Relationship between Organizational Culture and Strategy Implementation: Typologies and Dimensions

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Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to answer the question of"what is the relationship between organizational culture and strategy implementation" and to analyze their typological and dimensional correlations, so as to solve the problem of some failures in strategy implementation process in this aspect.

Design/methodology/approach - Using a sample of 136 members of Iranian Karafarin Bank, this paper empirically examines the hypotheses that suggest relations between typologies and dimensions of organizational culture and dimensions of strategy implementation.

Findings- The results confirm the hypotheses and unveil the relations between all typologies and dimensions of cultures and components of implementation. Results clear up the key role of flexibility of cultures in strategy implementation process. Additionally, findings verify flexible cultures have to do more with policy formation and structural factors in implementation. Moreover, results reveal the significant correlation between strategic emphases among culture and implementation of the strategy.

Research limitations/implications - The main limitation of this research is to investigate the hypotheses only in a single enterprise and data were collected from one source.

Practical implications - Findings can advise thoughtful managers to consider all dimensions of their organization's culture in order to successfully implement the strategy, simultaneously urge them to lead the organization through flexible cultures.

Originality/value - The significant value of this research refers to its focus on typologies and dimensions of culture and strategy implementation which investigates their correlations. Due to the fact that the subject has not been studied in depth, this paper provides empirical evidence to confirm these relations exist. Particularly, clan and adhocracy culture have more relevance to implementation.

Keyword: Organizational Culture, Strategy Implementation, Typology, Dimension
Paper type: Research Paper

Introduction

Now days, no organization can go on its mission and last in the world of competition without maintaining a strong advantageous culture. The study on the effects of organizational culture was started in 1980s, today is matching itself with new human values and styles of development which have brought new era in enterprises.

Perez Lopez et. al. (2004) believes there is a consensus on the idea that organizations making the effort to introduce a culture which encourages communication among their members and motivates employees to question fundamental beliefs will achieve a favorable working atmosphere.

The pervasiveness of an organization's culture requires that management recognize underlying dimensions of their corporate culture and its impact on employee-related variables such as satisfaction, commitment, cohesion, strategy implementation, performance, among others (Daulatrum B. Lund, 2003).

Many studies have tried to prepare some conceptual models and test the effect of organizational culture (Daulatrum B. Lund, 2003; Mehta and R.Krishnan, 2004; Zabid and Sambasivan, 2004; Navanjo-Valencia et. al., 2011). A noticeable influence of a powerful culture clears up on the subject of strategy implementation. As well as the formulation of a strategy seems critical, its execution should be considered vital. Only organizations which implement almost all their strategy achieve good records on profitability. However, only a few studied implicitly the effect of culture on strategy implementation (SakuMantere, 2000; Van Der Maas, 2008).

Therefore, with the importance of culture as a unifying and encouraging factor, it has to be considered in the implementation process. Thus, it is a must to measure which kinds of cultures will help organization implement its strategic objectives. Also, it is necessary to find out the effects of culture's components on strategy implementation. Considering literature and the role of modern social and personal values, we estimate organizations validating flexibility versus stability and adaptability versus refusal gain more advantages out of their cultures through implementation process. This will help managers and decision-makers build up a productive environment for the personnel consequently promote outputs in strategy implementation with higher degrees of productivity. In order to classify organizational cultures, Cameron and Quinn (1999) proposed a model of four-type cultures. Using this typology, we are able to clarify the relations between different cultures and strategy implementation.

The present study first reviews the literature. Then, we empirically examine the relationship between organizational culture types and strategy implementation. We also investigate the amount of influence for each type on the implementation dimensions. Another beneficial investigation is held to clarify the components of organization's culture on strategy implementation. Finally, we prepare some fruitful discussions.

Literal Review

Organizational Culture

The researches on the subject of organizational culture and its effect on other organizational variables became widespread during 1980s. Lund (2003) alludes to the fact that "the 1980s witnessed a surge in popularity to examine the concept of organizational culture as managers became increasingly aware of the ways that an organizational culture can affect employees and organizations". Between 1983 and 1986 most of the leading journals within the field have dedicated special issues to this topic (Alvesson, 1990) and brought up many definitions for this notable issue. Organizational culture is defined as "beliefs, assumptions, and values that members of a group share about rules of conduct, leadership styles, administrative procedures, ritual, and customs" (Schein, 1990, 1992, 1995; Mintzberg, 1990; Mehta and Krishnan, 2004). Also, it has been mentioned "the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms"(Kilmann et. al., 1985; Lund, 2003), "the human invention that creates solidarity and meaning and inspires commitment and productivity" (Deal, 1986; Lund, 2003), a "system of shared values and beliefs that interacts with a

company's people, organizational structure, and control systems to produce behavioral norms"(Uttal, 1093; Lund, 2003). Dodek et al., (2010) remark "culture is to an organization what personality is to the individual- a hidden, yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilization". We perceived there is no consensus on comprehensive definition .in accordance with Mary Jo Hatch and TammarZilber (2012), cultures cannot be accurately or completely described at all. Even so, all the definitions are close in the notion they convey and bring us to define organizational culture: A of beliefs and shared values that unifies members of an organization and consolidates them under the cover of potent behavioral norms and rules.

Cultures can be categorized in a spectrum of weak to strong cultures. Lee (1984) and Mehta and Krishnan (2004) suggest that successful companies apparently have strong cultures. Dauber, Fink and Yolles (2012) considers the key role of external environments as "all elements outside the boundary of the organization" (Daft, 2009) to which an organization needs to adapt (Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976). Aten and Howard-Grenville(2011) imply the globalization's influence on organizational culture referring to Majken Shultz who raised the points that globalization has contributed to the rise of some organizational culture that carry significant weight.

It is very complicated to measure a typology of organizational culture. However, we apply Cameron and Quinn model (1999), the Competing Values Framework (CVF). Even though there are other typologies of cultures (Reigle, 2001; Wallach, 1983; Kets De Vries and Miller, 1986; Goffee and Jones, 1998), the CVF is one of the most extended and comprehensive and has been used in many empirical studies (Naranjo-Valencia et.al, 2011; Sanz-Valle et.al, 2011; Lao and Ngo, 2004; Igo and Skitmore, 2006; Obenchain and Johnson, 2004). The Cameron and Quinn's CVF model uses two dimensions to categorize culture into four types (Figure 1.).
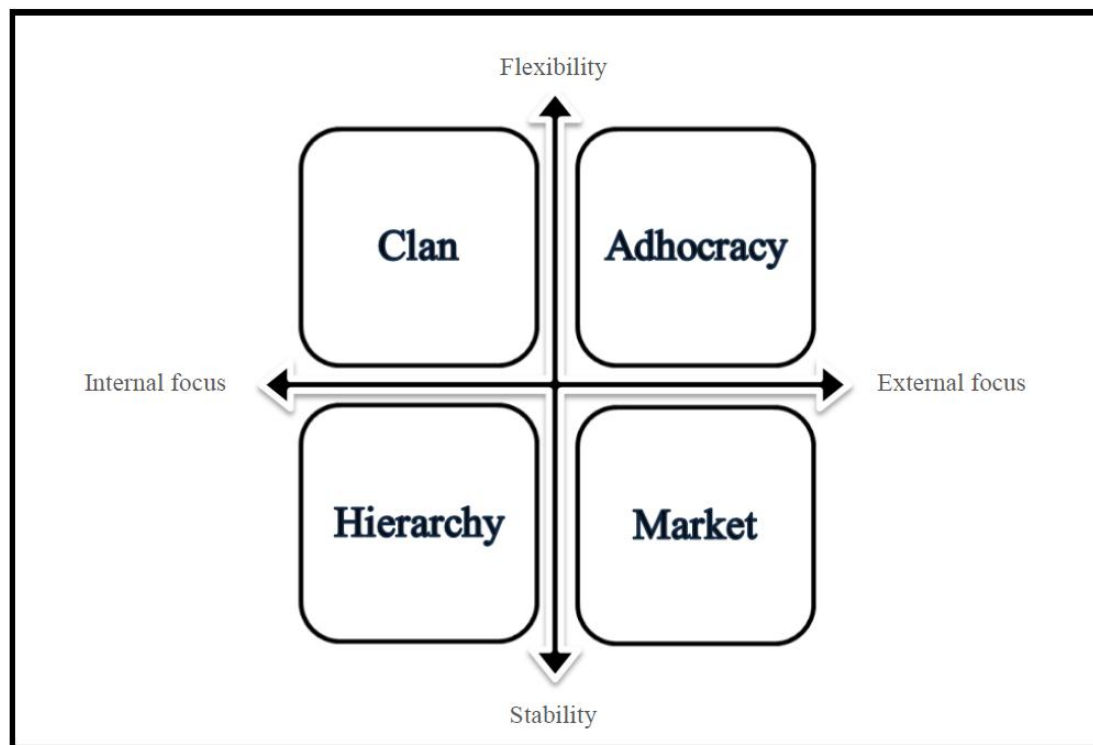

Figure 1: Cameron and Quinn Model of Culture's Typology

By considering two dimensions, stability versus flexibility and internal focus versus external position, Cameron and Quinn (1999) proposed a model(Figure 1) which describes four types of culture: Hierarchy, clan, market and adhocracy.

According to the model, hierarchy culture, based on Weber's bureaucracy theory, focuses on internal efficiency, cooperation and sticking to dominant characteristics. Clan culture (family culture), also focuses on internal issues but its emphasis is on flexibility rather than stability. In this kind of culture, partnership, teamwork, and corporate commitment to employees are regarded as mail characteristics. Market culture is control oriented and focuses on external organization affairs. Organizations with this culture use observation and resistance to reach higher level of productivity and competitiveness. Finally, adhocracy culture tended to external organization matters and emphasizes flexibility and change more than resistance.

Strategy Implementation

A meaningful strategy will not be a trump card expect if is mostly implemented. As a matter of fact, many organizational failures occur due to the lack of implementation not formulation. Considering Johnson's research(2004) that reports %66 for corporate strategy is never implemented, Crittendens(2008) relate the problem to "somewhere in the middle of this strategy-to-performance gap, with a more likely source being a gap in the formulation-to-implementation process". Homburg et. al.(2000) believes "the implementation of strategy is critical. Thus, while managers should be careful to develop an appropriate and effective strategy, they should assign the large portion of their attention and resources to activities and tasks which are related to implementation".

Noble (1999) introduces a chain which leads to implementation of the strategy. This sequence is comprised of communication, interpretation, adoption and enactment respectively. There are also other definitions for implementation. Implementation is "a procedure directed by a manager to install planed change in an organization"(Nutt, 1986), "the sum total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan"(Wheelen and Hunger, 2004), "all the processes an outcomes which accrue to a strategic decision once authorization has been to go ahead and put the decision into practice"(Miller et. al., 2004). I believe the most manageable and straightforward definition of strategy implementation is the process of putting strategic written formula into action and realizing the strategic plans. What it is determined, implementation plays a key role in organizational achievement thorough its goals and, as Giles (1991) implies, gives the organizations significant competitive edge.

Finally, based on our questionnaire, we divide the implementation process into five explanatory dimensions which are applicable in data analysis:
1. Policy Formation
2. Policy Implementation
3. Resources
4. Motivation
5. Structural Factors

Theoretical Framework

From past researches, studies on organizational culture maintained its relationship with performance and effectiveness (Fey and Denison, 2003; Pirayeh et.al., 2011; Ouchi, 1981), commitment and job satisfaction (Zainet.al., 2009; Lund, 2003; Meijen, 2007), organizational change (Abdul Rashid et.al, 2004; Carnall, 1990) and organizational learning and innovation (Naranjo-Valencia, 2011; Lopez et.al, 2004; Davenport and

Prusak, 1997). Alvesson (1990) studied the popularity of organizational culture. He concluded that culture can be used as a tool for achieving performance. Mehta and Krishnan (2004) found that strong cultures help leaders be more charismatic and influential. Organizational culture seemed to have some substantial influence on organization's strategy (Green, 1988; Bates et.al., 1995, Mantere, 2000; Van Der Maas, 2008; Van Buul, 2010). Bates (1995) suggests business strategy and organizational culture are essentially synonymous. Green (1988) introduces strategy as a product of culture. However, the relationship between culture and strategy receives very limited research attention, actually remains uncovered. According to Buul (2010), a fundamental part of managing strategy implementation process should take into account organizational culture as a powerful aspect of status quo (Van Der Maas, 2008; Barret, 2004). What the literature has not clarified is which types of cultures strengthen or undermine the implementation process. Also, there is lack of empirical study on this subject. However, due to previously mentioned researches, we are sure to claim there is a significant relation between the organizational culture and strategy implementation:

H1: Organizational culture will have a significant relationship with strategy implementation.
In order to clarify the relevance of each type of culture to strategy implementation, we use Cameron and Quinn model (1999) and investigate every culture's relationship with implementation process. Since we live in communication age, technological changes occur more rapidly than they are supposed. As to globalization, boundaries are fading away. Also, freedom is becoming the main human value and people are less tended to be controlled. Considering all mentioned, we estimate cultures with more flexibility have more to do with implementation. In this way, we suppose all types of cultures are related to strategy implementation, but probably with different coefficients. Thus we basically hypothesize:

  H1a: Clanculture will have a significant relationship with strategy implementation.
  H1b: Adhocracy culture will have a significant relationship with strategy implementation.
  H1c: Market culture will have a significant relationship with strategy implementation.
  H1d: Hierarchy culture will have a significant relationship with strategy implementation.

Considering these hypotheses, we reach to a theoretical model (Figure 2.).
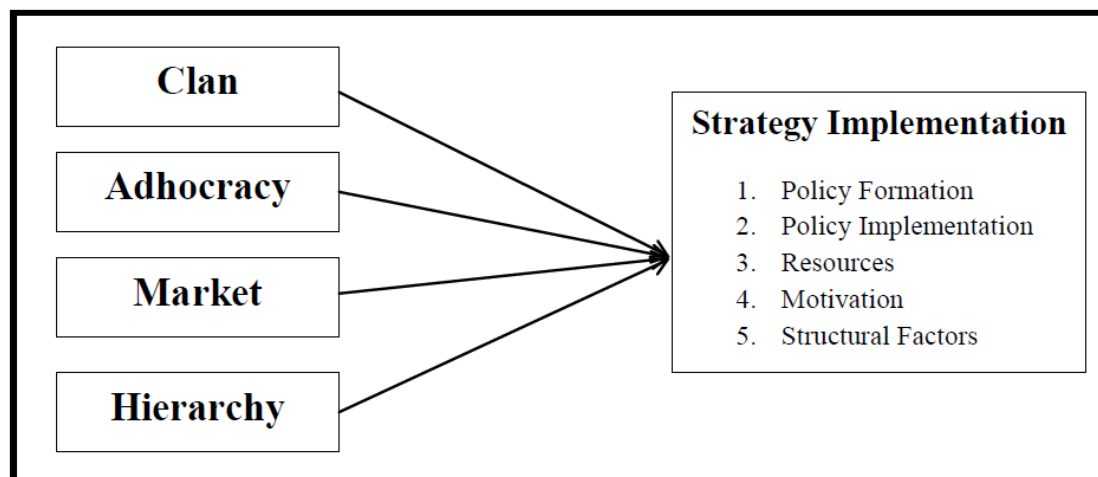

Figure 2: Theoretical Model

We apply OCAI (Cameron and Quinn, 1999) instrument to test our claims. This accepted questionnaire describes the typology of cultures by six dimensions:
1.   Dominant Characteristics
2.   Organizational Leaders
3.   Management of Employees
4.   Organizational Glue
5.   Strategic Emphases
6.   Criteria of Success

This brings us to another conceptual model (Figure 3). We then bring up an innovative hypothesis (H2) which persuasively supports H1:
H2: All dimensions of organization's culture are significantly related to strategy implementation.

As to the aim of this research to examine the relations between organizational culture and strategy implementation, it is logically inferred that the most credible correlation will occur between strategic emphases and implementation of the strategy. Thus we suppose:
H2a: There is a highly significant relation between strategic emphases in organization's culture and the strategy implementation.
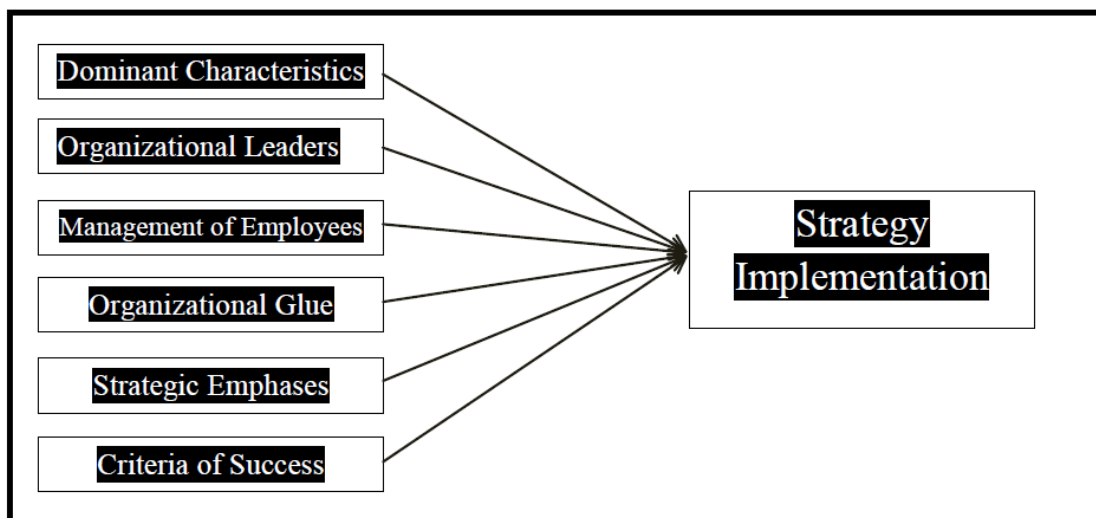

Figure 3: Dimensional Model of Culture

Methodology
Data collection and sample
This research is a survey to investigate relationship between typologies and dimensions of organizational culture and strategy implementation in Iranian Karafarin Bank. The bank is very eager to stick out in banking system with modern structures and active personnel.
The population embodies 210 members i.e. managers and experts in headquarters of the bank. Calculating by Cochran formula, we have reached the number of 136 to make the sample by random. Therefore 136 questionnaires have distributed in all departments of the bank. 101 respondents completely returned their questionnaires (representing a response rate of 74.3 percent) which all are usable for data analysis.

As to random distribution of questionnaires, we did not eliminate any department and no restriction held on handling process. So the sample includes a comprehensive body of respondents in a variety of job responsibilities, preparing no considerable limitations on research process and findings.

Measures
Organizational culture was measured using Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) developed by Cameron and Quinn (1999). It has been applied in many previous studies (Deshpande et. al., 1993; Obenchain, 2002; Lau and Ngo, 2004; Raquel Sanz-Valle et. al., 2011; Juliu C. Naranjo-Valencia et. al., 2011). We used all six dimensions of the questionnaire: dominant characteristics, organizational leaders, management of employees, organizational glue, strategic emphases, criteria of success. The questionnaire organized 24 items into six parts with for descriptions in each part which defines to four types of cultures. In case of *strategy implementation*, we applied a self-organized questionnaire composed 19 questions in five dimensions: Policy formation, Policy implementation, resources, motivation, structural factors. For both, perceptions of respondents were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1=strong disagreement to 5=strong agreement) with $\alpha = 0.957$.

Analysis
The sample was tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov technique and show up to be a non-normal population. Thus, non-parametric Spearman rho was used to obtain correlation coefficients between typologies of cultures and strategy implementation. Then, the same procedure was held to realize correlations between the typologies and dimensions of strategy implementation. Finally, coefficients for relevance between components of the culture and implementation of the strategy of the organization were brightened.

Results
Our findings prove the main hypothesis which claims there is a meaningful relationship between organizational culture and strategy implementation (H1). Results show all types of organizational cultures have significant relations with implementation process (Table 1), but the extent of these influences vary from the most effective (Clan culture) to the less effective (Hierarchy Culture).

Table 1: Correlations between types of cultures and strategy implementation

			Strategy Implementation
Spearman's rho	Clan	Correlation Coefficient	.656**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	101
	Adhocracy	Correlation Coefficient	.645**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	101
	Market	Correlation Coefficient	.540**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	101
	Hierarchy	Correlation Coefficient	.495**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	101

In terms of the hypotheses, the findings support H1a showing clan culture effects significantly on strategy implementation (CC=.565, Sig=.000). The findings also provide support for H1b which suggests that adhocracy culture is positively associated to strategy implementation (CC=.645, Sig=.000).

Results maintain expected relations for both market and hierarchy cultures. In case of market culture, the correlation coefficient came out .540. The number for hierarchy culture has measured .495.

All in all, the findings implicitly support our viewpoint which considers flexibility as the key factor to implement the strategy. It is confirmed that flexible types of cultures are more associated to the strategy implementation process.

Table 2: Correlations between cultures and dimensions of implementation

			Str1	Str2	Str3	Str4	Str5
Spearman's rho	Clan	Correlation Coefficient	.653**	.562**	.496**	.569**	.613**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	101	101	101	101	101
	Adhocracy	Correlation Coefficient	.619**	.543**	.485**	.536**	.621**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	101	101	101	101	101
	Market	Correlation Coefficient	.499**	.539**	.422**	.593**	.442**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	101	101	101	101	101
	Hierarchy	Correlation Coefficient	.363**	.387**	.380**	.471**	.324**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001
		N	101	101	101	101	101

To be more subtle, we examine the relations between the types of cultures and the 5 dimensions of strategy implementation. The results clarify that all types are correlated to the whole dimensions which we perceive as a strong support for H1. However, the ranges of these relations are different (Table 2). According to the findings, the higher degrees of correlations occur when flexible cultures (clan and adhocracy) visit policy formation (dimension 1) and structural factors (dimension 5).

Results conduct the highest relation between clan culture and dimension 1 (CC=.653, Sig=.000). Adhocracy culture highly effects on policy compilation as well (CC=.619, Sig=.000). Furthermore, there are significant relations between flexible cultures and structural factors. The findings reveal that structural factors receive highest influence from the adhocracy culture (CC=.621, Sig=.000) and the second noticeable effect from the clan culture (CC=.613, Sig=.000).

Table 3: Correlations between the strategy implementation and dimensions of organizational culture

			Char	Lead	Manage	Glue	Strat	Success
Spearman's rho	**Strategy Implementation**	Correlation Coefficient	.582**	.585**	.600**	.684**	.716**	.659**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	101	101	101	101	101	101

Finally, the findings provide support for H2 which suggest that all dimensions of organizational culture are significantly related to strategy implementation (Table 3). In addition, results support H2a and proved the major relation between the strategic emphases and the strategy implementation (CC=.716, Sig=.000). The findings also show the organizational glue has the second large effect on the implementation of strategy (CC=.684, Sig=.000).

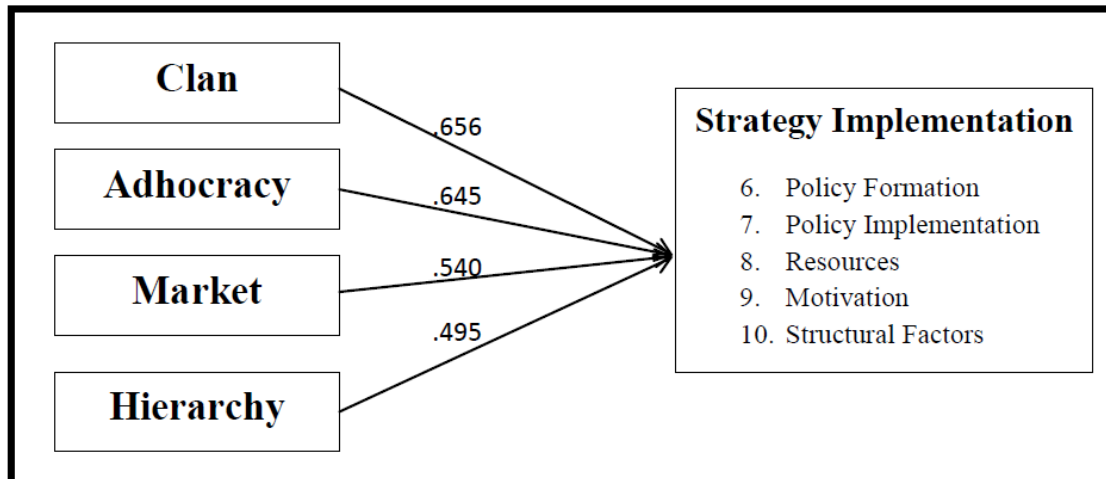Here are the schematic of relations with their coefficients:

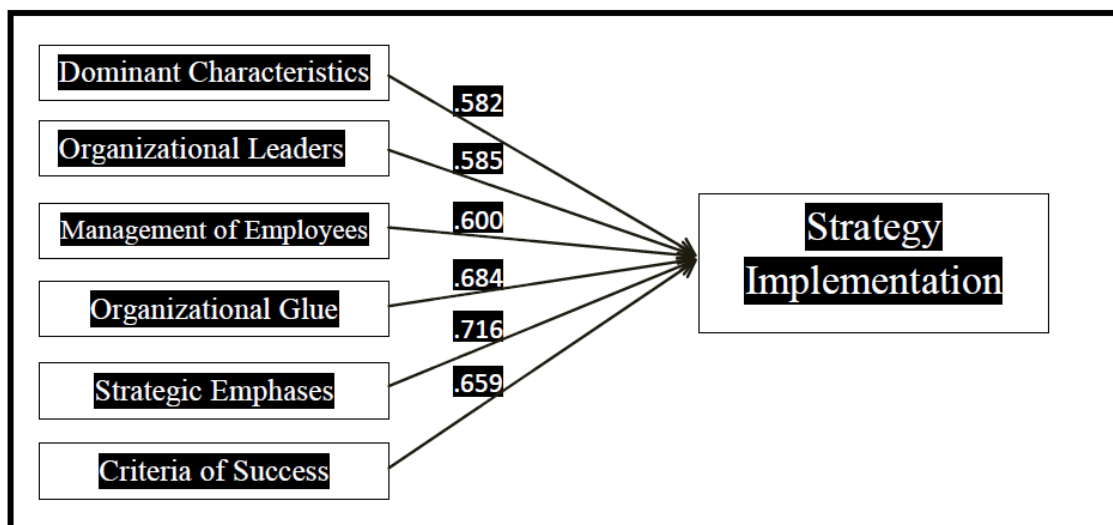Figure 4: Correlation Coefficients for Typologies

Figure 5: Correlation Coefficients for Dimensions

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Discussion and Conclusion

This study focused on the relationship between organizational culture and strategy implementation. The literature remarkably underlines the significance of organizational culture. This paper empirically has investigated that.

Our findings provide empirical evidence for the hypothesis that suggest positive link between organization's culture and strategy implementation. This is in line with previous studies which had considered relationships between organizational culture and organization's performance indicators (Fey and Denison, 2003; Pirayeh et.al., 2011; Ouchi, 1981; Lee and Tseng, 2005; Abdul Rashid et.al, 2004; Carnall, 1990; Naranjo-Valencia, 2011; Lopez et.al, 2004; Davenport and Prusak, 1997). According to obtained results, clan and adhocracy cultures considerably favor strategy implementation. Results also show market and hierarchy cultures encourage the implementation.

However, the study upholds a cogent defense for our general view toward cultures' constructive flexibility. The findings clarify that the flexible cultures have more relevance with the implementation process. A possible explanation is that the present-day organizations are more inclined to behave organically in order to react to unpredictable phenomena quickly. Therefore, flexibility plays the key role in organization's achievement. However, results imply that stability still remains noteworthy.

Another appealing result of this study refers to the components of strategy implementation. Results demonstrate that all types of cultures are related to all dimensions of implementation, outstandingly flexible types to policies (dimension 1) and structural factors (dimension 5).

In case of policy formation, sound relations with clan and adhocracy cultures can be justified by the fact that policies lead the organization's routine activities and forming them is an up-to-date function. Obviously flexible cultures are more adapted to modifications.

Regarding structural factors, our findings uncover elastic-nature cultures (i.e. clan and adhocracy) which prepare amenable surroundings for their employees receive more relevance with structural factors of strategy implementation. The reason may be that the extent a structure tolerates deviations from mechanistic body and present freelance in organizational behavior is crucial in strategy implementation.

Results also provide support for the hypothesis which assumes relations between all dimensions of culture and strategy implementation. This outcome illustrates the multi-dimensional nature of culture, making smart managers aware of the reality that they should account all aspects of culture elegantly so that to apply its productive functions.

Finally, the findings supply empirical support for the logic idea of highly significant relation between strategic emphases in culture of an organization and its strategy implementation. We believe this result comes out of the research's route. It reasonably notifies while seeking to implement the strategy, emphasizing on the strategic objectives plays the paramount role. In summary, our research cleared the typological and dimensional correlation between organizational culture and strategy implementation. Using Cameron and Quinn's CVF model, the results disclose different types of cultures have different weighs in relation to some organizational components, in this case implementation process, which backs previous studies (Naranjo-Valencia et.al, 2011; Sanz-Valle et.al, 2011; Lund, 2003).

Limitations and Implications

We are inclined to reveal some social effects implied by our research. Since the culture of society directly and indirectly affects the organizational culture, it can be inferred that a strong social culture leads to a unified organizational culture which consequently

maintains implementation process. It then makes a circle that upholds culture of the society. Whenever the strategic objectives of the organization achieve, they make symbolic meaningful outputs which showcase the heavy effect of culture on organizational achievement. So, sustainable norms and values are created to end the circle by fortifying a constructive social culture. As for limitations of our study, we limited our measures in an organization in a specific sector. It may be possible that some deviations observe when it comes to hold the same survey in a different organization with different amount of dependency to the culture. Anyway, we believe the results can be generalized because, as literature suggest, organizational culture is a key factor in any single organization.

Directions
Our findings may guide managers to regard their organization's culture as a dimensional phenomenon which has a combined relationship to the strategy implementation, simultaneously urge them to lead the organization through flexible cultures.
For practitioners, it is suggested that they consider dimensions of organizational culture alongside the typologies to reach the best fulfilling results. They can use our findings to base their attempts on flexibility. Also, we strongly recommend the readers to look up to relations between key dimensions of strategy implementation process and the organizations' culture. They should be aware that the results clearly suggest flexible cultures are more associated to structural and formational dimensions. So, giving the idea of our objectives, further practical researches can be hold to test these correlations in other sectors and handle the results in applied management instructions.

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