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Towards increased innovativeness and sustainability through organizational culture: A case study of a Finnish construction business

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Abstract:
In the Finnish construction business, innovation management is considered to be difficult. However, cultural transition towards more innovative and creative thinking in construction industry can have vital impact on sustainability nationally and globally. There is an urgent need to examine at a more detailed level innovativeness in the construction companies and especially the manager’s abilities to manage innovative organizational culture. It appears that lacks in managing culture and people with difficulties to understand key elements of innovativeness in organizational context seems to be a barrier towards increased innovativeness. The main finding is that the managers in construction industry cannot manage or create culture towards innovativeness. Therefore, there is major sector level lacks in innovativeness that have negative impact on societal change towards sustainability. This paper focus on managing organizational culture to reveal innovativeness in the case company that is vital for sustainability.

Keywords: construction, organizational culture, innovation, sustainability, transition

1 Introduction
In research, innovation is considered to be a very complex and multidimensional process in organization or social system connected to organizational culture. According to Nonaka & Teece (2001) innovation management is a complex process of managing knowledge and information in organizations highlighting the inter-organizational collaboration between internal and external organizations. Schött & Jensen (2016) states that networking benefits both process and product innovation. Kotter has studied that only through leadership it is possible to develop and care for culture that is adaptive to change (Kotter 1998:166). Sarros et al. (2008) states that there are two differing schools of thought about leaders and culture.

The functionalist school argues that leaders are the true architects of culture change through substantive or visible actions they make or through the symbolic roles they play (Meindl et al. 1985, Schein 2004, Sarros et al. 2008). The anthropological view questions about the veracity of leaders’ being able to create new culture because organization leaders are part of exiting organizational culture and not apart from it (Smircich 1983, Meek 1988). It seems that in research the functionalist perspective is in favour arguing that leaders are in a rather crucial position to shape the organization’s culture by shaping the organizational environment (Denison & Mishra 1995, Schneider et al. 1995). Therefore, organizational culture is crucial factor when increasing innovativeness in organizations.

If the social system is something like construction industry with a very diverse and a multileveled nature, it seems to be that there is no single way to explain how innovations will occur or how culture can be managed. Nevertheless, Ogbonna & Harris (2000:780) have found a link connecting participative leadership and innovative organizational culture as a forecaster of organizational performance. Geert Hofstede (2010:24) states that organizations are culture bound and therefore act in a certain way. To be successful, organizations must constantly create new ideas on how to improve their operations towards innovativeness to maintain competitiveness (Porter, 1985; Damanpour, 1991; Kessler & Chakarbatí 1996; Tidd, 2001; Liu 2013; Nagano et al. 2014; Arundel et al. 2015; Liu & Liang 2015). Organization must create diversity and use practices such as open innovation by themselves to be innovative in their own organizational context. This is highly important industries like construction industry in transitions towards more sustainable approaches.
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