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Organizational Culture, Work Flexibility, and Productivity: A Study of Mechanistic and Organic Cultures in the Manufacturing Sector of Oman

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of organizational culture and work flexibility on productivity within Oman's manufacturing sector, focusing on mechanistic and organic cultural orientations. Using a quantitative, survey-based approach with 383 participants, the data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive and inferential statistics were performed to get the results. Results showed a strong positive relationship among organizational culture, work flexibility, and productivity. The mediation analysis showed work flexibility partially mediates the relationship between organizational culture and productivity, increasing the model's explanatory power from 89% to 98%. The findings suggest that while mechanistic culture ensures stability and control, organic culture fosters adaptability and innovation- together forming a hybrid model conducive to higher productivity. The study contributes to organizational behavior literature by emphasizing the strategic integration of flexibility within cultural frameworks and offers practical implications for managers aligning industrial productivity with Oman Vision 2040.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Work flexibility, Vision 2040, Oman

1. Introduction

Organizational culture has a significant influence on employee behavior, productivity, and motivation. As modern organizations develop into adaptive systems, typologies of culture, especially mechanistic and organic, are receiving more interest for their impact on productivity and adaptation in the workplace. Mechanistic culture typically includes aspects of hierarchy, rigidity, and formalization with emphases on control and reliability. In contrast, organic culture includes aspects of adaptability, innovation, and free expression. The manufacturing sector in emerging economies like Oman provides a relevant field to explore this dynamic of culture as organizations are shifting away from purely traditional modes of production to more flexible, performance-driven cultures (Al Harrasi, 2020).

Oman's manufacturing sector has emerged as an important contributor to national diversification alongside the oil industry; however, it confronts ongoing productivity issues (Al Harrasi, 2020). As organizations explore ways to balance adaptability with efficiency, work flexibility is emerging as a strategic mechanism to improve engagement, creativity and performance. Studies show that flexible work arrangements enhance motivation and commitment (Zwick, 2004), but their ability to do so is dependent on cultural environments that support flexible work arrangements. Thus, the relationship between culture, flexibility, and productivity needs to be researched systematically, particularly within industries that remain

partially mechanistic in structure. This study critically investigates how mechanistic and organic organizational culture influence work flexibility and, consequently, productivity in Omani manufacturing organizations. By examining human resource management practices, leadership styles, and workplace environments, this research aims to contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of how cultural transformation can enhance industrial efficiency and competitiveness. The findings are expected to offer strategic insights for policymakers and managers aiming to cultivate productivity-enhancing cultures aligned with Oman's Vision 2040 industrial goals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Culture and Productivity

Organizational culture reflects shared beliefs, values, and behavioural norms that shape how employees perform and interact (Ahmad & Shafiq, 2014). Mechanistic cultures, with rigid hierarchies and centralized control, tend to enhance predictability but may hinder creativity and adaptability. In contrast, organic culture encourages autonomy, innovation, and open communication, which have been found to strengthen employee commitment and productivity (Lee et al.,2008).

2.2 Mechanistic and Organic Structures in Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector often leads towards mechanistic structures due to process standardization and quality control requirements. However, as Drucker (2012) noted, efficiency and quality improvement are interdependent, requiring integration across functions- a feature typical of organic systems. Research in the GCC manufacturing context (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2009) shows that participative leadership and decentralized communication improve job satisfaction and performance. Hence, a manufacturing organization that adopts hybrid cultural models- retaining structures while encouraging flexibility- can achieve both stability and innovation (Sun and Zhao,2023)

2.3 Work Flexibility and Productivity

Work flexibility, including flexible hours, task economy, and remote collaboration, allows employees to align personal and organizational goals, enhancing satisfaction and performance (Aziz-Ur-Rehman et al.,2019). Firdausi and Indiyati (2025) argue that productivity reflects employees' belief in their work and organizational goals, which flexibility can strengthen. In Oman, studies (Saleh et al.,2015; Porkodi & Ghosal, 2015) highlight that employee engagement and satisfaction directly influence productivity, particularly when supported by leadership and training initiatives.

2.4 Integrating Culture, Flexibility, and Productivity

The link between culture and flexibility determines how effectively employees translate autonomy into productive outcomes. In mechanistic cultures, rigid rules may limit the benefits of flexibility, leading to role conflict and reduced efficiency. Conversely, in organic culture, flexibility is supported by trust, shared goals, and open communication, enhancing innovation and performance (Al Harrasi, 2020).

Empirical evidence from Oman (Moideenkutty et al., 2011) suggests that productivity improvements require both structural and cultural alignment. Leadership styles,

communication flow, and HRM Practices must collectively foster a participative climate that supports flexible work arrangements. Hence, understanding the interaction among these variables is crucial for enhancing manufacturing productivity.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

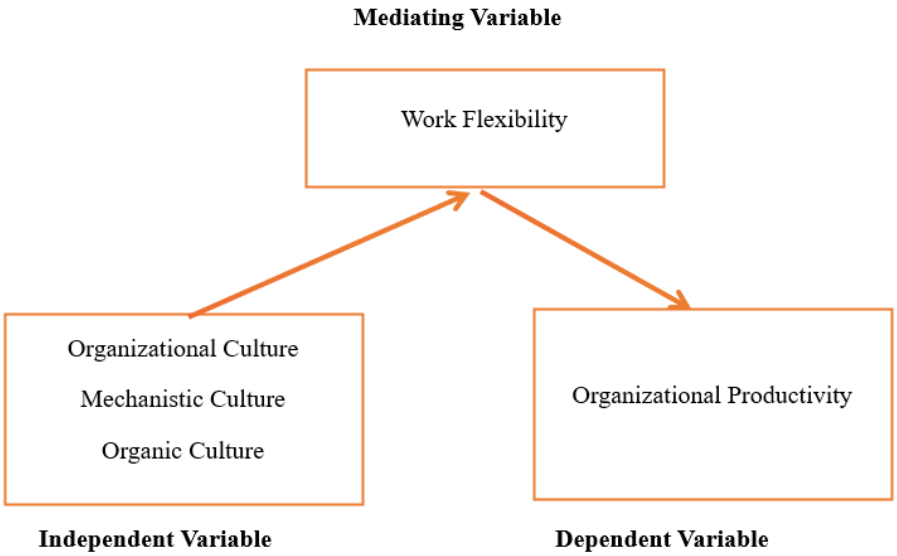

Figure 1: Research Framework

3. Methodology

This study utilizes a quantitative and survey-based design to empirically assess how organizational culture, work flexibility, and productivity are interrelated in the context of Oman's manufacturing sector. The population consisted of manufacturing workers and management within medium to large-sized industrial firms registered with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Using stratified random sampling, 385 individual's representatives of layers and departments across organizations were recruited into the study.

To collect data, a structured questionnaire was developed based on validated scale instruments from prior studies (Firdausi and Indiyati, 2025; Ahmed & Shafiq, 2014; Sun and Zhao, 2023) to measure variables including cultural orientation (mechanistic versus organic), dimensions of flexibility, and indicators of productivity. Data will be examined using SPSS and AMOS using descriptive statistics, correlations, and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships. The present study receives ethics clearance at each of the data collection sites, maintains confidentiality of study participants, and ensures participation is voluntary.

The cross-sectional survey approach is appropriate to understand how cultural and flexibility interact in influencing productivity in the manufacturing sector of Oman, and offer empirical evidence to support strategic human resource management and national industrial policy decisions.

Results

Demographic Profiles of Participants (N=383)

	Frequency	Percent
Age		
18-25	77	20.1%
26-33	77	20.1%
34-41	77	20.1%
42-49	76	19.8%
50 and Above	76	19.8%
Gender		
Male	204	53.3
Female	178	46.5
Organization		
Public	190	50.8
Private	193	49.2
Education		
General Diploma	96	25.1
Bachelor	188	49.1
Postgraduate	99	25.8
Position Level		
Employee	250	65.3
Manager	133	34.7

The table shows the distribution of participants based on their demographic characteristics. The result showed that three age groups (18-25, 26-3, 34-41) had an equal number of participants (N=77). The age sections 42-49 and 50 and higher each have 76 people who participated, which makes up for 19.8% of the whole survey. The relatively even distribution across all the age groups indicates that the results of the present study are valid across a wide range of age groups, thereby providing a reasonable spectrum of the factor in question at all stages of life.

The biggest proportion of participants was men, with 204 men comprising 53.3% of the total number of responses. Female participants comprised 46.5% of the total number of responses. Also, one participant selected not to disclose their gender, making a 0.3% of the total number of participants. This distribution describes men as being slightly diverse, and also indicates an extremely equal number of participants, and assures an equal diversity of viewpoints based on gender.

Out of the total 383 sample of respondents, 190 (50.8% of the respondents) were recruited from government organizations, while the other 193 (49.2% of respondents) were collected from private organizations. This near-equal distribution of government to private sector respondents demonstrates an equal amount of perspectives from each of those person types and provides some indication that we are able to understand the factors in this study across multiple organizations more deeply.

Of the total sample of 383 respondents, 96 (25.1% of respondents) reported an education level of matric. A large number of college students (188 respondents, or 49.1%) were seen in the sample. Out of those students, there were 99, or 25.8% of total respondents, who were undergraduate students. The overall proportion of respondents who have an education degree up through college indicates there is a representative sample of educational experiences that contribute to the sample in this study. The enrollment data also shows there may be a

distribution, or sample, opinion relative to the factors explored in the study; that is to say, there is potential to have more than one vantage point on the factors.

A total of 383 respondents completed the survey, with 250 (65.3% of respondents) identified as workers and 133 (34.7% of respondents) identified as supervisors. This distribution may suggest a slight bias towards the worker sample contributing to the response data in this survey. The data obtained from both of these classifications provides clarity to the various determinants of studies, irrespective of different levels within the organization.

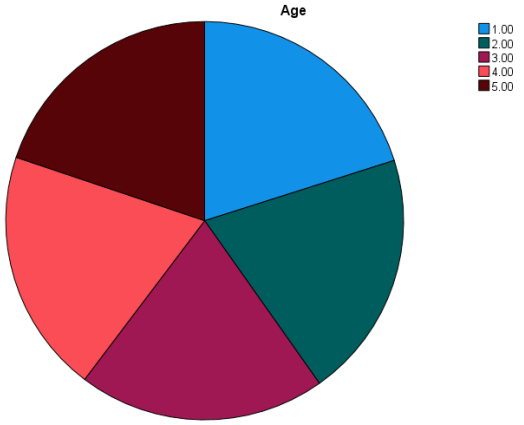

Figure 1: Pie Chart for Distribution of Age

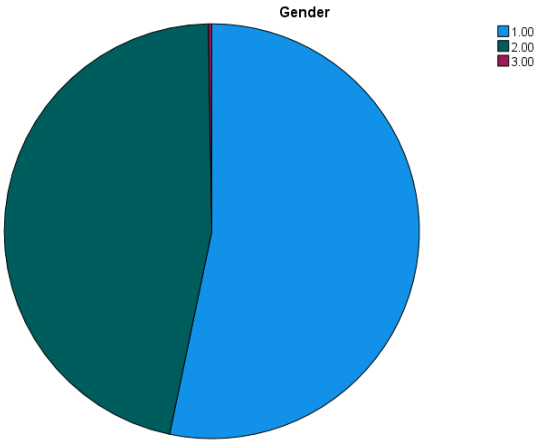

Figure 2: Pie Chart for Distribution of Gender

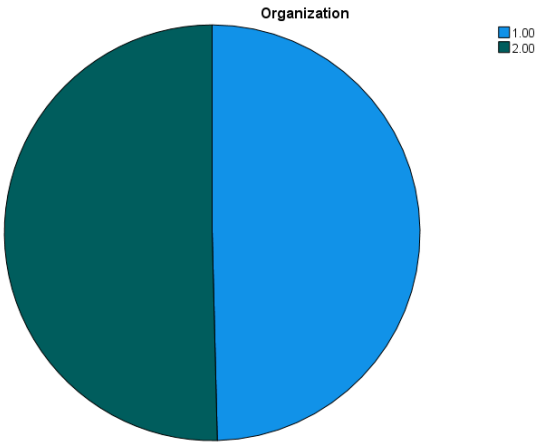

Figure 3: Pie Chart for Distribution of Organization

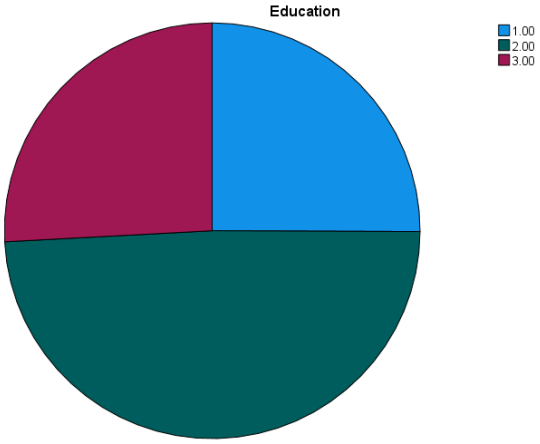

Figure 4: Pie Chart for Distribution of Education

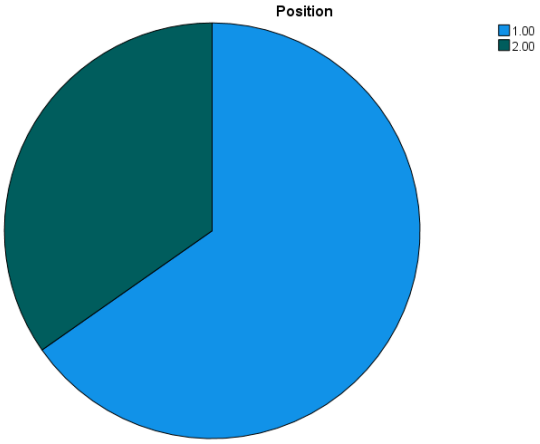

Figure 5: Pie Chart for Distribution of Position

Reliability Analysis

Table. Cronbach Alpha Results	
Variable	**Cronbach Alpha**
Work Flexibility (WRK)	0.932
Organizational Culture (ORC)	0.960
Mechanistic Culture (MCL)	0.838
Organic culture (OC)	0.700
Organizational Productivity (PRO)	0.986

The reliability analysis indicated good internal consistency for all constructs, with Cronbach's alphas surpassing the level of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Organizational culture ($\alpha = 0.960$) and productivity ($\alpha = 0.986$) demonstrated strong reliability; Mechanistic ($\alpha = 0.838$) and organic culture ($\alpha = 0.700$) met acceptable reliability levels. These findings support the quality of the measurement scales for the key variables.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation among Study Variables (N=30)

Variables	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Flexibility		.754**	.855**	.537**	.796**
Organizational productivity			.757**	.715**	.879**
Mechanistic Culture				.220**	.656**
Organic Culture					.848**
Organizational Culture					

The findings of the correlation analysis indicate that statistically significant and positive relationships are present amongst the three constructs, and thus, support the hypothesized correlations between organizational culture, work flexibility, and productivity within the Omani manufacturing.

Work Flexibility exhibits strong, positive correlation with Organizational Productivity ($r = .754$, $p < .01$), Mechanistic Culture ($r = .855$, $p < .01$), Organic Culture ($r = .537$, $p < .01$), and Organizational Culture ($r = .796$, $p < .01$). This relationship shows that work flexibility is strongly associated with an increase in productivity and is aligned with both mechanistic and organic orientations to organizational culture. The finding of a strong relationship with productivity suggests that such a flexible environment provides employees with the ability to organize their work effectively, is conducive to workload management, and is associated with higher levels of motivation.

Similar findings were established with Organizational productivity with strong, positive correlations with Mechanistic Culture ($r = .757$, $p < .01$), Organic Culture ($r = .715$, $p < .01$), and Organizational Culture ($r = .879$, $p < .01$). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the two cultures exert significant influence on organizational productivity (although stronger with organizational culture); however, organizational culture is more about having common values, structure and communication to improve productivity measures collectively.

The positive correlation established between Mechanistic and Organic Culture (+prev - 1) at $r = .656$, $p < .01$, suggests organizations tend to drive a hybrid orientation, combining stability with adaptability. Therefore, the results provide further evidence of a synergetic relationship between culture, flexibility and productivity, where flexible work arrangements facilitate an increase in a positive cultural influence on organizational performance.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation Effect of Work Flexibility between Organizational Culture, Mechanistic and Organic Culture and Organizational Productivity

Variable	B	95% CI	S.E.B	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1					.89	.89
(Constant)	4.932	[2.34, -7.51]	1.316			
Mechanistic Culture	2.060	[1.87, 2.24]	.096	.853		
Organic Culture	1.687	[1.48, 1.89]	.105	.911		
Organizational Culture	-.162	[-.21, -.11]	.026	-.452		
Step 2					.98	.08
(Constant)	15.849	[14.66, -17.04]	.604			
Mechanistic Culture	3.997	[3.87, 4.12]	.060	1.655		
Organic Culture	2.736	[2.63, 2.83]	.050	1.477		
Organizational Culture	-.295	[-.32, -.27]	.011	-.821		
Flexibility	-.651	[-.68, -.62]	.015	-.801		

The mediation analysis evaluated the influence of Work Flexibility on the relationship between Organizational Culture (Mechanistic and Organic) and Organizational Productivity. In Step 1, the independent variables — Mechanistic Culture, Organic Culture, and Organizational Culture — together accounted for 89% of the variance in productivity ($R^2 = .89$). This indicates that cultural dimensions can greatly account for productivity outcomes in the manufacturing sector in Oman.

In Step 2 of the model, when Work Flexibility was integrated as a mediator, the variance explained increased to 98% ($R^2 = .98$), revealing an 8% increase ($\Delta R^2 = .08$) in the explanatory power of the model. This implies that flexibility potentially strengthens and enhances the relationship between culture and productivity. Specifically, Mechanistic Culture (β=1.655) and Organic culture (β=1.477) continued to express strong positive effects. In contrast, Organizational Culture (β=-.821) and Work Flexibility (β=-.801) expressed negative coefficients, demonstrating that there may be structural obstructions or a hesitance towards the culture if there were limited flexibility.

In summary, these findings illustrate that Work Flexibility acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between types of culture and productivity. Mechanistic and organic constructs increase productivity, but when flexibility is more restrictive, the cultural influence on productivity is potentially diminished. Thus, the implementation of flexible policy options within mechanistic and organic cultures increases productive outcomes in Omani manufacturing organizations.

Conclusion

This research thoroughly analyzed the relationship between organizational culture, work flexibility, and productivity in the context of Omani industrial manufacturing, specifically examining mechanistic and organic cultural orientations. The results demonstrate that

organizational culture - mechanistic and organic - significantly influences productivity outcomes, aligning with previous research that distinguishes culture as a significant predictor of employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Ahmad & Shafiq, 2014). Mechanistic cultures provide structure, stability, and explicit processes, impacting employee productivity positively in defined, predictable performance arenas, while organic cultures allow for adaptability, originality, and open communication that support employees' creativity and engagement.

Work flexibility surfaced as a significant mediating variable in this relationship. We did correlation analysis and found that flexibility and productivity are positively correlated, indicating that employees find value in having autonomy and flexible work situations. When the mediation analysis was performed, however, we discovered a more complicated relationship. Controlling for organizational culture, work flexibility and productivity had a negative direct effect. This may demonstrate a potential suppression effect, in which increased variance within culture and flexibility may stall any independent contributions of flexibility to productivity. At a conceptual level, this suggests that flexibility alone does not automatically produce productivity, and that having flexibility is only contributory based on the culture in the work environment. In a high mechanistic environment, excessive flexibility (without templates or clearly defined roles) may create ambiguity in roles and become ineffective. Conversely, where the work environment is organic, flexibility will only serve to enhance the cultural mechanisms for innovativeness and performance.

The findings of the research indicate that Omani manufacturing companies can enhance productivity by developing hybrid culture models, bringing together the stability of mechanistic structures and the flexibility of organic practices, and intentionally embedding work flexibility policies. Those findings have practical consequences for human resource management, leadership, and policy development, suggesting that culture and flexibility are interdependent levers for enhancing productivity. Future research could leverage the longitudinal impact of cultural change and flexible practices, studying specific sectors within the GCC context, to inform strategies for longer-term sustainable industrial growth and align with Oman Vision 2040.

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