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# INNOVATIVE CORPORATE CULTURE AND WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY

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***Abstract***

*The objective of the study was to critically examine the relationship between innovative culture and organizational productivity. Organizations are faced with the problem of low productivity. This could be caused by organizational cultures that are not creative, not competitive, strict adherence to power authorities, and lack of team spirit. The study concluded that adhocracy culture, market culture, hierarchy culture, clan culture have positive relationships with organizational productivity. The study recommended that organizations should be innovative, adaptable and dynamic in values, behaviour, and ways of doing things. Hence adhocracy culture, market culture, hierarchy culture, clan culture would enhance organizational effectiveness and sustainable competitive advantage.*

**Introduction**

Firms currently must operate in an environment characterized by ever increasing global competition, changing customer demands, rapid technical changes, and uncertainty (Droge, Calantone, & Harmanciogiu, 2008
Im, Montoya, & Workman, 2012). Within this context, innovation is considered critical for achieving sustainable competitive advantages and therefore for firm success (Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001). That is mostly due to the fact that innovative firms are more flexible and can respond to change more quickly; they go the extra mile when it comes to creating new opportunities and exploiting existing ones (Drucker, 1985). Empirical, research provides support for a positive relation between firm innovation culture and productivity (Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001).Organizational culture has been attracting more attention in the last few decades due to its potential role in improving the organization's future prospects from the managerial perspective (Fisher & Wilmoth, 2018; Hutchison et al., 2019).

Watson (2006) stated that culture was originally derived from a metaphor of the organization as "something cultivated.” However, culture is more conventionally seen as a set of values, attitudes and behaviors that are shared, by a group of people and communicated between generations (Matsumoto, 1996). Similarly, recent studies on organizational culture have focused more on intangible qualities such as values, behaviors and attitudes which help in the decision-making and development processes. Some researchers stress on the point that organizational culture is the climate and practices that support the development cycle within organizations by dealing with people (Schein, 2004).Researchers stated also that there are two scenarios regarding culture variations within any given organization. First, a single uniform or homogeneous culture can exist across an entire organization (Wood et al., 2016). Second, organizations, especially larger and diverse ones, can have multiple cultures or subcultures. Therefore, cultural variations in such organizations are likely to occur across multiple departments. So the management can either focus on the entire organizational culture or can assess different subcultures to determine where commonalities exist (Cameron & Quinii, 2011; Wood et al., 2016).Many published studies have also provided evidence of the significant relation between organizational culture and innovation (Chang & Lee, 2007; Tellis et al, 2009). Moreover, Tellis et al. (2009) evaluated the effects of corporate culture on radical innovation by using survey and archival data from 759 firms across 17 countries. The authors found that corporate culture is the strongest driver of radical innovation across nations and firms.

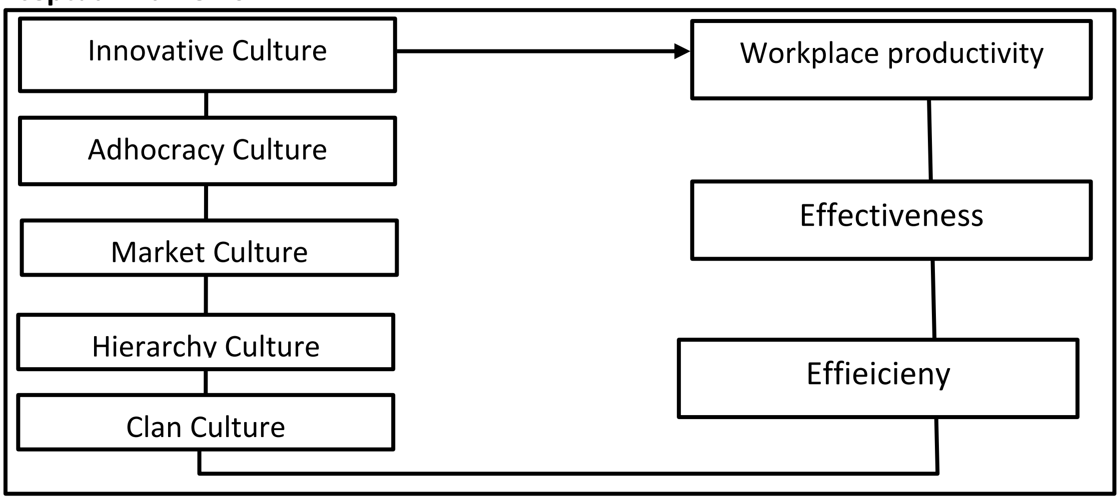
Similarly, Jaskyte and Kisieliene (2006) and Schein (2004) stated that the effect of organizational culture on innovation depends on the contents of the culture. It is necessary, therefore, to improve the innovative culture in any given firm so that its members can search for new products, services or processes (Skerlavaj, Song, & Lee, 2010). Thus, innovation, as a process in any organization, requires a cultural climate and an innovative behavior that enhances creativity (Buschgens, Bausch. & Ballon, 2013; Tellis et al, 2009).According to the literature review on the effects of culture on innovation, researchers defined four culture characteristics that have the potential to enhance innovation: creativity, freedom, teamwork and. risk taking (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; McLean, 2005). It is also reported in the literature that some organizations try to extend cultural characteristics that enhance innovation based on their existing culture and field of work such as availability of resources, customer orientation, employee participation, cooperation, continuous learning orientation and flexibility (Jamrog et al., 2006; McLean, 2005).

Hartnell, Ou, and Kinicki (2011) tried, to assess the relationship between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness (but not specifically innovation). Although their results provided abroad-base support to the assertion that culture types affect organizational effectiveness, they did not sufficiently document the mechanism of how organizational culture can support aspired innovation (as was also postulated by Hogan & Coote, 2014).Innovative and fast response to changes in the external environment is very important of any organization nowadays in order to avoid the risk of extinction. Innovation, defined as departure from existing knowledge, principles, products and/or practices to newly create or significantly improved ones, can keep the organization ahead of its competitors. Innovation also involves new ways of thinking on technological advances, marketing strategies and/or consumer behavior. Innovation can be generated internally from within organizations or adopted from external sources and can be radical or incremental. Radical innovation is harder to implement and involves, in general, greater risk because of the uncertainty but might be more suitable for long-term growth. On the other side, incremental innovation is easier to implement and suitable for making gradual improvements (Giramopoulou, Barlatier, & Penin, 2019, Rodriguez-Prado, 2018). Hence the study seeks to fill a gap in literature on innovative culture and organizational productivity.

**Statement of the Problem**

Organizations are faced with problem of low productivity as result of lack of innovational values and ways of doing things. This could be attributed to organization's inability to take risk and be visionary. Organizations are faced with adhering to old culture types. Hence they are not involved on innovative culture types such as adhocracy culture, market culture, hierarchy culture and clan culture that may bring about organizational effectiveness. Therefore, the study is intended to find out if innovative culture can influence organizational productivity.

**Conceptual Framework**




**Source:** Adopted from Cameron and Quinn (1999)

Conceptual framework showing innovative culture with its dimensions as adhocracy culture, market culture, hierarchy culture, clan culture and the relationships with organizational productivity.

**Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between innovative culture and organizational productivity.

1. To ascertain the relationship between adhocracy culture and organizational productivity.
2. To ascertain the relationship between market culture and organizational productivity.
3. To ascertain the relationship between hierarchy culture and organizational productivity.
4. To ascertain the relationship between clan culture and organizational productivity.

**Theoretical Framework**

The Competing Value Framework (CVF) model is a well-known model used to determine existing culture types in any organization (Hutchison *et al*. 2019). Ouinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) initially developed this model based on four dimensions: human relations, open systems, rational goals and internal process. Since then, some empirical studies used CVF to identify culture types of organizations (Stock, McFadden, & Gowen, 2007). This model is used to check competing demands that determine cultures in organizations based on two dimensions: focus (internal or external environments) and organizational structure (emphasis on stability or flexibility) (Bradley & Parker, 2001). Cameron and Quinn (1999) later made some changes to the model by modifying culture types to adhocracy culture (AC) (creativity), market culture (MC) (competitive vision), hierarchy culture (HC) (controlled decision-making mechanism) and clan culture (CC) (collaboration vision). The same authors also developed an evaluation instrument called Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) to assess existing culture types in any organization.

## Literature Review

### Innovation

Innovation has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. OECD (2005) defines innovation as "the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external Relations".

Innovations may be classified using different criteria. OECD (2005) distinguishes between, four types of innovations: Product innovations involve significant changes in the capabilities of goods or services, both entirely new goods and services and significant improvements to existing products are included. Process innovations represent significant changes in production and delivery methods. Organizational innovations refer to the implementation of new organizational methods; these can be changes in business practices, in workplace organization or in the firm's external relations. Marketing innovations involve the implementation of new marketing methods; these can include changes in product design and packaging, in product promotion and placement, and in methods for pricing goods and services.

In general, the literature on the topic considers innovation one of the key drivers for long-term corporate success, especially in dynamic markets (Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001). The rationale behind the idea is that innovation often serves to deal with a turbulent external environment. To survive in Schumpeterian environments, organizations must be able to cope with increasing complexity and high-speed change. In such contexts, companies with the capability to innovate will be able to respond to the challenges faster, manufacture improved new products, and exploit market opportunities better than non-innovative companies (Jimenez-Jimenez, Sanz-Valle and Rodriguez-Espallardo, 2008).

Given the importance of innovation in firm success, a number of studies have attempted to identify its main determinants (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). In general, they can be grouped into individual level, organizational level, and environmental level. Within organizational level, the literature refers to size, organizational design, strategy, leadership, human resource practices, financial support, and organizational culture. Out of them all, the ones that stand out most are organizational design and organizational culture (Damanpour, 1987, 1991; Mumfor, 2000).

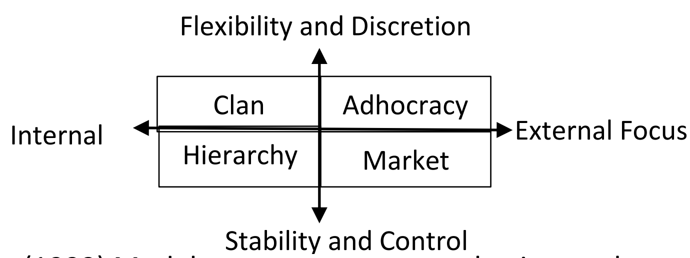
### Innovative Corporate Culture

Organizational culture can be defined as the values, beliefs and hidden assumptions that the members of an organization have in common (Miron, Erez, & Naveh, 2004). Such shared values form the basis of communication and mutual understanding and affect employee behavior through its two main functions: internal integration and coordination (Hofstede, 1988; Martins & Terblanche, 2003). Thus, culture can stimulate innovative behavior among the members of an organization because it can lead them to accept innovation as a basic value of the organization and foster commitment to it (Hartmann, 2006).

Empirical research has also provided evidence of a significant relation between culture and innovation (Buschgens et al., 2013; Chang & Lee, 2007; Lau & Ngo, 2004; Lin et al., 2013; Miron et al., 2004; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2012). What the literature on the topic has not clarified enough is what types of culture enhance or inhibit innovation.

In order to identify the characteristics of an innovative culture, the model proposed by Cameron and Quinn (1999) was used, the Competing Values Framework (CVF), this model is one of the most influential and extensively used models in the area of organizational culture research (Yu, 2009).

Cameron and Quinn (1999) define four cultures - adhocracy, clan, market and hierarchy - using two dimensions (see Fig. 1): flexibility and discretion versus stability and control and external focus versus internal focus and integration. Using these along with six organizational aspects- dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, employee management, the organizational glue, strategic focuses, and criteria for success - they determine four types of organizational cultures.




Cameron and Quinn (1999) Model

The adhocracy culture emphasizes flexibility and change; it is externally orientated. It is usually seen in companies that operate in dynamic contexts and in those seeking to be leaders in their markets. The key values in an adhocracy culture are creativity, entrepreneurship, and risk taking. The clan culture also stresses flexibility but it is internally focused. Characteristics of clan culture firms are teamwork, employee involvement, and corporate commitment to employees. A market culture preaches control and stability and is externally oriented. The core values of firms with this culture are goal achievement, consistency, and competitiveness. Finally, a hierarchy culture is also control-oriented but it focuses on the internal organization. Its key values are efficiency and close adherence to norms, rules and regulations (Sanz-Valle and Perez-Cabaliero, 2011).

Having defined the types of models suggested by Cameron and Quinn (1999), their relationship with innovation is now examined. There is general consensus regarding four characteristics or cultural values that enhance innovation: creativity, freedom/ autonomy, a risk-taking attitude, and teamwork (Naranjo-Valencia, 2010).

Regarding creativity, innovation relies on the appearance of new and creative ideas (Mumford, 2000) and innovation is achieved by combining creativity and the implementation of such ideas. Therefore, an enterprise needs creative people to support the processes, not only those associated with developing ideas, but also those involving the selection, assessment, and execution of the ideas (Jamrog, Vickers, & Bear, 2006; McLean, 2005). Hence, an innovative culture should, on one hand,

Freedom, which manifests itself as autonomy, empowerment, and participation in decision-making (Isaksen & Ekvall, 2010; Martin, 2002) is one of the most common elements associated with an innovative culture. An atmosphere of freedom and autonomy increases the employees* intrinsic motivation, considered a key factor in promoting creativity in an organization (Amabile, 1998; McLean, 2005).

As for risk taking, companies have realized that successful innovation is not achieved on the first try (Claver, Llopis, Garcia, & Molina, 1998). If the firm perceives that risk taking is dangerous and may not produce good results, the personnel will not risk any creativity, innovation or experimentation (Filipescu, 2007).

A comparison of the above-mentioned characteristics to the types of culture developed by Cameron and Quinn (1999) leads to the conclusion that, flexibility-oriented cultures enhance innovation because flexibility is associated with creativity, freedom, and a risk-taking attitude, whereas cultures that stress stability and control may inhibit innovation. Empirical research provides evidence to justify that relation (Jaskyte & Dressier, 2005; Jaskyte & Kisieliene, 2006). Moreover, externally oriented cultures can be expected to foster innovation more than internally oriented cultures. Whereas customer orientation aids the initiation stage by directing product developers toward external users, seeking their input to hone encourage employees to take time to think creatively and experiment (Shattow, 1996), and, on the other, encourage them to seek new ways to tackle problems and explore their ideas even if the value of the results may not be clear (Miron et al., 2004). new product ideas (Im, Nakata, Park, & Ha, 2003), if a company stays locked inside its own four walls, It is not able to discover and exploit opportunities outside its existing businesses or beyond its current technical or operational capabilities (Wolpert, 2002).

Then, the type of culture of the CVF expected to most foster innovation is an adhocracy culture as it emphasizes flexibility and is externally orientated. On the contrary, a hierarchy culture inhibits innovation because the values that it emphasizes hinder it: control and stability and an internal orientation. Besides the key innovation values (i.e. creativity, freedom, and a risk-taking attitude) are missing.

In relation to the other two types of culture model (the market and the clan), it is necessary to deepen their characteristics to clarify the relationship. Taking into account the characteristics of a clan culture, it may foster innovation as it emphasizes teamwork and employee participation. If the work team has a diversity of talented interdisciplinary members who come up with challenging ideas and incorporating new experiences and information it will promote creativity and innovation (Castafieda, 2015; Jamrog et al., 2006; Martins & Terblanche, 2003; McLean, 2005). However, the evidence provided in empirical studies regarding this topic is non-conclusive. Whereas Llorens, Ruiz, and Garcia (2005) find that cohesion of teams fosters innovation and Moore (1997) proves that it encourages creativity, other studies present evidence to the contrary. For example, Scott and Bruce (1994) find no particular effect on innovative behavior when team members are changed. Finally, Jaskyte and Kisieliene (2006) observed that an organizational culture characterized by stability and guidance for the team is inversely related to innovation. In addition, a clan culture is internally focused, which may reduce the firm's access to new ideas and opportunities. Wolpert (2002) states that if a firm is stuck within their own four walls, it will be unable to discover and take advantage of opportunities.

In the case of market culture, there are several facts in favor of and against it. The external orientation of a market culture encourages innovation as offering new ideas and markets the company familiar with the needs of customers (Reid & Brentani, 2004; Salavou, Baltas, & Lioukas, 2004; Song, Thieme, & Xie, 1998). In contrast, other studies find that excessive attention to the current needs of customers can be a barrier against some types of innovation (Baker & Sinkula, 2002), however, in general, the literature on the subject believes that the external orientation encourages innovation. Additionally, the market culture - according to its definition in the model of Cameron and Quinn, emphasizes control and stability rather than flexibility, which is a constraint to innovation.

According to the resource-based view of the firm, culture can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage not only because it is valuable and rare but also because it is difficult for competitors to imitate as many of its most important characteristics are tacit and highly complex (Coyne, 1986).

**Organizational Culture and Sustained Competitive Advantage**

As mentioned previously, the interest in organizational culture can be explained by the assumption that certain organizational cultures lead to an increase in corporate financial productivity. This assumption is founded on the perceived role of culture in generating competitive advantage (Scholz, 1987). According to Krefting and Frost (1985) organizational culture may create competitive advantage if the boundaries of the organization are designed in a manner which facilitates individual interactions and if the scope of information processes is limited to appropriate levels. Theorists also argue that the values that are widely shared and strongly held enable managers to predict employee reactions to certain strategic options and in this way minimizing the scope for undesired consequences (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000)

In 1986, Barney specified three conditions that have to be met in order for a company's culture to achieve sustained competitive advantage. First, the culture has to be valuable, which means that it must allow the company to behave in a manner that will lead to higher profits, lower costs and other results that improve the financial productivity of the firm. Second, the culture has to be rare, which means that it must have distinctive characteristics that differentiate the firm from the cultures of a large number of other firms from the same industry. Third, a culture must be imperfectly imitable, which means that even if potential imitators can understand valuable and rare organizational cultures, it still may not be possible to imitate those cultures.

One of the earliest quantitative studies on the culture-productivity link was conducted by Denison (1984) who used data from 34 American firms over a five year period. The author examined characteristics of organizational culture in these firms and tracked their productivity over time. To measure productivity the author used data on returns on investment and sales. For organizational productivity responses on a one time survey regarding the perceptions of work organization and participation in decision making were gathered. Although, the author found that organizational culture is correlated with financial productivity, some of his measurement indicators differ in the strength of the relationship between culture and productivity. Decision making and work design were associated with long term, financial productivity while supervisory leadership was associated with short term financial productivity. Even though it has encouraging results, this study is not without limitations. The most important criticisms refer to the use of employee perceptions which suggest that the study had obtained a measure of organizational climate rather than a measure of organizational culture (Lim, 1995).

Rousseau (1990) tried in his study to overcome some of the limitations in measuring organizational culture. He gathered data from 32 voluntary service organizations using as a productivity measure the amount of money raised .from a recently completed found-raising campaign and the Organizational Culture inventory, promoted by Cooke and Lafferty (1983) to measure organizational culture. The results of this study showed no significant positive correlations between productivity and Culture.

One of the most extensive studies on the culture-productivity link was conducted by Kotter and Heskett (1992). They used data gathered from 207 firms over a five year period. In this study they used various Measures of culture and long term economic productivity data. Their initial objective was to examine the relationship between *strong* cultures and long term productivity. Even though they' found only a minor correlation between strong culture and long term productivity, subsequent investigations showed that firms with cultures suited to their market environment have better productivity than those that are less fitted to their ; environment.

Marcoulides and Heck (1993); analyzed the relationship between organizational culture and productivity using data collected from 26 organizations. The authors proposed a model in which organizational culture was measured using several latent variables (organizational structure, organizational values, task organization, climate, and individual values and beliefs) and organizational productivity was measured using capital, market and financial indicators. The results of this study showed that all of the latent variables used to measure organizational culture had some effect on productivity with workers attitudes and task organization .activities being the most significant variables.

More recently, Ogbonna and Harris analyzed the relationship between organizational culture and productivity by including the leadership style as a third variable in the model. They used a sample of 1000 units from the Financial Analysis Made easy database of registered British companies. To measure productivity they used variables such as: customer satisfaction, sales growth, market share, competitive advantage and sales volume. For organizational culture they used measures such as: competitive culture, innovative culture, bureaucratic culture and community culture. The results showed that all four measures of organizational cultured were associated in some way with corporate productivity. More specifically, innovative and competitive cultures had a direct effect on productivity and accounted for approximately 25 percent of the variance in organizational productivity. Both competitive and innovative cultures were 325 externally oriented in line with the assumption that organizational culture must be adaptable to external environment for a sustained competitive advantage. The bureaucratic and community cultures, which were internally oriented, were not directly related to productivity.

This study was extended in 2002 when the authors analyzed the link between market orientation, organizational culture, strategic human resource management and organizational productivity. The authors used the same measures as in the previous study for organizational culture and productivity. As in the previous study, competitive and innovative cultures were found to have a significant effect on productivity while community and bureaucratic cultures were not related to productivity.

**Empirical Review**

Gordon and DiTomaso (1992) studied the effect of the cultural orientations adaptability vs. stability on financial productivity in a number of U.S. firms. They concluded that companies that emphasize adaptability tend to have better financial productivity than companies that emphasize stability.

On the contrary, Xenikou and Simosi (2006) studied a sample of Greek organizations and they concluded that the achievement orientation (market culture) was related to productivity whereas the humanistic orientation (clan culture) was not, and indicated that the organizational norms that promote goal setting, productivity, and effectiveness were related to high productivity.

The study conducted in Japanese companies (Tokyo) by Deshpande, Farley, and Webster (1993) showed that the market culture is associated with better productivity, followed by the adhocracy culture, and that the clan culture and the hierarchy culture are associated with poor productivity.

Other studies used other typologies such as the cultural trait typology that can be compared to Cameron and Quinn's. Said typology, developed and tested by Denison and Mishra (1995), mention the traits involvement, adaptability, mission, and consistency (they share the same cultural-type orientation introduced by Cameron and Quinn), which correspond to the cultural types: clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy, described above.

Child (1980) clearly remarked, although organizational principles of structure and technology are tending to become similar across cultures and nations, culture continues to influence peoples' behavior in the work setting despite the convergence of organizational structure and technology, leadership and managerial behavior remain culture specific and highly resistant to change.

Denison and Mishra (1995) conducted a study in the U.S., concluding that the four traits are positively related to subjective measures (quality, employee satisfaction, and overall productivity). Fey and Denison (2003) conducted a study using Russian firms and compared its results to those obtained in similar studies in the U.S. In general, they concluded that the adaptability and involvement (adhocracy and clan) of companies with a flexible orientation are the most relevant traits of effectiveness in the Russian context whereas in the U.S. context, mission (market culture) is important. Likewise, Chan, Shaffer, and Snape (2004) concluded based on a study in Hong Kong that adaptability (adhocracy) were the trait more related to productivity.

There is also evidence that the clan culture and, in general, all cultures that enhance cooperation and teamwork have a positive effect on productivity (Petty, 1995). Equally, a high level of involvement fosters a strong sense of psychological ownership and commitment to the organization and its goals (Denison & Mishra, 1995).

Although Deshpande et al. (1993) found a negative effect and Xenikou and Simosi (2006) did not obtain any significant results for the relation between this culture, which they called humanistic orientation, and productivity, other studies provide evidence of a positive relation (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Fey & Denison, 2003; Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992).

Abdel Razek and Alsanad (2014) emphasized the importance of identifying and assessing factors that have the potential to affect innovation, like (culture, and determining their inter-relationship.

Culture may be regarded as an invisible filter of values and norms which acts as an intervening variable between the environment and human behavior. Culture involves processes of nurturing through social stimuli, a set of forming the basis for the behavior of individuals (Gatley et al, in Carmazzi, 2005).

## Conclusion

The study concluded that:

Adhocracy culture could enhance organizational productivity

Market culture could enhance organizational productivity

Clan culture could enhance organizational productivity

Hierarchy culture could enhance organizational productivity

## Recommendations

The study recommended the following:

1) Management should imbibe the culture of creativity and risk taking and atmosphere of freedom and autonomy, since adhocracy culture will increase the employees' intrinsic motivation which will lead to organizational productivity.
2) Management should inculcate the spirit of innovation and ideas to employees to win the market; hence market culture preaches control and stability in order to gain sustainable market advantage.
3) Management should encourage clan culture to the employees which stresses flexibility and internal

focused, and enhances team work, employee involvement, and cooperate commitment for goal achievement.

4) Management should maintain hierarchy culture which is control – oriented and focuses on internal organization, hence its key values are efficiency and close adherence to norms, rules and regulations for improved organizational productivity.

## Contribution to knowledge

The study contributed to knowledge by discovering that innovative corporate culture such as adhocracy culture, market culture, clan culture and hierarchy culture can positively influence organizational productivity.

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