

# **The Mediating Effect of Organizational Culture between Innovation Capabilities and Organizational Performance of Economic Development Department in UAE: Conceptual model**

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## **Abstract**

A study of literature shows that many studies on categorization of innovation and organizational performance are still lacking. The study therefore seeks to examine how the organizational culture mediates the capacity for innovation and the organizational performance of the UAE Department of Economic Development. A review of the relevant literature is the method used for assembling relevant data. The study found that in previous studies there are various ways to categorize corporate performance. After reading current literature, this study resulted in harmonization by identifying key innovation factors including the vision and strategy, organisation's intelligence, creativity and idea management, technology management and organizational structure and system. In conclusion, this study provides useful information on corporate culture to help mediate innovations and corporate performance to ensure effective corporate performance.

## **Keywords**

Organizational Culture; Innovation Capabilities; Organizational Performance; Mediating Effect

## **1. Introduction**

Organizational performance requires an analysis of the performance of a company against its goals and objectives. This, in other words, involves real results or outputs as compared to the desired outputs. The analysis concentrates on three main results: firstly, value performance for the shareholder; secondly, financial performance; and thirdly, market performance. "In general, the concept of organizational performance is founded on the notion that an organization is a voluntary association of productive resources, including human, physical and capital, in an effort to achieve a common goal (Ali et al, 2016). Those providing the assets will only commit them to the organization so long as they are satisfied with the value they receive in exchange, relative to alternative uses of the assets. As a consequence, the essence of performance is the creation of value. So long as the value created by the use of the contributed assets is equal to or greater than the value expected by those contributing the assets, the assets will continue to be made available to the organization and the organization will continue to exist. Therefore, value creation, as defined by the resource provider, is the essential overall performance criteria for any organization. How that value is created is the essence of most empirical research in management. Conversely, how that value is measured is the essence of this research. The evidence on innovation and performance suggests a positive effect on

productivity and growth, in particular positive impact to the customers (Azar et al, 2017). In addition, some authors found that innovation has a positive effect on the sales growth but not on productivity (Bysted and Hansen, 2015). According to Calvino and Virgillito (2018) who found a positive relationship between the level of productivity and innovation. Organizational innovation significantly contributes to the performance, productivity and improvement of new goods and services and hence competitiveness and growth.

Although it is generally accepted that innovation has contributed to the business performance, companies must adopt some types of innovation over time that enable them to achieve a competitive advantage and enhance their performance (Chen et al, 2015). The organizations that have greater innovation will achieve a better response from the environment, find it easier to improve organizational performance capabilities and consolidate a sustainable competitive advantage. Innovation has a direct impact on organizational performance (Chen et al, 2015).

“The UAE's economy is continuing to rely on the hydrocarbons sector to drive growth, but the nonoil sector is going to become increasingly important, especially in the near future when several major industrial projects will come on stream. In fact, the large projects include the petrochemicals city, Al Gharbia Chemicals Industrial City, which was due for completion in 2015, but also the considerable expansion of Emirates Aluminium (EMAL) at the end of 2014 (Coccia, 2016). In the post 2009 recovery, the major drivers of the non-oil sectors have become trade, tourism, logistics and manufacturing. However, the road of UAE towards a diversified knowledge economy is not completed yet, so the next section will examine the characteristics of a knowledge economy and the ways to achieve a diversified and well-developed knowledge economy.”

However, Government innovation plays an essential role in enabling public sector entities to provide customers and businesses with highly efficient services at a lower cost. The 7 innovation priority sectors in UAE are; renewable and clean energy, transportation, technology, education, health, water and space. Organizational culture represents a system of shared values and beliefs that affect organizational members' expectations, and the ways in which they make sense of their organization and its environments, including its competitive landscape (Hartnell & Doyle Corner, 2016). Organizational culture could be a strategic asset for the organization performance in that it increases the adaptability of and fit between an organization and its environment (Coccia, 2016). In order to capture the complexity of the cultural phenomenon, in this study we chose to include three different cultural types. Coccia, (2016) identified three separate organizational cultures: innovative/entrepreneurial cultures, where challenge and risk-taking are the norm; bureaucratic cultures, with clear lines of responsibility and authority; and supportive cultures, where the work environment is typically friendly and accommodating. The aim of the study is to propose framework for the impacts of innovation capabilities on organizational performance through organizational culture in the department of economic development in United Arab Emirate. Nonetheless, due to the lack of research in literature related to innovation capabilities and organizational performance of economic development in the United Arab Emirates, there is a discrepancy between innovation capabilities factors that affect organizational efficiency. The purpose of this study is to fill the gap by developing a model to understand the factors that influence organizational performance in the United Arab Emirates economic development. Although there are numerous conceptual studies have been tested in extant literature studies are limited with numbers and depth of the analysis (Al-Fadhali et al, 2018). Most of the studies have investigated the relationship between innovations typologies, innovation performance mainly linked with the manufacturing sector (Coccia, 2016). The studies related to the service sector have made the investigation linked with the company business strategies with the perspective of innovation (Coccia, 2016). However, there is less concerned on the innovation capability under-examined within the service sector. On the other hand, most of the researchers Dangelico et al, (2017), have recommended the future study have to focus on the innovation capability and organizational performance.

However, there have been many researches on organizational performance such as; Chen et al. (2015) conducted a research on causality between high-performance work systems and organizational performance, Gunasekaran et al., Dangelico et al, (2017) conducted a research on big data and predictive analytics for supply chain and organizational performance. Vries et al, (2016) conducted a research on corporate social responsibility or CEO narcissism CSR motivations and organizational performance, (Coccia, 2016) conducted a research on organizational climate for innovation and organizational performance: The mediating effect of innovative work behavior, Dangelico et al,(2017) conducted a research on A bridge over troubled water: Replication, integration and extension of the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance using moderating meta-analysis, Forés and Camisón (2016) investigate how information technology governance mechanisms and strategic alignment influence organizational performance: Insights from a matched survey of business and IT managers, Forés and Camisón (2016) conducted a research on HRM practices and organizational performance in the UAE banking sector: The mediating role of organizational innovation, Fraj et al (2015) investigate an ethical climate, corporate social responsibility and organizational performance: evidence from the UAE public sector and also Gunasekaran et al (2017) conducted a research on the determinants of organizational performance: a proposed framework. Of all the

previous research, there is no research conducted on innovation capabilities, organizational culture and organizational performance in the department of economic development UAE, this is the gap this research work set to bridge.

## **2. Literature review**

There are “various ways of defining innovation. First, Hartnell et al, (2016) defined innovation in various aspects such as in terms of the introduction of new goods, methods, procedures, market and structure of an organization, which means a new combination of fundamental resources (Hartnell et al, 2016). Ketata et al. (2015) also defined innovation as a new combination of fundamental elements of production. In fact, innovation is a process of recombining existing things or resources Kontoghiorghes (2016). By and large, innovation is considered to be the process of applying discoveries and new concepts; this process results in introducing new outcomes, products and processes (Chen et al, 2015). Much of the innovation literature has viewed innovation as the process of using new technology to develop new products. However, innovation is broader than this definition, since it may mean successfully applying a new idea in an organization, no matter where it occurs within the organization (Masa’deh et al, 2017). Chen et al. (2004) took a different approach in defining innovation; they believe that innovation refers to the process of newly combining the main factors of production and injecting them in the system. Innovation is about the skills of implementing and managing research so as to use a new technology to come up with new products in the market that meet customer needs. On the other hand, (Masa’deh et al, 2017) views innovation in terms of activities that depend on technical and physical knowledge. Those activities should result in the formation of “product development routines share the view that innovation is not restricted to the procedure of developing a new product, but it can also apply to the development of new processes and strategies, as well as coming up with new business ideas. They also state that innovation activities are not only a result of research centers but can occur anywhere within an organization. "In 2003, Hekmen defined innovation as the knowledge process that has a target of creating new knowledge so as to develop commercial solutions. Innovation here is a process that includes knowledge possession and sharing so as to create new knowledge. The author added that “innovation is the adoption of an idea or behaviour that is new to the organization.” Innovation is all about creating new ideas and knowledge that help business to achieve new outcomes, by improving business structures and processes from the inside to create products that meet market needs.

### **2.1 Types of innovation**

“Innovation is described as a combination of two elements which are invention and exploitative innovation. Dangelico et al,(2017) Said that there are two ways to achieve the principle of innovation which are exploitative innovation and exploration, where exploitative innovation involves using the existing opportunities and exploratory innovation means to search for new opportunities.” “Many researchers show that knowledge sharing is the key success to approach an effective innovation. For example, De Vries et al, (2016) said that innovation is highly depending on the accumulation of new knowledge which as a result facilitates creative solution. Chen et al, (2015), asked for solving all problems when a culture of effective knowledge sharing is available among groups and individuals. In order to get better explanation of effective knowledge sharing, the innovation is divided into two dimensions: exploitative innovation and exploration. Forés and Camisón (2016), described the exploitative innovation as transferred or general knowledge that is used to improve an organization's existing product, processes or services, while in the case of exploratory innovation, as specialized knowledge that forms a basis for the production of new products and technologies. The creation of effective innovation comes from obvious and visible expertise and from the invisible of total experience (Coccia, 2016). As a result, innovation can be improved by sharing the employee tangible experiences and accumulated knowledge with each other. Hence knowledge sharing is also important for both exploitative and exploratory innovation.

### **2.2 Innovation Capability**

There are several definitions of innovation capability, according to Forés and Camisón (2016) who defined it as the level of organization inventiveness. Calvino and Virgillito, (2018), described innovation capability in terms of the connection between exports and innovation capacity. “Innovation capability can be described over a wide scope and at the various levels on which it meets the requirements of a firm’s strategy, adapts to various conditions and a competitive environment. Based on the firms view, innovation capability is considered as essential to firms attaining strategic competitiveness.” “With respect to evolutionary theory, it is considered as critical to firms obtaining and sustaining competitive advantage and enhancing firm performance in a dynamic environment. Innovation capacity involves innovation culture, the capability of internal processes and the capability to comprehend the environment.

Many studies have focused on the organizational phase of innovation. Some studies pointed out the common factors that are shared by innovative enterprises, especially the factors that affect the competencies needed for managing innovation.

### 3. Innovation capability model/framework

Vries et al, (2016) Presented different definitions of innovation capability. Particularly, Vries et al, (2016) defined innovation capability as the ability to continuously transform knowledge and ideas into new or significantly improved products, processes and systems for the benefit of the firm and its stakeholders (Coccia, 2016). Also stated innovation capability as the ability to create new and useful knowledge based on previous knowledge. The definitions of innovation capability mainly explain the significance of knowledge acquisition and creation to enhance the knowledge base and the knowledge application capabilities of organizations. According to these definitions, innovation capability involves all the steps and efforts that firms should consider to acquire knowledge in order to develop successful products, processes or organizational systems. In the same vein, many researchers have either related innovation capability to absorptive capacity to apply a framework that analyses business performance, firm innovation and associated contextual factors. They divided innovation capability into three aspects, as shown in the first part of Figure 1:

- 1) **Innovation culture:** the organization’s culture that embraces innovation culture by encouraging and supporting innovation.
- 2) **“Internal processes capability:** the ability to merge useful information and knowledge from various resources and encourage cooperation to create innovation.”
- 3) **“Capability to understand environment:** the ability to comprehend the business embodiment in order to understand technological and market progression.”

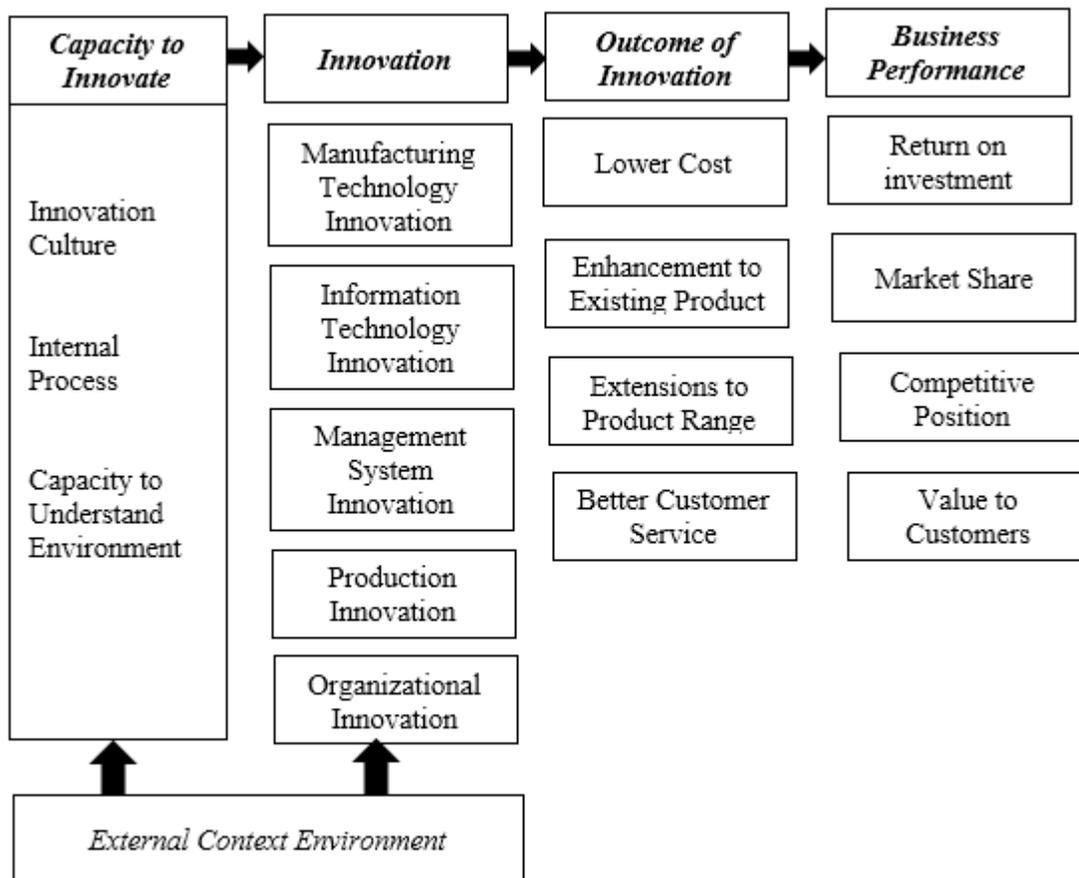


Figure 1: Firm innovation and business performance

## 4. Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research was to use a review of existing literature, this paper explores the theories of innovation capabilities and their implications in the organizational performance to provide useful information to ensure effective management of organizations through organizational culture in order to perceive constructive and/or reactive approaches to help the policy makers to predict the organizational performance indicators.

## 5.0 Results and discussions

### 5.1 Conceptual model development

The authors identified the aspects comprising innovation capability and showed how these aspects can assist in attaining effective innovation performance. They studied the model that focuses on innovation and innovation outcomes in which it forms the fundamental competitive strategy for companies. The link between each aspect of innovation capability and overall performance in case of organizational performance (Department of Economic Development UAE). The author divided innovation capability into seven aspects: participatory leadership culture, ideation and organizing structures, work climate and wellbeing, know-how development, regeneration, external knowledge, and individual activity (see Figure 2).

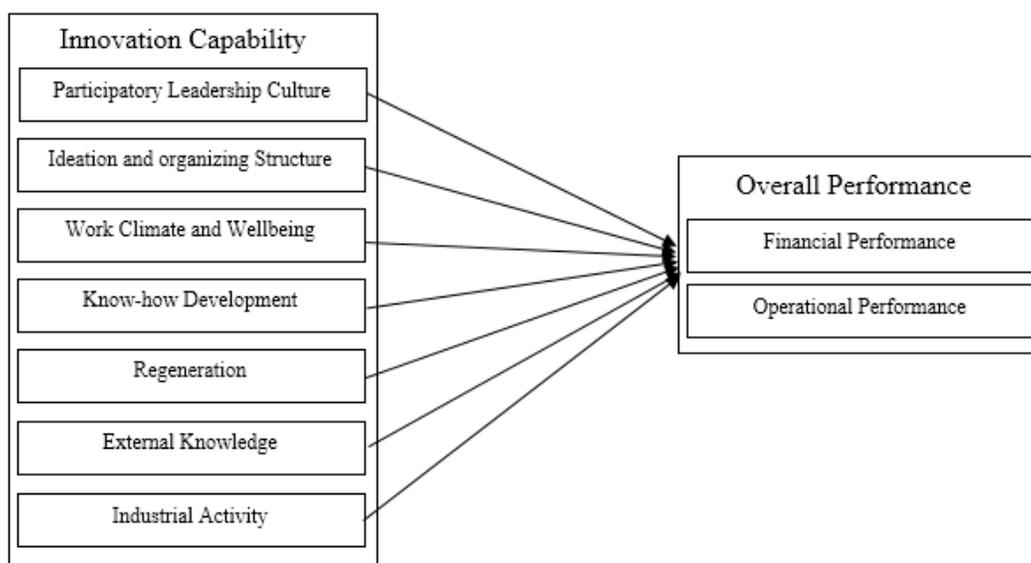


Figure 2: Aspects of innovation capability and firm performance  
(Saunila, 2014)

- 1) **Participatory leadership culture:** This aspect refers to the general environment of an organization that advocates innovation, without omitting the role of leadership in facilitating innovation. It also considers the ability of the leader to lead, advocate and retain innovation practices in the organization. Thus, managers should allow staff to spend time and resources on developing personal skills.
- 2) **Work climate and wellbeing:** “This aspect is related to the wellbeing of the staff and also the work environment that facilitates innovation, such as cooperation and values. The probability of innovation is greater in a climate where employees show greater competence, integrity, reliability, loyalty to the firm, and openness to each other. Another relevant factor is an employee’s motivation as regards participating in the work community, as well as in relation to his or her own wellbeing.”
- 3) **Ideation and organizing structures:** “These refer to the structures and systems that enable successful innovation, in relation to generating innovation, developing, implementing, and finally organizing the work tasks. Thus, specific innovation tools are required to ensure the flow of idea generation.”

- 4) **Know-how development:** “This concerns the knowledge and competencies of the employees that contribute to innovation capability. If a firm is serious about learning and development, then it should thoroughly understand its environment, which includes customers, competitors, and latest technology.”
- 5) **External knowledge:** “This refers to the practice of availing of the knowledge in external networks to support the innovation capability of a firm. This is vital to the firm since collaboration with customers, competitors and suppliers can fill the gap in knowledge that the enterprise itself could not fill.”
- 6) **Regeneration:** “This highlights the ability of an organization to learn from previous experience and to the proper use of the experience to foster innovation and improve operations. An organization should be mature enough to take the risk of learning from mistakes and allowing the learning curve to take its course.”
- 7) **Individual activity:** “This is about people who are internally motivated and are keen to carry out work that will help to create an innovative work environment. Other authors suggest that firms should question their norms, practices and beliefs in order to develop a more innovative organization.”

## 5.2 Relationship between Innovation Capability and Organizational Performance

Innovation is the “most important factor that decisively affects the nature or outcome of an organization’s performance. Stressed that organizations need to have a robust learning orientation in order to acquire competitive advantage. The authors divided learning orientation into four components: “commitment to learning, shared vision, open-mindedness, and intra-organizational knowledge sharing.” They found that the overall learning orientation affects firm innovativeness, which in turn affects firm performance. They also found that the firm’s innovativeness can be measured through the degree of innovation adoption by the company, and on the ability and willingness to change, which is positively associated with performance “demonstrated the effect of market orientation on firm innovativeness through learning orientation; this finding shows that creating customer information and knowledge, evolving and then achieving a marketing plan and being willing to challenge assumptions and values have a positive effect on firm innovativeness. Furthermore, a firm’s innovativeness refers to the willingness to practice new ideas and concepts, explore new approaches and methods, to creativity in the operations procedures, and the rate of introducing products; these all affect positively a firm’s performance.” organizational learning, which is considered as a foundation of obtaining sustainable competitive advantage and an essential factor in improving organization performance. The authors found that organizational learning has a positive effect on organization performance. The link between organizational innovation and performance and found that there is a positive correlation between the two. The connection between innovation capability and firm performance within organizations. “The author divided innovation capability into seven aspects and found that only three aspects of innovation capability have an influence on overall firm performance; these are know-how development, ideation and organizing structures, and leadership culture.”

“Innovation is classified into different categories such as technical innovation and organizational innovation; thus, each kind of innovation has an effect on different domains of performance. Technical and administrative innovation play important roles in improving companies’ performance and contributing to increasing an organization’s value. Therefore, innovating companies are always interested in economic growth and thus can easily take advantage of emerging opportunities and products compared to non-innovating companies (Jimenez-Jimenez and & Sanz-Valle, 2011). “Firms’ collaboration and coordination can be developed by enabling administrative innovation, which in turn results in having better efficiency measures. Technical innovation increases the competitiveness of the firm, which has a positive impact on the outcomes of effectiveness measures. Organizational innovations represent the necessary conditions that assist in using technical product and innovation processes efficiently; thus, organizational innovations are considered as “sources of competitive advantage;” they also affect business performance with respect to lead times, quality, productivity and flexibility (Armbruster et al., 2008). There is a strong and positive relationship between organisational innovations and the overall organization performance; therefore, innovation should be well understood and well managed by managers to increase operational performance in the organization.

Other measures can also affect firms’ performance such as innovation speed and innovation magnitude. The innovation speed is a sign of an organization’s resources and capabilities as well as the swiftness of adopting procedures or products that are in the field of interest in the industry. It significantly affects financial performance, “measured by the average return on assets. Furthermore, innovation speed generates positive results at organization level; it is stated that any increase in innovation speed will result in a decrease in development costs and in turn have a positive impact on product quality, while at the industrial level, it is argued that there is a relation between the increase of innovation speed and market share. Innovation magnitude refers to the number of innovations adopted by

an organization from the available innovative ideas in the market. Most of the researchers believe that adopting more innovations leads to greater benefits, profits and reduced organization cost.

“Other studies state that innovation and organization performance measures are positively related to each other. It has been found that R&D expenses can be used as an essential measure of innovation; the more R&D investment, the higher the growth in productivity. However, R&D expenditure has shortcomings when it is used as an innovation measure. R&D expenditure also does not represent all the efforts of innovation, such as learning by practising, human capital and a firm’s knowledge. In some cases, using R&D expenditure as a measure of innovation is inaccurate, especially in cases of developing innovation through cooperation between an R&D department and universities or between an R&D department and other agencies that pay the R&D expenditure. In many cases, small firms do not allocate dedicated funds to an R&D department, instead they fund all activities together. Finally, it is not always the case that more expenditure on the R&D department leads to better innovation outcomes and better performance, but small innovation efforts can result in better performance.”

### **5.3 The role of Organizational Culture**

The ideology, “philosophy, mutual assumption, expectations, attitude, beliefs and norms that tie an organization jointly. The concept of culture is usually linked with foreign, people plus places those are distant, with convention foreign languages and practices. An organization culture is reformed and crystallized dynamically and continuously over the period of time. It is a complete collection of shared assumptions about a whole work within a specific profession. These assumptions tell about the concepts such as truth, time, reality and space as these effects individuals and groups.

Culture is something that has been done with the people, distinctive quality and approach of an organization. The way things are done and significant non-rational qualities organizations have. An organization is said to have a strong culture, which is mostly defined as they share it on broad basis between the employees. It refers to that part of an organization that is intangible, which is used to give cohesiveness. Culture represent signification. In spite of it culture sometimes totally becomes separated from practical and it just become shared meaning, assumptions, belief, ethics that simply reside in the mind of employees, therefore it can be both a behavior and a belief.

It is keen to understand organizational traditions for the reason that it is fundamental to study what is going on in organization, how to correctly run them and then how to create some improvement in it. Most organizational observers and scholars have find out that organizational culture has a leading result on the product and long-lasting usefulness of an organization.

### **5.4 The Role of Culture in Innovation and Organization Performance**

Organizational culture favours innovation while a stable environment favours imitative. “Now days in the business world the main emphasis are given on the practices of management as to identify knowledge, knowledge distribution, creativity, innovation and on talent development in which organizational culture plays a very vital role in achieving this. On the other hand, organization culture can play a role in simplifying the information processing and reducing the transaction cost, which directly lead to better performance. In the culture that is friendly to information sharing and transferring, the cost of processing information is decreased. Besides, with the increase in available information, the uncertainty or asymmetry can be decreased, which also helps to improve performance. With the shared norms and trust, the behaviors in the organization will be easily predicted and monitored, which reduces the supervision cost. Organizational culture can also maintain the stability and solidarity of the organization, which can reduce the cost for recruitment and coordination. Similarly, Organizational culture functions in these ways and has a direct effect on organizational performance. Furthermore, organizational culture can also give indirect impacts on organizational performance by directly influencing other business activities or organizational factors.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study was set to suggest one of the major ways of managing organizational performance which is through effective innovation capabilities. This study was able to appraise previous studies on this subject matter and found that the key factors of innovation capabilities include: vision and strategy, organizational intelligence, creativity and idea management, management of technology and organizational structure and system. This study believes in the opinion that the mediating effect of organizational culture between innovation capabilities have a substantial and direct effect on organizational performance of economic development department in UAE. This study can be useful to the government organizations in making relevant policies relating to organizational performance by involving all the s organizational culture and innovation capabilities to ensure proper execution. For the purpose of future

research, an empirical study is recommended to determine how relevant each organizational culture and innovation capabilities on organizational performance. In future work, the authors intend to make more investigation the mediating effect of organizational culture between innovation capabilities and organizational performance of economic development department in UAE by using structural model by conducting quantitative study.

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