrani (2020) in their study on the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour. A second common mechanism studied is structural and hierarchical conditions: In their study of organizational climate as a predictor of innovative work behavior, specifically in Pakistani organizations, Imran et al. (2010) found that dimensions of organizational climate (autonomy, resources, and support for innovation) were significant predictors of innovative work behavior, offering direct empirical support for the focus on Pakistani organizational contexts in the present study. A third recurring theme is tolerance for risk and failure, which is theorized to be a rational avoidance of risk by the employee, especially in more hierarchical and control-oriented cultures, if they propose untested ideas.

In spite of the enormous amount of theoretical and quantitative evidence, only a few studies have explored such mechanisms and interactions in the context of Pakistani organizations, employing a qualitative method





which could capture the contextual richness and the organizational contrasts that can only partially be captured by quantitative single sector survey method. A multiple case study design that can directly compare different organizational environments, from relatively flat, global, and technology-driven organizations to more hierarchical, local, and manufacturing-driven organizations and financial institutions, is an appropriate approach to the current study given the diversity of the Pakistani firms and their organizational traditions.

This study attempts to fill this void with a qualitative multiple-case study of the effects of organizational culture on the innovation behaviour of employees in three purposefully selected Pakistani organizations in contrasting organizational contexts from different sectors. Specifically, the study aims at exploring within each case organization the perception and experience of employees, team leaders and managers of the organizational culture in relation to innovation in the case organization, as well as at the identification of specific cultural mechanisms that make the organizational culture appear to both facilitate and inhibit the behavior of employees when it comes to innovation in the case organization, and to perform a cross-case analysis, which will make it possible to identify similarities and differences in these mechanisms across the three contrasting organizational contexts. In keeping with the multiple case study methodology as outlined by Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007) and Yin (2018), the study seeks to provide insight into the relationship between organizational culture and innovation behavior in the Pakistani business context in a contextually rich and comparatively grounded manner. The rest of the paper summarizes the literature; outlines the method; summarizes the within case and cross case findings; and offers suggestions for organizational practice and future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The management literature has adopted a number of influential and well-known theoretical approaches to the concept of organizational culture, of which the most well known is the competing values framework developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011) that classifies four types of culture: clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy based on two underlying factors: flexibility versus stability and internal versus external orientation. In this context, adhocracy culture (flexibility, risk taking and entrepreneurial orientation) is theoretically most closely related to innovation-supportive organizational conditions, while hierarchy culture (formalization, control and intra-organizational process orientation) is theoretically most closely related to innovation-constraining conditions. Hogan and Coote (2014) tested a theoretical model of organizational culture, innovation, and performance based on Schein's original model of organizational culture as consisting of artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions, and found that espoused values specifically supportive of organizational innovation, as opposed to organizational culture as a whole, were significantly correlated with a variety of innovation-related employee behaviors, such as idea generation and idea implementation, providing empirical evidence for the theoretical claim that espoused values, rather than organizational culture as a whole, are related to innovation-related outcomes.

The meta-analytic research that exists on this relationship has largely supported and supported these theoretical predictions. Drawing on a comprehensive empirical literature on organizational culture and innovation, Büschgens et al. (2013) identified a consistent pattern of positive associations between culture types that focus on flexibility, external orientation, and risk tolerance and innovation outcomes across the studies they reviewed and found significant methodological differences in how organizational culture and innovation outcome were operationalized in the reviewed studies, which the present study's qualitative



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approach is specifically designed to help address by relying on employees' own contextualized representations of culture rather than predetermined survey items. Naranjo-Valencia et al. (2011) also concluded that culture with a focus on flexibility and on external orientation was correlated with an innovation-oriented approach to strategic choice, in line with the main theoretical agreement around the cultural orientations that foster innovation.

The concept of employee innovative behavior is considered as a multi-stage process, which includes idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation, and each of these stages could be differently affected by organizational culture. Janssen (2004), who studied how people's perceptions of organizational fairness affect the experience of innovative behavior, reported that organizational culture's effect on innovation works partly through the way it affects people's perceptions of organizational fairness and that their sense of psychological safety at work influences the experience of innovative behavior. De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) built one widely-used instrument that captures the four steps of the innovation process: Idea exploration, idea generation, championing ideas, and implementing ideas; this distinction is relevant for understanding the innovation process within case organizations in the present study and the different types of cultural mechanisms within each case organization.

Leadership behavior has been consistently found to be a key process in the enactment and experience of organizational culture in relation to innovation. Afsar and Umrani (2020) investigated the relationship of transformational leadership with innovative work behaviors and revealed that task complexity was a moderating variable between the two with task complexity making the positive relationship between transformational leadership and the motivation to learn and the perception of innovative climate of the organization stronger, and stronger in the positive relationship between the two variables and employees' innovative behaviors. Similarly, Shanker et al. (2017) found organizational climate for innovation to be significantly related to organizational performance, with the mediation role of employee innovative work behavior, indicating that leadership and organizational climate play a mediating role between the organizational culture and actual employee behavior. In the context of employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior to foster innovative behavior, Xerri and Brunetto (2013) conducted a study that showed that employees' general sense of commitment and positive behavior toward the organization was more strongly correlated with innovative behavior, implying that organizational culture's impact on innovative behavior may be mediated by employee's broader relational orientation toward the organization, rather than by narrowly innovation-specific organizational cultural cues.

Structural and climate conditions are another common thread that runs throughout this literature, especially for the context of an organization in Pakistan, as was explored in the current study. In their study on organizational learning culture among South Korean companies, Škerlavaj et al. (2010) found that openness to experimentation and risk tolerance to failure were significant predictors of innovative organizational outcomes, providing direct empirical evidence for the importance of tolerance for failure, and structural flexibility as further specific cultural mechanisms, to be closely examined in the present study's case organizations. In the organizational psychology and culture framework, the authors Du and Wang (2022) identified human resource management practices and the feeling of psychological ownership as two more factors that can influence the innovative behavior of employees, in this case as a cultural mechanism.

Methodologically, multiple case study research has emerged as a reliable means of investigating organizational phenomena like the relationship between culture and innovation that are advantageous to





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ethnographic analyses in contrasting organizational contexts and comparative analyses that are rich with contextual detail. Multiple-case designs that involve purposive selection of cases for their ability to provide theoretically meaningful contrast will enable the researcher to determine whether the patterns of analysis are replicated or diverged across cases, thus enhancing the analytic generalizability of the qualitative results beyond those of a single case (Yin, 2018). In the context of theory building from case studies, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) also highlighted the importance of cross-case analysis to uncover both the convergence of patterns across contrasting cases and the divergence of patterns to identify the boundary conditions of emerging theories, the latter of which is evident in the within-case and crosscase analytic structure used in the present study. Themes were derived from the interviews using the six-phase approach to thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), and qualitative coding and cross-case display techniques detailed by Miles et al. (2014) were used in the analysis of interview data.

The literature surveyed and reviewed indicates three general conclusions. First, there is a consistent relationship between culture types that are oriented toward flexibility, risk taking and external orientation with higher innovation performance, while those that are oriented toward control and internal orientation are linked to lower innovation performance; however, the relationship between these culture dimensions and innovation performance is not necessarily linear, and the degree of heterogeneity among the various measures and constructs of these culture dimensions is considerable (Büschgens et al., 2013; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2011). Second, there are specific cultural mechanisms that have been consistently recognized as key factors in shaping the innovative behaviour of employees in an organization, such as leadership behaviour, structural and climate conditions, tolerance for risk and failure (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Imran et al., 2010; Škerlavaj et al., 2010). Third, although quantitative survey research has confirmed the general nature of these dynamics, there is relatively little qualitative comparative case study research that explores how the cultural mechanisms are realized and felt in different and contrasting organizational settings specifically in Pakistan (Hartmann, 2006; Imran et al., 2010). In the present study, this gap is directly tackled in a qualitative multiple case study design.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, the idea was to find out how organizational culture influenced employee innovation behavior, which is why a qualitative multiple-case study approach was chosen. To address the need for cross-case comparison across contrasting organizational environments, and to apply consistency with the case study literature that suggests and justifies the use of a multiple-case design to increase the analytic generalizability of the qualitative findings beyond what a single-case design allows, a multiple-case design was chosen (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2018).

To provide contrasting organizational environments, three organizations were purposively selected, one from each sector of Pakistan, from information technology, manufacturing and banking and financial services sectors. These three were chosen on the basis of the literature reviewed as being, on the one hand, the relatively flat structure, with a global context, typical of technology businesses and, on the other, the more hierarchical culture, with a process-oriented focus, typical of manufacturing and regulated financial services organisations, giving a theoretically meaningful contrast to the cross case analysis.

**Table 1****Profile of Participating Case Organizations**

Case	Sector	Approximate Size	Ownership	Predominant Structure
Case A	Information Technology (software services)	Medium (250–500 employees)	Privately owned, locally headquartered with international clients	Relatively flat, project-team-based
Case B	Manufacturing (industrial goods)	Large (1,000+ employees)	Privately owned, family-managed group	Multi-layered, functionally departmentalized
Case C	Banking and Financial Services	Large (1,000+ employees)	Publicly regulated financial institution	Hierarchical with centralized policy control

Note. Organizational size and structural descriptions are based on participant accounts and, where available, organizational documents gathered during data collection.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were purposefully selected within each case organization to represent a variety of organizational levels that directly pertain to the innovation behavior of employees, including individual contributors, team leaders, and managers. A total of 24 employees, team leaders and managers across the three cases were interviewed, with 8 employees, team leaders and managers being interviewed within each case in consultation with a designated organizational contact with the relevant organization to ensure representation across the relevant departments and functions within each case.

**Table 2****Profile of Interview Participants by Case and Role**

Case	Employees	Team Leaders	Managers	Total
Case A (Information Technology)	4	2	2	8
Case B (Manufacturing)	4	2	2	8
Case C (Banking and Financial Services)	4	2	2	8
Total	12	6	6	24

Note. N = 24 participants across three case organizations. Roles were self-identified by participants at the time of interview.

Data Collection

Data were gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews with each of the 24 participants, which employed an interview guide that included questions about participants' perception of their organization's culture, their experiences proposing or implementing new ideas in the workplace, the behaviors of their leaders and other participants in response to such efforts, and their perception of their organization's risk and failure tolerance, as well as providing opportunities for participants to add other issues that were important to them based on their individual experiences. Interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants and later transcribed verbatim, before analysis. In addition, where possible, internal documents, such as communication from the organization, human resource policy documents, and mission or values statements were also gathered, in each case, to complement and support the evidence drawn from the interviews.

Table 3**Overview of Data Sources by Case**



Case	Interviews Conducted	Organizational Documents Reviewed
Case A (Information Technology)	8	Values statement; onboarding handbook; internal innovation-award program materials
Case B (Manufacturing)	8	Employee handbook; standard operating procedure excerpts
Case C (Banking and Financial Services)	8	Code of conduct; internal newsletter excerpts; suggestion-scheme policy document

Note. Organizational documents were reviewed as supplementary context for interpreting interview data and were not independently coded as a primary data source.

Data Analysis

In each case, a thematic analysis process was followed, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the transcripts, initial coding, searching for candidate categories, reviewing categories against the coded data, and defining and naming overarching themes. Initial codes were grouped into larger categories and these were then further developed into a matrix display of overarching themes representing the patterns in the participants' experiences related to organizational culture and innovation (Miles et al., 2014), and were done through an iterative coding process. We followed a cross-case analysis approach to multiple-case study research (MCR) to systematically compare the themes emerged within each case to look for convergent themes, which are emerging patterns that are shared across cases, and divergent themes, which are emerging patterns unique to some organizational contexts, as per the cross-case analysis logic of MCR had by Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007) and Yin (2018).

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Several methods were employed to ensure trustworthiness of the analysis. To support triangulation across multiple perspectives of the same organizational culture, multiple roles of participants, employees, team leaders and managers were interviewed in each case. Where possible, organizational information was analyzed in conjunction with interview information to provide further context for the interview data. Initial coding and categorization of emerging themes were iterative, the initial codes and categories were revisited and elaborated against the entire set of transcripts in each case before developing overarching themes and the cross case analysis was systematic across all three cases, based on a uniform comparative framework,



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as recommended in multiple case qualitative research to achieve credibility and dependability of the analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2018).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Thematic analysis of interview data, and organizational documents, was conducted within-case, which yielded five overarching themes present, in varying forms across the three case organizations: Leadership Support for Innovation, Structural Flexibility and Hierarchy, Communication and Idea-sharing Channels, Tolerance for Risk and Failure, and Recognition and Reward Practices. Table 4 shows the coding framework used to identify the themes in the data, starting with initial codes, then moving through categories to emerging themes.

Table 4**Coding Framework: From Initial Codes to Overarching Themes**

Overarching Theme	Categories	Illustrative Initial Codes
Leadership Support for Innovation	Manager responsiveness; psychological safety	“Manager listens to ideas”; “afraid to suggest changes”; “open-door approach”
Structural Flexibility and Hierarchy	Decision-making layers; role autonomy	“too many approvals needed”; “can decide on my own”; “chain of command”
Communication and Idea-Sharing Channels	Formal channels; informal channels	“suggestion box unused”; “team brainstorming sessions”; “ideas lost in email chains”
Tolerance for Risk and Failure	Response to mistakes; experimentation norms	“mistakes are punished”; “allowed to try and fail”; “pilot testing encouraged”
Recognition and Reward Practices	Formal recognition; informal acknowledgment	“innovation award program”; “no credit given”; “public praise in meetings”



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Note. Themes were derived inductively through within-case thematic analysis of interviews with 24 participants across three case organizations, following Braun and Clarke (2006).

Case A: Information Technology Firm

For Case A, the culture was consistently reported as having accessible leadership that was responsive, and a relatively horizontal organization structure with a high degree of autonomy for project teams. The overall picture of organizational tolerance of risk and failure was relatively high, as employees and team leaders reported a general openness to new ideas that were raised informally in the team meetings, and noted that failed attempts to new approaches were viewed as learning opportunities, not as faulting the team leader. One Case A manager explained: “We say to the team, ‘If it doesn’t work, that is OK, if we tried something new, at least it didn’t work; we don’t want them to be afraid to say anything. In Case A, formal internal innovation-award programs were complemented by regular public recognition of employees’ contributions at team meetings, and were supported by organizational documents.

Case B: Manufacturing Company

The participants in Case B reported a much more hierarchical organizational culture, with a number of steps needed to be taken for even minor changes of process and the overall attitude towards working outside of the standard operating procedures being fairly risk-averse. Some staff members mentioned that they were not feeling psychologically safe to propose new concepts or discuss them, as one person said, “If it doesn’t work out well because of you, then it’s your name on it, so most people just go the manual way.” Formal routes for the sharing of ideas were in place, many participants noted a suggestion box in the employee handbook, but this was rarely used or followed up. In Case B, recognition and reward systems were characterized as weak and not always applied or utilized; for many, successful process improvements were only rarely formally attributed to the person(s) who came up with the idea.

Case C: Banking and Financial Services Firm

The culture of the organization was more diverse and internally dynamic in Case C, than in Cases A or B, and at the institutional level, there was a strong emphasis on compliance, risk management, and minimizing risk because of regulatory requirements; for one team leader, “In banking, you can’t really do anything quick like a tech company—it always has to go through risk and compliance first.” Some respondents, especially from digital banking and product development teams, saw these specific teams as islands of innovation-friendly culture, where leadership is easier to engage and there was more of a tolerance of experimentation than in other parts of the institution where compliance was a greater priority. One of the internal variations of Case C itself was identified as being a significant finding, indicating that culture in an organization might not be uniform even within a single case organization (this was most notable in the larger and more structurally differentiated organization).

Cross-Case Analysis

Table 5 shows a cross-case comparison of the five overarching themes across the three case organizations, summarising the findings from within the cases given above.

**Table 5***Cross-Case Comparison of Organizational Culture Dimensions and Innovation Behavior*

Theme	Case A (IT)	Case B (Manufacturing)	Case C (Banking)
Leadership Support for Innovation	Strong; managers described as accessible and responsive	Weak; approval-limited focused, responsiveness to informal ideas	Mixed; strong in digital/product units, weak in traditional units
Structural Flexibility and Hierarchy	High flexibility; flat, team-based structure	Low flexibility; multiple hierarchical approval layers	Low institution-wide flexibility; higher flexibility within specific units
Communication and Idea-Sharing Channels	Frequent informal channels (team brainstorming)	Formal channels present but underused in practice	Formal, compliance-oriented channels predominate
Tolerance for Risk and Failure	High; failure reframed as learning opportunity	Low; mistakes associated with individual blame	Low institution-wide; moderate within innovation-focused units
Recognition and Reward Practices	Formal award program plus frequent informal recognition	Minimal and inconsistently applied	Present but inconsistently experienced across units

Note. Cross-case comparison synthesizes within-case thematic analysis of interviews with 24 participants (employees, team leaders, and managers) across three case organizations.



FINDINGS

The cross case analysis shows that organizational culture exerted a direct influence in the three case organizations by interacting and working together in a cross-interacting way through several distinct cultural mechanisms, thus reinforcing the theoretical expectation, derived from the quantitative literature, that the role of organizational culture should be direct regarding the actions that influence innovation-relevant outcomes, not by one single generalized cultural influence (Büschgens et al., 2013; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2011). The two most consistently differentiating factors across the three cases were leadership for innovation and tolerance of risk and failure, specifically, the combination of accessible leadership and an explicit reframing of failure as learning opportunity was most often associated with the adhocracy culture type hypothesized by Cameron and Quinn (2011) to be most conducive to innovation, while the combination of approval-seeking leadership and blame-oriented response to failure was most often associated with the control-oriented hierarchy culture type hypothesized to be least conducive to innovation.

The salience of leadership behavior and of perceived psychological safety in influencing participants' willingness to propose and pursue new ideas is similar to Afsar and Umrani (2020), who found that leadership style significantly influences the employee's perception of the innovation climate, and Janssen (2004), who found that perceived organizational fairness and psychological safety significantly influence how stressful the process of innovatively behaving is for employees. Several Case B participants' accounts of not wanting to propose new concepts because of the possibility of being blamed for innovation failures echo this fairness/safety limiting mechanism, as it can be seen that Case B's culture of innovation not only has structural requirements for approving new ideas but also produces a psychological experience for employees who try to innovate.

In terms of organizational climate, the structural flexibility and hierarchy theme was congruent with Imran et al. (2010) findings that autonomy dimensions of organizational climate predicted innovative work behavior within Pakistani organizations specifically, Case A was relatively more flexible, team-based structure compared to Case B where employees had less autonomy to make decisions at the process level. Cultural artefacts of communication and idea sharing revealed a similar but analytically different pattern: Case B had a formal suggestion channel as part of the artefacts, but participants' reports showed that this was not being used or acted upon in practice, meaning that there was a gap between the actual lived experience of the culture and the artefacts that were espoused. This is similar to another finding in the data, where espoused artefacts did not match with the lived experience of the culture, as reported by participants, which was in line with the distinction made by Hogan & Coote (2014) between espoused cultural artefacts and operative ones.

The internally differentiated pattern found in case C—for the digital and product development units functioning as comparative pockets of innovation supportive culture within a compliance-driven institutional culture—was one of the most unexpected findings of the reviewed literature, which tends to focus on organizational culture in terms of the whole organisation. The finding implies that the connection between organizational culture and innovation behavior may be better understood in the context of organizational units rather than organization level, a subtlety that has implications for both research and organizational practice in the diagnosis and development of innovation-supportive culture in large, complex organizations.



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The patterns in recognition and reward practices also mirrored the patterns in leadership and risk-tolerance, and supported these findings: The program of formal recognition combined with the regular and informal recognition in Case A seems to have reinforced the levels of psychological safety found in the leadership and risk tolerance practices, and a lack of recognition combined with the hierarchical risk-taking environment found in Case B seems to have reinforced the adverse effects of the hierarchical style and blame-oriented approach to failure. This finding aligns with Du and Wang (2022), who reported that innovative behavior is an outcome of human resource practices and that these practices are not standalone enough to influence innovative behavior, but serve as reinforcement of the employees' overall psychological bond to their organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study examined the influence of organizational culture on employees' innovation behavior in a qualitative multiple case study approach involving three organizations from varied industries including Information Technology (IT), Manufacturing and Banking and Financial Services (BFS). The overarching themes that emerged from within-case thematic analysis were leadership support for innovation, structural flexibility and hierarchy, communication and idea-sharing channels, tolerance for risk and failure, and recognition and reward practices, with information technology showing greater leadership concerning innovation, relative to the other two firms, and the manufacturing firm showing more hierarchy, relative to the other two firms, and the banking firm showing some elements of both. Cross-case analysis suggested that the elements of leadership, flat structure, and explicit failure tolerance most influenced employee innovation behavior were more pronounced in the information technology firm than in the other two firms, while the elements of hierarchy, and relative to the other two firms, and the banking firm with some elements of both, were most influential in the manufacturing firm. Recognition and reward practices and communication and idea-sharing channels were found to be more evenly distributed between the three firms. The findings extend the organizational culture-innovation literature by giving insights into how the innovation behavior and organizational culture are connected in specific units of the organization and not necessarily the entire organization, especially in larger and structurally differentiated organizations, based on encompassing the lived experiences of employees, team leaders and managers from contrasting organizational contexts in Pakistan.

The results have several implications for managers and leaders interested in creating an innovation-enabling culture in Pakistani companies. Leadership development efforts concentrating on explicitly responding well to the ideas employees generate and on reinterpreting failures as learning opportunities, rather than as occasions for personal blame seem to be the most consistently distinguishing cultural levers for determining whether employees are willing to act innovatively; for this reason, organizations, especially those with more hierarchical traditions like Case B, might focus on developing leadership that is particularly oriented towards responding to employee-generated ideas and reframing failures as learning opportunities, not as occasions for personal blame. They should also undertake a process of auditing the gap between formally designed communication and idea sharing channels with employees' actual experience of those channels, as Case B demonstrates the suggestion channel was available, but not used, even though Case B's employees are using it. In larger, more structured organizations (like Case C), the leaders should be aware that they can foster and safeguard innovation supporting subcultures within certain units, even when they can only



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build a uniformly innovation supporting culture on the organizational level if they are able to circumvent constraints, such as regulatory compliance requirements.

There are some limitations in this study which qualify the conclusions and indicate directions for further studies. The findings are analytic (not statistical) generalizable because the study is qualitative but multiple cases (three organizations, 24 participants), future researchers may investigate whether the cultural mechanisms and cross-case patterns found in this study apply to a larger and more diverse group of Pakistani organizations, such as different sectors beyond information technology, manufacturing, and banking, and of different sizes. The cross-sectional design also means that it is not possible to explore the evolution of organizational culture and innovation behavior over time within an individual organization; follow-up qualitative research with fewer numbers of organizations over a longer period of time might provide insight into this relationship, especially as firms like Case C's banking institution face continued pressure from compliance and innovation. Finally, there is a risk of selection bias with regard to the participants drawn on the basis of organizational contacts; future studies could improve the sampling procedure, such as by increasing the sample size in each case organization via random or external sampling, to further reduce this risk.

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