

## ON TRANSFORMING A TRADITIONAL ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A GLOBAL BUSINESS

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**Abstract.** This study highlights the challenges that a traditional organizational culture faces in terms of its adaptation in the context of contemporary business models and globalisation trends. In our attempt to answer the question – Can a traditional organizational culture and global business coexist? – the constructs as research and innovation, teamwork, decision-making, risk taking, market orientation, and adaptation of organisational culture, are included in the methodological framework. A case study of Montenegro as a developing country in Southeastern Europe was used as a research method. Firstly, a desk review of relevant secondary literature sources related to organisational culture, in general and in the context of globalisation, was carried out. Secondly, the impact of globalisation and international business on the traditional organisational culture in the developing environment, was investigated using a survey as a data collection method.

**Keywords:** organizational culture, traditionalism, globalization, business, adaptation, development.

**JEL Classification:** M14, O15, F60, F63.

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## 1. Introduction

There is general agreement that organisational culture exists and plays an important role in shaping behaviour in organisations, but there is little consensus on what organisational culture is. The descriptions that can be used in the absence of a universally accepted definition are: *Organizational culture is how organizations do things; Organizational culture is the sum of values and rituals that serve as the glue to integrate the members of the organization; Organizational culture is civilization in the workplace*, etc. (Kapidani et al., 2020). It is important because it permeates all organisational constructs and processes in a subtle, intangible way. It is a key factor in understanding organization functioning and it explains internal life of an organization.

This study examines the resilience of the organisational culture of a small developing country, i.e. Montenegro, under the conditions of pervasive globalisation. Montenegro strives to maintain its distinctiveness, while also adjusting to the needs of the modern world. As a nation, it finds itself caught between a strong tendency toward homophobic fragmentation and globalization (Nikčević, 2015).

Montenegro's social and business environment is distinct because of a confluence of historical, cultural, and political elements. From a geopolitical perspective, it is located at the intersection of eastern and western influences. As a result, it has a rich past that has shaped it. The Ottoman, Venetian, Austro-Hungarian, French, and Russian empires have all had an impact on the economy, architecture, laws, education, and lifestyles of the people over the years. Social and economic standards were shaped by the Yugoslav era's collectivist and socialist ideologies and practices. Montenegro, an officially independent state, is attempting to strengthen its national identity by focusing on preserving customs and cultural past (Ćalović Marković, 2024; Laštro et al., 2023; Lisica, 2024). Montenegro's traditional commercial alliances used to be built on trust, loyalty, and mutual support, while corporate ethics prioritize long-term relationships over short-term earnings (Nikčević, 2023; Nikčević, 2024; Nikčević & Pavičević, 2024).

Within this framework, the goal of this research is to build on the understanding of the mechanisms by which organizational culture supports the transformation of traditionally rooted business practices in accordance with global trends. These trends include, but are not limited to multinational corporations' dominance, global supply chains, digital economy, workforce upskilling growth, hybrid work models, and sustainability initiatives (Joos et al., 2025). In other words, this study shed light on the adaptation of local organizational practices to global business and has the potential to fill the existing gap in the literature, as there have been no similar studies in Montenegro so far.

The theoretical background of the study is dominantly based on the triangulation of three well-known organizational culture theories: Hofstede (1984), Handy (1995), and Cameron and Quinn (2011). These theories provide a holistic view of organizational culture change, ensuring that the proposed interventions address well its structural and behavioral aspects.

The paper is structured so that the topic is briefly discussed at the beginning. The following section is a review of literature on organisational culture in general and in globalised setting. Then, the focus shifts to the actual organisational culture in Montenegro, including the needs for its transformation. This is followed by the problem statement, hypothesis, and methodological framework. The subsequent sections cover the analysis of results, discussion and conclusion, along with the study's limitations and future research plans.

## 2. Literature review

The environmental scan or literature review covers organizational culture in general, and organizational culture in the light of globalization, sustainability, innovation, organizational agility, job automating, and leadership.

*Organizational culture.* In the comparative literature, it can be noticed that majority of the authors, who dealt with organizational culture, tried to determine the concept and define the phenomenon of organizational culture. However, there is none universal or generally accepted definition of organizational culture that would adequately reflect all its elements.

Organizational culture represents the way things are done in an organization (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). It is a matter of the way of thinking and behaviour of employees in the organization, on which depends whether and to what extent the organization will be successful in its business. Organizational culture is also viewed as a system of informal rules by which people behave most of the time (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Furthermore, Hofstede (1984) has defined organizational culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguished members of one organization from members of another. Later, the same author

more studiously defined organizational culture as a system of assumptions, beliefs, values and norms of behaviour that members of one organization have developed and adopted through shared experience, manifested through symbols, which are guiding their thinking and behaviour (Hofstede, 2001). A similar definition was given by other authors, looking at organizational culture as a set of values and norms, attitudes and rules of conduct that employees in an organization adhere to when performing business activities (Abdalla et al., 2020; Ashkanasy et al., 2000; Colquitt et al., 2015; Engelen et al., 2016).

Organizational culture includes socio-cultural activities, repetitive patterns of perception, working methods, assessments of organizational culture as well as sets of myths, symbols and common behaviours (Chatman & Choi, 2022; Scott & Allen, 2023; Tulcanaza-Prieto et al., 2021). It encompasses deeper values and serves as the basis for developing shared organisational norms (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020).

Despite the existence of different definitions of organizational culture, all of them to some extent have in common that organizational culture means acquired knowledge and experience (at both individual and group levels) that greatly contribute to the creation of a specific organizational culture.

According to the degree of risk and the time of feedback on the results of the measures taken from the market, one can distinguish: macho culture of strong people, culture of hard work and a lot of fun, culture of risk and process culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). According to the external and internal orientation of the company, i.e., the flexibility of the company, the following can be differentiated: culture of a clan, adhocratic culture, marketing and hierarchical culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Based on the distribution of power and orientation towards people and tasks, Handy (1995) distinguished between the culture of power, roles, task, and support. Starting from the criteria of adaptability, mission, employee involvement, and consistency, the authors as Hartnell et al. (2016) distinguished the following types of culture: mission, involvement, task-, and relationship-oriented cultures. The classification of organizational culture based on employee behaviour distinguished four types of organizational culture: academic, sport's team, club, and fortification culture (Sonnenfeld & Ward, 2008).

As these are different types of culture with their own distinctive features, it is difficult to observe them in isolation.

*Globalization impact.* Globalization significantly impacts organizational culture through various mechanisms like innovation, digital transformation, knowledge sharing, hybrid working models, social connections, multinational corporate practices, and sustainability initiatives. Some of these are addressed in the following studies.

Innovation is a phenomenon that improves a modern organization's competitiveness and enables successful business operations (Dani & Gandhi, 2022; McCausland, 2022). The researchers largely agreed that organizational culture can encourage or inhibit the implementation of innovations. If companies foster innovation, it is advised that they create an innovation culture. This encourages investment in employees, knowledge sharing, developing new ideas, teamwork, etc. Several studies indicated that certain cultures are more innovation-oriented because they have a dynamic and favourable environment for innovation development, including people, who are willing to take risks (Isensee et al., 2020). In the studies conducted in Israel (Harel et al., 2021) and Turkey (Bayhan & Korkmaz, 2021), e.g., it is examined the extent to which organizational culture is focused on promoting innovation. Furthermore, Bauk (2017) and Bauk et al. (2017a, 2017b) dealt with the influence of organizational culture on intelligent, rational digital transformation and innovation in various socio-economic domains in the developing environments.

Lingmont and Alexiou (2020) examined the moderating role of organizational culture in the relationship between smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics and advanced algorithms awareness and job insecurity. The results showed that employees, who achieved a high result in training in these domains, have a lower perception of job insecurity.

Some authors emphasised the importance of knowledge sharing culture in virtual teams in the age of globalisation (Asatiani et al., 2021; Şahin et al., 2024). Although virtual teams allow organisations to integrate skills and talents from different parts of the world, cultural differences among team members add complexity to these relationships. However, several authors worked on promoting organizational agility through virtual knowledge sharing (Budur et al., 2024; Davidavičienė et al., 2020; Syifa & Ahman, 2022).

There are inspiring studies on the organisational culture in the context of the global crisis caused by the Corona-19 pandemic (Balkan & Akyuz, 2023; Lunt et al., 2024; Vázquez-Martínez et al., 2021). How can an organizational culture be created when everyone is working from home and physically apart from one another? Is it possible to bring a physical culture – like that of an office – into the virtual environment’s intangible realm? This is an area where further research is required.

Some research works suggested that there is a strong correlation between leadership and culture, and that leadership creates organisational culture. Namely, a sound knowledge of one’s own culture, along with building up strong, innovative culture by leaders can positively impact business (Aparisi-Torrijo et al., 2023; Cherian et al., 2020; Martinez et al., 2023). Some research findings suggested that organizations with transformational cultures and transformational leadership skills are usually successful. More precisely, leaders in such organizational cultures encourage creativity, teamwork, problem solving, and risk-taking (Bagga et al., 2023).

The issue of connection between organizational culture and the process of globalization has been considered by Vonk and Silva (2024) and Wu et al. (2023), as well. They claimed that thanks to the processes of globalization, differences in business in different cultures are being erased. These authors recommend embracing positive global trends like lower costs due to larger economies of scale, stronger bargaining power, global research and development, knowledge exchange, and human capital. According to their claims, these trends lead to old ways of working and behaving being erased and new ones being established that lead to business success. Furthermore, Behal (2023) examined the broader economic implications of globalization on small businesses through market expansion and competitive pressure. Rahman et al. (2024) examined how small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries navigate globalization. This research highlighted the dual nature of globalization as both an opportunity and a challenge.

Assoratgoon and Kantabutra (2023) examined organizational culture and sustainability. According to them, companies should grow in accordance with the concept of sustainable development – ecological, economic, social, and cultural.

Building on the above-mentioned studies, this research examined the impact of globalization processes on Montenegro’s organizational culture, which has undergone significant transformation from socialism to capitalism over the past three decades.

### 3. Case of Montenegro

Business organizations often struggle to adapt to global processes, particularly Montenegrin ones, which are based on rigid cultural norms that are slow to change. However, Montenegrin companies must be market-oriented in a way to create a market-oriented culture, which is

characterized with investment in research and innovation, teamwork, willingness of employees to accept change (risk), and the appropriate decision-making approaches. Apart from the need to fit into global trends, it is important to recognize that, in addition to its positive aspects, globalization may also have some negative implications.

The *positive* sides of globalization are unhindered movement of people, goods, capital and knowledge; development of education, since the free market encourages employees, who are highly educated; easier access and accessibility to the world in the broadest sense of the word; more efficient economic development, etc. All this is accompanied by a strong development of knowledge and technology (Suminar & Telaumbanua, 2023; Wang et al., 2022).

When it comes to the *negative* sides of the globalization process, the most visible are the monopolies of multinational companies, tax avoidance, structural unemployment, deepening the gap between rich and poor, drain of labour force from transition countries, etc. Large companies have the power of monopoly and manipulation. They offer standardized products (thanks to new technologies) and establish the rules of the single world market. Furthermore, globalization leads to the uniformization of tastes, customs, and habits (Mushtaq et al., 2022).

Regardless of the positive and negative sides of globalization, no organizational culture can develop outside the context of globalization. The key is to recognize the benefits of globalization as much as possible and appropriately incorporate them into the domestic system. Such approach contributes to the formation of flexible and progressive culture harmonized with globalization.

Although in a small national framework, such as the Montenegrin one, one can speak of *small* organizational culture. However, such a culture should not be overlooked in a global context because it plays an important, albeit small, role in the process of globalization. Even such a *small* culture could have a positive impact on the advancement and strengthening of the process of globalization. Additionally, every nation must fulfil the demands of globalisation in a way that allows it to integrate its domestic economy with the global economy (Michie, 2019).

#### 4. Problem statement

The phenomenon of organizational culture is related to achieving business success. It affects employee satisfaction, their team and personal achievements, as well as overall working conditions. The trend of globalization has imposed the need for Montenegrin companies to be market-oriented in numerous segments, including organizational culture.

The inability to understand organisational culture and its importance for business success has a negative impact on the ability of Montenegrin businesses to operate profitably and strengthen the overall social and economic development of the country. Notwithstanding, organizational culture is a very important segment of cooperation between Montenegrin and foreign companies. Montenegro has a chance to achieve better results through smart cooperation that would include national interest, but also awareness of the needs of others. Although Montenegro is a small country – spatially and demographically, it is an integral part of global culture, while its non-integration into it can have negative implications and be an obstacle for an unhindered business at regional and global level. Although Montenegro is a small country in terms of both size and population (area of 13 812 km<sup>2</sup> and population of 620 029 citizens due to Monstat (2020a)), it is an integral part of global culture. Failure to integrate into this culture can have negative implications and hinder business at regional level. Therefore, the main question this paper rises is: *How should Montenegro's organizational culture be adapted to global business trends to ensure their coexistence?*

In defining the hypotheses, we made use of empirical knowledge, extensive preliminary research of relevant secondary literary sources and consultations with experts in the field. By examining the hypotheses, we aim to find out whether and to what extent Montenegrin companies are ready to respond to the challenges of the globalisation process. On this basis, we will either confirm or reject the following hypotheses:

H1: There is reluctance towards research and innovation.

H2: There is a lack of teamwork and concern for employees' welfare.

H3: There is a centralized approach to decision making.

H4: There is change and risk averseness.

H5: There is a lack of market-oriented attitudes.

Each of these hypotheses is based on a sound empirical knowledge of the conditions in Montenegro. Besides, we found support for the reasoning behind the hypotheses in a detailed review of relevant secondary sources. The constructs that underpin the hypothesis are essential to comprehending Montenegrin organizational culture and laying the groundwork for its adaptation to international business.

*Reluctance towards research and innovation.* Globalisation implies constant research leading to development and innovative solutions. However, there is no research without employees, who possess knowledge as a fundamental business resource. Any *responsible* organisation should not only perceive the profitability of investments in research, innovation and knowledge, but also implement them in its business strategies to improve business performance (López-Cabarcos et al., 2021). It is necessary to develop an organisational culture that is oriented towards continuous investment in people knowledge, research and innovation skills. It is also necessary to have employees, who are able to adopt new knowledge and are ready for research and innovation (Rohman et al., 2021).

*Lack of teamwork and concern for employee welfare.* Practice has shown that the bearers and drivers of society and progress are still individuals. However, each individual achieves more in the team than alone. Orientation to teamwork is important for every company. At the same time, the process of globalization emphasizes the importance of teamwork. By working in teams, employees reduce costs, shorten deadlines and bring satisfaction with what is done. Also, teams allow organizations to become more flexible in line with the pace of change in a global context. In that sense, it is necessary to develop a culture that encourages, rewards, supports, and legitimizes teamwork (Morales-Huamán et al., 2023; Pandey & Chitranshi, 2023).

*Centralized approach to decision making.* Globalization has created a different business environment compared to the traditional business frameworks and decision-making methods. Such a business environment requires managers to have a broad knowledge of business trends. Things must be viewed in a global context, to make valid decisions. In this sense, globalization requires that the traditional (vertical) hierarchical structures (decision-making processes) that involve decision-making from the top (without / or very little involvement of employees) are replaced by flexible structures. Flexible structures imply decentralization in the decision-making and involvement of employees in these processes (Schwartz, 2016).

*Change and risk averseness.* Globalization leads to change and the presence of uncertainty and risk is to a certain extent understandable. Nevertheless, some cultures are more prepared to take risks than others (Fischer & Weißmüller, 2024). The employees' awareness of the need to accept changes, in Montenegrin companies, is low. The changes can have positive but also negative consequences on the company's operations (Cullen-Lester et al., 2019; Staszkiwicz

& Szelągowska, 2019). Employees support changes that lead to company development, but this seems more declarative than real. The fear of employees to take the risk of change is evident, because they believe that these changes will personally affect them and cause a bad position in the direction of change or loss of job, reduction of personal income, loss of certain benefits, subordinate position in the organization, etc. It is indisputable that the acceptance of risk (change), regardless of the positive or negative outcome, is an integral part of globalization and modern business. Employees need to recognize the risk of change, accept it, and develop strategies to manage it.

*Lack of market-oriented attitudes.* Globalization requires companies to become market-oriented, which means adopting a market-oriented culture. The ways of thinking and behaviour of employees should be directed towards the consumers in the direction of recognizing and meeting their needs. Recognizing these needs makes it much easier to enter new markets, accept and adjust to changes, and deal with new situations. All this must be viewed in the context of teamwork, continuous investment in knowledge and innovation, acceptance of change, recognition of competition, conquest of new markets and the like (Tabatabaei, 2024). In the direction of favouring a market-oriented culture, the role of the manager is unavoidable. They should recognize employees as a key resource of modern business and permanently invest in their knowledge and training.

To support our main research question in relation to the problem statement, we will outline below some key features of global business trends.

*Global business trends.* Several major themes have had a substantial impact on global corporate strategies in recent years. The extensive use of digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, internet of everything, big data, cloud, and blockchain has allowed businesses to improve customer experiences and streamline operations while promoting smooth cross-border team cooperation. To satisfy customer demand and enhance brand reputation, companies are investing in eco-friendly activities, making sustainability a key component of corporate strategy. Companies have been forced to adjust by diversifying their suppliers and establishing strategic alliances to reduce risks because of geopolitical changes and evolving trade regulations. Additionally, localizing products and marketing has improved customer involvement by considering local cultures and consumer behaviour. To obtain market insights and spur innovation in the global marketplace, collaborative partnerships – including alliances with regional businesses and academic institutions – have become essential tactics (Bui et al., 2025; Dang, 2023; Park, 2024; Velásquez & Rios, 2023).

## 5. Methodological framework

To examine the companies in Montenegro readiness to accept globalization trends, in the period from September to December 2023, a survey was carried out. The research methodology was based on quantitative statistical analysis and comparison with the relevant secondary sources. The survey was conducted in 20 Montenegrin companies – 10 state and 10 private ones, on a sample of 350 employees of different age, educational level and gender. Most of the respondents had higher education qualifications. In total, 400 questionnaires were distributed, but 50 of these were not handed back, so that the survey finally included a sample of a total of 350 respondents. We dealt with the business organizations of different sizes, different types of activity like production, trade, and services at different levels of technical and technological development. Care was taken to ensure that those surveyed had varying levels of professional experience, education, and position within the organization.

The selection criteria for the companies were successful business performance over the last five years and the presence of registrations and licenses in accordance with the law. Managers and employees were selected based on having at least five years of relevant experience, stability and long-term commitment to the company, including strong sense of ethics and public accountability. Companies and respondents that did not meet these criteria were not able to be a part of our research.

To prepare the survey, we became as familiar as possible with the actual, tangible conditions in the companies as well as any potential issues. These activities yielded information that was useful in creating survey questions. The management representatives agreed that the employees would be asked in writing to participate in the study before the questionnaire was administered.

The questionnaire consisted of closed questions that are unambiguous and straightforward. We have tried to steer clear of loaded, recall-dependent, ambiguous, double-barrelled, and positively and negatively worded questions. We believe that the collected data provides the most accurate picture of the circumstances.

The questions were all the Likert's type with five offered alternatives in the answers. The answers were ranked with numbers from 1 to 5 with linguistics qualifiers as 5-yes, 4-mostly yes, 3-neutral, 2-mostly no, and 1-no. The respondents had to choose one of the five numbers to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the offered options.

**Table 1.** The hypothesis vs. statements and control variables (source: own research)

Hypothesis	Statement
H1: Reluctance towards research and innovation.	S1.1 The organization supports professional development.
	S1.2 Continuous improvement and lifelong learn affect the competitive advantage of the organization.
	S1.3 Employees are ready for research and innovation.
	C1 Professional development is important for the organization success.
H2: Lack of teamwork and concern for employee welfare.	S2.1 The organization supports and nurtures teamwork.
	S2.2 The success of an individual and the success of the organization are positively correlated.
	S2.3 The organization takes care of employees in terms of social welfare.
	C2 Collectivism is important for the organization success.
H3: Centralized approach to decision making.	S3.1 All employees participate in decision making in the organization.
	C3 Employees' participation in decision making is important for the organizational success.
H4: Change and risk averseness.	S4.1 As in life and at work, risky situations should be avoided.
	S4.2 Changes in the organization of the company so far have mostly brought only trouble.
	C4 Taking care of individuals is important for the organization success.
H5: Lack of market-oriented attitudes.	S5.1 There is a need in the organization to plan and analyse the past business.
	S5.2 There is enough self-initiative in the company by the employees.
	S5.3 In the company, human resources are recognized as the key in the conditions of modern business.
	C5 Planning future activities is important for the organization success.



The development of hypotheses and related statements is the result of theoretical investigation and understanding of the prospects in the business environment being explored. To ensure the credibility of respondents' answers, we repeated the questions in a modified form and linked them to the control variables that correspond to the following constructs of organizational culture: professional development, collectivism, participation into decision-making, employees' self-initiative attitude, and planning the future.

The connections between the hypothesis, examined statements, and control variables are given in Table 1.

## 6. Analysis and findings

This quantitative research is divided into three parts. In the first part, the descriptive statistics of all variables are examined. The average numerical value of all measured variables related to the hypothesis is used as an indicator of the respondents' neutrality or (dis)agreement with the hypothesis. In the second part, the constructs with which the largest number of respondents agree were ranked, as well as those with which the largest number of respondents disagree. Neutral answers are not considered. The third part of the analysis examined the correlations between the demographic and measured variables in the model.

### 6.1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were carried out on the 13th Gen Intel (R) Core i5-1335U computer (20 GB, 1.3 Hz) in the licensed IBM SPSS, ver. 29 environment. They include mean values of all variables, variances, standard deviation, coefficient of variance, and Chronbach's alpha coefficient. The standard deviation (SD) was found to be within acceptable limits ( $-2 < SD < +2$ ),

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics (source: own research)

Variable	Mean	Variance	SD	CoV	CA
S1.1	4.089	0.921	0.849	23%	0.791
S1.2	4.451	0.916	0.839	21%	0.807
S1.3	4.123	0.936	0.876	23%	0.800
C1	4.234	0.926	0.875	22%	0.768
S2.1	3.237	0.717	0.840	22%	0.841
S2.2	3.854	0.882	1.397	23%	0.811
S2.3	3.669	0.808	0.824	22%	0.870
C2	3.923	0.823	1.046	21%	0.804
S3.1	2.734	0.365	1.863	13%	0.810
C3	2.551	0.441	1.010	17%	0.836
S4.1	3.957	0.913	1.239	23%	0.859
S4.2	3.529	0.621	1.746	18%	0.793
C4	3.729	0.859	0.920	23%	0.743
S5.1	3.983	0.772	1.152	19%	0.766
S5.2	3.537	0.727	1.269	21%	0.761
S5.3	3.920	0.840	1.082	21%	0.764
C5	3.414	0.645	1.258	19%	0.727

as was the coefficient of variance (CoV), i.e.  $20\% < \text{CoV} < 30\%$ . The values of Cronbach's alpha (CA) coefficients are all above 0.7 threshold, which indicates acceptable data internal consistency. The results are shown in Table 2. It is obvious that the mean values of the control variables correspond well to the mean values of the associated variables on which the hypothesis are based.

We deepened this basic statistical analysis in the second part of the data examination, where we excluded neutral responses from the analysis and looked at the frequencies of positive and negative responses. This helped us to evaluate the hypotheses.

## 6.2. The answers' frequency analysis

In the second part of processing the survey results, we highlighted the constructs with the highest number of positive and negative responses. The codification of the responses was as follows: 5 – yes (Y), 4 – mostly yes (MY), 2 – mostly no (MN), and 1 – no (N). Neutral answers were excluded. The results and analysis of the cases used to test the hypotheses are presented in Table 3.

Most of the respondents agreed that *continuous training and lifelong learning* affect the competitive advantage of the company. In second place there is several respondents, who agree with the statement that *risky situations should be avoided*. The third position in terms

**Table 3.** The results of hypothesis analysis (source: own research)

Hypothesis	Statement	Frequency		Validity
		Y/MY	MN/N	
H1: Reluctance towards research and innovation.	S1.1 The organization supports professional development.	101 (MY)		Confirmed Although the employees recognised importance of career development and lifelong learning, many respondents showed no interest in research and innovation development.
	S1.2 Continuous improvement and lifelong learn affect the competitive advantage of the company.	209 (MY)		
	S1.3 Employees are ready for research and innovation.		172 (N)	
H2: Lack of teamwork and concern for employee welfare.	S2.1 The organization supports and nurtures teamwork.	128 (MY) & 128 (Y)		Confirmed The employees are aware of the importance of teamwork and the positive correlation between individual employee success and the success of the company. However, most respondents do not agree with the statement that the company takes sufficient care of the benefits of employees, but rather contrary. This can have a negative impact on employees' motivation to work as a team and their commitment to the company.
	S2.2 The success of an individual and the success of an organization (enterprise) are positively correlated.	148 (MY)		
	S2.3 The organization (company) takes care of employees in terms of social welfare.		140 (N)	

End of Table 3

Hypothesis	Statement	Frequency		Validity
		Y/MY	MN/N	
H3: Centralized approach to decision making.	S3.1 All employees participate in decision making in the organization (company).		90 (MN)	Confirmed All the answers are mostly negative. It means that all employees are not involved in decision making. Consequently, this implies a centralised approach to decision-making.
H4: Change and risk averseness.	S4.1 As in life and at work, risky situations should be avoided.	152 (MY)		Confirmed Employees are not ready to take risks, even though the experience tells them that changes in the company did not only bring trouble.
	S4.2 Changes in the organization of the company so far have mostly brought only trouble.		100 (MN)	
H5: Lack of market-oriented attitudes.	S5.1 There is a need in the company to plan and analyse the past business.	148 (MY)		Confirmed Although the company needs to plan and analyse past business, there is no self-initiative of employees. In addition, when asked whether the company shows concern for its employees, a small number of respondents answered positively. However, recognizing employees as a key resource would support company's market orientation.
	S5.2 There is enough self-initiative in the company by the employees.		250 (N)	
	S5.3 In the company, human resources are recognized as the key in the conditions of modern business.	70 (MY)		

of the number of respondents, who agree, was taken by the position that *there is a need in the company to plan and analyse the past business of the company*.

When it comes to the negative attitudes of the respondents, in the first place in terms of the number of high disagreements is the assumption that *there is enough self-initiative in the company by employees*. In second place is the number of negative responses based on the assumption that *employees are ready for research and innovation*. Employees also have a negative attitude towards the assumption that *the organization (company) takes care of employees in terms of social welfare*.

Hypotheses H1–H5 can be considered confirmed based on the results obtained.

### 6.3. The variances' analysis

In the third part of the data analysis, it was examined whether the dominant frequencies in answers concerning the measured variables in the model differ significantly with respect to variables related to the company ownership structure and sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, i.e., their age, education, job level and gender. The results obtained through

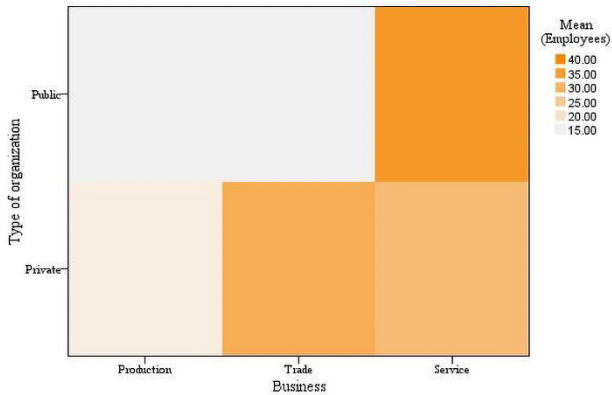
t-test and ANOVA F-test are shown in Table 4. Significance levels lower than 0.05 are marked with an asterisk. The market values indicate that the type of organization surveyed, and the demographic characteristics of the population have a statistically significant influence on the variables analyzed and vice versa. This means the results show different combinations of statistically significant influences of company ownership and type, including the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, on the variables of the model.

**Table 4.** The impact of the respondents' structure on the variables (source: own research)

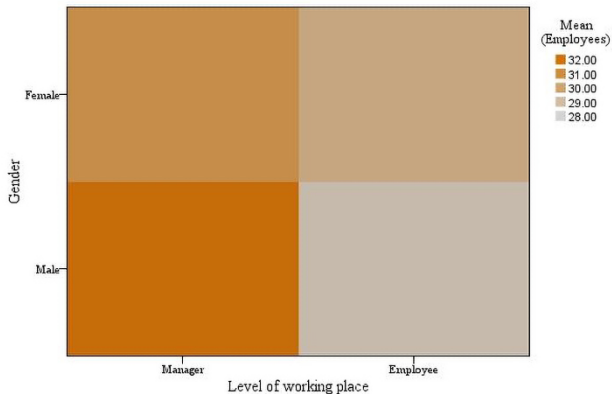
Variables	Company		Age	Gender	Education	Role
	Public; Private	Production; Trade; Service	<25; 26–35; 36–45; 46–55; >56	Male; Female	Elementary; Secondary; High; Higher	Manager; Employee
	Sig. (t-test)	Sig. (ANOVA)	Sig. (ANOVA)	Sig. (t-test)	Sig. (ANOVA)	Sig. (t-test)
S11	0.557	0.318	0.207	0.857	0.021*	0.099
S12	0.243	0.051	0.994	0.134	0.066	0.277
S13	0.150	<0.001*	0.216	0.222	0.018*	0.087
C1	0.146	<0.001*	0.02*	0.491	0.032*	0.063
S21	0.012*	0.066	0.304	0.580	0.338	0.478
S22	<0.001*	<0.001*	0.001*	0.832	0.081	<0.001*
S23	0.664	0.211	0.222	0.126	0.640	0.649
C2	0.007*	0.006*	0.438	0.047*	0.695	0.886
S31	0.767	<0.001*	0.546	0.899	0.053	0.864
C3	<0.001*	<0.001*	0.069	0.615	0.005*	0.014*
S41	<0.001*	<0.001*	0.01*	0.639	<0.001*	0.064
S42	0.002*	<0.001*	<0.001*	0.867	0.022*	0.052
C4	0.662	0.359	0.230	0.802	0.998	0.088
S51	<0.001*	<0.001*	0.004*	0.466	0.001*	0.125
S52	0.590	<0.001*	0.558	0.869	0.236	0.433
S53	0.630	0.517	0.437	0.692	0.714	0.258
C5	0.778	0.952	0.748	0.427	0.388	0.225

In addition to this, in the SPSS environment we generated heat maps of the organization ownership vs. activity, and gender vs. role in the organization. In the data set under analysis, manufacturing and trade businesses are privately held, whereas service businesses are publicly owned (Figure 1). This illustrates how Montenegro's business ownership structure changed as the country moved from socialism to capitalism. The only business still owned by the state was the service sector. The privatization plan put in place during the transition period, which sought to boost efficiency and competitiveness in the trade and manufacturing sectors, is reflected in this shift in ownership structure. At the same time, the desire to protect the public interest and guarantee the supply of essential services is reflected in the state's continued ownership of the service sector.

Regarding the gender balance, men predominate in leadership roles, even though there were equal numbers of women and men involved in the study. This is typical of Montenegrin



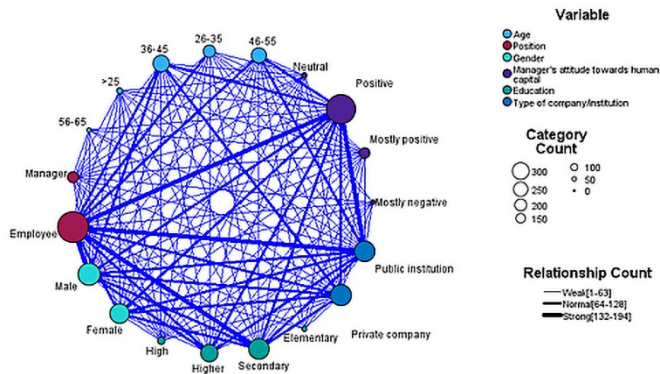
**Figure 1.** The organizations' ownership structure vs. business activities in relation to the number of employees (source: own research)



**Figure 2.** The organizations' gender vs. roles structure in relation to the number of employees (source: own research)

society, where patriarchy is deeply ingrained (Figure 2). This pattern indicates that social norms and gender stereotypes still influence professional responsibilities and possibilities, especially in leadership positions. Women are becoming more prevalent in Montenegro's workforce, especially in the service and education sectors, but they haven't made much headway into management roles. Long-term effects on organizational effectiveness and gender equality in society may result from this disparity between men and women in leadership roles. More social cohesiveness and better organizational performance may result from advancing equal chances for women in leadership roles and altering cultural perceptions (Monstat, 2020b).

The statistical analysis indicated that the assessment of the manager's attitude towards human capital had the greatest effect across the sample. Figure 3 shows a map of the respective interdependencies. Most employees replied that the manager had a good attitude towards the employees. Notwithstanding, it is advisable to proceed with caution, as employees often fear repercussions for giving truthful answers to such questions. This is a remnant of the top-down socialist approach to governance.



**Figure 3.** The assessment of the manager's attitudes towards employees (source: own research)

The last, but not the least, the methodological approach and findings of this study could be used as an inspiration and model for similar studies of organizational culture in other emerging business environments. Similar studies have been carried out in Paraguay (Sánchez-Báez et al., 2020), Turkey (Akner et al., 2024), Nepal (Upadhaya et al., 2018), Nigeria and Gana (Oriade et al., 2021). Further and deeper analyses of organizational cultures, with the aim of improving theoretical frameworks and practices, could be inspired by these studies as well.

## 7. Discussion

Although the organizations support professional development and lifelong learning, as key bearers of their competitive advantage, the results show that employees are not ready for research and innovation. Research and development were not given much importance in the past (socialist) period in Montenegro. Only recently, this development component has been taken as important in tertiary education, although there is still insufficient investment in research and development (H1).

The respondents are aware of the importance of teamwork and the positive correlation between individual success and the success of the company. However, most respondents do not agree with the statement that the company takes sufficient care of the benefits of employees, on the contrary. This attitude is most likely a consequence of collectivism, which is characteristic of the Montenegrin national culture. Employees mostly identify with the collective (organization) in which they work. Therefore, it would be expected that the organization in which they work will take care of them. This can be explained by the inherited syndrome of socialism and self-governing relations, according to which everyone is loyal to the collective, and in return, the collective is responsible for the fate of the individual. However, this research did not confirm that there is an organizational concern for the well-being of employees, although a large percentage of employees expressed loyalty to the organization (H2).

The employees showed a negative attitude towards the question: Are all employees in their organization involved in decision making? – Montenegro is a country with a high distance of power, which means that power is largely concentrated with the leaders (H3).

A paradox has been observed – employees are not willing to take risks, even though the experience tells them that changes in the company have not only brought problems.

The reason may be the current world crisis and increased caution in investing, as well as the remnants of a socialist ideology that ruled out risk. Thus, the respondents show resistance to risk and risky situations (H4).

Although there is a need in the company to plan and analyse past business, there is no self-initiative of employees. This is most probably related to unwillingness to take risks and resistance to change. Also, the lack of initiative can be related to the centralized approach to decision-making, which largely determines the behaviour of employees, in the sense that it stifles creativity, and employees' initiative. All this points to the conclusion that the company is perceived more as a social than economic form of business, which disrupts a healthy and natural relationship with the market (and all forms of competition) and results in a lack of market-oriented culture (H5).

## 8. Conclusions

The research showed that the organizational culture in Montenegro differs from the global organizational culture in some segments. Specifically, Montenegrin enterprises are hesitant to conduct research and innovation, have insufficient representation of cooperation, use centralized decision-making techniques, are averse to change and risk, and lack market-oriented attitudes. Such an organizational culture can be a serious obstacle to Montenegrin future development. Numerous inconsistencies are the result of residuals of the past, the burden of the old system and the still non fully accepted new values. Therefore, the general conclusion is that some dimensions of organizational culture need to be fundamentally changed, whilst some dimensions need to be further upgraded and strengthened.

To reduce collectivism, it is necessary to change the current belief of employees that their workplace is safe under all circumstances, and that the state is obliged to take care of the social status of each employee. This system of beliefs and values leads to the fact that employees are not independent, they do not have self-initiative and self-help creativity. This can result in insufficient accountability in behaviour and performance at work.

Accepting risk, coping with failure and taking responsibility become parts of the actual global business policies. Therefore, it is necessary to replace individual work, as a traditional value, with teamwork, whilst decision-making needs to be done at all levels. Additionally, rigid and centralized control systems, which can inhibit employees' ideas and initiatives, should not be exercised. It is necessary to create a culture that is receptive to actual business models, which can ensure social advancement and development.

The imperative of the necessity of investing in people and their lifelong education should play a key role in creating and changing organizational culture. A new power structure should be established in companies based on the authority of competence and knowledge rather than titles and positions. By developing awareness of the need for new knowledge and skills, as well as motivating all employees to acquire new knowledge, it is possible to prevent the development of so-called irreplaceability syndrome. In this context, the workplace and power will be protected only by knowledge. Successful companies are characterized by deep respect for each person, teamwork, openness, trust, respect, decentralization, delegation, autonomy, risk acceptance, learning from mistakes, openness to change and the like. If companies aim to be successful in the market, they are supposed to embrace these dimensions of organizational culture.

In the case of Montenegro, adopting actual business trends is a necessity rather than a choice. Its biggest advantage is that as a small country it can quickly adapt to changes in the

environment. What is harder and slower are the changes in the way of thinking. Changes in the way of thinking and acceptance of global trends represent a chance for the economic development of Montenegro.

The services of foreign experts can be used, but Montenegro should bring back many young people who unfortunately left the country. To a certain degree, foreign specialists can comprehend and resolve issues. They can be very beneficial, but Montenegrins are more familiar with the culture and mindset of the country. Unfortunately, some good ideas have failed because deeply ingrained Montenegrin customs have prevented them from being considered.

This study emphasizes the significance of understanding and leveraging organizational culture in small states like Montenegro, which navigate the complexities of global integration. The case study of Montenegro's organizational culture offers valuable lessons for nations with a unique cultural heritage that wish to engage with international markets without compromising their identity. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the value of community and solidarity as assets in creating resilience and adaptation within organizations.

Montenegro's rich and diversified cultural legacy, influenced by various civilizations, is portrayed as a resource capable of contributing to global value chains. These cultural aspects can inspire novel diversity management techniques and offer new views in an interconnected global economy.

An organizational culture that mixes local values with global norms increases a country's appeal to overseas investors. Montenegro's example demonstrates how such a culture can provide a competitive advantage by delivering stability and inclusion, both of which are particularly appealing to investors in economic and social transitional circumstances.

The study of Montenegrin organizational culture contributes to global discussions on modernization, governance, and diversity management. It demonstrates how global demands may be adjusted to cultural identities, laying the groundwork for long-term growth in small states. This approach has far-reaching consequences for policymakers, business leaders, and academics, providing inspiration for initiatives that balance local traditions with global economic demands while enhancing the global economy.

The response to this study's major research question is affirmative. Nonetheless, there is room for improvements. As a result, research-based recommendations are made to improve the coexistence of traditional and global organizational cultures, elevate Montenegro's position on the geopolitical map, and accelerate its development.

Despite its rigorous methodology, this study is not without limitations. Focusing on specific dimensions of organisational culture as research and innovation, teamwork, decision-making, risk-taking, and market orientation in the context of Montenegro as a developing country leaves other dimensions unexplored. Therefore, future research should examine the role of additional dimensions as results orientation, communication, attention to detail and stability, or it should analyse the overall effect of organisational culture by including all these dimensions. Besides, the research design was a case study, and the number of respondents was limited. In the future, a similar study will be conducted with a larger sample, longitudinally over time and across a wider geopolitical area with different socio-political dynamics. It should be conducted in cooperation with the Montenegrin scientific diaspora and expanded with qualitative research on a carefully selected sample, in companies of vital importance to the Montenegrin economy. A special attention should be paid to the education, innovation and development.



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