

Organizational Culture and Innovations

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The article is based on the experience of designing and delivering special courses at the University and enterprises implementing active learning programs.

The dynamic capabilities to innovate and change are deeply rooted in an organization's ability to be ambidextrous, i.e. both to incrementally build on its traditions and past (cultural experience) and to learn and be able to drive innovation streams. The article deals with theoretical investigations and case studies of business and educational organizations. The researches conducted by foreign and Lithuanian investigators reveal a number of similar dimensions related to the role of organizational culture in managing strategic innovations and changes. Researchers stress deeply-rooted, strong organizational culture as a factor contributing to sustained innovation associated with the norms and values that support the generation and implementation of creative ideas.

The article is aimed at overweighing some conflicting and contradictory evaluations of culture influence on organizational development (e.g., strong cultures induce uniformity and limit individual creativity). A lot of investigations manifest that strong cultures foster better strategic creativity management.

Focusing on economic and educational developments as the level of this comparative analysis, the discussion is started with a brief explanation of integrating notions of organization change and culture based on the norms that foster creativity, innovation, implementation and successful development in the competitive and complex, if not supercomplex, world. Moreover, an attempt is made to overweigh some conflicting and contradicting considerations about culture as an agent inducing uniformity and limiting individual creativity. However, a lot of researches prove the fact that strong cultures with innovation-enhancing values and norms foster better strategic management in terms of producing and implementing relevant and the most advanced ideas.

Keywords: *organizational culture, creativity, innovation, ambidextrous organization, strategic management, innovation-enhancing values and norms.*

Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century is the time of great expectations and premonitions. Rapid developments that take place immediately bring to mind global changes, innovations, brave ideas and technology, especially as it delivers information through the World Wide Web (WWW). These occurrences enable to largely mitigate the problems of the past and adapt to changing and in-

creasingly competitive environment as well as offer efficient alternatives for further improving the quality of educational, economic, political and other spheres of life.

Researchers agree that creativity, innovations and their implementation are vital for a significant organization change (H. S. Barnett, 1973; P. Drucker, 1993; E. M. Rogers, 1995; T. M. Amabile, 1996; M. Fullan, 1999; B. Vijeikienė and J. Vijeikis, 2000; K. Gečas and A. Jakubauskas, 2001; B. Janiūnaitė, 2002; V. Snieška and J. Vasauskaitė, 2005; and others). The dynamic capabilities to innovate and change are rooted in an organization's ability to be ambidextrous, i.e. to be able to simultaneously explore and exploit as well as increase variance at the same time (M. L. Tushman and W. K. Smith, 2004).

Focusing on economic and educational developments as the level of this comparative analysis, the discussion is started with a brief explanation of integrating notions of organization change and culture based on the norms that foster creativity, innovation, implementation and successful development in the competitive and complex, if not supercomplex, world. Moreover, an attempt is made to overweigh some conflicting and contradicting considerations about culture as an agent inducing uniformity and limiting individual creativity. However, a lot of researches prove the fact that strong cultures with innovation-enhancing values and norms foster better strategic management in terms of producing and implementing relevant and the most advanced ideas. Similar conclusions have been drawn from the study and participation in the design and realization of organizational learning programs (e.g., international business negotiation course for small and medium business enterprises, municipality offices) as well as the in-depth investigations of academic culture (A. Poškienė, 1998; P. Jucevičienė, A. Poškienė, L. Kudirkaitė, N. Damanskas, 2000; A. Poškienė, 2004).

The **object** of the article is an integrated approach to enterprise and academic culture and its impact on organizational creativity and innovation.

The **aim** of the article is to reveal similarities between enterprise and academic culture; to highlight their influences on an organization's development; to overweigh some conflicting and contradictory evaluations of culture influences in an organizational change; to show that strong cultures foster better strategic management in introducing innovations.

The **tasks** addressed and the **methods** used for achieving research aims are as follows:

- Analyze the scope of current conceptual development in culture and its influence applying the

method of problematic analysis of scientific literature, practical interviewing method, comparison, generalization, exemplifying.

- Substantiate and formulate some statements about the similarities of enterprise and academic cultures and their workings.

Creativity and innovation – a lifeline of organization development

Innovation has become an absolute necessity to perform well under the present conditions of rapid developments. Paraphrasing the words by Gary Hamel, a well-known writer and management consultant, it could be said that organizations can rely on their culture but not on past success to function better than they are doing today. Furthermore, current achievements are not to carry organizations into the complex, competitive future, they must continuously innovate, i.e. their strategy should include *continuous innovation* or a *steady stream of innovations* (A. M. Hitt, R. D. Ireland and R. E. Hoskisson, 2005). The winners will be the innovators with bold thinking and strategic management abilities, oriented to change.

It has already been mentioned that the innovation issue has been and is widely studied, however, it is expedient to remind some most recent definitions of this most significant occurrence of the 21st century landscape.

Innovation is an idea, practice or object that is perceived to be new by a person or adopting entity (E. M. Rogers, 1995).

Innovation is everything new on the level of a system of education, the school as an organization, and a pedagogical system (D. Hopkins, M. Aiscow, M. West, 1998).

Perpetual innovation is a term used to describe how rapidly and consistently new information – intensive technologies replace older ones (M. A. Hitt, R. D. Ireland and R. S. Hoskisson, 2005).

Mention should be made about T. S. Robertson's study (1971) based on other scientists' seminal research in the field of different innovations. These kinds of inno-

vations are very distinct while following the development of the use of technologies in educational terrain:

- *discontinuous innovation* (supplanting transparencies with Power Point as the medium of visual communication);
- *dynamically continuous innovation* (changing from a traditional chalkboard to transparencies);
- *continuous innovation* (using coloured chalk to supplement white chalk).

Although *creativity* is not a sufficient condition for innovation, the term innovation refers to the successful implementation of creative ideas. Basing on other researchers' investigations, F. J. Flynn and J. A. Chatman (2004) define innovations as the combination of two processes: (1) creativity, or the generation of new ideas; and (2) implementation, or the actual introduction of the change. Thus, it might be said that creativity and implementation are somehow distinct occurrences, or sequential stages in the innovation process. According to F. J. Flynn and J. A. Chatman, these two phases may overlap substantially.

Enhancing the creative efforts of an organization, its every unit, or even each person is a matter of the utmost importance in promoting innovation. Creative ideas and actions lead to novel, useful and advanced procedures, products, services. The creator and the innovator may be different persons for the creator may lack the desire or means to innovate (A. J. Dubrin, 1984).

Thus, creativity is the ability to process information in such a way that the result is original and meaningful; it is the combined influence and effort of people with creative potential working in an environment that encourages creativity (ibid).

Having analysed the meanings of creativity and innovation, it is expedient to mention five *major attributes of innovation* that influence the rate of their adoption. Table 1 presents a generalized version of the antecedents that tend to be the most consistent and strongest predictors of innovation adoption rate (E. M. Rogers, 1995).

Table 1

Attributes of innovation influencing the rate of their adoption

Attribute	Specification	Target
1. <i>Relative advantage</i>	A degree to which an innovation is perceived to be better than the preceding one.	To provide a beneficial advantage.
2. <i>Complexity</i>	The extent to which an innovation is difficult to understand or use	To choose or educate potential adopters who would possess adequate knowledge, skill and experience
3. <i>Compatibility</i>	A degree to which an innovation is consistent with existing values, past experience and present needs.	To balance the existing potential and foresee how the adoption of innovation could be facilitated.
4. <i>Visibility</i>	A degree to which operations and results of innovation are observable, visible or readily communicated to others.	To gain rapid awareness and recognition among the targeted group, and even ultimate acceptance. The visibility of the innovation makes the rate of adoption higher.
5. <i>Trial and error method</i>	A degree to which an innovation can be tried on a limited scale.	To put the innovation on a trial basis with minimal investment of time, money, or effort.

All these complex processes dealing with organizational creativity and innovation implementation require a firm and well-established foundation – organizational culture. Culture is the social energy that drives, or fails to drive, the organizational change (M. A. Hitt, R. D. Ireland, R. E. Hoskisson, 2005).

Culture strength and culture content

An organization is a certain group of people who have come into special responsibilities taking assigned duties and obligations. The researchers of organizational behaviour present definitions that differ in their linguistic expressions, however, the main characteristics are almost the same:

“An organization is a social agreement for the controlled performance of collective goals” (A. Stuczynski and D. Buchman, 1991).

“An organization is a structured social system consisting of groups and individuals working together to meet some agreed-on objectives” (J. Greenberg and R. A. Baron, 1995).

These definitions show that people and relationships within organizations as well as their objectives are the main aspects in these systems. J. Martin (1992) singles out three forms of organizational culture: *a) integration; b) differentiation; c) fragmentation*. Integration is the general meaning of culture in an organization. Differentiation means that there exist subgroups within any given organization that differ in their shared meanings from one another. Fragmentation suggests that culture is some kind of a network of different meanings, sometimes even inconsistent.

According to P. Jucevičienė (1996), organizational culture is the system of essential values followed by the organization and acknowledged by the majority of its members, the system having influence on their behaviour and being supported by the organization history, myths as well as manifesting itself through traditions, ceremonies, rituals and symbols. Thus, organizational culture refers to the complex set of ideologies, traditions, commitments, and values that are shared throughout the organization and that influence how the organization conducts its whole performance becoming a potential source of innovation, advance and advantage.

Culture shapes the arrangement of an organization at the very beginning of its evolvement as well as in its further growth and development. The problem of *fitting between individual values and the organization's values* becomes very important. Values provide principles applied in organizational, situations, changes, and challenges. C. L. Cooper and S. E. Jackson (1997) consider values to be the key to motivation, and therefore it is not the values individuals bring to the organization that count, but the values the organization brings to the individual. It is the path of learning to co-exist and to gain experience by mutuality, interdependence, and co-learning (E. Kram and D. T. Hall, 1996). The organization based on democratic managerial principles unites its members to strive for creative decisions, innovations, quality, and excellence.

Although researchers disagree about how to concep-

tualize and measure organizational culture, it can be understood as a *system of shared values* (that define what is important) and norms that define appropriate attitudes and behaviours for organizational members (how to feel and behave).

Thus, cultural values and norms are a powerful means of stimulating creativity and innovation. Successful innovation may depend on organizational cultural norms that groups develop and the extent to which the group's cultural orientation aligns with, and is supported by, the organization's overall orientation (T. M. Amabile, 1996). Keeping to these considerations, researchers of organizational culture single out these concerns: (1) the extent to which members agree and care about values and norms – *culture strength*; and (2) the extent to which these norms and values differ across settings – *culture content*. F. J. Flynn and J. A. Chatman (2004) present an overview of investigations dealing with the diverse influence of strong cultures on innovations and changes. The presence of strong norms can enforce a dominant perspective among group members. Norm strength in a group or organization reflects the extent to which members conform to those norms, but not necessarily the extent to which members behave uniformly. H. C. Triandis (1995) holds that individualistic cultures tend to value the unique contributions made by each member and the pursuit of individual interests above group interests. Other researchers find individualistic and collectivistic groups to be rather similar in terms of norm strength.

The investigations in the field of organizational culture, both academic culture and corporate culture reveal a lot of similarities of these cultures and their influence on the innovation and change of these organizations. Changing environment and close relationship with the business world have stimulated the demand for more *managerialism* in academic culture because, according to Ch. Duke (1995), the importance of organizational culture, tradition, intuition and above all motivation which characterizes universities as social systems may prove increasingly relevant to other knowledge-based industries, and indeed to all forms of business.

Even historically, universities were associations or guilds. Masters and students were divided only in their progress. However, universities remained largely devoid of large-scale organizational characteristics until comparatively recently (R. Barnett, 2000). Contemporary universities have become large organizations with considerable human and material resources, human skill, ingenuity and motivation, i.e. they have become large corporations of students and teachers.

A stream of new words or more accurately of well-known terms carrying new meanings, have entered the educational discourse. Ch. Duke (1995) considers four keywords *enterprise, capability, competence, and partnership* to be change agents, each trying to shift the work and identity of educational institutions. Moreover, these agents reveal and embody the relationship between different cultural settings, such as enterprises and educational institutions, because the boundaries between them have become *porous* and people transfer back and forth between these settings according to the

programs offered by academic or enterprise professionals. Thus, a *corporation of students and teachers* is closely related to manufacturing or service companies and vice versa.

Comparative research of the impact of organizational culture

The strongest link between enterprises and educational institutions is expressed in the aspirations to create *knowledge-based society*. *Transformative learning programs* introduced into medium, small enterprises and municipality offices manifest the provision of the continuum of learning contexts, identifying organization as the place where thinking and vision meet

(A. Poškienė, 2004). Table 2 shows the influence of various variables on organization innovation and change.

The representatives of one bigger company (BC), three medium business enterprises (A; B; C), two small business enterprises (D; E) and university (U) were interviewed with the aim to find out their personal attitude to organizational culture and other factors manifesting organizational development. Interviewees represented different managerial levels (ML) and employees (E). The number of the interviewed persons was not numerous especially in small business enterprises, however, an interview is the means that helps to reveal a lot of psychological aspects.

Table 2

Factors influencing innovation and change in organizations (%)

Organization	F A C T O R S						
	Org. culture	Org. policy	Leadership	Personal efforts	Personal satisfaction	Motivation	Learning possibilities
	ML : E	ML : E	ML : E	ML : E	ML : E	ML : E	ML : E
BC	89 : 45.5	98 : 91	99.5 : 91	83.5 : 81	97 : 71.5	100 : 98.5	95.5 : 91
A	92 : 51.5	99 : 89.5	98.7 : 95.9	79.2 : 55.7	81 : 49.6	92 : 98.1	98.3 : 91.6
B	98.2 : 79	94.5 : 98	91.1 : 92	91 : 80.6	74 : 81.3	98 : 98.9	97 : 92.2
C	99.5 : 88	100 : 91	94 : 96	94 : 90.7	45 : 58	99 : 98.5	98 : 62
D	93 : 63	94 : 93	82 : 95	98 : 31	41 : 21.5	93 : 98.5	96.5 : 58
E	87 : 79	93.5 : 94	89 : 93.7	61 : 14	30.5 : 20.3	94 : 89	63 : 61
U	98.9 : 98	97 : 99.5	90.6 : 98.3	89.7 : 91	93 : 89	91 : 99.5	98.9 : 97.7

This small research has revealed some similarities between enterprises and an academic institution. Namely, the representatives of these organizations have highly rated the impact of the following factors: organizational culture, organizational policy, leadership, motivation, learning possibilities. These are very important, if not crucial, factors in organizational development.

The study of the influence of personal efforts and motives in striving for organization change reveals a wide network of relationships among individuals who regard themselves as belonging to that distinctive system ensuring the distribution of jobs, authority, and positions. Human resources are the key to maintaining strategic flexibility and ability to change. They stimulate organizations to create and to add ideal or material capital and implement the strategies needed to sustain creative ideas and seek innovations.

The relationship between culture and innovation is more complex than the research can reveal. It is characterized by a lot of determinants that are simply too difficult to be expressed, measured or perceived. The impact of culture on creativity and innovation depends on the nature of agreement more than its mere existence (F. J. Flynn and J. A. Chatman, 2004). If the

members of the organization exhibit a high level of agreement about the way creative and innovative ideas should be generated and implemented, their success is ensured. Cultural cohesion derived from normative agreement and value-rich objectives facilitates the development process.

Conclusions

Researchers note that there is no theoretical model that could explain the conditions under which innovations are most likely to occur. However, the study of theoretical and practical considerations as well as some research of culture and innovation relationships can lead to some conclusions:

- Cultural cohesion derived from normative agreement and value-rich objectives can lead to more effective creativity and innovation.
- Effective management of cultural cohesiveness may enhance creativity and innovation as well as fasten their implementation.
- Promotion of horizontal (egalitarian) collectivism during the creativity stage encourages the divergent thinking as a prerequisite of innovation.

- Adherence to the organization's norms and values results in more uniform attitudes to creative ideas and innovations.
- Both enterprises and educational institutions are characterized by similar influences of culture in their development, and culture for them is viewed as an innovation-enhancing means, as a maintenance condition that should be given a sufficient and proper attention.

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Organizacijos kultūra ir inovacijos

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami įmonių kultūros ir akademinės kultūros panašumai ir skirtumai. Ypatingas dėmesys kreipiamas į kultūros įtaką organizacijos vystymosi ir pasikeitimo procese skatinant kūrybiškumą ir įgyvendinant naujoves.

XXI a. pasižymi sparčiu vystymusi, naujovių diegimu ir pažangių technologijų taikymu. Šie pasikeitimai siūlo daug alternatyvų, kurios padeda tobulinti švietimo, ekonomikos, politinio gyvenimo, kultūros sritis. Užsienio ir Lietuvos mokslininkai tiria kūrybiškumo ir naujovių atsiradimo prielaidas bei nurodo jų sąsajas su organizacijų kultūra ir vertybių sistema.

Dinamišką organizacijų gebėjimą atsinaujinti ir keistis lemia jų daugialypė prigimtis ir lankstumas panaudoti visus savo vidinius ir išorinius išteklius. Tai liudija ir lyginamoji pramonės bei švietimo institucijų analizė. Net ir šių organizacijų apibrėžimai skiriasi tik lingvistiniu požiūriu, o jų esmė ta pati. Visos šios organizacijos remiasi panašiomis vertybėmis ir pažangą skatinančiomis normomis. Skiriasi tik galutinis produktas.

Visoms organizacijoms būdingas atsinaujinimas, pažanga, o inovacijų ir kūrybinių siekių srautas yra jų augimo garantas. Mokslininkai inovacijas apibūdina kaip dviejų procesų darinį: a) kūrybiškumas arba naujų idėjų generavimas; b) įgyvendinimas arba faktiškas pasikeitimo įdiegimas. Galima teigti, kad kūrybiškumas ir įgyvendinimas yra nuoseklios naujovių proceso pakopos. Šios pakopos gali labai ryškiai sutapti.

Skatinant kūrybines organizacijos galias, svarbios kiekvieno padalinio ir kiekvieno darbuotojo pastangos. Kiekviena kūrybinė mintis gali virsti labai svarbia organizacijos pasikeitimo prielaida. Aišku, kad kūrėjas ir novatorius gali būti skirtingi žmonės, nes idėjų kūrėjas ne visada turi noro arba galimybių savo mintis paversti naujove. Yra keli inovacijų požymiai, kurie daro įtaką jų įgyvendinimo spartai: santykinė sparta, sudėtingumas, matomumas (aiškumas), išbandymas.

Nagrinėjant šiuos inovacijų įgyvendinimo veiksnus, galima pastebėti, kad jų įtaka labai svarbi. Santykinė sparta arba pažanga parodo, kad planuojama naujovė yra efektyvesnė ir naudingesnė negu ankstesnis produktas, paslauga, metodas. Sudėtingumas yra susijęs su naujovės įgyvendinimo specialistų pasirengimu vykdyti iškeltus uždavinius.

Konkurencingumas įgyvendinant inovacijas verčia siekti tarp turimų žmogiškųjų ir materialinių išteklių bei naujų galimybių pusiausvyros. Aiškumas arba supratimas reikalauja nuodugniai įvertinti naujovių ir pasikeitimų įgyvendinimo grupių galimybes ir numatyti tolimesnius veiksmus (pvz., papildomą specialistų samdymą). Išbandymas turėtų padėti nustatyti minimalias investicijas, laiko ir pastangų sąnaudas, susijusias su naujovių įdiegimu.

Inovacijų įgyvendinimo būtinybė ir sparta šiuolaikiniame vystymosi etape yra lemiantys veiksniai dabartiniame kintančiame pasaulyje, nes jie ne tik palaiko organizacijos išlikimą, bet užtikrina jos spartesnę vystymąsi bei konkurencingumą. Mokslininkai nagrinėja organizacijos kultūros, jos vertybių ir normų sistemos poveikį, pabrėždami kultūros įtaką kūrybiškumo ir inovacijų spartinimui. Stipri vertybių ir normų sistema, atspindi organizacijos narių pasirengimą vieningai siekti užsibrėžtų tikslų, tačiau šis vieningumas nereiškia skirtingų nuomonių netoleravimą.

Įvairias organizacijas (pramonės, švietimo) vienija bendras tikslas stiprinti bendrą organizacijos kultūrą ir siekti, kad organizacija padarytų svarų įnašą į žinių visuomenės kūrimą tapdama besimokančia ir naujovių siekiančia organizacija.

Aišku, kad šie sudėtingi kūrybinės minties vystymosi ir naujovių įdiegimo procesai reikalauja tvirto pagrindo – organizacijos kultūros, jos vertybių ir normų sistemos, kurioje ypatingas vaidmuo tenka toje organizacijoje dirbantiems žmonėms. Nuo jų susitelkimo ir koherentiškų santykių priklauso organizacijos pasikeitimų sėkmė. Tarp organizacijos ir jos darbuotojų vertybių puoselėjimo turi egzistuoti grįžtamasis ryšys, kuris užtikrina visų siekių kokybę, nes organizacijos kultūra yra vertybių bendravimo sistema.

Atliktas tyrimas parodė įmonių ir akademinės kultūros bendrumus ir atskleidė požymių, kai kuriuos dalykus skirtumus. Organizacijos kultūra, jos politika, vadovavimas, motyvacija, teikiamos moky-

mosi galimybės minimos kaip labai svarbūs kūrybiškumo ir naujovių skatinimo veiksniai. Šiame kontekste reikėtų pažymėti, kad skiriame šiuos aspektus: a) kai kurių organizacijos vertybių ir normų skirtumai (kultūros turinys) ir b) laipsnis, kuris apibūdina organizacijos narių vertybių ir normų laikymosi ribas (kultūros tvirtumas).

Organizacijos kultūros, kūrybiškumo bei inovacijų sąsajos ir priklausomybė yra daug sudėtingesnė negu kad gali tyrimai atskleisti. Šią priklausomybę apibūdina daugybė veiksnių, kuriuos kartais sunku nusakyti, o tuo labiau įrodyti. Tai daugybės susitarimų ir žmogiškųjų santykių sistema, besiremianti tradicinėmis ir naujomis vertybėmis, kurios ir skatina kūrybiškumą bei naujovių siekius.

Mokslininkai pažymi, jog nėra teorinio modelio, kuris galėtų paaiškinti sąlygas, sudarančias galimybę inovacijoms atsirasti, tačiau teorinių teiginių ir praktinio patyrimo studijos leidžia daryti kai kurias išvadas: kultūros turinio bendrumas ir jos tvirtumas, paremtas kryptinga vertybių ir normų sistema, sudaro prielaidas kūrybiškumui ir inovacijoms; efektyvus kultūrinio koherentiškumo valdymas skatina kūrybiškumą, naujoves, jų įgyvendinimą, suvienija įvairias nuomones; tiek įmonėms, tiek švietimo institucijoms yra būdinga panaši kultūros įtaka jų augimui ir vystymuisi.

Raktažodžiai: *organizacijos kultūra, kūrybiškumas, inovacijos, daugiaplanė organizacija, strateginis valdymas, inovacijas skatinančios vertybės ir normos.*

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