

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
FIRAT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**



**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL
TIGHTNESS AND INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR IN
ORGANIZATIONS**

Chalank Hawar MOHAMMED

Master Thesis

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

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ELAZIĞ**

PREFACE

Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimleri Enstitüsü tez yazım kurallarına uygun olarak hazırladığım “An Exploratory Study on the Relationship between Cultural Tightness and Innovative Behavior in Organizations” Başlıklı Yüksek Lisans Tezi’min içindeki bütün bilgilerin doğru olduğunu, bilgilerin üretilmesi ve sunulmasında bilimsel etik kurallarına uygun davrandığımı, kullandığım bütün kaynakları atıf yaparak belirttiğimi, maddi ve manevi desteği olan tüm kurum/kuruluş ve kişileri belirttiğimi, burada sunduğum veri ve bilgileri unvan almak amacıyla daha önce hiçbir şekilde kullanmadığımı beyan ederim.

17.01.2022

Chalank Hawar Mohammed



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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL TIGHTNESS AND INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Although the impact of culture on organizational work outcomes is widely recognized, extant research has mostly adopted a value-centric approach, focusing mainly on employees' internal values rather than external factors such as shared norms and behavioural constraints in work settings. Recognizing this gap in the literature, this thesis focuses on the concept of organizational cultural tightness, which pertains to the strength of social norms (i.e., clarity and pervasiveness of norms) and the strength of sanctioning (i.e., the amount of tolerance for deviance from norms) in organizations. More specifically, the study presented here investigates the relationship between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behaviour in organizations. Collecting data from 120 employees and their team leaders from organizations operating in the different sectors in the Duhok Governorate in Iraq, this study demonstrated that organizational cultural tightness is negatively linked to employees' innovative behavior.

Keywords: Organizational cultural tightness, Innovative behavior, Organizational work teams, Iraq.

ÖZET

ÖRGÜTLERDEKİ KÜLTÜREL SIKILIK VE YENİLİKÇİ DAVRANIŞ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİYE DAİR BİR KEŞİF ARAŞTIRMASI

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Kültürün örgütsel sonuçlar üzerindeki etkisinin yaygın olarak bilinmesine rağmen, mevcut araştırmalar çoğunlukla değer merkezli bir yaklaşımı benimsemiş ve çalışma ortamlarındaki ortak normlar ve davranışsal kısıtlamalar gibi dış faktörlerden ziyade esas olarak çalışanların içsel değerlerine odaklanmıştır. Literatürdeki bu boşluğu fark eden bu tez, sosyal normların gücü (yani, normların açıklığı ve yaygınlığı) ve yaptırımların gücüyle (yani, normlardan sapma için tolerans miktarı) ilgili olan örgütsel kültürel sıkılık kavramına odaklanmaktadır. Daha spesifik olarak burada sunulan çalışma, örgütsel kültürel sıkılık ile örgütlerdeki yenilikçi davranış arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmaktadır. Irak'ın Duhok Valiliği'nde bilişim sektöründe faaliyet gösteren kuruluşların 120 çalışanından ve onların ekip liderlerinden veri toplayan bu çalışma, örgütsel kültürel sıkılık ile çalışanların yenilikçi davranışları arasında negatif yönlü bir bağlantı olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgütsel kültürel sıkılık, Yenilikçi davranış, Örgütsel çalışma takımları, Irak

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COVID -19	: Coronavirus Disease 2019
DV	: Dependent Variable
IB	: Innovative Behavior
IV	: Independent Variable
OCT	: Organizational Cultural Tightness
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VIF	: Variance inflation factor



1. INTRODUCTION

This section presents an overview of the study's background and provides information on the original thesis value, problem statement and questions, the objectives and importance of the study, the study terms, and the dissertation's structure to achieve the study goals.

1.1. Study Background

The competitive success of any organization resides in its innovative capabilities. A shift towards knowledge-based economies makes employees an essential part of innovation. So, in a success-gaining process, organizations rely heavily on the innovative capabilities of their employees that are usually termed as innovative behavior. Innovative behavior helps build the vital organizational proficiencies that enable the organization to grow, adapt, transform and survive in response to the ever-changing business environment (Lee & Kramer, 2016). Employees' innovative behavior is critical since it facilitates the exploration and optimal utilization of existing resources, which, in turn, aids in the generation of organizational competitiveness and profitability. Innovation plays an instrumental role in becoming more effective and competitive in today's market (Masnan et al., 2008). As the business environment grows and becomes increasingly dynamic and uncertain, firms are required to remain economically competitive. Thus, in the modern era, organizations must become more inventive to maintain their competitive advantage and power, and to cope with the increasing demands of their customers (Arun et al., 2020).

Today one fundamental issue that remains to be tackled is how innovation can be fostered in organizations. Whereas innovation is believed to play a fundamental role in improving organizational competitiveness, it is also clearly recognized that culture and innovation are closely related (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2007). It has been asserted that a strong culture that promotes innovation within organizations considerably influences the employees' capacity to be innovative, and boosts their ability to successfully come up with creative ideas and to produce innovative goods (Hurley & Hult, 1998). Although earlier research directly points toward a strong link between culture and innovation (Hilmarrsson et al., 2014), researchers have also called for further empirical evidence as not many studies have focused on the impact of culture on innovation, and available few research studies have merely focused on the limited aspects of cultural characteristics or dimensions (Naranjo-Valencia & Calderon-Hernández, 2018). Hence, despite a great deal of attention devoted to culture as a key stimulant for innovation, more needs to be done still to understand the critical role that culture plays in effectively managing organizational knowledge and thereby facilitating employees' innovative behavior (Delong & Fahey, 2000).

Organizational culture is one of the most critical factors responsible for the emergence of productive or constructive behaviors at work. A relatively new concept in this area is the concept of cultural tightness that is defined as the strength of social norms and the degree of sanctioning within societies/organizations (Gelfand et al., 2006: 1226; Wasti & Fiş, 2010). Tight cultures are generally characterized by strict and well-defined social norms, and individuals operating in such cultures usually get punished or negatively sanctioned when they deviate from the established rules. Loose cultures, on the other hand, are characterized by a lack of clearly defined norms, and

individuals from such cultures are either tolerated or encouraged for their deviant behavior (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Because cultural tightness is closely associated with strong adherence to existing norms and rules, it is expected to have a profound effect on the functioning of organizations. Scholars have so far been able to map global variations in cultural tightness as well as variances within a single country. Yet, although a few studies have investigated the link between cultural tightness at the country-level and organizational outcomes (e.g., Ozeren, Ozmen, & Appolloni, 2013), how organizational cultural tightness is related to work outcomes in organizations (specifically employee innovativeness) is largely missing.

Previous research focusing on cultural tightness-looseness within a single country or comparing multiple countries based on their cultural tightness-looseness has demonstrated that cultural tightness is negatively related to innovation or creativity (e.g., Harrington & Gelfand, 2014; Chua et al., 2015). Nevertheless, recent research has also shown that individuals who operate in tight cultures favor gradual/incremental rather than radical transformations (Chua, Huang, & Jin, 2019). Cultural tightness discourages experimentation with highly novel ideas because it encourages employees to be careful and to prevent mistakes, which reduces their willingness to try new ideas (Shin et al., 2017; Üstün & Kılıç, 2017). Furthermore, Muthukrishna and Henrich (2016) suggested that in closed societies, where deviation or risk-taking is discouraged, there is minor variance in terms of transmitting information and learning of cultural practices (Chua et al., 2015). As such, in tight cultures, there is minor variation in the knowledge base among individuals and a greater degree of shared understanding. Hence, innovation is more likely to occur in these cultures gradually than in other types of civilizations (Gelfand et al., 2006). Loose societies, on the other hand, have more significant information transmission variance since the culture accepts and tolerates mistakes and deviations from established norms. It is precisely because of these seemingly harmful mistakes that innovations are born and thus, loose cultures can be more likely to foster innovation.

Taken together, these discrepant findings and arguments emphasize the need for further research to figure out how organizational cultural tightness (not the country-level cultural tightness) is linked to innovative behavior in organizations. It is therefore the central goal of this thesis to examine whether organizational cultural tightness promotes or stifles innovation in organizations, and to enrich the literature on the impact of culture on employees' work outcomes by focusing on a novel yet understudied cultural dimension.

1.2. The Original Value of the Thesis

Innovation is required to adapt to, thrive, and compete for the dynamic change in the business world. Currently, organizations have to be more innovative in order to achieve their objectives. Hence, special attention needs to be devoted to creative human resources as change agents and sources for organizational innovation and success. Tidd and Bessant (2014: 9) define innovation as "the process of making ideas reality and capturing value through four main phases, namely searching, selecting, implementing and capturing value.". Innovation is therefore the driving force for economic growth, better welfare, and new forms of employment.

Whereas innovation is one of the most critical factors determining an economy's competitive advantage globally, the capacity for innovation is one of the most significant factors affecting organizational success. Broadly, innovation is recognized as one of the fundamental

forces behind companies gaining competitive advantage. Each organization has a different potential for innovation that determines the type, scope, and scale of the innovations implemented as well as the organization's operational and innovation strategy. Some typical characteristics of creative businesses include leadership, shared vision, the will to build an innovative business, collaboration, constant participation in an effective motivating mechanism, and innovative activities. Research confirms that businesses that introduce and handle technologies successfully deliver higher profits and better financial performance than their rivals in the market (Kozioł-Nadolna, 2020). As a result, the advancement of innovation theories and processes demonstrates that, along with all developments in today's economy, more complex and concrete models of innovation processes will emerge. Also, developing countries' innovation is influenced by firms' ability to resolve issues and address current systemic, infrastructural, institutional, and financial constraints.

Correspondingly, the innovation capacity within an organization grows by increasing the flows of information and expertise within an organization based on networks. Innovative behavior involves individual activities aimed at producing, adopting, or implementing innovations, and developing ideas and solutions for an organization that are beneficial to its attempts to generate ideas, seek opportunities, seek support, and implement ideas. In this regard, many factors affect innovative behavior in organizations (e.g., job complexity, the leadership style that facilitates innovative performance, gender of organizational members, material and non-material incentives, and organizational climate; Fauzia et al., 2017: 33).

As briefly mentioned above, cultural tightness has also associated with innovation in organizations. For example, Ozeren and colleagues (2013) conducted a comparative study of Turkish and Italian marble industries with the goal of examining the relationship between cultural tightness and organizational innovativeness. Their findings indeed indicated a significant relationship between the two variables, and confirmed that the tightness-looseness is an integral method to the popular value model and is expected to present valuable insights for companies, scholars, and cross-cultural researchers in portraying a more complete picture of how culture and organizational outcomes are related.

In another study, Chua and his colleagues (2019) examined the relationship between cultural tightness and innovation with 11662 participants from 31 provinces in China. The authors defined cultural tightness as a cultural dimension that distinguishes communities on the basis of the strength of their laws and norms, and suggested that cultural tightness-looseness refers to the degree to which individuals are punished or tolerated when they deviate from these laws and norms. Consequently, the authors found that culturally tight areas experience enhanced control and pressure in daily life and are more exposed to threats, but people operating in culturally tighter areas also reported a higher degree of experienced happiness. The authors also showed that areas with tighter cultures have lower substantive/radical innovations rates, yet they achieved higher percentages of gradual/incremental innovations.

Correspondingly, another study by Chua and his colleagues (2015) developed a new model to explain the impact of culture on innovation in a global context. The authors argued that both innovation participation and innovation success depend on cultural tightness; that is, the level to which an area is distinguished by solid cultural models and less tolerance for deviant behaviors of both innovators and organizations. The authors found that some concurrent thinking produced

through tight cultures could benefit innovation, challenging the dominant view in innovation studies that different or divergent thinking is necessary for inventive performance.

As can be seen from the examples above, although the effect of culture on innovation has been an exciting topic for researchers, there is not much consensus on how cultural tightness and innovative behavior are linked. Furthermore, because cultural tightness is a relatively new concept that has been mostly examined at the country-level, there is very little research on the association between cultural tightness and innovative behavior in organizations. This thesis therefore strives to investigate how organizational cultural tightness characterized by greater clarity about behavioral expectations, a limited range of acceptable behaviors, strong adherence to social norms and severe sanctions for norm-violations (Talamo et al., 2021; Gelfand et al., 2006) affects the level of innovative behavior in organizational work teams. By utilizing a field study with real-world work teams, this thesis aims to offer generalizable results and practical advice for managers interested in the innovative performance of their work teams.

1.3. Problem Statement and Questions

An innovative culture within organizations is still not so common. Furthermore, more research is needed to understand the antecedents of innovative behavior in organizations. The current study intends to investigate how a work team's shared norms and constraints affect its innovative behavior.

Previous studies have pointed at a link between culture and innovative behavior. For example, in an effort to display the link between culture and innovation, Hazem (2019) conducted a literature review. This work reviewed the literature on cultural dimensions that affect innovation and creativity to provide an integrative understanding of the existing literature. Consequently, the findings revealed that culture is recognized in the literature as one factor that stimulates innovative behavior among organizational members. Similarly, Eskiler et al. (2016) investigated the link between organizational culture and innovative sports services in tourism enterprises. The authors have suggested a significant association between culture and innovative behavior and have concluded that innovative behavior is essential for improved performance and success, and organizational culture should be organized to empower employees. Additionally, a study conducted by Tianya (2015) examined the relationship between culture and innovative behavior. Focusing on cultural values such as individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, long-term/short-term orientation, power distance, and masculinity/femininity, the results of the study pointed out that culture indeed affects innovative behavior.

In addition to the literature mentioned above, Jolly and his colleagues (2021) studied cultural tightness-looseness on 1265 Ecuadorian citizens who represented the people of the comparatively tight culture of Ecuador. Their study focused on the concept of cultural tightness-looseness, which outlines the degree to which a unique culture maintains solid behavioral patterns and the level to which it is possible for individuals operating in that culture to deviate from these norms. Consequently, the authors argued that there is a paucity of studies on cultural tightness-looseness, and there are notable gaps in the perception of countries and cultures in the world, particularly in South America. Moreover, the authors suggested providing the necessary instruments for future studies to examine other countries and cultures so that these gaps can be narrowed.

As noted by several scholars, cultural tightness and its reflections on organizations (i.e., organizational cultural tightness) have not been sufficiently studied before. Furthermore, we still don't know much about how organizational cultural tightness impacts work outcomes such as employees' innovative behavior. For this reason, to bridge this gap, the present study will address the impact of cultural tightness on the innovative behavior of work team members within work organizations in Duhok Governorate in Iraq. Accordingly, the key objective of this thesis is to answer the following research question: '**How is organizational cultural tightness related to innovative behavior in organizational work teams?**'".

1.4. Study Objectives

The present study's primary purpose is to investigate the relationship between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior among a sample of work team members and their immediate supervisor's/team leaders at several organizations in Duhok Governorate in Iraq. The other aims include:

- Providing a theoretical framework for the study variables that reflect prior researchers' contributions to the study of these variables with references from scientific sources to enrich the academic aspect of the study.
- Attempting to answer the formulated research question that reflects the study's problem statement with results acquired from the analysis of the field data.
- Providing theoretical contributions to the literature on organizational cultural tightness and its impact on work outcomes in organizations.
- Yielding practical implications relating to how innovativeness can be enhanced in organizations.

1.5. Study Significance

The significance of the present study arises from its theoretical and practical contributions:

Theoretical contributions: Although previous studies have established a link between cultural values and innovation or creativity (Kwan, Leung, & Liou, 2018), there is minimal research on how cultural tightness affects processes and outcomes in organizational work teams. More specifically, previous research has mainly taken a value-centric approach and focused on Hofstede's cultural values such as uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, long-term/short-term orientation, power distance, and masculinity/femininity. Yet, by focusing on values alone, these studies have chiefly taken into account within-individual influences of culture on behavior, neglecting external factors such as shared norms and constraints of the environment in which individuals operate (Gedik & Ozbek, 2020; Gelfand et al., 2006). By taking into account these external/structural influences on behavior, the present study will endeavor to enrich the current organizational literature, focusing on the cultural dimension "tightness," which has been studied mainly in countries but not sufficiently in organizations. Therefore, this thesis will outline how cultural tightness within work teams predicts the innovative behavior of members of work teams.

Practical contributions: This thesis will provide information to organizations on how culture affects innovative behavior (whether it promotes or hinders innovativeness) and what managers can do about it. Hence, the current study will present several suggestions to

supervisor's/team leaders particularly and organizations generally, regarding how to manage the impact of culture on innovative behavior that is crucial for a work team's success.

1.6. Study Terms

This thesis revolves around two main concepts: organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior. These concepts are described below.

In her book, "Rule Makers, Rule Breakers: How Tight and Loose Cultures Wire Our World", Gelfand (2018) suggests that tight cultures are characterized by clearly defined and reliably imposed social norms that leave little room for individual improvisation and interpretation. For example, China, France, India, Japan, and Singapore have tight or strict cultures (Gelfand, 2019). In addition, Gelfand et al. (2006: 1226) defined cultural tightness as a bicomponential construct that captures the strength of social norms (i.e., clarity & omnipresence of norms) and the strength of punishment (i.e., the amount of tolerance for deviance from norms) within societies. Since organizational cultures inevitably resemble the social culture in which they reside, cultural tightness is also reflected in the workplace (Gedik & Ozbek, 2020: 635).

In the present era of digitalization and globalization, creativity and innovation are becoming a significant demand for organizations. Innovation has become the basis of growth and competitiveness in the global economy (Nasifoglu, 2020). In the meantime, innovative behavior is the intentional behavior of staff to create or implement new ideas to increase their position efficiency and obtain rewards. The combination of views, therefore, constitutes three components of innovative behavior: (i) idea generation, (ii) idea promotion, and (iii) fulfillment of the new idea (Bawuro et al., 2018: 2). In this sense, "Innovation is the company's specific instrument. It provides resources with a new ability to build wealth. Indeed, innovation creates a resource." (Drucker, 1993: 30). In other words, innovation capacity is defined as "the way in which companies can produce innovative results" (Esterhuizen et al., 2012: 2). Kogut and Zander (1992: 391) stressed that innovation integrates a firm's ability to develop new solutions from current knowledge. At the same time, capacity for innovation can develop new versions of and make necessary changes in market demand direction. The capacity for innovation is a factor that can be improved through work. Capacity for innovation is a company's method and ability to produce innovative results. The following factors demonstrate a company's innovative capacity: (i) product innovation; (ii) innovation in processes; (iii) research and development investment; and (iv) new distribution channels (Sözbilir, 2018: 2).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses and clarifies the concepts of innovative behavior and cultural tightness in organizations. In line with this purpose, this chapter presents an in-depth literature review on these concepts and strives to present compelling arguments about how organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior could be related.

2.1. Innovative Behavior in Organizations

2.1.1. Understanding Innovative Behavior

Innovation is the procedure of equipping new or improved capabilities that enable companies to stand out differently from others and obtain higher profitability. Business achievements, performance improvements, and innovation success are impossible without utilizing innovation capabilities in firms and industries (Teng et al., 2020). Due to the fact that product life cycles have shortened, technology is rapidly developing and the needs of customers are increasing, competition has become a pervasive reality of today's business world. In order to survive, grow, keep up, and sustain performance in such hypercompetitive environments, innovation appears to be vital for organizations. Organizations competing in such dynamic and ever-changing environments focus heavily on innovation as they consider it a critical element of competitiveness (Dervitsiotis, 2010). Innovation is a crucial component that enables organizations to stand out differently from their rivals to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The continued existence of firms in business depends on the competitive advantages that differentiate them from competitors. Firms with creative outputs can gain a competitive advantage, and they try to sustain this advantage as it helps them maintain and increase their market share. Many past studies concluded that innovation seems to be the primary source contributing to organizations' competitive advantage to survive in the global marketplace (Zawislak et al., 2012).

The emergence of advanced technologies, extreme global competition, and a knowledge economy has made innovation a progressive component of competitiveness. According to Kaplan and Warren (2007), innovation is a necessity rather than a luxury. In such rapidly changing environments, there is no such industrial player who will refuse to innovate. Innovation acts as a medium through which organizations introduce new processes, products, and systems that enable them to adapt to the changing technologies, modes of competition, and changing markets (Deborah Dougherty & Hardy, 2012). So, innovation is a way to deal with the dynamics of the environment and evolving markets. Innovative firms can compete and perform better because of their ability to design, produce and market their products earlier than their rivals. Under conditions like intense competition, scarce resources, ever-changing customer demands for good quality, and a dynamic business environment, researchers analyzed that the primary component that enhances organizations' performance is innovation. Innovation indeed leads to better future productivity (Karlsson & Tavassoli, 2015; Kim & Koo, 2017).

According to Kelley and Littman (2006), firms that succeed in a competitive environment need much more than a great product that can be a significant component of their business success. They need innovation at every point, among all team members, and in all aspects of their business. Furthermore, firms have to fulfill customers' needs better than their competitors by providing as many products as possible. Previous researchers have provided different

perspectives on innovation. For example, whereas Nayak and colleagues (2011) defined innovation as successfully implementing creative ideas within an organization, Thornhill (2006) suggested that innovation begins with a new idea introducing new products, services, and processes. According to Lopez-Nicolas (2011), a new or modified production method, management process, policy, plan, or program established in an enterprise is defined as innovation. Innovation capability is the skill to consistently develop new, creative and novel thoughts or ideas that bring short-term and long-term profits for the firms. Many previous studies identified that, due to innovation, substantial differences exist between/among the performance levels of firms (Huhtala et al., 2014; Karlsson & Tavassoli, 2015; Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018).

Organizations' main focus lies on meeting customers' needs through their products. This enables firms to exploit current and future opportunities for growth. So, innovation capabilities have a direct effect on organizational learning, growth, and innovation performance. Innovative firms perform better than non-innovative organizations because they possess innovative capabilities to respond to environmental changes quickly. Such firms invest more in innovation and become more productive (Wadho & Chaudhry, 2018). The most critical factor for organizations to achieve a competitive advantage in precarious market situations is innovation. Innovation capability enables organizations to react to varying market conditions (Slater et al., 2014). Innovation capability should be embedded in all structures, systems and strategies that maintain innovation in a firm (Gloet & Samson, 2016). This ultimately increases the performance of organizations.

2.1.2. The Need for Innovation in Organizations

Due to the growing use of new technologies, companies' only chance for market survival is to continue to innovate (Damanpour & Aravind, 2006). Similarly, Lam and colleagues (2005) stated that firms must meet their objectives by adopting new technologies and innovation. These innovations must be directed at improving existing processes for the benefit of the organization. The authors emphasized that innovation is critical for an organization's success and for achieving a competitive edge. Eisenbeiss et al. (2008) stressed the critical importance of innovation in gaining a competitive edge over competitors. Additionally, innovation is known to enable firms to deal with complex issues in a straightforward and comfortable manner. According to Zahra and Covin (1994), innovation is often a necessary component of organizational survival and growth.

Work organizations are expected to improve what they offer to the market, and how they generate and deliver their services to ensure their growth and survival prospects. So, being innovative is about providing value, requiring individuals and organizations to embrace something unique. It is not enough for organizations to generate good ideas only, it is also necessary to bring them into practice. Innovation is thus at the heart of each organization's renewal process (Bessant et al., 2005) and it pertains to optimizing the potential advantages of a new concept (Lam et al., 2005). Innovation is considered to be one of the most desirable phenomena within organizations and is known to be closely influenced by changes in organizations' internal or external factors.

In a constantly changing environment, organizations cannot thrive without making compatible innovations. In this manner, most scholars in previous studies have emphasized that

the ability to innovate has a significant impact on the performance of companies (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2017).

2.1.3. The Need for Teams to Establish Innovative Cultures in Organizations

Team innovation is defined as implementing new and valuable ideas by a group of people in any organizational context (West & Anderson, 1996). Studies have found that innovation is a complex process in any organization and comprises two steps: idea generation and implementation of innovation (Hülsheger et al., 2009). Therefore, with the participation of innovative teams, organizations tend to achieve a higher success rate and better performance (Balkin et al., 2001). Team members with high creative self-efficacy develop more innovative ideas and achieve better work outcomes than other team members with low levels of creative self-efficacy. High levels of creative self-efficacy enhance team members' creativity and result in the achievement of work success. Research has also found that this relationship holds the other way round as well; innovative behavior also increases innovative self-efficacy among employees (Mittal & Dhar 2015).

Organizations are increasingly relying on project teams to accelerate innovation and gain competitive advantage (Wuchty et al., 2007). Teams are defined as social systems comprising three or more people (Hackman & Lorsch, 1987) and are formed to get a particular task done within a given schedule (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). One of the natural features that a project team faces is uncertainty (Meyerson & Scully, 1995). To help organizations achieve a competitive advantage, teams must explore creative ideas, exploit existing knowledge, and make the best out of their valuable and feasible ideas (Liang et al., 2019).

Innovation is a significant element in organizations' struggle to transcend the challenge of emerging technology and knowledge, and to gain sustainable competitive advantage (Asbari et al., 2021; Bagheri & Akbari, 2018). To evolve and adapt to demanding conditions, organizations increasingly depend on teams, the standard building foundations of modern business organizations (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013). Innovation in the team refers to the implementation or development of innovations, methods, or mechanisms that are new and beneficial to the team (Günsel & Açikgöz, 2013).

Innovative teams and organizations tend to reap better overall performance degrees and higher success rates. Studies have established that innovation could be a complicated method in any organization. It has two steps, specifically creativity and its implementation within the organization. Innovative behavior is a thoughtful formation of a novel and sound idea and solicitation of this idea for the benefit of the individual, the workgroup, and the overall organization (Omuudu et al., 2021). Earlier, innovative behavior was defined as the willingness to change in general terms (Tran et al., 2020). Research conducted by Farmer and colleagues (2018) categorically depicted that imitation was inspirational and liked by others. The imitative behavior of employees was used to inspire and present things differently. The early theories on invention focused on psychological factors such as inspiration, imagination, and genius. After imitation, the inventive behavior was introduced by employees, adding some scientific theories into the process of product manufacturing. After invention, more attention was devoted to innovation in service, product, and process to gain a competitive advantage. The importance of innovation was realized decades back when innovation was to produce a new product, new excellence in work, new

manufacturing technique, new market, a new source of supply, and the configuration of the organization to meet new challenges (Nasifoglu Elidemir et al., 2020).

Past research reveals that new challenges have mutated organizations to find different ideas which are workable, marketable, and promoted in the organization (Awan & Javed, 2015). Every year companies develop new products and services, and these recent developments are a result of the intelligence, imagination, and creativity of their employees (Mainemelis et al., 2015). It is clear that innovation is an employee's dependent outcome and can only be achieved if its behavior is addressed. So, the focus should be on the employee's behavior and not on innovation only.

According to the concept of social exchange theory, individuals change behavior in exchange for organizational practices. Past studies have primarily ignored the specifics of the employees and mainly focused on organizational factors to understand employees' innovative work behavior (Shalley et al., 2004). One must capture that a company's most important assets are its employees who develop products, render services, and are responsible for innovation (Gabanov, 2011).

Companies utilize the resources needed for innovation such as competition, government support, availability of patents and foreign copyright inputs, level of education, foreign celebration, and R&D subsidies (Dotun, 2015). Surprisingly, all research studies have missed the role that employee behavior plays in making innovations. Employee behavior is essential for innovation in the organization (Van de Ven, 1986). Employees' innovativeness is the engine of economic growth in the current global fierce competition that both countries and companies face (Toivenen & Tuominen, 2009). The pressure of competition in the market has forced companies to differentiate their products by innovation (Nybakk & Jenssen, 2012). The manufacturing sector is the main identity of any country where employees' innovation can be seen and judged by the company's performance (Kalay & Lynn, 2015). Employee behavior is vital for an organization's innovation capability, leading to organizational performance in manufacturing firms (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018).

Due to the overwhelming use of technology, organizations face internal and external environmental challenges and pressure, and they have to respond to these taking into account the needs of their current and future customers (Bessant & Tidd, 2009). The behavior of employees at the workplace, therefore, plays a pivotal role in innovation. Employees' behavior and importance can only be assessed when companies overcome obstacles to innovation, thereby helping employees generate ideas for innovative output (Samma et al., 2020).

Teams, on the whole, would be more successful if team members shared resources and worked together (Morgeson et al., 2010). In terms of the realization of ideas, it is anticipated that it would be beneficial to provide one another with input and tools, train employees and improve their skills, and promote the self-development of groups. Motivating members of teams to learn, grow, try to solve challenges, and achieve shared goals is an essential task for organizational leaders or managers (Morgeson et al., 2010). Innovations developed by teams can be more profitable than an idea developed by a single individual since teams can create a higher impact.

2.2. Why Is Culture Important for Innovation?

A company's success depends on its ability to innovate. For firms to innovate, an innovative culture must exist in which all employees can contribute creative ideas autonomously.

For the production of new goods or services, management needs to use its relevant sources, and process innovation may result in minor tweaks or additions to current goods or services (Balachandra & Friar, 1997). When a company introduces innovation, it is critical to focus on the consumer's demands, understand what the client wants, and adapt the project to meet those demands. Employees enhance productivity by developing new procedures that enable them to gain a competitive edge. Innovative employees are more motivated and creative, and they contribute fresh ideas to the organization's success. In the early stages of innovation, a key variable to success is the initiation, development, and execution of innovative ideas, which can only be achieved with the effective human resources management of the organization. The most innovative organizations hire creative people and increase their employees' creativity by giving them appropriate training, and as such, employees then bring more innovative ideas for the success of work and create an innovative culture within the organization. When organizational members are innovative, they deal more capably with ambiguous situations and constraints. Hence, through innovation, team members can achieve better outcomes. For innovation to occur in organizations, it is necessary to establish an innovative culture in which members can express their ideas independently when facing challenges (Benita et al., 2015).

Given the significant contribution of innovation to commercial and economic development, culture has been recognized as an essential factor affecting the level or extent of innovation (Rohlfers and Zhang, 2016; Verspagen, 2006). So far, much research has studied the link between culture and creative or innovative behavior (e.g., Barnett, 1953; Parveen et al., 2015; Goncalo & Staw, 2006). Consequently, it is not unusual to find that some nations or enterprises have a strong potential for creativity in an ideographical cultural environment and vice versa. While the explosion of studies can dramatically advance our understanding of the impact of culture on innovation success, the existing studies have significant limitations. Essentially, theoretical concerns and research in this field have fallen behind real needs (Anderson et al., 2014).

Past literature tends to approach the role of culture on innovation in an absolutist manner. However, it is crucial for conceptual developments and different empirical results to be synthesized to understand the link between culture and innovation better. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on the influence of culture on innovation at different stages. To address the shortcomings mentioned above, this thesis aims to clarify the concept of culture and innovation, and provide an overview of the relationship between these two variables to identify the main issues that need further development. As Yoo and colleagues (2011) noted, individuals' cultural value orientations vary according to their country's culture, and even individuals with similar national cultures may have divergent cultural orientations. Like individuals, organizations operating within a country may also differ in terms of their cultural orientations and it is therefore very likely that organizations' divergent cultural orientations will explain the observed differences in their work outcomes.

Barney (1986) claims that organizational culture seems to be an essential component in a company's success (Tushman, 1997). As a result, it is not surprising that most scholarly work discusses the link between culture and innovation. In the highlighted literature, scholars have considered innovation as an outcome that is affected by some characteristics of the organizational culture. The competing value framework is one of the most frequently used theoretical models in this respect (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). By

concentrating on four major culture types (i.e., clan, hierarchy, adhocracy and market), competing values framework investigates how culture may affect innovation (Deshpande & Farley, 1999; Cameron & Quinn, 1999). In addition to these cultural characteristics, innovation-oriented cultures (Brettel & Cleven, 2011) and learning cultures (Kerlavaj et al., 2010) are also recognized as relevant factors that determine the outcome of innovation.

For decades, the effect of culture on innovation has been a hot matter of debate. Rothwell and Wissema (1986) investigated the connection between culture and technological innovation, highlighting many important points of intersection between these two influences. First, the authors suggested that innovation occurs only when needed and recognized several processes behind this feature, including culturally specific ones: (i) government support - including funding and adoption of new technology and (ii) any innovation has a limited lifespan (i.e., there is a threshold period for an innovation to be accepted by society; after that, all community members will benefit from the innovation). Second, most of the progress made requires previous groups of inventions. This feature is tied less directly to a nation's culture but indirectly impacted by culture since culture impacts the development of innovation groups (Tracey & Clark 2003). Third, those societies and civilizations less resistant to change will be more open to new technology (Bruce, 1993). Finally, new technologies are only approved if there is a compelling purpose for them to exist. This attribute is not inherently tied to culture, yet culture may have a substantial influence since certain cultures are less resistant to change and new technologies; as a result, society needs less driving force to accept new technology (Foster, 1962).

The impact of culture on innovation has been well-documented by previous research. For example, using a survey, Herbig and Miller (1991) investigated the effects of Japanese and American cultures on the capacity for innovation in adopting innovation by a society. Individualism, initiative, risk-taking, and openness were all prominent features of the American culture, which explain why Americans seek radical innovation (innovations that have a significant impact on corporate markets and economic activity) and creations as a means of expressing their creativity. At the same time, America's other cultural characteristics (e.g., insufficient cooperation and low tolerance) hindered process innovations (innovations applied in production processes). In contrast, the advantages of the Japanese culture, however, strengthened the process of incremental innovation (e.g., cooperation, loyalty, homogeneous and longer-term view) to the cost of radical innovation and invention. In another study, Westwood and Low (2003) examined the relationship between culture, innovation, and creativity and concluded that culture might influence how creative and innovative processes are perceived and clarified, but no culture is optimal for innovation. The authors also discovered that cognitive abilities and personality characteristics have a significant effect on innovation. Additionally, a cultural development for innovation has been associated with lower degrees of centralization, higher levels of education, and more favorable attitudes toward innovation (Lee, 1990). Although culture has been shown to impact innovation and the innovation process significantly, it is essential to remember that culture is a complex structure of many dimensions and nuances (Tung & Verbeke 2010; Hofstede, 2001).

2.2.1. Cultural Dimensions Related to Innovation

Before moving on to organizational cultural tightness, it is worthwhile to review past literature that has linked culture to innovation. Based on Hofstede's (1980, 1994) work, this

stream of research has suggested that cultural dimensions may have implications for innovation or innovative behavior in societies. These cultural dimensions are:

- Collectivism/individualism that relates to the strength of interpersonal connections;
- Power distance associated with inequality;
- Uncertainty avoidance associated with dealing with the unexpected and the unknown;
- Masculinity/femininity as a result of emotional gender roles; and
- Long-term/short-term orientation based on the time horizon that individuals display (Hofstede 2001, 2006).

2.2.1.1 Collectivism/Individualism

When an individual joins a workforce, organization, or a project, then he/she carries his/her own beliefs, values, and culture in general. Different individuals belonging to different cultures possess different values (Khan & Law, 2018). Collectivistic individuals categorize people as members of the in-group and out-group. In a group, favoritism means that individuals are more concerned about the overall achievement of their group's goals while they are not very close to members of the out-group and are not concerned with the wellbeing of the out-group over their own (Chen et al., 1998). Past literature is filled with studies investigating different aspects of collectivism and individualism (Triandis et al., 1986).

Spence (1985) suggested that understanding the difference between individualistic and collectivistic cultures is a prerequisite for goals attainment. Individuals belonging to individualistic cultures are driven by personal goals, while those belonging to collectivistic cultures keep in mind the shared goals. In this context, Orttung and Zhemukhov (2014) noted that individuals operating in individualistic cultures are less interested in close interpersonal support systems. When members work in a team, the most important thing is being selfless to other people's needs and forming team cohesion. Foster and colleagues (2003) found that individuals belonging to individualistic cultures exhibit high levels of narcissism while those belonging to collectivistic cultures exhibit low levels of narcissism. Smith (1990) suggested that when there is high interdependence within the group of collectivistic people, then individuals become less narcissistic. Jasielska and colleagues (2018) reported that individuals from individualistic cultures use material possessions to find solace, but individuals from collectivistic cultures like to excite their fellow members and find contentment in this. Zheng (2017) suggested that members of collectivistic cultures prefer to maintain interpersonal group relations and remain harmonious. A comparison between the two types of cultures shows that people from individualistic cultures care less about other people's sentiments and values, while members of collectivistic cultures put the need of others in front of their own sentiments.

Choi et al. (2018) put forward that collectivistic cultures positively influence team cohesion because collectivism focuses on group togetherness. Shemla et al. (2016) proposed that collectivistic cultures could influence team cohesion because they reflect how close the group members are, how much they stick to their integrated goals, and how shared values are more important than their individual members' goals. Chatman and colleagues (2019) suggested that solid team cohesion is dependent on how close group members are and it is positively related to collectivism. In this regard, Mockaitis et al. (2012) suggested that a robust collectivistic culture enhances team cohesion because members value one another. Jarvenpaa et al. (2004) stated that

positive characteristics of collectivistic cultures like assisting one another, prioritizing group's goals over personal goals, and identifying the self more with the group would lead to higher team cohesion. Marcus and Le (2013) suggested that collectivistic cultures bring members closer to each other and thus, influence team cohesion and goal attainment.

According to researchers, when individuals operate in collectivistic cultures, they support each other in all ways to achieve their shared goals and objectives. In a collectivist culture, people give priority to group benefits over their personal interests (Brewer & Chen, 2007) and act as one (Volkema et al., 2016). Scholars have been interested in how this group-orientation of collectivistic cultures affect the performance of project-based organizations. For example, due to the collectivistic nature of national culture in China, it was observed that there is a positive effect of collectivism on project success as compared to rather individualistic cultures such as Australia (Chiu et al., 2015). Similarly, Pinillos and Reyes (2011) concluded that collectivism in a society has an exceptionally positive effect on project management compared to societies where individualism dominates or cultures where power distance is comparatively high.

The implications of collectivism and individualism for innovation have remained debatable for a long time. Some scholars have argued that collectivistic individuals are more likely to accommodate group norms and can therefore play a crucial role in promoting innovation and productivity in order to assist their firms in enhancing performance. Since employees will be more concerned with the interests and development of their companies in a collectivistic culture, collectivism may serve as an excellent "catalyst" in the development of innovations, encouraging employees to become more motivated. This means that collectivistic individuals may be more likely to be proactive in integrating and applying collective skills to develop original ideas as well as novel processes or products (Pian et al., 2019).

Previous literature has revealed mixed findings with respect to the effect of collectivism-individualism on innovation. For example, in a study with 68 university student groups, Goncalo and Staw (2006) found that, when creativity was a salient goal within the group, groups consisting of individualistic members were more creative than groups consisting of collectivistic members. The authors thus concluded that, although collectivism may foster employees' prosocial tendencies such as helping and interpersonal cooperation, it may also jeopardize creativity in organizations. Consistent with this finding, Gorodnichenko and Roland (2011) have also shown that individualistic cultures enjoy higher rates of innovation and economic growth. Another study conducted by Morris et al. (1993) in 84 industrial firms revealed that collectivism-individualism is indeed crucial for understanding the entrepreneurial behavior of firms and entrepreneurship suffers when the work environment is characterized by high levels of collectivism or individualism. The authors therefore suggest that, rather than high levels of individualism, a balanced degree of collectivism-individualism is needed to achieve the highest level of entrepreneurship and innovation. Finally, using data from 62 countries, another study confirmed the positive effect of individualism on innovation, but also demonstrated that some types of collectivism (e.g., patriotism and nationalism) increased innovation rates whereas some other types of collectivism (e.g., familism & localism) decreased innovative behavior (Taylor & Wilson, 2012).

2.2.1.2 Power distance

Power distance refers to the tendency to view inequality and improper distribution of power as normal or acceptable, and suggests that power must be kept in the hands of elite individuals (Peng et al., 2020). Power distance is a concept mainly used in the research of cross-cultural values, and from an organizational perspective, it refers to the tendency of an individual to believe and accept that power in any organization can be distributed unequally (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Organizational members who score high on power distance are more likely to demonstrate autocratic behavior and engage in one-way communication. They rarely involve their subordinates in the decision-making process to accomplish goals; instead, they seek relevant direction from their leaders for achieving their objectives, accept decisions that are made for them, and obey instructions (Farh et al., 2007). On the other hand, individuals scoring low on power distance usually believe that they must be given authenticated power to express their views and they rely on their own solutions for the problems that they encounter. With a higher sense of control, low power distance leaders and followers always support each other in order to reach effective solutions and they take actions that they think are suitable for accomplishing their goals (Bai et al., 2016).

Socially, power distance is described as the degree of accepting the uneven allocation of power by the people (Wei et al., 2017). Individuals with high power distance orientation perceive their leaders as possessing innate power, superiority and status, and thus accept unequally distributed power more than individuals with low power distance orientation (Kirkman et al., 2009). Auh and colleagues (2016) state that power distance is described as the amount of unequal power (position, authority, money) accepted by certain persons, groups, and nations as obvious, genuine, or practical.

Power distance is an important cross-cultural value for organizations because each supervisor acts as the formal head of the group, and every concerned supervisor desires to implement what he or she has planned for. Especially in high power distance organizations, a one-way communication style that skips the input of other employees in any stage of decision-making is prevalent, and this situation is not necessarily interpreted as wrong behavior because employees always seek direction from their supervisors (Hershcovis et al., 2017). Supervisors inclined towards high power distance will unintentionally exhibit lower levels of social belongingness and emotional attachment with their employees. They clearly define a rational stance and maintain distance, which can raise awareness among employees of their rights and obligations. So, in organizations, high power distance impedes the flow of socioemotional resources between a supervisor and an employee, weakening the emotional relationship between them (Lin et al., 2013).

The weakening of ties between supervisors and their subordinates can even reach the degree of workplace bullying in organizations (Vidyarthi et al., 2014). Workplace bullying is indeed a prominent phenomenon that can be observed in cultures that are inclined toward high power distance because subordinates always seek direction from their supervisors that are leading their tasks and they do not contribute to any decision-making process (Loi et al., 2012). The subordinates do not consider the behavior of their supervisor as wrong and believe that they live in a culture where seniors or supervisors have the right to abuse and demotivate their subordinates to achieve desired objectives (Anderson & Brion, 2014). On the other hand, individuals who operate in low power distance organizations believe that they have their own opinions and have

the right to participate in decision-making. This can sometimes create conflict among leaders and their subordinates, which can escalate into significant health problems. However, as discussed before, individuals scoring high on power distance perceive the hierarchical subordinate-supervisor relationship as reasonable because this hierarchy can benefit their organizations as a whole. So, they avoid complaining and blaming their superiors for any ill-treatment or for their health-related problems (Blader & Chen, 2012).

In high power culture organizations, people are regularly inactive recipients, and the communication for heading and choice-making occurs in a top-down manner (House et al., 2004). Higher power distance cultures ordinarily embrace an administration style that may not make it possible for subordinates to approach and negate their bosses straightforwardly. So, in high-power distance cultures, subordinates are extra tilted towards their supervisors and depend upon the orders given by them (Hale & Fields, 2017). Nations with tall power distance cultures often accept that there is nothing off-base with disparity and that everybody has a task. France, Malaysia, China, Belgium, and the Middle Eastern world are respected as nations or districts with higher power distance.

Power distance has been linked to various work outcomes in organizations. As for innovation, past scholars have reported consistent findings suggesting that power distance is negatively related with innovative behavior. For example, in a sample of 20 European countries, Kaasa, & Vadi, (2010) have found that power distance is moderately negatively related to innovation that was measured by the number of patent applications. Similarly, findings from a study with 66 countries revealed a strong negative relationship between power distance and the Global Innovation Index (Rinne et al., 2012). In a study involving small-sized and medium-sized enterprises, (Dibrell et al., 2011) have conveyed that power distance is negatively associated with employees' and firms' innovation capabilities, and empowerment of employees at least partially mediates the relationship between power distance and innovation capabilities. These findings therefore suggest that a consensus has been reached on the negative impact of power distance (i.e., acceptance of the unequal distribution of power) on innovative behavior of organizations and societies.

2.2.1.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

Businesses may encounter many uncertainties within the specific market that they operate. Numerous scholars have distinguished among the probable sources of uncertainty at work. Among all, uncertainties appear because of product requirements, choices regarding the use of technology, or the involvement of different characters in work (Martinsuo and Killen, 2014). Further mentioned sources of uncertainty are the information overload with vagueness, the rate at which changes arise in the business projects, randomness in timing, and change direction. Uncertainty may also arise due to the factors incorporated by the external environment, such as decision-making processes of a system, or from the outer market, or by a competitor's actions (Aaltonen, 2011; Winch, 2010). Another important source of uncertainty can be found at the individual level, where different employees see and interpret uncertainty differently based on their personalities (Madsen & Pries-Heje, 2009). According to Mehta et al. (2014), just collecting a large volume of information is not enough when the level of uncertainty is high. It is required that team members collect complete information and interpret it clearly to make proper use of it

in the decision-making process to resolve uncertainty. It is essential to mention here that studies related to management control have observed that an environment with high uncertainty asks for more interactive use of control systems, like organizational restructuring and innovations (Fried, 2017).

Uncertainty avoidance refers to a society's level of tolerance for uncertain and ambiguous situations, and is informative of the degree to which members of a society try to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty (Hofstede, 1980). Since innovation is about change and tolerating risks, it certainly necessitates accepting uncertainty (Shane, 1992). According to Hofstede (1980), individuals with lower uncertainty avoidance values are more prepared to take risks and accept different viewpoints and behaviors, facilitating the innovation process. Hofstede (1980) also claimed that civilizations with a higher uncertainty avoidance rating resist new technology and are less likely to innovate. Shane (1993) provided empirical support for this contention showing that societies characterized as uncertainty-accepting were more innovative than uncertainty-avoiding societies. In the same vein, Kaasa and Vadi (2010) demonstrated that uncertainty avoidance was significantly negatively related with patenting intensity that the authors described as an indicator of the capability to initiate innovation.

2.2.1.4 Masculinity/Femininity

According to Watson (1995), the terms associated with masculinity are reported as power, control, dominance, independence and challenge. So, the term masculinity can be described as having the qualities which are stereotypically attributed to men. Merriam-Webster also defines *masculinity* as having qualities that are usually associated with men (Mahalik et al., 2003). Female values are interdependence, cooperation, awareness of patterns, emotional tones, intuition, and personalist perception (Loganathan & Krishnan, 2010). On the whole, whereas masculine cultures emphasize achievement-orientation, tasks, money, performance, and purposefulness, feminine cultures place value on people, life quality, caring about others and the environment, and not drawing attention to oneself (Nakata & Sivakumar, 1996: 64). Furthermore, masculine cultures display less gender egalitarianism and feminine cultures display greater gender egalitarianism (Cox & Khan, 2017).

Past literature has either found no relationship between masculinity/femininity and innovation, or a negative relationship between masculinity and innovation. For example, Wilhelm and Wilhelm (2012) demonstrated that low masculinity predicted managers' willingness to empower their employees and this, in turn, positively predicted a country's capacity for innovation. Using the Global Innovation Index, Cox and Khan (2017) found that innovative societies were marked by low masculinity. In a study with 63 countries, Williams and McGuire (2010) showed that masculinity had no effect on a country's economic creativity.

2.2.1.5 Long-term versus Short-term Orientation

Long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of 'face' and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede, 2001: 351).

The importance of the future is described by a long-term orientation, whereas the importance of the past and present is defined by short-term orientation. Cultures with a low score on long-term orientation value time-honored conventions and traditions while being suspicious of change in society. In comparison, societies with a high long-term orientation score take a more rational approach, encouraging economic development and investment in contemporary education as a means for preparing for the future (Hofstede, 2016). Long-term orientation shows the degree of predilection for future rewards like firmness and economy. Contrary to this, short-term orientation points out the degree of nurturing the qualities of the past and the present, especially value for custom, satisfying social responsibilities, and striving to maintain reputation (Hofstede, 2001). Individuals with long-term orientation believe in long-term results and performance and are not involved in opportunistic behavior (Doney et al., 1998).

According to Nakata and Sivakumar (1996), the link between long-term orientation and innovation seems to be even more prominent at the organizational level because a high level of long-term orientation facilitates both the start and implementation stages. This is partially achieved by fostering a strong work ethic. Companies in long-term-oriented countries are more likely to adopt inter-company innovation and embrace new ideas that are considered valid (Bukowski & Rudnicki, 2019). In addition, the long-term perspective seems to be linked to an organizational culture that can manage corporate innovation. According to the Kaisen model of cooperation, the most obvious argument for adding a long-term perspective to all aspects of business operations is the undeniable economic success of East Asian countries in recent decades, especially in the field of innovation (Bukowski & Rudnicki, 2019).

In support of the above-mentioned view, Bukowski and Rudnicki (2019) have shown that higher long-term orientation scores were associated with higher national innovation rates or intensity. Consistent with this, Cox and Khan (2017) also exhibited that long-term oriented societies were more innovative than short-term oriented societies based on the Global Innovation Index.

2.3. Cultural Tightness

Culture is one of the most relevant yet nuanced topics in social sciences. Decades of research on culture have given this term hundreds of meanings. Hofstede and colleagues (2010: 6) described culture as "a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes individuals or categories from others.". Triandis (1994) described culture as standard practices, beliefs, norms, and values. Scholars have proposed different cultural dimensions which distinguish human societies, as in the example of the six-dimensional national culture model of Hofstede (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Studies in cross-cultural psychology recommend that culture is often found in the social norms that govern behavior (Zou et al., 2009). Norms are widely believed to constitute acceptable behavior in a particular community (Zou et al., 2009). Individuals need to adhere to the social standards in their respective cultures and know that their reference communities validate their decisions and actions to meet epistemological needs (Festinger, 1950). According to Zou et al. (2009), personal interpretations of social norms shared within a culture may explain well-documented cultural differences in behavior and cognition.

In line with this, Gelfand and her colleagues (2006) developed the concept of tightness-looseness and highlighted the importance of this construct for understanding societal variance on many levels. Gelfand et al. (2006) note that cultural tightness-looseness consists of two main elements, the strength of social expectations or norms (number and clarity) and the degree of punishment (intolerance for deviance from norms). This cultural dimension emphasizes how the external effect of expectations and restrictions results in cross-cultural behavioral differences, theoretically separating it from the more traditional cultural dimensions (e.g., individualism-collectivity), which concentrate on personal characteristics and internal values.

Gelfand and colleagues have carried out a variety of empirical studies over the past decades to prove that tightness looseness is a vital cultural factor that can account for disparities in societies in different fields (e.g., Aktas et al., 2016; Gelfand et al., 2011; Harrington and Gelfand, 2014). Societies vulnerable to ecological and human threats (e.g., natural disasters, diseases, and territorial disputes) appear to have close ties with healthy norms to organize social behavior to ensure their survival (Gelfand et al., 2011). Cultural density is often expressed in current institutional practices, day-to-day situation limitations, and human psychological processes. Tight (contra loose) societies have more specific guidelines and a narrower set of compartments (e.g., eat, laugh, argue) which is considered appropriate in everyday social circumstances (e.g., job interviews, movies, workplace). Individuals in tight cultures have a greater intensity of self-regulation, including prudence, urges, and self-monitoring, than people in loose cultures (Gelfand et al., 2011). A study by Liu et al. (2018) pointed out that tight cultures tend to punish deviations from social expectations. This work also proposed that people from tight cultures tend to comply with the established behavioral standards during social interactions than loose cultures.

According to a recent survey study performed in 33 countries by Gelfand et al. (2011), countries such as Iraq, Malaysia, Japan, Norway, China and Singapore are ranked high on indicators of cultural tightness. Individual socialization is influenced by a country's level of cultural tightness, which affects psychological adaptation at the individual-level and influences creative engagement (i.e., creative challenge endeavors and success). Individual-level perceptions, motivations, and behaviors are influenced by the cultural tightness expressed in the institutional processes of the society. Individual psychological adaptation is facilitated by supporting social systems such as school, family and religious groups as well as legal systems (Harrington & Gelfand, 2014). A strict culture promotes limited socialization with a well-developed system for regulating and monitoring behavior (Arnett, 1995), and deviations from established norms are easily detected. Cultural tightness is also associated with the restriction of situations that limit accepted behaviors in daily life. These institutional behaviors facilitate individual-level psychological adaptations such as self-discipline and cognitive style over time.

Because organizational cultures tend to show the characteristics of the societal culture in which they operate and the level of cultural tightness within a country is also reflected in organizational life, it can be expected that organizational cultural tightness will also have an impact on the way that organizations perform their activities. In this respect, organizational cultural tightness can be described as the strength of social norms (clarity and pervasiveness of norms) and the strength of sanctioning (the extent to which deviance from norms is tolerated) in organizations (Gelfand et al., 2006). When organizations are culturally tight, employees are expected to perform their daily activities within a limited range of acceptable behavior and know

that there will be severe negative sanctions if they deviate from the established norms. When organizations are culturally loose, employees can operate within a wider range of permissible behaviour and are tolerated for deviance from norms.

2.4. The Relationship between Cultural Tightness and Innovative Behavior

Cross-cultural studies have extensively investigated the organizational level reflections of a country's social and cultural aspects. Nevertheless, these dimensions were approached primarily from a value-centric perspective. However, recent research has identified new aspects of culture that can be used to explain cross-cultural differences. First taken up by Pelto (1968) from an anthropological perspective and then developed further by scholars from sociology and psychology (e.g., Boldt, 1978; Triandis, 1989; Gedik & Ozbek, 2020), the cultural aspect of tightness-looseness has recently re-emerged as a topic of theoretical and empirical debate (see Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011). The authors argue that the phenomenon of cultural tightness-looseness has evolved in response to an established value-centric approach. This situation resembles a long-standing philosophical question in psychology. What affects behavior; nature or the environment? An individual's idealized inner expectations form values, yet the tightness-looseness component focuses on norms. Therefore, tightness-looseness is concerned with the naturally emerging norms describing "what should be" or "how individuals are expected to act" in societies, and in order to get a complete understanding of the cross-cultural similarities and differences, it is imperative to consider the tightness-looseness criterion as the back of the coin.

As stated earlier, cultural tightness was characterized by Gelfand et al. (2006) as the strength of social norms and the degree of sanctioning within a specific society. Scarcity of resources, history of territorial strife, high population density, and environmental challenges contribute to a country's cultural tightness (Gelfand et al., 2011). These natural difficulties heighten the need for robust standards to coordinate behavior and the punishment of deviations to secure the collective's existence. Social norms are clearly imposed and enforced in communities with tight cultures, typically with harsh penalties. Because they lack defined rules and consistent enforcement to regulate behavior, loose cultures are less predictable, less orderly, and less efficient than tight cultures (Gelfand et al., 2006).

When individuals from tight cultures choose a course of action, they are more likely to consider whether their activity conforms to social norms and is less likely to depend on their personal values or beliefs (Harms & Groen, 2017). In comparison, loose societies are usually distinguished by the pervasiveness of situations in which no definitive or pre-indicated way of behaving is present (Gelfand et al., 2011). Individuals who are socialized in loose cultures therefore tend to obey their internal guiding principles and accomplish their specific objectives (Leung & Morris, 2015). They are inclined to rely on their own thoughts and beliefs when making decisions (Tam & Chan, 2017) and are less likely to be influenced by social norms or expectations. As a result, whereas personal beliefs or values can be a determinant of behavior in loose cultures, they usually have a more negligible effect on behavior in tight cultures (Lee & Kramer, 2016).

Tightness-looseness is a cultural phenomenon that is still evolving, particularly in the organizational field. In fact, except for a few studies (e.g., Di Santo et al., 2021; Gedik & Ozbek,

2020; Wasti & Fiş, 2010), organizational tightness-looseness has gained little attention in the organizational literature. It is therefore the central aim of this thesis to fill this gap, and to examine how organizational cultural tightness is related to innovative behavior in organizations, an extremely important work outcome for organizations to succeed in their business and gain competitive advantage over others in the market.

Innovation requires strengthening existing work processes and deviating from established rules and practices (Janssen, 2004). In other words, innovation or creativity has to do with challenging existing norms and thinking differently (Goncalo & Staw, 2006). The concept of cultural tightness-looseness is particularly pertinent to innovation. Past scholarly work has argued that organizations from tight cultures are characterized by order, stability, a high need for structure and resistance to change (Gelfand et al., 2006). Such organizations are generally less flexible, meaning that they cannot quickly respond or adapt to changing circumstances. Furthermore, such cultures socialize their members to be cautious and to prevent errors, thereby reducing their willingness to experiment with novel ideas (Chua et al., 2019). In addition, because norm-violation is associated with heavy punishment, members of tight cultures tend to avoid deviance from established rules and perform their activities or work using a restricted range of (acceptable) behavior. Moreover, tight cultures usually transmit and acquire similar information to/from one another since deviation from norms or risk-taking is discouraged (Muthukrishna & Henrich, 2016). As a result, although members of such cultures develop a greater shared understanding, their knowledge base exhibits little variation, which can impede innovative behavior. Organizations from loose cultures, on the other hand, tolerate deviance and organizational change whereas they are also less focused on order and stability. Employees working in loose cultures are tolerated or encouraged for deviant behavior, so they are not restricted in terms of the range of behavior they can exhibit. This facilitates their flexibility and encourages them to come up with more innovative ideas and behavior (Gelfand et al., 2006). Based on the reasoning above, one can argue that cultural tightness is likely to be negatively associated with the innovative behavior of employees in organizations.

Past research has provided preliminary evidence for this idea. In their study across the 50 states of the United States of America., Harrington and Gelfand (2014) have reported decreased innovation and creativity scores for states with tight cultures. Chua et al. (2015) found that members of tight cultures were less receptive to foreign creative ideas, and were also less likely to engage in and succeed at foreign creative tasks, particularly if the cultural distance between their country and the audience's country was large. In their study across 31 Chinese provinces, Chua et al. (2019) concluded that, despite higher levels of incremental innovation, lower substantive/radical innovation rates were observed in provinces with tight cultures. Concerning the organizational context, in a study conducted with members of 143 Turkish industrial firms, Üstün and Kılıç (2017) found that lower levels of looseness were associated with lower proactivity, innovation-orientation and risk-taking. Finally, using a sample of 147 work teams from 13 organizations in Turkey, Gedik and Ozbek (2020) demonstrated that organizational cultural tightness was negatively related with the creativity of work teams when team-level collectivism was low. Based on this evidence, the central hypothesis of this thesis follows as:

H1: Organizational cultural tightness is negatively related to innovative behavior in organizational work teams.



3. STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and Model

The methodology describes a pre-designed approach followed by researchers to reach research outputs, and involves the methods and techniques to obtain the study objectives. The current study adopted a quantitative approach (i.e., a questionnaire) as a descriptive-analytical design to identify the relationship between the study variables.

The framework of this study will be limited to two main variables; Organizational Cultural Tightness (as the independent variable IV) and Innovative Behavior (as the dependent variable DV). Figure 1 displays the study model and describes the relationship between the variables:



Figure 1. The Research Model

3.2. Study Hypothesis

The current research attempts to test the critical hypothesis below to address the relationship between organizational cultural tightness and employees' innovative behavior as follows:

H1: Organizational cultural tightness is negatively related to innovative behavior in organizational work teams.

3.3. Data Sources

The study relies on two tools for data collection to provide the theoretical framework and to test the study hypothesis. In this sense, as for the theoretical background, the present study utilized articles from reputable international journals, dissertations, textbooks and other academic books, and the Internet to examine the related literature that forms the basis of the current study. As for the hypothesis testing, it has adopted the questionnaire method as a critical instrument for data collection. The questionnaires have been distributed to the targeted sample and the participants' responses have been analyzed by two statistical programs: the Statistical Package Program for Social sciences (SPSS Version 26) and AMOS (Version 20).

3.4. Data Analysis Tools

In line with the study goals, the present research has used numerous statistical tools for data analysis and hypothesis testing. In this manner, the present study adopted the questionnaire (or the survey) method as the main tool to collect the primary data by using a 7-Point Likert-type agreement scale. Seven-point items appear to be the ideal solution for questionnaires (Finstad,

2010) because they are more precise and simpler to use, better reflecting the actual assessment of the respondents. Based on the 7- Point Likert-type items used in the study, participants' responses ranged from (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4= Neither disagree nor agree, 5= Somewhat Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Strongly Agree). On the other hand, the current study included two separate questionnaires; one for the employees working in organizational teams as shown in Appendix 1 and the second one for team leaders (or supervisors) managing the participating organizational work teams as shown in Appendix 2. Subsequently, the employee questionnaire involved two parts. The first part included demographic information such as gender, age, academic qualification, work unit, the length of service in the current organization and the length of service in the current work team. The second part included the organizational cultural tightness scale (among other scales) as shown in Table 1. Correspondingly, the questionnaire for the team leaders also involved two parts. The first part included demographic information (e.g., gender, age, academic qualification, work unit, the length of service in the current organization, the length of service in the current work team). The second part encompassed questions on team members' innovative behavior and performance within their work teams. In order to achieve the study aims, the data has been collected via personal contacts and field visiting of members of work teams and their supervisors in the Duhok Governorate, Iraq. Table 1 illustrates the scales used for the purposes of testing the relationship between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior of employees.

Table 1. The scales used for hypothesis testing

Variables	Source
Organizational cultural tightness scale (IV)	6 items adapted Gelfand et al. (2011)
Innovative behavior scale (DV)	4 items taken from De Dreu and West (2001)

3.5. Study Population and Sample Frame

The study population consists of work team members and their immediate supervisors/leaders. The present study is expected to involve 7 organizations that, altogether, contain 150 work teams from the Duhok Governorate in Iraq. Random sampling was adopted as a method in gathering the study sample. Nevertheless, to achieve the study purposes and to test its hypotheses, organizations from the private sector were asked to participate in the current study. The private sector has been selected for the following reasons:

- Private sector organizations demonstrate a lower degree of performance in the private sector in the Duhok Governorate, and innovative behavior could play a significant role in improving their performance.
- There is more competition among organizations in the private sector, so the innovative behavior of work teams may be significant for them.
- Private sector organizations potentially have more comprehensive experience in developing facilities and providing services attuned to the competitive world of global business.
- Private sector organizations usually have much more robust management capabilities due to recruiting and compensating qualified managers and technicians.

3.6. Sampling Technique

Organizations are the expanding source of competitive advantage for Iraq and they attract foreign investment, increasing the cultural diversity of Iraq's workforce and Iraq's global recognition as a new, developing, and emerging country. Correspondingly, day by day, the business environment in Iraq is becoming more complex due to the continuously and rapidly changing circumstances, including especially the emerging immigration of people in recent times.

The population exploited in this study comprises project team leaders/supervisors and their immediate subordinates (i.e., team members) working in different organizations from different sectors. The present research strived to collect data from seven private, project-based organizations operating in different sectors, including organizations running various projects in humanitarian support, community services, education, legal consultation, vocational training, healthcare and hygiene, shelter, livelihood, and cash services.

The collection of data from the entire population was not possible given the time and resource constraints (as well as the Covid-19 restrictions). Hence, a small population subsection was drawn with probability or nonprobability technique (Hair, 2015). Probability sampling was used to collect responses and data was collected on a random basis. This random procedure ensured objectivity, and data was collected from a representative sample. After getting approval from team leaders/supervisors, the questionnaires were distributed on site and upon completion, the researcher collected the questionnaires back from the team leaders and the employees. The project's core team members reported the data on organizational cultural tightness (OCT), whereas the employees' innovative behavior (IB) was reported by the project team leaders/supervisors. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality was assured. Both team leaders/supervisors and employees felt motivated to express their honest opinion.

The number of distributed questionnaires was 200 respondents (160 employees + 40 team leaders) but 180 responses were returned. 10 questionnaires were discarded due to non-completion, so the final sample comprised 160 participants (120 employees + 40 leaders).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter discusses the data analysis procedures and the results of the data analysis revealing whether the proposed hypothesis of the present study is confirmed or not. For preliminary data screening; missing values, descriptive statistics, outliers, data normality, and homoscedasticity analyses were performed. SPSS (V.26) was utilized to test the study hypothesis, and to perform the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the measurement model, the researcher employed AMOS (V.20) software. Scholars consider AMOS to be a robust tool for conducting CFAs (Byrne, 2016). AMOS facilitates graphics, allowing users to test path diagrams conveniently, estimate regression parameters, and calculate model fit criteria. After ensuring the reliability and validity of the measurement model, a structural regression analysis was performed to test the proposed hypothesis of the research model.

4.1. Preliminary Analysis

Before testing the proposed hypothesis of the study, the researcher has performed some preliminary analyses such as a focus group analysis to evaluate the scales used in the present research and to ensure the clarity and understandability of the wording of the questionnaires. Furthermore, the researcher also performed analyses relating to the missing values, descriptive, outliers, data normality, and common method bias. A more detailed description of these preliminary analyses is given in the section below.

4.2. Screening of the Data

In the first part of the data analysis, for data screening, the researcher carried out some initial tests such as missing values, descriptive statistics, outliers, data normality, common method bias effects, and aberrant values (Hair et al., 2010).

4.3. Missing Value Analysis

Missing value occurs in the data set when participants forget or neglect to answer some of the questions, and sometimes it may occur during data entry. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested that missing data in a data set is the most common problem in the data analysis process. Primarily, the problem of missing data occurs when using the survey questionnaire method because some of the respondents in the targeted sample may fail to respond to one or more questions in the survey (Little & Rubin, 2014). Missing values in the data set might produce many issues during statistical analysis. For instance, missing data reduces statistical power, which shows that the analysis (estimation) could be biased in generating results (Cordeiro et al., 2010). Hair et al. (2006) argued that, when the solution of missing values in the dataset is not handled correctly, the data with missing values are generally removed. Yet, the reduction in the sample leads to preliminary data analysis of the sample, and the empirical findings obtained by data relating to non-randomly missing data might be biased, causing inaccurate results.

In this research, SPSS was utilized to assess the number of missing values within each item and construct, which includes more than one question to measure the same concept. The missing value analysis showed that there was no missing value in the team leader or employee data, confirming that the collected data can be used for further analysis.

4.4. Demographic Information

For the current research, two questionnaire versions were designed. Team leaders/supervisors have responded to the team leader's questionnaire, while the employees or the subordinates of a team leader/supervisor filled in the employee questionnaire. Age, gender, educational qualification, amount of total work experience and experience with the current work team were the demographic information obtained from the participants of this study.

4.4.1. Gender

One of the critical elements of demographics is gender, distributing the population sample into male and female. In this study, it has been observed that the proportion of male respondents was higher than the proportion of female respondents.

Table 2. Gender

Gender	Employees		Leaders Gender	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	77	64.2	28	70.0
Female	43	35.8	12	30.0
Total	120	100.0	40	100.0

The above table represents the gender composition of the sample in which, out of 120 employee respondents, 64.2 % were male and 35.8% were female. Out of the 40 team leaders, 70% were male and 30 % were female. The male percentage was higher in both the employee and leader respondents.

4.4.2. Age

Age is an essential part of the demographic, but some respondents feel hesitant to disclose their age. So, for convenience reasons, different age categories were used in the questionnaire to collect data regarding respondent's age.

Table 3. Age distribution

Age	Employees age		Leaders age	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
18 to 30	50	41.7	11	27.5
30 to 45	54	45.0	24	60.0
45 to 55	12	10.0	3	7.5
above 55	4	3.3	2	5.0

Table 3 shows an account of the age categories for the sample. Out of the 120 employees, approximately 41.7% belong to the age group of 18 to 30. Similarly, 45.0% of the respondents were between 30-45 years of age, and only 10.0% and 3.3 % of the respondents were in the age range of 45-55 and above 55 years, respectively. Out of the 40 team leaders, 27.5% of the respondents belonged to the age range of 18-30, 60% of the respondents belonged to the age range of 30-45, 7.5% of the respondents belonged to the age range of 45-55 and 5.0% of

respondents were in the age range of above 55. Whereas most employees' age was between 18 and 45, team leaders were predominantly aged between 30 and 45.

4.4.3. Educational Qualification

Education is essential for passing the knowledge of societies and countries from one generation to the other. Education has a vital role in the affluence of the whole nation. Education entails new and unique opportunities for individuals to improve themselves to compete with others on a global basis. Education is the instrument that provides people with necessary information, technique, and skills that allow them to know their rights and obligations toward their society, family, and obviously nation. Education increases the mental picture and the outlook to see the world.

Table 4. Educational qualification

Employees Education	Frequency	%	Leaders Education	Frequency	%
Master's Degree	16	13.3	PhD	5	12.5
Bachelor Degree	61	50.8	Master's Degree	16	40.0
Diploma Degree	33	27.5	Bachelor Degree	17	42.5
Vocational High School Degree	10	8.4	Higher Diploma Degree	2	5.0

Table 4 shows the qualification level of respondents such as PhD, master's degree, bachelor's degree, (higher) diploma degree and vocational high school degree. Employee data shows that 13.3 % of the respondents had master's degree, 27.5% had a diploma degree, 8.4% had vocational high school degree, and most respondents had a bachelor's qualification with a percentage of 50.8 %. Similarly, team leaders' educational data shows that most leaders had either a master's qualification (40%) or a bachelor degree (42.5%), with less team leaders holding a PhD degree (12.5%) or a higher diploma degree (5.0%).

4.4.4. Work Experience

Work experience is the total number of years that employees have worked in numerous organizations. Work experience enhances the intelligence and ingenuity of people, so it is also an essential component of demographics. This section incorporates information relevant to the professional experience of the participants. Different categories were defined in the questionnaire to gather the data on the professional experience of the participants.

Table 5. Work experience

Work Experience	Employees experience		leaders experience	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 to 5 years	63	52.5	16	40.0
6 to 10 years	47	39.2	22	55.0
Above 10 years	10	8.3	2	5.0

Table 5 shows that 39.2% of the staff members had work experience for 6 to 10 years. 52.5 % had work experience for 1 to 5 years and only 8.3 % of them had work experience for more

than 10 years. Similarly, out of the 40 team leaders, 40% had work experience for 1 to 5 years, 55.0% had work experience for 6 to 10 years, and only 5.0% of respondents had work experience for more than 10 years. Most of the respondents' scores were placed in the range of 1-5 and 6-10 years.

4.4.5. Experience with the Current Team

Experience with the current team (or team tenure) shows the number of years that employees have spent in the work team that they are currently part of.

Table 6. Experience with team

Experience with work team	Employees experience		leaders experience	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 to 3 years	56	46.7	13	32.5
3 to 5 years	35	29.2	9	22.5
Above 5 years	29	24.1	18	45.0

Table 6 demonstrates the team tenure of the participants of this study. The results reveal that 46.7% of the employees had 1 to 3 years of experience with their current team, 29.2 % of the employees had 3 to 5 years of experience with their current team, and only 24.1% had more than 5 years of experience with their current team. Similarly, out of 40 team leaders, 32.5% of the respondent's team tenure ranged from 1 to 3 years, 22.5% of the respondents' team tenure ranged from 3 to 5 years, and 45% the respondents' team tenure was observed to be more than 5 years. Most of the respondents' team tenure was found to be 1-3 and above 5 years.

4.5. Outliers

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007: 62) outlier is "a case with such an extreme value on one construct (a univariate outlier) or such a strange combination of the value on two or more variables (multivariate outlier)". Hair et al. (2006) asserted that outliers are different from other observations because of extremely high or low values. Most scholars agreed that outliers might affect the non-normality of data and distort statistical findings (Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Tabachnick & Fidell (2007) suggested that outliers within the data set exist due to some reasons such as mistakes during data entry, failure to specify codes to the missing values that may eventually lead to the treatment of this data as actual data, entering observations from non-representative populations, and inclusion of observations from the population having higher distribution than average. In the case of this study, the score of skewness and kurtosis for all the statements were within the criterion of normal distribution (Table 7). Therefore, no case was removed, and the remaining tests were conducted with the same sample of 120 participants.

4.6. Data Normality

Initially, the missing values of the data have been analyzed through the frequency distribution test because the structural equation modeling (SEM) is susceptible to missing values and normality test, so detecting the missing values was also considered necessary regarding SEM

(Pallant, 2010). The normality test was conducted, and for the decision criteria, the skewness and kurtosis were considered. In this study, each item was checked out in terms of skewness for measuring the symmetry of data and kurtosis for measuring whether the data are heavy-tailed or light-tailed relative to a normal distribution (Pallant, 2010).

The acceptable range of value in the context of skewness and kurtosis should be between -3 and +3 (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). Based on this criterion, the present data demonstrated satisfactory values of skewness and kurtosis in range, and so Structural Equation Modelling could be applied in later stages (Teo & Noyes, 2014).

Table 7. Normality

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OCT1	120	.048	.221	-.875	.438
OCT2	120	-.409	.221	-.653	.438
OCT3	120	-.412	.221	-.642	.438
OCT4	120	-.053	.221	-1.024	.438
OCT5	120	.083	.221	-.204	.438
OCT6	120	.365	.221	-.393	.438
IB1	40	.271	.374	-.946	.733
IB 2	40	.523	.374	.795	.733
IB 3	40	1.017	.374	.642	.733
IB 4	40	.769	.374	-.289	.733

4.7. Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis informs us about the statistics relating to the study variables. It consists of essential details like mean values, minimum and maximum values, and standard deviation. Prior to analyzing the descriptive statistics, mean scores for the main study variables (i.e., organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior) were computed for each respondent. This means that, for organizational cultural tightness (OCT), participants' responses to six items making up that scale were averaged and for innovative behavior (IB), participants' responses to four items making up that scale were averaged, and correspondingly, a single score for organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior was obtained for each respondent. Table 8 shows the mean values, the minimum and maximum values as well as the standard deviation for the main study variables. Concerning the total sample, the mean score for organizational cultural tightness was 4.10 ($SD = 1.06$) and the mean score for innovative behavior was 3.487($SD = 1.01$), suggesting that, on average, the employees reported the cultural tightness within their teams to be above-average (> 3.50) and the team leaders rated the innovative behavior of their employees to be slightly below-average (< 3.50).

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
OCT	120	4.1028	1.06405
IB	40	3.4875	1.01582

4.8. Common Method Bias

According to Podsakoff and colleagues (2003), common method bias (CMB) arises when the questionnaire itself creates variations in responses compared to the basic predispositions of the participants for which the survey has been designed to investigate. CMB is defined as the amount of variance caused by measurement methods rather than research constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Podsakoff et al. (2003) asserted that scholars should evaluate CMB in their data set because using a similar method of measurement for both independent and dependent constructs might threaten the validity of the conclusions regarding the associations among measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). For that reason, as a procedural remedy, the present research utilized two sources of data (i.e., employees and the team leaders) to alleviate the effect of CMB in the current data set.

4.9. Data Analysis

4.9.1. Reliability Analysis

As per literature, consistency of a scale is called its reliability. Thus, if a scale produces identical results in several scenarios, it can be referred to as a reliable scale. It is very important to conduct a reliability test in a research study in order to ensure that the items making up a construct measure the same underlying construct. Reliability is computed using Cronbach's alpha test, where Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggest that the standard of Cronbach's alpha is expected to be more than or equal to .70. Table 9 demonstrates the reliability analysis results for this study by reporting the Cronbach's alpha values for organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior, respectively.

Table 9. Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
OCT	0.903
IB	0.820

From Table 9, it can be observed that the scales used in this research have good reliability, and all the values are in line with the threshold value. More specifically, the results showed that the measurement scales for both organizational cultural tightness (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.903$) and innovative behavior (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.820$) were reliable with Cronbach's alpha values higher than the indicated threshold of .70.

4.9.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The current research used reliable scales to measure the study variables. Thus, there was no need to perform an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and so, this study proceeded with CFA (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). To examine the goodness of model fit, the following model fit indices were used: CMIN/df, goodness of fit index (GFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). Previous research asserted that the GFI range is from 0 to 1, and the value should be closest to 1. The value of GFI must be greater than .80 for a good model fit, and values below this level indicate a poor model fit. Scholars propose different threshold values for RMSEA. According to Hu and Bentler (1999), the appropriate range should be between .06-.08, whereas according to Lomax and Schumacker (2004), the value must be less than .05 for a good model fit. MacCallum et al. (1996) proposed that the acceptable value should be equal to or less than .10 for a good model fit.

Furthermore, this research also assessed the validity of all the research measures to ensure the overall validity. Koeske (1994) asserted that scale validity could be measured in two ways, such as discriminant and convergent validity. Convergent validity defines the extent to which the measures of the same concept are like each other (i.e., have high intra-factor associations). On the contrary, discriminant validity can be defined as the extent to which the two measures are distinct, such as having low inter-factors correlations (Bagozzi Yi & Phillips, 1991). Following the guidelines of previous research, a number of tests were conducted as standard to examine the model fit indices, reliability and validity of all the measures of this research.

4.9.2.1. CFA for Organizational Cultural Tightness

In the present study, a CFA was conducted for organizational cultural tightness to provide an appropriate model. The CFA showed an acceptable fit statistic of the data (CMIN/df= 1.80, GFI= .96, CFI= .98, TLI= .97 and RMSEA= .08) suggesting that all indices were in the acceptable range. Furthermore, following Kline (2015), the standardized factor loadings of each selected item were reported below. The results of the CFA confirmed that the factor model had sufficient discriminate power.

Table 10. Model fit index for OCT

Factor	CMIN	Df	RMESA	IFI	TLI	CFI	GFI
factor	16.173	9	0.08	0.983	0.971	0.983	0.959

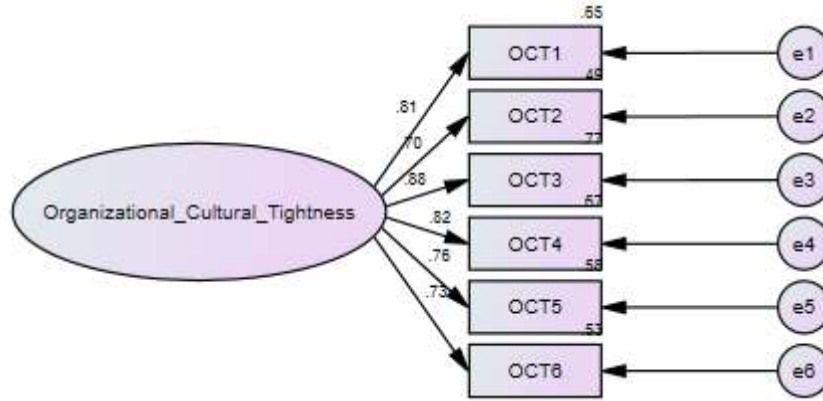


Figure 2. Measurement model 1

4.9.2.2. Factor Loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for OCT

The factor loadings are summarized in Table 11, showing that the standardized factor loadings range from .73 to .88. The item loadings are satisfactory since they are greater than the acceptable value of .50 (Hair et al., 2006). Ideally, AVE should be equal to or greater than .50 to indicate an adequate convergent validity (Fararah & Al-Swidi, 2013; MacKenzie et al., 2011). With a value of .89, the AVE is in the acceptable range and all items representing organizational cultural tightness can be used for regression analysis.

Table 11. Factor loadings and average variance extracted for OCT

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	AVE
Organizational cultural tightness	OCT1	.81	0.89
	OCT2	.70	
	OCT3	.88	
	OCT4	.82	
	OCT5	.76	
	OCT6	.73	

4.9.2.3. CFA for Innovative Behavior

Innovative behavior was measured with four items. The CFA results showed an acceptable fit statistic of the data (CMIN/df= 1.28, GFI = .99, CFI=.997, TLI=.99, and RMSEA= .04). All indices were within the acceptable range. Furthermore, following the recommendations of Kline (2015), the standardized factor loadings of each item were reported (see Table 12 and Figure 3).

Table 12. Model fit index for IB

Factor	CMIN	Df	RMESA	IFI	TLI	CFI	GFI
factor	2.552	2	0.04	0.997	0.990	0.997	0.989

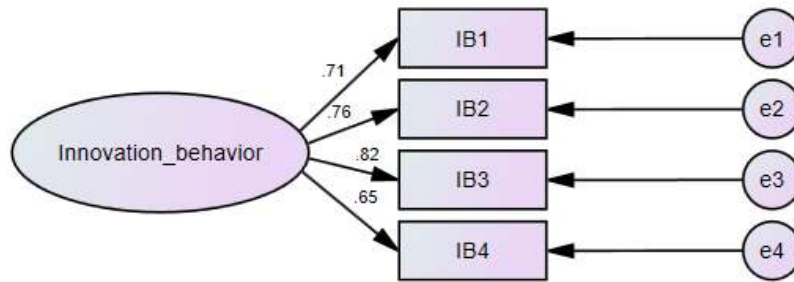


Figure 3. Measurement model for IB

4.9.2.4. Factor loadings and Average variance extracted (AVE) for IB

As can be seen from Table 13, the standardized factor loadings range from .65 to .82 and are greater than the acceptable value of .50 (Hair et al., 2006). With a value of .83, the AVE is in the acceptable range and all items representing innovative behavior can be used for regression analysis.

Table 13. Factor loadings and average variance extracted for IB

Construct	Items	Outer lodgings	AVG
Innovative behavior	IB1	.71	.83
	IB2	.76	
	IB3	.82	
	IB4	.65	

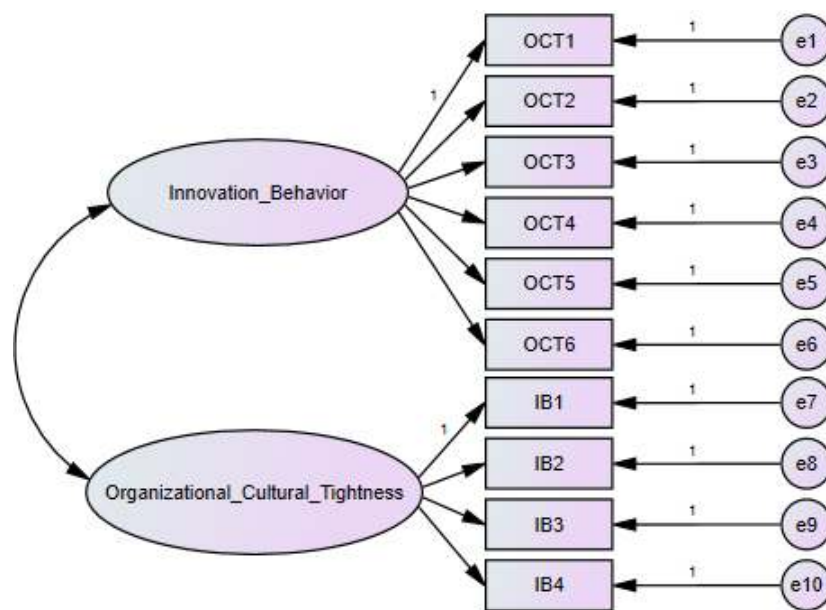
4.9.2.5. CFA for OCT and IB

To authenticate the proposed model, it is necessary to conduct a CFA (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). The proposed model consists of two latent variables; namely, organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior.

Table 14. Two-factor model

Factor	CMIN	Df	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI	GFI
2-factor	41.5	34	0.04	0.912	0.983	0.987	0.935

The confirmatory factor analysis of the two-factor model signified a good fit as shown in Table 14. The model fits the data better this way because all values meet the threshold. More specifically, the incremental fit index (IFI) value is greater than .90 (.91), which represents an excellent fit. The comparative fit index (CFI) value should be greater than .90 and it was found to be .99, which also demonstrates a good model fit. The value of root mean square of approximation should be less than .05 and was found to be .04. Similarly, the value of the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) should also be greater than .98 and in this case, it was found to be .983, which also represents a good model fit. Thus, overall, the two-factor model shows an excellent model fit as evinced by the indices presented here.

**Figure 4.** Measurement model for IB

4.10. Control Variables

We used the one-way ANOVA test to figure out whether the control variables for the present study affect the innovative behavior of employees (i.e., the dependent variable). As can be seen from Table 15, the results showed non-significant difference in innovative behavior across gender ($F = 1.26$, $p > .05$), age ($F = 1.415$, $p > .05$), educational qualification ($F = 1.008$, $p > .05$), work experience ($F = 0.253$, $p > .05$) and experience with the current team ($F = 1.956$, $p > .05$), hence providing preliminary evidence that no control variables need to be entered into the regression analysis for hypothesis testing in the present study.

Table 15. Control variables

Variables	F-value	Significance
Gender	0.676	.413
Age	1.415	.242
Educational Qualification	1.008	.457
Work experience	0.253	.777
Experience with the work team	1.956	.146

4.11. Correlation Variables

Correlation analysis is performed to distinguish the relationship between variables, or in other words, correlation analysis intends to analyze the relation between two variables. The relationship can be identified as positive when the variables are/move in the same direction, and it can be viewed as negative when the variables are/move in the opposite direction. In addition, the correlation coefficient ' r ' indicates the strength of the relation. The primary objective of this research is to undertake correlation analysis to determine the correlation between OCT and IB and to gain a first impression of whether the suggested hypothesis may be accurate or not.

Table 16. Correlation analysis among the study variables

Variables	Gender	Age	Education	Experience	Experience with team	OCT	IB
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gender	1						
Age	-.210*	1					
Education	.081	-.037	1				
Experience	-.027	.385**	-.156	1			
Experience with team	-.114	.339**	-.251**	.545**	1		
OCT	-.021	-.011	-.050	-.084	.008	1	
IB	-.075	-.071	-.167	.026	.105	-.180*	1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The above correlation table shows a significant negative correlation between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior, where $r = -.18^*$ at $p < .05$. The analysis also revealed

that the demographic variables were not significantly correlated with employees' innovative behavior, thus allowing for testing the proposed relationship between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior independently.

4.12. Regression Variables

To confirm the relationship between the variables, a correlation analysis has been carried out, which has revealed that the study variables are related to each other. However, correlation analysis alone is not adequate because it only shows the association between the studied variables and does not provide adequate support to explain the causal relationship between the variables. Therefore, a regression analysis has to be carried out to authenticate one variable's dependence on the other variable.

H1: Organizational cultural tightness is negatively related to innovative behavior in organizational work teams.

Table 17. Regression Results

Model	R ²	B	β	S.E	T	Sig.
OCT	0.32	-.196	-.180	.099	-1.985	.049

Table 17 shows the regression results related to the study hypothesis. The core hypothesis suggests that organizational cultural tightness is negatively related to innovative behavior. The results indeed showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior ($B = -.196$, $\beta = -.180$, $SE = .10$, $p < .05$). The R^2 shows that 32% of the variance in innovative behavior can be explained by organizational cultural tightness. The p-value of .04 indicates that organizational cultural tightness and employees' innovative behavior have a significant relation with each other. Hence, the results presented here support Hypothesis 1.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of the current study. First, this chapter discusses findings on the hypothesized relationship between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior in light of the existing research. Second, this chapter discusses the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study. Third, this chapter highlights the study's limitations and proposes some future areas that need to be addressed in order to extend the findings of this research.

5.1. Discussion of Findings

The primary reason for conducting this research was to shed light on the current scholarly debate on the impact of organizational cultural tightness on employees' innovative behavior, and this study investigated the link between these two variables in the Iraqi context. The data for the suggested hypothesis has been collected from several organizations in Iraq. As the results in the previous section demonstrate, the main hypothesis of this study proposing that organizational cultural tightness is negatively associated with innovative behavior has been confirmed, providing support for the notion that organizational culture is indeed crucial for the innovative behavior of employees.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that organizational cultural tightness is negatively associated with the innovative behavior of employees within organizational work teams. Results from the regression analysis provide support for this hypothesis ($B = -1.96$ and $p < .05$), showing that organizational cultural tightness is negatively associated with innovative behavior in organizations. Past literature also supports this result. Previous studies have shown a negative relationship between national or state-level cultural tightness and innovative behavior (e.g., Chua et al., 2015; Harrington and Gelfand, 2014; Mu et al., 2015; see also Chua et al., 2019). Organizations in tight cultures typically have a high degree of constraint, with practices that limit the range of acceptable behavior and promote structure and direction. Organizations in relatively looser societies usually have more latitude in their cultures, which include policies that allow for a broader range of acceptable behavior, risk-taking, openness to change, and experimentation (Chua et al., 2019). Relatedly, organizations in loose cultures exhibit less cohesion and order, but show higher tolerance for change and innovation inside their organizations. Employees have significantly more latitude, and a wider range of acceptable behavior is available to employees in organizations where accountability and discipline are less stringent or non-existent. Higher levels of organizational innovation and creativity are enabled, as a working climate with a greater degree of expressed ideas and behaviors is often connected with more extraordinary innovativeness (Cox et al., 1991). Since flexible societies and relatedly, loose organizational cultures encourage creativity and change, they allow for a higher degree of deviant conduct although these same processes may result in less predictability and order (Ozeren et al., 2013).

5.2. Practical and Theoretical Implications

This study includes theoretical and practical implications concerning the impact of organizational cultural tightness on innovative behavior. Although previous research has been mainly value-centered in explaining how culture influences work outcomes, this study highlights

that not only organizational members' internal values, but also their shared norms and constraints are important to understand the level of variation in employees' innovative behavior. Second, when examining the role of cultural tightness on creativity and innovation, most research has concentrated on country-level tightness scores and ignored the fact that the culture within organizations of the same country should also be taken into account. Third, this study provides support to past studies showing the detrimental effects of cultural tightness on creativity and innovation in organizations and contributes to the related literature by actually measuring employees' perceptions regarding the level of cultural tightness within their work teams. Finally, since there is minimal literature available on organizational cultural tightness in the Iraqi context, this study fills this gap by testing how employees' perceived cultural tightness affects their innovative behavior in the relatively tight cultural setting of Iraq.

The study results demonstrated that organizational cultural tightness decreases the innovative capabilities of the team that may eventually lead to poor performance. Therefore, this study recommends organizations to adopt a less tight culture within their work teams in order to increase the innovative behavior of their members. This study suggests that cultural tightness is detrimental for the innovativeness of organizational work team members and their managers, and a suitable cultural environment should be ensured to boost innovative behavior in organizations.

Innovation is considered a critical element determining the success of organizations. Organizations should therefore encourage the innovation proposed by their employees and make these innovative ideas a part of their strategy. Reward and incentives are good ways to bring such attributes of employees to make a stronger team. For this purpose, organizations should know the competencies of their employees. Based on the results from this study, it is evident that when organizations adopt cultures that are low on cultural tightness, they can come up with more unique ideas, which eventually leads to higher creativity and innovation because employees can then share their opinions without any fear of the rules, norms and regulations of the organization. This will also help organizations meet the ever changing nature of innovations. With the right organizational culture that gives employees the opportunity to convey their original and novel ideas, organizations can better reach their performance goals and overall objectives.

5.3. Limitations and Future Directions

Although efforts have been exerted into eliminating and overcoming flaws while conducting the study, there are always a few limitations in research as it is impossible to cover all aspects in one study. As mentioned above, by adding some well-informed evidence in the literature, the current research has filled some existing gaps in the literature. Yet, due to constraints of resources and time, the study also has some limitations. These are:

1. Theoretical side: The scope of the thesis was limited to organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior within organizational work teams.

2. Area Boundaries: This study was limited to the private sector companies in the Duhok Governorate in Iraq.

3. Time limits: This study was conducted during the academic year 2021-2022, yet at a turbulent time due to the Covid-19 crisis, where employees worked mostly from home and needed extra efforts to adjust to the conditions of remote working.

The small sample size was another limitation of the study, and the reason behind this limitation is that data was collected in a relatively short time. Data was collected from only organizations operating in the Duhok Governorate. So, it might not be representative of the whole culture of Iraq, whereas employees working in different cities may exhibit different behavior due to geographical as well as environmental differences.

Additionally, this study utilized the random sampling method and the study sample consisted of individuals which were easily reachable to the researcher. Due to random sampling and data collection from only a few organizations, the present study could definitely benefit from studying some additional organizations in order to generalize the results. Moreover, because solid situational factors and Iraqi culture in specific have a substantial impact on the results obtained from this study, future researchers can observe the same relationship in other countries to ensure the generalizability of the findings.

In the present investigation, the study sample also consisted of employees operating in the IT sector. Yet, the linkage between organizational cultural tightness and innovative behavior could be further tested in other sectors such as the banking or telecommunication sectors, where innovation is critically important and highly demanded for performing the tasks. That's why, this research could be extended to other sectors in order to validate the robustness of the obtained findings across different sectors.

Another challenge faced during this research related to using two separate questionnaire versions for the employees and their team leaders/supervisors. Furthermore, as is the case in many field studies, some employees were not interested in leaving aside their tasks at hand and fill in the questionnaires, so it was a challenging task to convince them to participate in the study.

5.4. Conclusion

This study examined the effect of organizational culture tightness on innovative behavior in the Iraqi context. For the purposes of the study, primary data was collected with the help of an adopted questionnaire. Random sampling was used for data collection. Findings from the analysis of the data obtained from 120 employees (and their team leaders/supervisors) revealed a negative effect of organizational cultural tightness on employees' innovative behavior, suggesting that adherence to strict norms and regulations in organizations may discourage employees to think differently and present new ideas. Hence, organizations or managers need to develop and build a culture that gives employees the opportunity to think out of the box and bring divergent perspectives to the table. The appreciation of unique ideas may then increase employees' innovation efforts and facilitate organizations' goal attainment.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix - 1: Questionnaire Form



T.C.

FIRAT UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this survey. This study is designed to obtain a clearer picture of how teams function in organizations. You are kindly asked to read the following information and answer the related questions. Please read the questions very carefully and make sure that you answer all of them.

Please keep in mind that your answers will be treated with strict confidentiality, so there is no need to mention your name in this survey. The anonymized data will be used solely for statistical purposes and only the researchers will view your individual responses.

We highly appreciate your kind cooperation and valuable time in completing the attached questionnaire.

Note: If you have any questions, you can communicate with the researchers based on the information contained in this form.

Sincerely,

Researcher

Chalank Hawar Mohammed

Master Student (chalankhawar2@gmail.com)

(Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Yeliz Gedik)

Questionnaire for Staff

Demographical questions

Please answer the following questions with the (√) sign where applicable.

1. **Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. **Age:** _____
3. **Academic Qualification:** ☐ High School ☐ Vocational High School
☐ University (Bachelor's degree) ☐ University (Master's degree) ☐ University (PhD degree).
4. **Department or Unit:** ☐ Production ☐ Marketing/Sales
☐ Research & Development ☐ Finance/Accounting ☐ Human Resources ☐ Public Relations
☐ General Management ☐ Other: _____
5. **Length of service in your current organization:** _____ year _____ months.
6. **Length of service in your current work team:** _____ year _____ months.
- 7.

The statements below relate to you as a person. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. You have 7 response options (1 = totally disagree, 7 = strongly agree). When in doubt, it is best to rely on the first answer that comes to your mind.

Seq	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
C	Organizational cultural tightness (Gelfand et al., 2011)							
X1	There are many social norms that employees are supposed to abide by in this work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X2	In this work team, there are very clear expectations for how employees should act in most situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X3	Employees agree upon what behaviors are appropriate versus inappropriate in most situations in this work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X4	Employees in this work team have a great deal of freedom in deciding how they want to behave in most situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X5	In this work team, if one employee acts in an inappropriate way, others will strongly disapprove.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X6	Employees in this work team almost always comply with social norms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thanks for your participation!

Questionnaire for Leaders/Supervisors

Demographical questions

Please answer the following questions with the (√) sign where applicable.

1. **Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female.
2. **Age:** _____
3. **Academic Qualification:** ☐ High School ☐ Vocational High School
☐ University (Bachelor's degree) ☐ University (Master's degree) ☐ University (PhD degree).
4. **Industry:** ☐ Textile ☐ Food ☐ Wholesale/Retailing
☐ Banking / finance / insurance ☐ Transportation ☐ Communication ☐ Consultancy ☐ Public relations ☐ Publishing ☐ Entertainment ☐ Construction / Building ☐ Health care ☐ Technology
☐ Other : _____
5. **Length of service in your current organization:** _____ year _____ months.
6. **Length of service in your current work team:** _____ year _____ months.

The statements below relate to **the work team members that you lead/supervise**. Please compare the performance of the work team members that you lead/supervise with those of other work teams within the same organization with similar composition, tasks, and customers.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. You have 7 response options. When in doubt, it is best to rely on the first answer that comes to your mind.

Seq	Statement	Well below average	.	.	Average	.	.	Well above average
-	Innovative Behavior (De Dreu & West, 2001)							
X1	This team member develops innovative ways to achieve performance goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X2	This team member initiates improved work strategies and methods.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X3	This team member initiates new procedures and methods.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X4	This team member is developing new ways to encourage innovation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thanks for your participation!