



Regulatory Innovation in UAE: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT: This study addresses the topic of organizational innovation as a strategic tool that contributes to enhancing institutional efficiency, competitiveness, and achieving national goals. The study reviews the current status of organizational innovation in Emirati institutions, and highlights the most important achievements, challenges, and future trends in this field. The study also focused on the role of organizational innovation in supporting the UAE Vision 2071, which seeks to establish the country's position as a global center for innovation. The UAE is considered one of the leading countries in supporting organizational innovation, as the government has launched many initiatives such as the "Year of Innovation" and the Advanced Innovation Strategy. The public and private sectors are showing remarkable progress in adopting technology to enhance innovation. Organizational innovation in the UAE is a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable development and institutional excellence. Despite the challenges facing its implementation, government efforts and strategic support contribute to creating a work environment that stimulates innovation, as this field is a starting point for achieving the country's economic and social development goals and enhancing its ability to compete in global markets. However, it is difficult to accurately identify the factors that influence organizational innovation, especially in light of the rapid changes in the economic and social environment and to conduct research that integrates innovation and sustainability by analyzing case studies from Emirati institutions.

Keywords: Organizational Innovation, UAE, Institutional Performance, Competitiveness, Advanced Technology.

INTRODUCTION

A country's economic growth is said to be based on the performance of its financial sector, which is being the most prominent factors amongst several other factors boosting an economy (Bentzen *et al.*, 2021). Zhu *et al.* (2006) state, the stability, as well as the growth of any economy greatly depends on the stability and performance of its finance and banking sector. It is basically said to be functioning as an intermediary role by connecting deficit and surplus units, whilst providing funds for fruitful purposes and thereby contributing towards economic growth and development. In the recent years, banks across the world have experienced extensive and vibrant changes, which are rapidly revolutionizing and reshaping the banking industry. Amin *et al.* (2019) noted that the global economy is shifting towards the knowledgebased model. This shift, along with several changes in the workplace and evolving demands, has placed significant pressure on organisations to become hubs of innovation and talent. Globalization, defining feature of this knowledge based economy, is evident in the rise of borderless economies and the emergence of new multinational corporations (Alzaabi, 2019; Byat & Sultan 2014). These developments have significantly influenced management research, requiring new investigative approaches. Today, innovation is increasingly recognized with a key driver of growth for the both companies and nations (Cherian *et al.*, 2021). The United Arab Emirates (UAE), an independent

country since 1971 consists of seven Emirates. Each Emirate has its Ruler who usually is the head of the most powerful tribe. Substantial oil exports that began in the 1970s have conveyed extraordinary returns and continue to be the driver of growth. Nevertheless, due to the limited skills and work experience of the local population, a migrant labour force has played a fundamental role in the country's progress. Currently, among the most challenging tasks facing the UAE is the development of its human capital. Labour migration into the UAE accounts for around 90 percent of the labour force in the private sector according to estimates of the National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority (Mansour, 2015).

ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION

The majority of firms find themselves operating in turbulent environments, which are subject to rapid transformations in terms of information technologies, market uncertainties, shorter product life cycles, and intensifying competition (Ghezzi *et al.*, 2018). Innovation remains a basic requirement for securing growth and even survival in such conditions (Marini, 1971). Organisations deem innovation as a critical factor in securing organisational prosperity (Carlfjord *et al.*, 2010; Pouwels & Koster 2017).

Furthermore, (Willerding *et al.*, 2016) asserts that the objectives of ambitious organisations can be attained via innovative practices. This resource remains among the most vital for attaining sustainable economic

growth in the modern world (Ghosh, 2015; Roman *et al.*, 2012; Shobaki & Naser 2017). Even though modern innovation has a vital function in enabling growth in manufacturing and service industries, innovation research applies mainly to the manufacturing sector, whereas a few researchers have investigated innovative work behaviours within the services sector, in particular within the banking industry (Polese *et al.*, 2018). The range and diversity of descriptions of innovation has been noted. First, many studies show that innovation involves creativity. As an example (Akram *et al.*, 2020; Mazouz *et al.*, 2019) reported that innovative behaviours lead to newer concepts, practices, or entities, based on the personal or other unit view of adoption. Furthermore, Rogers discusses the concept of diffusion of innovation, which emphasises the spread over time, via particular channels, of innovative ideas between members of social systems. Conversely, (Hutapea *et al.*, 2021; Mohmad Albassami *et al.*, 2019) implies that innovation differs from creative activity, wherein the later can be defined as the generation of novel concepts. Innovative behaviours generate and lead to the implementation of novel concepts, processes, and goods, and so creativity is therefore a part of innovative practices. Even though services have many unique features that differ from those for goods, much research (Daneshvar Deylami *et al.*, 2019; Nenadál *et al.*, 2018) has shown that within the service context and based on assimilation approaches, the ideas and theories of innovative practices as employed in manufacturing can

be readily transferred to service sectors. In an investigation of innovative work behaviours within the service industries, (Chong *et al.*, 2013; Subhan & Don Jae 2012) asserted that, absent any influence on the features of service innovation, the research utilised the same schemes as those applied to manufacturing industries.

Continual innovation is vital to secure organisational prosperity in modern markets, most of which see fierce competition as a result of accelerating globalisation (Haneda & Ito 2018; Naveed *et al.*, 2022). Innovation remains a matter of survival in free-market economies (Majed Sadq, 2019; Mergel, 2018) and the innovation of newer and better goods and services is therefore not an option but a necessity that faces every organisation. Discovering the means to maintain sufficient capacity for renewal while developing greater creativity and innovativeness has become a corporate imperative in the modern world. Globally, the top 10 innovative nations are all Western in their development. Based on the 2018 (Global Competitiveness Report, 2018d), Switzerland ranks first worldwide regarding innovation, scoring 5.9 out of a maximum 7.0. The United States ranks second at 5.8. Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Japan score similarly at 5.6, corresponding to 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th in rank order. Finland scores below at 5.5, whereas the United Kingdom as well as Austria both rank last in this top 10 list of innovative countries, scoring 5.3 globally. Please see Fig. 1 (Ameen *et al.*, 2021; Na-Nan *et al.*, 2021).

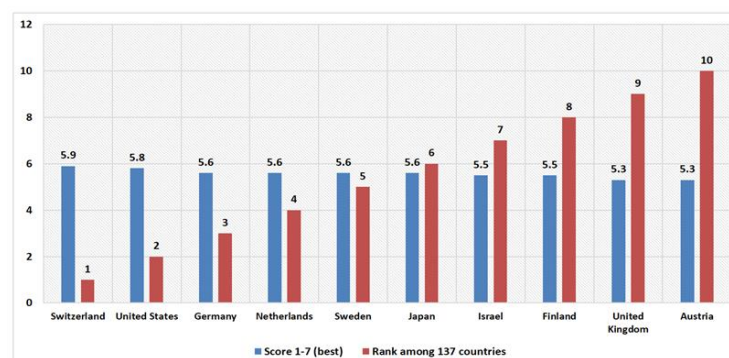


Fig. 1. Top 10 countries in the world regarding the Innovation (Score 1-7 (best), ranking among 137 countries)
Source: (Global Competitiveness Report, 2018d).

The innovation output indicator measures the extent to which ideae stemming innovation sectors are capable of reaching the market providing comparatively better jobs opportunities. According to the (Global Innovation Index, 2017a), regarding innovation outputs the Arab region does not perform in comparison to the Europe, North American countries, East Asia. Arab countries are scoring between (11-36) in the same report. The investigative focus on UAE stems from consideration of the rapid growth seen in its industries that was accompanied by interest in enhancing organisational innovation. In spite of growth in various sectors, including real estate, construction, renewable energy, aviation, banking services, and tourism, the petroleum and gas industries remain the dominant contributors to UAE's GDP. In comparisons of UAE to other Arab

states in the region, the state outperforms its neighbours in innovation output. However, it remains significantly behind its Western counterparts in this regard.

ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION-AN OVERVIEW

In one of the seminal works on organizational innovation (Baumane-Vītoliņa *et al.*, 2022; Farley, 2020; Shamina & Borisova 2018) has classified the study of organizational innovation into three immediate areas, each corresponding to distinctive research questions. The first category contains theories related to organizational structure and design, such as contingency theories and industrial economics theories. These theories focus on analyzing organizational structures and their impact on an organization's

capacity to innovate, with the level of analysis being focused on the organization as a whole. The second category includes organizational cognitive and learning theories, where the level of analysis is more micro-focused. These theories examine the cognitive foundations and processes of knowledge creation within organizations, specifically examining how innovation arises as a solution to organizational problems. The third category involves organizational change and adaptation theories, such as the incremental versus evolutionary view of organizational change and punctuated equilibrium theories. Here, the level of analysis extends to both the organizational and environmental levels, examining how organizations respond, or fail to respond to shifts in the environment and technological advancements. Beyond these three classifications, organizational innovation can also be studied through a systematic approach that includes several distinct categories: (1) innovation as a dependent variable, (2) innovation as an independent variable, (3) the sources of innovation, (4) types of innovation, (5) innovation climate, and (6) the measurement of innovation. Given the critical role of innovation in organizational survival and performance, understanding the factors that influence innovation is of paramount importance. Multiple studies have been conducted to identify the determinants of innovation within organizations. For example, an analysis by examined service and manufacturing organizations, revealing that factors such as administrative intensity, complexity, external and internal communication, functional differentiation, managerial attitude toward change, professionalism, slack resources, specialization, and technical ability positively affect organizational innovation. In contrast, centralization was found to have a negative impact, while factors like formalization, managerial tenure, and vertical differentiation showed no statistically significant effect on innovation. Constant research continues to examine the influence of these and other variables, such as the geographical location of the organization and the type of organization, on innovation. The extensive body of research on organizational innovation also extends to examining the results and consequences of innovation (Abbas & Asghar 2010; Hanelt *et al.*, 2017; Rosa *et al.*, 2018). As highlighted in the introduction, innovation can significantly enhance an organization's chances of survival, and improve competitiveness, legitimacy, and trust. Furthermore, innovation has the potential to increase organizational productivity, efficiency, performance, customer satisfaction, and the quality of services, while also decreasing costs. Future research is expected to continue examining the diverse outcomes of innovation in various organizational contexts, such as its effects on employees' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behavior. Thus, innovation can influence multiple aspects of an organization, including costs, processes, product and service quality, and overall citizen satisfaction (Alkandari, n.d.; Alshemmari, 2024; Al-Shammari, 2024).

Understanding the sources and actors contributing to innovation is a crucial aspect of this research. The existence of innovation is dependent on the generation of ideas from various sources or the contributions of different actors. In the public sector, for example, innovation may stem from employees' workgroups, organizational leaders, government agencies, regulatory bodies, industry stakeholders, universities, and members of the public. These sources of innovation can be categorized as top-down (e.g., ideas originating from organizational leaders or government), bottom-up (e.g., ideas coming from employee workgroups), or external (e.g., ideas coming from universities or industry stakeholders). Future research can further improve the literature on the sources of innovation by analyzing how each source affects organizational outcomes, such as performance, and individual results like employee job satisfaction or innovative behavior, and the different types of innovations that arise.

Accordingly, innovation is critical in enhancing organizational processes and developing new products (Husain & Husain 2023). This strategic initiative facilitates various aspects of an organization, such as creating new business models, innovative products, and fresh marketing approaches, among other related features and attributes. Innovation success often relies on an organization's ability to implement creativity and optimize commercial processes. In many cases, introducing new products is a popular method for achieving improvement. However, these new products often lose their impact over time as they undergo mass adoption in the market, accelerating the point at which they are no longer perceived as truly innovative. Therefore, organizations must explore alternative innovation strategies that can sustain market transformation and adaptation over the long term. Specifically, innovation in business models tends to address critical market challenges over time and is quickly adopted by leading organizations to maintain growth. Organizations' aim to enhance their capabilities in creating competitive advantages through unique goods and services highlights the need to integrate innovation within the organizational structure. Consequently, this article's objective is to examine the innovation processes implemented within organizations. This will be done through a systematic review of national and international literature to understand better and explore the existing theoretical foundations, contributions, relevance, and application of innovation in organizational contexts.

Types of Innovation. Experts recognise different kinds of innovative activities according to various characteristics. Each type requires specific responses for an organisation to innovate successfully. These findings on such innovative activities can help practitioners to assign corporate resources more efficiently, based on type. This study presents classifications in the following:

1. Radical / Incremental Innovation. To discriminate among differences between incremental and radical and innovations, this research refers to these in terms of major and minor innovations. Radical innovative

behaviours involve basic technological transitions. These would involve major transformations in existing processes, products, and services. Such activity therefore represents revolutionary transformations in current corporate practices. Radical innovative practices can be adapted according to the pressures and crises arising in external environments. Furthermore, when corporations only rely on internal information as a means of understanding their environment, radical innovation can still lead to failure. To innovate radically, an organisation must therefore depend not only on any internal information, but on available external information as well. In addition, radically innovative behaviours lead to new needs that have not been recognised previously by consumers. Corporations must make extensive process investments in term of production, communications, and distribution so as to pursue innovation and would therefore be subject to increased risks in radical innovation whenever

development cycles have lengthened too much, which lowers success rates. Conversely, an incremental innovation is a minor development or refinement of a current product and/or service offering or an operational process. Incremental innovations relate to the creation of significant value in organisations or industries, through improvements in infrastructure or existing products and processes. Innovation may progress even in normal conditions or transitions. Incremental innovation involves continuous process improvement that enhances customer satisfaction by meeting their existing needs and these would therefore not necessarily lead to new markets. Some 90% of product technology innovations represent incremental innovations that lead to small enhancements in existing product and service offerings. Table 1 summarises the differences between incremental and radical and innovations.

Table 1 : Differentiation between radical and incremental innovation.

Criteria	Radical Innovation	Incremental Innovation
Time	Long-term time	Short-term time
Frequency of occurrence	Seldom	Often
Nature of process	Discontinuous	Continuous
Objective	Creation of new products or processes	Enhancement of existing products or processes
Degree of change	Large	Small
Effect on competence	Destroying competence	Improving competence
Effect on market or industry	Creation of new markets/ transformation of existing markets/ destruction of old ones	Expansion of existing markets
Focus	Exploration	Exploitation
Risk and uncertainty	High	Low
Success rate	Low	High
Technical novelty	High	Low

2. Technological/Administrative Innovation.

Administrative innovation is associated with the application of newer concepts for improved managerial processes, organisational frameworks, and human resources. Even though these do not directly output novel product or service offerings, such innovations can indirectly influence market introductions. Administrative innovations often respond to internal corporate requirements that involve structural, functional, and procedural/rule-based issues. These methods have a vital function in enabling communication among employees while improving work performances. Therefore, administrative innovation directly relates to organisational management, whereas it is indirectly associated with basic workplace activities. Administrative innovation involves top-down adoption that is initiated and supported by top management. In other words, managerial initiatives must first be innovated by corporate leaders and then assigned to staffs. Numerous examples exist of administrative innovations, including planned career advancement and enrichment, manufacturing cell processes, continuing improvement initiatives, just-in-time reengineering, intelligent organisation and total quality management, agile

enterprises, incentive/reward schemes, and advanced performance evaluation systems. Technology comprises artefacts with practical applications that can be replicated systematically. Technological innovation is described in terms of advances in product performance, with regards to processes related to the production of newer products or else the significant improvement of current products. These form essential parts of products and processes. Both are directly associated with basic workplace activity. In today's modern economies, technological innovation that accords with the creation and application of knowledge remains a key factor in promoting the progress of firms. Likewise, Western-style innovation increases productivity while promoting existing product lines with greater success.

In accordance with the preceding discussions, overall technological innovation comprises technology product innovations and technology process innovations. Technology product innovations concern the implementation and commercialisation of products with enhanced performance, whereas technology process innovations emphasise the implementation of newer or else significantly enhanced methods that improve the production and/or delivery of goods and services

(Ghezzi *et al.*, 2018; Jeni *et al.*, 2021; Naotunna & Zhou 2018; Shafi *et al.*, 2020; Styhre & Sundgren 2005).

3. Product/Process Innovation. In today's increasingly competitive markets, product innovation continues to have a vital function in achieving corporate aims. Process innovation remains essential to supporting organisations in such environments. As these can be difficult to replicate, they are considered to be a vital source of competitive advantage. As an example (Bharati *et al.*, 2021; Wu, 2016; Zawacki-Richter 2020) reports that within Italy, some 65.9% of service organisations continue to pursue process and product innovations. As described below, many researchers therefore divide innovations into two kinds, product and process innovations. Product technology innovations represent newly developed final product that might be new to the corporation and also to the whole world. Product innovation is associated with the development or production of novel products or services that meet the needs of customers. It involves newer features that are made possible through the redevelopment of current products or services or the innovation of newer ones that are launched in the markets. Product innovation remains key to developing competitive advantages and profits, for it was demonstrated that 30.6% of corporate profits are derived from novel product offerings. Furthermore, innovative products afford organisations greater flexibility in meeting the needs of new consumers. Product and service innovation remains key to bringing about integration through several actors, which can involve external or else internal resources. Effective results should offer newer features for consumers, whether via the development of existing products or the innovation of newer.

Process innovation involves the discovery of advanced processes or methods for producing newer services and products for it is associated with the development of new methods that transform resources into new output. Process innovations aim to reduce production costs while enhancing production efficiencies. Further understanding of process innovations helps to enable the acquisition of competitive advantages, including technology-related operations and process transformations. Better understanding would therefore deepen a firm's capacity to adapt to environmental change.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

Organizational innovation is one of the main pillars of achieving institutional excellence in the United Arab Emirates, as the government and the private sector seek to adopt innovative strategies to enhance competitiveness and raise institutional efficiency. By reviewing the literature and research related to this topic, it was found that organizational innovation in the UAE has witnessed a remarkable development in recent years, and is considered a key element in promoting sustainable growth and achieving the goals of the UAE Vision 2021 and its national agenda. Organizational innovation contributes to improving the performance of

institutions in a comprehensive manner, whether through updating organizational structures or through applying new technologies and methods of work. In the UAE, public and private institutions have witnessed a major transformation in the way they are managed and organized as a result of rapid economic and technological transformations. Investments in modern technology, such as artificial intelligence, big data, and digital solutions, have increased, helping institutions achieve significant improvements in productivity and flexibility. Studies have also shown that organizational innovation is not limited to introducing new products or improving services, but also includes developing administrative methods and organizational structures that contribute to improving internal relations and providing a work environment that stimulates creativity. In addition, organizational innovation enhances the ability of institutions to adapt to rapid changes in local and international markets, and thus innovation is a vital factor in enhancing the UAE's ability to maintain its position as a global economic hub. Therefore, organizational innovation in the UAE represents a fundamental pillar for achieving institutional excellence and ensuring sustainable success in various sectors. Despite the challenges that organizations may face in this context, investing in an innovative culture, technology, and skills development remains the best path to success in a competitive global environment. Government initiatives that support innovation contribute to creating a favorable environment for implementing organizational innovations, and therefore the future holds many opportunities to achieve excellence in this field. It examines the relationship between levels of organizational innovation and institutional performance indicators, such as productivity, employee satisfaction, and profitability. How local values and customs influence the adoption of innovation within organizations and focuses on the challenges and opportunities facing small and medium-sized enterprises in implementing innovation strategies. Addressing these future research challenges requires intensive collaboration between researchers, government and private institutions, and the use of innovative research tools such as Big Data and artificial intelligence. It is also necessary to focus on specializing in the study of organizational innovation according to different sectors to ensure achieving results of practical value to support the UAE's journey towards global leadership.

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