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Examining the Influence of Innovative Leadership on the Innovative Work Environment

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ABSTRACT

The study intended to examine the effect of innovative leadership on the innovative work environment of the Divine Word College of Laoag. To carry out the study, the literature was reviewed and the study used the descriptive research design. The questionnaires were used to gather the data and the respondents were the employees of the Divine Word College of Laoag. The study found that the innovative leadership of administrators and the innovative work environment of the Divine Word College of Laoag is considered high. However, the correlation test found that there is no correlation between innovative leadership and an innovative work environment. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. It just means that innovative leadership has nothing to do with the innovative work environment. The innovative work environment can be caused by other factors not included in the current study.

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Introduction

Innovation is crucial for organizational success, as exemplified by the failures of companies like Eastman Kodak, Polaroid, Blockbuster, and Borders Group due to a lack of innovation (Purcell, 2019; Thangavelu & Estevez, 2022). This emphasizes the need for companies to redesign their business models for sustainability and profitability (Jørgensen & Pedersen, 2018). Viardot (2011) suggests that adapting to the environment and developing new skills enhances customer service and contributes to sustainable business. Grazi et al. (2022) found that business exits are often linked to innovation capabilities rather than just bankruptcy. Overall, innovation is essential for growth, relevance, and maintaining a competitive advantage in the business landscape (Viardot, 2011).

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Managers today require innovation and hard work, embodying an entrepreneurial mindset (Drucker, 2002). This entrepreneurial personality, characterized by innovativeness, is influenced by individual factors such as self-confidence, education, and the work environment (Koellinger, 2008; Athey & Schmutzler, 1995).

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The link between bankruptcy and entrepreneurial failure along with environmental variables is highlighted (Levratto, 2013). In various sectors, including education, innovation is essential for unlocking human resources needed for societal progress (Lee et al., 2020). Innovative education depends on creative leadership and organizational climates that encourage freedom in teaching and learning. The ongoing research assesses innovative leadership and environments in Divine Word Colleges in Region 1. The study comprises an introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation and analysis, and result discussion and conclusion.

Literature Review

The literature review aims to enhance understanding of the study's concepts and theories, contributing to the establishment of the theories to be investigated. The review results are presented thematically, aligning with the study's central theme.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Leadership

Organizational failures often traced back to leadership, as noted by Peter Drucker, emphasizing leaders' responsibility for institutional performance (Hesselbein, 2010). Numerous studies affirm the impact of leadership on organizational performance (Lieberson & O'Connor, 1972; Jing & Avery, 2008; Hurduzeu, 2015; Karamat, 2013). Leadership faces challenges from the external environment, necessitating rapid adaptation for organizational survival. Trait theories propose inherent leadership qualities, with researchers identifying traits such as self-confidence, intelligence, and perseverance (Stogdill, 1948; Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1973; Harter, 2008). Additional traits, like stability and extraversion, contribute to leadership success (Toegel and Barsoux, 2013).

While trait theories emphasize personal attributes, behavioral theories argue that leaders can be developed through training and education, focusing on actions rather than inherent traits (Lewin et al., 1939; Blake and Mouton, 1964, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 1995). Situational and contingency theories highlight the context-dependent nature of leadership, suggesting that leadership style must align with the situation (Khan et al., 2016). Definitions of leadership by Rost (1991) and Kouzes and Posner (1995) emphasize influence and mobilization for significant changes.

In the 21st century, marked by rapid environmental changes, traditional leadership approaches fall short. Innovative leadership, incorporating traits like creativity and adaptability, becomes crucial (Stogdill, 1948; Gardner, 1989; Toegel and Barsoux, 2013). These traits align with behavioral, situational, and contingency theories, emphasizing the need for leaders to judge situations and apply suitable styles. This convergence leads to the concept of Innovative Leadership.

Innovation and Innovative Leadership

Innovation, crucial for organizational success, is influenced by market and technological changes (Suarez & Lanzolla, 2007). Merriam-Webster defines innovation as "the introduction of something new or a change made to an existing product" (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Gorbo (2022) emphasizes the industry's dependence on innovation to meet market demands. The speed of innovation is tied to market and technological development, necessitating innovative organizational leadership (O'Sullivan & Dooley, 2008). Innovative leadership involves creative thinking, idea generation, and translating ideas into new products or services (Baumgartner, 2011). Leaders should foster a creative environment, influencing employees to contribute and collaborate, as structures and processes are not the solution (Barsh et al., 2008; Mumford & Licuanan, 2004).

Innovative leaders stimulate employee creativity, recognizing it as a key factor for competitiveness and enterprise innovativeness (Lv et al., 2021). The leader's role includes monitoring environmental trends, adjusting processes, services, and products accordingly (Amabile & Khaire, 2008). An innovative leader is essential for organizations to adapt, compete, and stay relevant in the face of external and internal changes (Barsh et al., 2008). This contrasts with bureaucratic leadership, which focuses on structures and procedures, hindering creativity. An innovative leader serves as an idea generator and influencer, vital for organizational innovation.

The Concept of Work Environment

The relationship between the work environment and productivity has been a focus since the 1900s, initially emphasizing the physical setup. Elton Mayo's Hawthorne study shifted the focus to human psychological needs, revealing that attention from employers positively impacted performance (Smith, 1987). Over time, the work environment concept evolved to include human relations, communication, and cooperation (Walden, 2004). Definitions vary; Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) emphasize interrelationships, Salunke (2015) focuses on the physical aspect, and Kohun (1992) sees it as the bridge between employees and the workplace.

Recent studies consistently show positive correlations between the work environment and job performance, satisfaction, and productivity (Demus et al., 2015; Jayaweera, 2015; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Rachman, 2021; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Agbozo et al., 2015; Taheri et al., 2020; Pandey, 2017; Kamanja, 2019).

These findings underline the importance of an improved work environment for positive work behavior and organizational success. Neglecting the work environment may impede job performance and hinder organizational objectives.

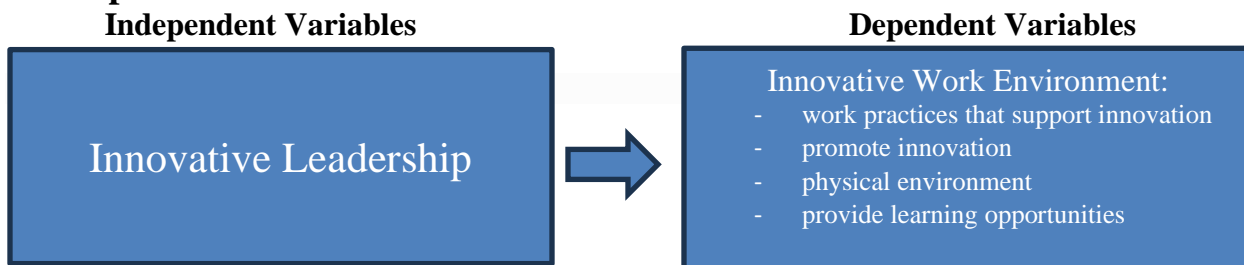
The Concept of Innovative Work Environment

Work environment and innovative work environment are distinct concepts. The former encompasses physical and psychological aspects (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Salunke, 2015; Kohun, 1992), while the latter focuses on fostering an atmosphere encouraging unconventional thinking and behaviors (Rogovskiy, 2021). Rogovskiy's definition emphasizes an innovation-oriented organizational climate (Litwin, 1968; Xu et al., 2022), where trust and cooperation prevail (Johannessen & Olsen, 2011; Khan, 1990). Such a climate fosters an environment where knowledge workers feel encouraged to apply innovative ideas to achieve organizational objectives.

Friendly organizational climates, characterized by trust, reduce stress, enhance satisfaction, and increase work commitment (Farr & West, 1991). Within this context, knowledge workers are more inclined to engage in innovative work behavior, driven by the belief that their ideas are supported (Farr & West, 1991). Intrinsic motivation is identified as crucial for fostering creativity and innovation (Hennessey & Amabile, 1998).

Research further explores the impact of an innovative organizational culture on overall performance. Studies by Ur Rehman et al. (2019) and Aboramadan et al. (2020) find significant correlations between an innovative culture, organizational learning, and business performance. Naranjo-Valencia et al. (2016) also highlight the influential role of an innovation culture on employees' performance. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of cultivating an innovative work environment for organizational success.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Australian Government (2022)

Figure 1: The conceptual framework explains the relationship between innovative leadership and an innovative work environment. The framework suggests that innovation depends on innovative leadership.

Statement of the Problems

The study aims to examine the effect of innovative leadership on the innovative work environment. It specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the innovative leadership of administrators?
2. What is the innovative work environment of the Divine Word College of Laoag in terms of;
 - 2.1 work practices that support innovation;
 - 2.2 promoting innovation;
 - 2.3 physical environment, and
 - 2.4 providing learning opportunities?
3. Is there a relationship between innovative leadership and an innovative work environment?

Assumption

The study assumes that innovative leadership influences the innovative work environment of employees and they can be measured.

Hypothesis

Studies have been conducted on the influence of leadership on innovative organizations (Mihaela, 2021), and innovative culture (Hechanova & Villaluz, 2019). These prove that leadership plays an important role in developing an innovative work environment. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that innovative leadership affects the innovative work environment.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study limits its investigation of the effect of innovative leadership on the innovative work environment to four dimensions namely work practices that support innovation, promoting innovation, physical environment, and learning opportunities. The population is limited to all employees of Divine Word College of Laoag.

Research Methodology

Scientific research demands adherence to a defined research methodology, which serves as a structured process for inquiry (Wilkinson, 2000; Leedy, 1974). The current study aligns with this requirement, employing specific investigative methods, including research design, data gathering instruments, population and locale selection, data gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design of the Study

The study employs a descriptive assessment and descriptive correlational research design, aiming to describe relationships among variables without establishing causation (Ariola, 2006). Descriptive research is utilized to depict profiles, frequency distribution, and characteristics of people, situations, or phenomena, answering what, when, how, and where questions (McCombes, 2020).

The Locale of the Study

The locale of the study was Divine Word College of Laoag in Ilocos Norte.

Population

The respondents of the study are the employees of the college. Since the number of employees is limited, the total enumeration sampling was used and thus all faculty and employees from the college were taken as respondents to the study.

Data Gathering Instruments

The study adopted validated questionnaires by the Australian Government (2022) on the innovative Leadership and innovative work environment.

Data Gathering Procedures

Maintaining research integrity, data collection occurred post-approval from the college president. The researcher, after receiving approval, had questionnaires distributed by a designated representative. Subsequently, the representative collected and submitted the data to the researcher for tabulation.

Ethical Procedures

The study proceeded following examination and approval by the research ethics committee, ensuring adherence to ethical standards and avoiding harm to human life and the environment.

Statistical Treatment of Data

To analyze the data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. The weighted mean determined the levels of innovative leadership style and the innovative work environment, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) gauged the correlation between the two. The interpretation of values followed specific ranges.

<i>Statistical Range</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
4.21-5.00	strongly agree/ Very High
3.41-4.20	Agree / High
2.61-3.40	somewhat agree/ Moderate
1.81-2.60	Disagree/Low
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree/Very Low

Data Presentation and Analysis

This part presents data that were gathered through research questionnaires. The data are presented following the statement of the problem of the study.

Problem 1: What is the innovative leadership of administrators?

Table 1. Innovative leadership of administrators of Divine Word College of Laoag (n=180)

Innovative Leadership Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Make innovation an integral part of leadership and management activities	4.10	A/H
Demonstrate positive reception of ideas from others and provide constructive advice.	4.08	A/H
Establish and maintain a relationship based on mutual respect and trust	4.12	A/H
Takes considered risks to open up opportunities for innovation	4.10	A/H
Consult on and establish working conditions that reflect and encourage innovative practice	4.06	A/H
Introduce and maintain workplace procedures that foster innovation and allow for rigorous evaluation of innovative ideas	4.06	A/H
Build and lead teams to work in ways that maximize opportunities for innovation	4.04	A/H
Acknowledge suggestions, improvements and innovations from subordinates	4.05	A/H
Find appropriate ways of celebrating and promoting innovations/changes	4.08	A/H
Pro-actively share relevant information, knowledge and skills with the subordinates	3.98	A/H
Composite Mean	4.06	A/H

Source: Australian Government, (2022)

Legend:

<i>Statistical Range</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
4.21-5.00	strongly agree/ Very High
3.41-4.20	Agree / High
2.61-3.40:	Somewhat agree/ Moderate
1.81-2.60	Disagree/Low
1.00-1.80	Strongly disagree/Very Low

The data in the table reveals an overall composite mean of 4.06 for administrators' innovative leadership, interpreted as "agree/high." This rating indicates that, collectively, the innovative leadership of administrators is not very high nor low, but falls within the "high" range. When examining individual indicators, each one falls within the same "agree/high" mean range. Administrators express agreement that innovation is integral to their leadership, fostering a culture that welcomes new ideas, maintains positive relationships, and encourages innovative practices. This aligns with research emphasizing the significance of innovative leadership in maximizing employee productivity and enhancing organizational performance (Mubarak, 2014). Scholars like Saythongkeo et al. (2022) and Koziol-Nadolna (2020) assert that innovative leadership significantly influences organizational innovation performance and employees' innovative behavior.

Problem 2: What is the innovative work environment of the Divine Word College of Laoag in terms of:

- 2.1 *work practices that support innovation;*
- 2.2 *promoting innovation;*
- 2.3 *physical environments;*
- 2.4 *providing learning opportunities?*

Table 2. The innovative work environment of Divine Word College of Laoag (n=180)

Innovative Work Environment	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
A. Work Practices		
Consult and establish working conditions that reflect and encourage innovative practice.	3.97	
Introduce and maintain workplace procedures that foster innovation and allow for rigorous evaluation of innovative ideas	3.97	
Facilitate and participate in collaborative work arrangements to foster innovation	3.99	
Build and lead teams to work in ways that maximize opportunities for innovation	4.00	
Composite Mean	3.98	
B. Promoting Innovation		
Acknowledge suggestions, improvements and innovations from all colleagues	4.08	
Find appropriate ways of celebrating and promoting innovation	4.05	
Promote and reinforce the value of innovation according to the vision and objectives of the organization	4.05	
Promote and support the evaluation of innovative ideas within the wider organizational context	4.07	
Composite Mean	4.06	
C. Physical Environment		
Evaluate the impact of the physical environment on innovation	3.96	
Collaborate with colleagues about ideas for enhancing the physical work environment before taking actions	4.03	
Consider the potential for supporting innovation when selecting physical resources and equipment	4.00	
Design, fit-out and decorate workspaces to encourage creative mindsets, collaborative working and the development of positive workplace relationship	3.98	
Composite Mean	4.00	
D. Providing Learning Opportunities		
Pro-actively share relevant information, knowledge and skills with colleagues 1 2 3 4 5	3.93	
Provide or encourage formal and informal learning opportunities to help develop the skills needed for innovation 1 2 3 4 5	3.99	
Create opportunities in which individuals can learn from the experience of others	3.98	
Composite Mean	3.96	
Overall Mean: Innovative Work Environment	4.00	

Source: Australian Government (2022)

The data in the table indicates that the overall mean rating for the innovative work environment at Divine Word College of Laoag is 4.00, denoting an "agree/high" level. This suggests that the innovative work environment is moderately high. When considering individual dimensions like work practice (3.98), promoting innovation (4.06), physical environment (4.00), and providing learning opportunities (3.96), each dimension falls within the "agree/high" range. Respondents affirm that the working conditions foster innovation, workplaces encourage creative mindsets, and there is a welcoming atmosphere for new ideas. This aligns with research by Awang et al. (2019) indicating that an innovative work environment influences organizational learning and innovative work behavior. Jilcha (2020) argues that workplace innovation impacts sustainable development, and Davies and Buisine (2018) emphasize the significance of innovative leaders, teams, and organizations in promoting innovation within an organization.

Problem 3: Is there a relationship between innovative leadership and an innovative work environment

Table 3. Correlation coefficients obtained on the test of the relationship between innovative leadership of administrators and an innovative work environment (n=180)

INNOVATIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT	INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP	
Work practices that support innovation	r	-.056
	(Sig. 2 - tailed)	.451
Promoting innovation	r	-.066
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.379
Physical environment	r	-.080
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.286
Providing learning opportunities	r	-.097
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.197

** Ssignificant at .05 level of significance (2-tailed)

The correlation analysis reveals non-significant relationships between innovative leadership and various aspects of the innovative work environment:

Innovative Leadership and Work Practices

Correlation Coefficient: -.056 This indicates no significant relationship between innovative leadership and work practices supporting innovation.

Changes in innovative leadership are unlikely to cause changes in the innovative work environment regarding supportive work practices.

Innovative Leadership and Promoting Innovation

Correlation Coefficient: -.066

No significant relationship exists between innovative leadership and an innovative work environment promoting innovation.

The level of innovative leadership in the institution does not influence the innovative work environment's promotion of innovation.

Innovative Leadership and Physical Environment

Correlation Coefficient: -.080

No significant relationship is found between innovative leadership and the innovative work environment concerning the physical environment. The prevailing level of innovative leadership does not impact the work environment in terms of the physical setting.

Innovative Leadership and Providing Learning Opportunities

Correlation Coefficient: -.097

There is no significant relationship between innovative leadership and the innovative work environment offering learning opportunities. Variations observed in providing learning opportunities are not attributed to the level of innovative leadership in the institution.

In summary, across these dimensions, the study finds that innovative leadership is not significantly correlated with the corresponding aspects of the innovative work environment.

Results and Discussion

The study reveals a high level of innovative leadership among administrators and an innovative work environment at Divine Word College of Laoag. Respondents acknowledge the integration of innovation in leadership, with administrators welcoming ideas, providing constructive input, and taking risks for innovation opportunities. Sen and Eren (2012) stress the importance of innovative leadership in addressing contemporary challenges, while Alharbi (2021) emphasizes its role in maintaining organizational competitiveness. Abun et al. (2023) highlight the necessity of an innovative work environment for fostering innovative work behavior.

Contrary to expectations, the correlation test indicates that innovative leadership is not significantly related to the innovative work environment at Divine Word College of Laoag. In a school context, an innovative work environment is influenced not only by leadership but also by the acquisition of new knowledge and technology, as noted by Silva et al. (2013, 2014) and Ndwiga et al. (2019).

Conclusion

The study explored the impact of administrators' innovative leadership on the innovative work environment, revealing both are considered high. However, the correlation test indicates no significant correlation between innovative leadership and the innovative work environment. Consequently, the study rejects its hypothesis. A suggested future study could delve into the relationship between innovative leadership and employees' work motivation.

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