

“Human capital development as an instrument of cultural transformation”

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HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Abstract

This paper examines the increasingly complex problem of corporate culture transformation in ever-changing, crisis-prone organizations, where conventional management models do not adequately guarantee the adaptability and stability of personnel. It is intended to explore the role of the effectiveness of human resource (HR) training and human capital development as a link in the transformation of corporate culture and an innovation-driven leadership style. CIIRS is used as the underlying theory that builds on the TEI in assessing the relationship between leadership styles and adaptability that develops in organizations. The paper used comparative techniques to examine the CIIRS factors to determine the most dominant culture transformation patterns among 28 organizations participating in the study and operating in the energy, logistics, and service industries in Ukraine during 2024–2025. Organizations with greater TEI values have greater adaptability, more positive and stable innovation processes, and higher employee engagement. Energy sector organizations tended to have the best combination of innovation leadership and human resource development processes. Logistics organizations had the widest discrepancies between training programs and culture. The findings show that insufficient implementation of innovation leadership strategies in HR training processes significantly hinders corporate culture change. This paper finds that HR training effectiveness has mediating and key significance in corporate culture transformation based on innovation management leadership. The results of this study may provide valuable guidance and recommendations on how companies can improve agility by combining leadership and HR training strategies, and serve as a basis for further analysis and research.

Keywords

corporate culture, management, innovation, training,
leadership, human capital development, inclusion,
communication, veterans

JEL Classification

M12, M53, O15

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РОЗВИТОК ЛЮДСЬКОГО КАПІТАЛУ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ КОРПОРАТИВНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ

Анотація

Ця стаття досліджує дедалі складнішу проблему трансформації корпоративної культури в динамічних організаціях, що функціонують в умовах криз, за яких традиційні управлінські підходи не забезпечують належного рівня адаптивності та стабільності персоналу. Метою дослідження є аналіз ролі ефективності навчання персоналу та розвитку людського капіталу як зв'язувального елемента між трансформацією корпоративної культури та інноваційно орієнтованим стилем управління. У статті використовується модель CIIRS як теоретична основа дослідження, у межах якої застосовується індекс ефективності навчання (Training Effectiveness Index, TEI) для оцінювання взаємозв'язків між стилями управління та організаційною адаптивністю. Для аналізу показників CIIRS було використано порівняльні методи з метою визначення домінуючих моделей трансформації корпоративної культури серед 28 організацій, що працювали у сферах енергетики, логістики та послуг в Україні у 2024–2025 роках. Організації з вищими значеннями індексу TEI, як правило, демонструють вищий рівень адаптивності, більш стабільні та позитивні інноваційні процеси, а також підвищений рівень залученості працівників. Підприємства енергетичного сектору показали найвищий рівень узгодженості між інноваційно орієнтованим управлінням та процесами розвитку людських ресурсів. Водночас у логістичних організаціях виявлено найбільші розриви між програмами навчання та корпоративною культурою. Крім того, результати дослідження свідчать, що недостатня інтеграція інноваційних управлінських стратегій у HR-навчальні процеси суттєво стримує рівень культурних змін в організаціях. У статті зроблено висновок, що ефективність HR-навчання відіграє посередницьку та ключову роль у процесі трансформації корпоративної культури на основі інноваційно орієнтованого управління. Отримані результати можуть слугувати практичним орієнтиром для компаній щодо підвищення організаційної гнучкості шляхом поєднання управлінських та HR-навчальних стратегій, а також створюють підґрунтя для подальших наукових досліджень у цій сфері.

Ключові слова

корпоративна культура, управління, інновації, навчання,
розвиток людського капіталу, інклюзія, комунікація,
ветерани

Класифікація JEL

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INTRODUCTION

Corporate culture is a significant determinant of effectiveness because it influences employee behavior and the pattern of decision-making within an organization. Corporate culture affects how an organization responds to challenges and how it changes. The conventional methods of managing corporate culture involve viewing corporate culture as a symbolic and static concept because of the use of disparate and loosely linked managerial approaches. In recent years, organizations have been increasingly finding themselves operating in conditions of instability, crisis, and rapid technological change. It was realized that under the existing setting, traditional culture management models have become inadequate for achieving a stable organization. Crises create uncertainties, and the rigidity of culture becomes a challenging risk for organizations. With an increasingly turbulent organizational setting, there has been a growing emphasis on coordination processes that integrate innovation with human capital development. The increased labor flexibility, skills obsolescence, and heightened need for continuous learning make it mandatory for an organization to reassess how its leadership practices combine to ensure their adaptability. Leading for innovation assumes an overarching importance in setting up conditions that favor innovation flexibility. Compared to vision-based strategic leaders, innovation-oriented leaders promote organizational cultures via policy statements, communicating behaviors, and learning-oriented workplace settings. At the same time, human resource management activities and HR systems have been growing in a more developmental manner, having more direct impacts on HR responsiveness and engagement. HR activities related to training and development, performance management, communication, diversity and inclusion, and motivation influence more and more the change process for human capital of an organization. If these systems emphasize compliance and administration procedures, they can limit the flexibility of an organization in an uncertain environment. Even so, the current literature exhibits a great gap in the joint effect of innovation-driven leadership and human capital development on the adaptability of an organization during and after the unstable circumstances that may arise from crises in the corporation's setting. The major problem with current literature is that leaders, HR frameworks, or corporate culture are explored in different fields without giving attention to the systemic relationship among the three factors together. This is a challenge that is yet to be solved, thereby highlighting the need for holistic analysis methods capable of elucidating the combination effect of leadership styles and human capital development in shaping corporate culture in a situation where instability is present. Such environments pose significant risks for many businesses, where consistency is a core determinant in achieving success.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The culture of organizations has long been recognized as an important antecedent of behavior on both individual and organizational levels. The seminal work by Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as “a set of fundamental assumptions developed through collective problem-solving that underlie periodic adaptation and internal integration.” Organizational culture was also defined by Hofstede et al. (2010) as “a system of shared values that influence how people perceive, think, feel, and behave in organizations.” Recent studies, on the other hand, identify the importance of viewing organizational culture as a dynamic process of adaptation and evolution as a result of environmental uncertainties and chang-

es in technology and organizational requirements (Alvesson & Svingsson, 2015; Denison, 2019). In fact, from this perspective, the efficiency of an organization has become more reliant on leadership and innovation processes than on organizational structures per se. Moreover, recent studies also argue that corporate or organizational culture could be seen as a dynamic system influenced by leadership processes and pressures from the environment, especially in unstable and crisis-ridden environments (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Leadership plays a crucial role in the cultural evolution process. Conventional leadership theories stressed hierarchical power and symbolic communication (Bass, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, current research is more focused on innovation-oriented leader-

ship as a key catalyst of adaptive cultural behavior in organizations. According to Anderson et al. (2014), innovation-oriented leadership refers to a certain form of leadership that fosters creativity and innovation at the organizational level. This type of leadership builds a safe environment with a high level of experimentation and alternative problem-solving approaches that not only allow but also promote failure at the organizational level, according to Edmondson (1999) and Carmeli and Schaubroeck (2007).

The issue of leadership gains vital importance during times of crises and change. Heifetz et al. (2009) argue that adaptive leadership involves the process of mobilizing the collective capacities to provide innovative solutions to complex problems. Empirical studies also support the notion that innovation-driven leadership enhances the speed of knowledge development and helps organizations during times of turmoil (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Berson et al., 2007).

In addition to leadership, HR management practices have been identified as crucial in determining the organizational culture. Recent literature on strategic human resource management identifies that the human resource system is the infrastructure within the organization that influences workforce behaviors and engagement (Wright & McMahan, 2011). The practices encompassing training and development programs, performance management practices, communication systems, motivation programs, and inclusion initiatives have been identified to act as the means through which the organization influences cultural patterns (Noe, 2017; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Petrova & Kondo, 2024). It has been suggested that to cope with these challenges, HR practices must shift from an administrative approach to a developmental and strategic approach aimed at innovation and transformation (Ulrich et al., 2013). Strategic fit research has also emphasized the need for skills and requirements at the employee level to be aligned with organizational objectives to improve performance and adaptability (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Boxall & Purcell, 2016). More recent research has pointed to the increasing role of analytics-based and technology-enhanced HR systems in achieving environments of con-

tinuous learning and adaptability (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016; Marler & Parry, 2016). These findings are especially relevant in dynamic and crisis-driven environments, where organizations face high levels of structural and technological dynamics and where employee agility and learning capabilities become critical. In recent years, research has increasingly emphasized the importance of not only the technological advances required for HR development systems, but also the corresponding behavioral aspects in combination with leadership processes (Lepak et al., 2007; Jiang et al., 2012). Despite the large body of research on leadership, HRM, and organizational culture, a problematic tendency has been highlighted in management research – that of treating leadership, HRM, or organizational culture separately (Yukl, 2013). Leadership studies tend to emphasize studying leader behavior while not taking into consideration the design of organizational human resource systems (Kaufman, 2015). In addition, there has been little modeling of leadership practices in combination with human resource systems in terms of their simultaneous contribution to the transformation of corporate cultures (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). This tendency in management research has been especially evident in crisis situations, in which adaptability and inclusiveness are especially important in terms of organizational survival (Mallak, 1998; Williams et al., 2017). In other words, a review of previous studies indicates that innovation leadership, human capital development, and adaptability within an organization are important. Moreover, there is a gap in including a coordinated analysis and approach that considers different aspects, such as leadership behaviors and adaptability. The purpose of the proposed research is to investigate the role of the effectiveness of HR development training as a linking mechanism between innovation leadership and the transformation of the organizational culture.

2. AIMS

The study aims to explore the mediating role of the effectiveness of HR training and human capital development in the relationship between innovation-driven leadership and corporate culture change. It will explain the possible role of HR de-

velopment processes in achieving corporate culture change from the influence of leadership-driven innovation. Thus, research into the relationship between the above factors should be used to develop applicable theoretical approaches to corporate culture change.

3. METHODS

The design and approach of this study is based on a quantitative diagnostic model developed from the CIIRS model created by the researcher. The model and its factors, including the CEI, RII, SEI, and TEI, have already been conceptualized and validated in previous research conducted by the authors and are grounded in established concepts of organizational culture assessment, HRM strategies, and organizational resilience (Petrova, 2022; Petrova & Pereira, 2024). In this model, the corporate or organizational culture is seen as a socio-economic system influenced by leadership practices and organizational malleability. The empirical foundation includes a diagnostic of the organizational culture carried out in 28 organizations in the Ukrainian energy, logistics, and services sectors in the years 2024–2025. The data were collected through structured surveys of the companies' organizational culture, which were conducted among management and key employees. The survey explored the key aspects of business culture and HR development. Under the CIIRS framework, four composite indices were generated, namely the Cultural Effectiveness Index, the Resilience & Integration Index, the Social Environment Index, and the Training Effectiveness Index. The four indices have all been measured using a common unit, which is then standardized for comparison.

TEI has been identified as a key analytical variable due to its representation of the mutual interaction of innovation-oriented management and HR development systems. TEI includes leadership involvement in training activities, efficiency in human resource development practices, quality of communications, harmony of organizational objectives and employee skills, and adaptability of learning systems. The general equation for TEI Index calculation is as follows:

$$TEI = \frac{L + C + A + S}{4}, \quad (1)$$

where *TEI* – Training Effectiveness Index (TEI); *L* represents leadership involvement in training, *C* denotes communication openness, *A* indicates alignment between organizational objectives and employee skills, and *S* reflects support and adaptive learning systems.

The analytical process included four steps. First, the values of the CIIRS indices were determined for each organization based on the survey data. Secondly, organizations were classified by type to establish sector-related patterns of corporate culture transformation. Thirdly, a comparative analysis was performed of the differences in TEI values and the relationship between leadership behavior and HR development structures. Finally, prevailing transformation patterns were determined by a structured combination of the outcomes of indices, paying special attention to the mediating impact of training effectiveness. All data were anonymized to protect confidentiality. This analysis is based on aggregated findings and does not identify any organizations as participants.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1. Sample and data collection

The empirical basis of this study was the diagnostics of organizational culture conducted in 28 Ukrainian organizations in the energy, industrial, and educational sectors in 2024–2025. The organizations included in this study are chosen due to their operation in dynamic environments, as well as in conditions of crises, and their interest in undertaking an organizational culture diagnostic process.

Data were collected using diagnostic surveys developed using the CIIRS. These were carried out among managers and key staff members who participated in leadership, HR management, and organizational development. All data were collected within the same time period to ensure consistency and comparability across organizations.

Table 1. Sectoral composition of the research sample (n = 28)

Source: Author's survey data, 2024–2025
(CIIRS diagnostic assessments across Ukrainian enterprises).

Sector	Number of Companies (n)
Energy	9
Industry	11
Education	8
Total	28

4.2. Survey instrument

A structured organizational culture survey based on CIIRS was conducted in this study. This scale was designed to measure basic elements of corporate culture, leadership practices, and human resource development. The scale was focused on examining the elements of leadership involvement, HR training effectiveness, communication, goal, employee capabilities, and learning capacity within an organization.

Using the same scale for measurements helped ensure uniformity. The survey design enabled the creation of composite indices used in the analyses.

4.3. Data analysis

The data analysis method used a quantitative diagnostic tool. Indices for the CIIRS, which are the “Cultural Effectiveness Index (CEI), Resilience and Integration Index (RII), Social Environment Index (SEI), and the Training Effectiveness Index (TEI),” were used on the organizations.

The analysis involved three major steps. Firstly, the index values were estimated on the organizational level. Secondly, the organizations were grouped into sectors to reveal specific characteristics of each sector in relation to corporate culture features. Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted to assess the differences in TEI values and their relationship with leadership practices and human resource development systems in the sectors.

Table 2. CIIRS cultural profiles of selected enterprises

Source: Author's survey data, 2024–2025 (CIIRS diagnostic assessments across Ukrainian enterprises).

Company	CEI	RII	SEI	TEI	Interpretation
UGV-Service	100	100	67	67	Strong leadership & environment; moderate inclusion & training
Interpipe Ukraine	100	67	67	100	Excellent training; weaker resilience and inclusion
Edelweiss-West	67	33	100	100	Strong social & training systems; critical resilience deficit

4.4. Ethical considerations

Previous CIIRS diagnostic results and aggregated responses were employed for the study. The results were all presented in anonymous and non-identifiable forms. This ensures that the results provided are in no way specific to an individual or an entity. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, allowing voluntary participation in diagnostic surveys.

5. RESULTS

A total of 28 organizations were used to test the CIIRS diagnostic model. The variance of the CIIRS index is extremely large at the organizational and sector levels, showing variations in leadership practices, HR development processes, social environment, and the effectiveness of the training.

To give a better understanding of differences at the organizational level in CIIRS profiles, three organizations: UGV-Service, Interpipe Ukraine, and Edelweiss-West, have been selected for comparison. The selected organizations represent different combinations of CIIRS index values and have distinctive alignment and imbalance patterns on cultural scales.

The CIIRS scores of the shortlisted organizations are given in Table 2.

The findings show that none of the analyzed organizations performs well on all four CIIRS indices. Every studied company had some strong points in certain dimensions but relatively weak points in others.

To examine broader patterns in the sector, the values of the CIIRS Index were also grouped by sector. Table 3 shows the average Index values for the different sectors.

Table 3. Sector-level CIIRS averages across 28 companies

Source: Author's survey data, 2024–2025 (CIIRS diagnostic assessments across Ukrainian enterprises).

Sector	Average CEI	Average RII	Average SEI	Average TEI
Energy & Oil/Gas	89	78	61	73
Industrial / Metallurgy	100	67	67	89
Services / Finance	68	45	92	90
Education / Vocational	89	78	33	78

Table 4. Diagnostic gap patterns and CIIRS implications

Source: Author's survey data, 2024–2025 (CIIRS diagnostic assessments across Ukrainian enterprises).

Company	Primary Strength	Key Weakness	Gap Pattern	Required Innovation Strategy
UGV-Service	Leadership & CEI	SEI + TEI	Communication & Training Gap	Leadership-supported HR development and inclusion strengthening
Interpipe Ukraine	TEI	RII + SEI	Resilience Gap	Innovation-oriented leadership adaptation programs
Edelweiss-West	SEI + TEI	RII	Adaptability Gap	Crisis leadership training; adaptive HR integration

Findings at the sector level disclose certain differences in the distributions of the CIIRS index. For example, average CEI and RII values are higher for organizations engaged in energy and those specializing in oil and gas. The mean values of SEI and TEI are relatively greater in the organizations with a services focus. The mean values of CEI and RII are relatively greater, while the mean values of SEI are lower in the educational and vocational sectors.

Based on the analysis at the organizational and sector levels, there appear to be three imbalance themes regarding CIIRS: Communication and training fit, Resilience capability, and Agility. These themes occur within a given organization based on differences in CIIRS scores.

The identified gap patterns in the chosen organizations are presented in Table 4.

Overall, no organization was identified in the sample that demonstrated absolute consistency across all CIIRS factors. It can be seen that high performance on individual factors did not relate directly to well-rounded corporate culture profiles based on the factors of leadership, resilience, social environment, and training effectiveness.

6. DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest that the transformation of corporate culture in dynamic and crisis-ridden organizations is not based on iso-

lated areas of excellence concerning leadership, human resource management, and the effectiveness of employee training and human capital development, but rather upon the integration and alignment of these areas into an overall corporate system. In the organizations studied, the data indicate that there exist imbalances between leadership, human resource management, and corporate culture adaptability. The first pattern that has been identified regards those organizations with a strong structure for their leadership, as well as a stable context for their operation, but a less strong outcome regarding the quality of the social environment and training effectiveness. This pattern validates the evidence that a lack of adaptability cannot be remedied by effective leadership if HR structures do not facilitate training, communication, and integration efforts within the organization (Anderson et al., 2014; Ulrich et al., 2013). This study validates the evidence by revealing that stability, achieved by leadership, can be accompanied by a lack of cultural adaptability if training processes and HR practices that prioritize employees do not fully support innovative leadership behaviors. The second pattern corresponds to organizations that present well-developed training systems but less-developed resilience and inclusion capabilities. The results align with the literature that proposes that the quality of training, when developed in isolation, does not necessarily lead to an improvement in resilience capabilities in organizations (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Duchek, 2020). The findings of this study support that training

systems should be developed in contexts that promote adaptability. A third pattern is those organizations that display a favorable social context and effective training processes combined with a weak capacity for resilience. This finding is relevant to the study of organizational resilience because this study shows how a favorable social context and the possibility of improving the organization through training may not result in effective crisis management even if the decision-making processes of the organization's leaders regarding strategic adaptation and management of change are poor (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015; Williams et al., 2017).

Among all the identified patterns, the factor of training effectiveness stands out as the key mediating factor linking the role of innovation-oriented leadership and the process of transforming the corporate culture (Petrova & Pereira, 2024). The results confirm that the role of training effectiveness has the potential to mediate the relationship that links the role of human capital development and the extent to which the leadership is involved in the process, the extent to which there is communication openness, and the alignment of organizational goals with the employees' competencies (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Nonaka, 1994). From a theoretical point of view, the implications of the findings appear to be that integrated

analytical frameworks are more appropriate for understanding the process of culture transformation in unstable environments than the disjointed models of leadership or HR. The findings of the study indicate that the process of culture transformation is the result of the interaction of leadership behavior, HR system design, and the effectiveness of learning, and cannot be achieved through disjointed efforts. In this context, CIIRS seems to provide an appropriate framework for understanding the process of corporate culture transformation, especially in a crisis, where resilience and adaptability are paramount. On the whole, the topic emphasizes that companies operating in unstable environments might require combined innovation-driven leadership and human capital development aimed at supporting learning, inclusion, and adaptability processes simultaneously. In other words, instead of focusing on each cultural dimension individually, companies should emphasize the alignment of their leadership behaviors, human capital development, and HR training efficiency with regard to supporting cultural transformation as a whole. This topic also has the potential to expand the field of organizational resilience studies and contribute to the development of new research on cultural management approaches within crisis-stricken economies.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to explore the role of training effectiveness in the human resource domain as the mediating factor that connects innovation-driven leadership and corporate culture transformation in dynamic and crisis-situational environments. Based on the analysis of CIIRS diagnostic data from 28 Ukrainian organizations, corporate culture transformation is found to be influenced by the degree of alignment of leadership practices, human resource development, and the organization's ability to learn. The results show that high performance of individual dimensions of culture, like the ability to lead effectively, the existence of training systems, and the quality of the social environment, does not ensure overall adaptability when these dimensions lack coordination with other dimensions. This is because organizations with imbalances between dimensions, such as leadership, human resource management, and the effectiveness of the training process, display low adaptability to instabilities and crises. A high level of coordination between innovation leadership and human resource development is related to more balanced cultural profiles.

The study also verifies the role of training effectiveness as the mediating factor, which indicates the level of leadership involvement, the quality of communication, and the fit between organizational goals and employees' skills. The findings validate the argument that the role of training systems is in the strategic application of the leadership-driven innovations and human capital development to achieve adaptability in the organizational culture, rather than being separate HR practices.

In practice, the results suggest that in situations of protracted organizational instability, it would be beneficial to focus on integrated approaches to leadership development and people management that simultaneously promote learning, inclusivity, and adaptability. As opposed to being focused on single cultural interventions, cultural balance assessment methods that evaluate several cultural dimensions seem to have the potential for more benefits. This study recognizes certain limitations. It is based upon a small sample of organizations selected from certain industries in a particular national setting. Other research can be conducted to increase the sample and explore the holistic culture diagnostic process in other transitioning economies affected by crises. The relationship between training effectiveness and other aspects of organizational performance can also be examined.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Iryna Petrova, Liyousa Taghikilanidamavandi.

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Writing – original draft: Liyousa Taghikilanidamavandi.

Writing – review & editing: Iryna Petrova, Liyousa Taghikilanidamavandi.

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