

Relationship between organizational culture and performance: literature review of the mediating and moderating effects

Relation entre la culture organisationnelle et la performance: revue de la littérature des effets médiateurs et modérateurs

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Date of submission: 21/07/2022

Date of acceptance: 07/10/2022

To cite this article:

ER RHAIMINI H.M. & CHARAF K. (2022) «Relationship between organizational culture and performance: literature review of the mediating and moderating effects», Revue du contrôle, de la comptabilité et de l'audit «Volume 6 : Numéro 3» pp : 129 - 146

Abstract

The relationship between organizational culture (OC) and organizational performance (OP) provides fertile ground and several opportunities for research. For this reason, and since several decades, many researchers from a variety of disciplines have shown a growing interest on this link. However, the lack of consensus on the definitions of the relevant concepts, combined with the multiplication of measurement models and the mixed but also inconclusive character of the findings from the conducted empirical studies, prevent the assertion of a direct, positive and strong link between OC and OP.

According to several theorists, there are mechanisms through which OC influences OP. Some even assume that formalizing a third variable will be necessary to establish this link. However, no study has yet identified the precise nature of these mediating and moderating variables mentioned in the literature. Therefore, this research work aims to fill this gap and provide researchers and managers with a documentary search from several databases to clearly identify these mechanisms and variables.

In this context, proposals will be presented as well as a conceptual model to be tested empirically in a later study. Following this, we will conclude the present study by highlighting its implications and outlining potential directions for future research.

Keywords: organizational culture; organizational performance; RBV; TQM

Résumé

La relation entre la culture organisationnelle (CO) et la performance organisationnelle (PO) constitue un sujet propice aux travaux de recherche. C'est pourquoi, depuis plusieurs décennies, nombre de chercheurs issus de diverses disciplines, y portent un intérêt croissant. Toutefois, l'absence de consensus en rapport à la définition des notions en présence, cumulée à la multiplication des modèles de mesure et à la nature mitigée mais aussi peu concluante des résultats issus des études empiriques menées, empêchent l'affirmation d'un lien direct, positif et fort entre la CO et la PO.

Pour plusieurs théoriciens, il existe des mécanismes par le biais desquels la CO influence la PO. Certains tablent même sur la nécessité de formaliser une troisième variable pour établir cette relation. Cependant, aucune étude n'a encore recensé la nature précise de ces variables médiatrices et modératrices mentionnées dans la littérature. Ce travail a donc pour visée de combler ce vide et de proposer aux chercheurs et aux managers, une recherche documentaire à partir de plusieurs bases de données permettant d'identifier clairement ces mécanismes et ces variables. Dans ce cadre, seront présentées des propositions ainsi qu'un modèle conceptuel à tester empiriquement dans une étude ultérieure. À la suite de quoi, nous concluons la présente étude en mettant en lumière les implications de celle-ci et en présentant de futures lignes de recherche possibles.

Mots clés : culture organisationnelle ; performance organisationnelle ; RBV ; TQM

Introduction

The influence of OC on firm performance has been studied since the 1980s (Ouchi, 1981). Since then, research suggests that its impact on the improvement of the company's various performance metrics continues to increase over the years. However, this positive relationship is not universally accepted (Chatman *et al.*, 2012). Indeed, several studies have reported mixed or even negative results regarding the effects of OC on OP (Detert, Schroeder & Mauriel, 2000 ; Hartnell, Ou & Kinicki, 2011).

Thus, the lack of consensus regarding the definitions of the concepts of OC and performance, and the use of different measures to evaluate them, make it difficult to mobilize the results of previous studies to firmly conclude for a positive relationship between the two constructs. Additionally, according to the resource-based view (RBV) theory (Barney, 1986), the OC, as a company's internal resource, is not self-sufficient to create a competitive advantage and improve performance. In fact, several studies suggest that mediating or even moderating variables may potentially play a role in the link between OC and performance.

The purpose of this research work is to compile the results of previous empirical studies carried out so far, in order to analyze the various pathways of mediation and moderation, capable of increasing the effect of OC on performance. The ultimate goal is to propose future research directions as well as a theoretical framework addressing the relationship between OC and performance, including a mediating or moderating variable, to be tested empirically in the Moroccan context.

This will allow us to answer our study's research question, which is:

What is the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance, and is there a need for mediators or moderators in this relationship?

This work will be organized in three stages. In the first section, we will introduce the concepts of OC and OP, before presenting a literature review on the direct relationship between OC and performance. A second section will be devoted to the presentation of the results of the documentary research on the indirect correlations between OC and performance, as well as on the mechanisms of influence. The third and last section will be dedicated to the presentation of the conceptual model to be tested later.

1. Literature review

1.1 Organizational culture

The first links between culture and organizational management appear in the 1970s (Pettigrew, 1979). Since that time, projects and studies have multiplied, demonstrating a growing interest in the concept of culture in the context of business (Ouchi, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Barney, 1986). This proliferation of research has resulted in a multiplication of definitions, with no consensus on the meaning of the concept of culture or its common usage (Schein, 2010). Despite this lack of agreement, the various definitions agree on common traits as well as a composition in various layers of the OC (Kwarteng and Aveh, 2018).

1.2 Organizational Performance

Performance measures how successfully an organization achieves its objectives and reaches improved levels of efficiency and competitiveness in accordance with its organizational strategy (Riratanaphong, Voordt and Sarasoja, 2012).

A broader view of firm performance has emerged, one that is not restricted to quantitative financial performance: an organizational performance (Picard, 2013). This organizational performance contains numerous indicators that provide information on the degree to which objectives are met, and it leads in a larger acceptance of the necessity for a balance between financial and non-financial dimensions (Kaplan and Norton, 1992; Sneyd and Rowley, 2004; Gmira and Mohammed, 2021).

1.3 The relationship between OC and performance

Since the 1980s, studies have confirmed the positive relationship between OC and performance (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). For instance, (Ouchi, 1981) found a positive link between OC and productivity. (Schein, 1984), highlighted the relevance of OC in achieving organizational excellence. Meanwhile, (Hofstede, 1998) emphasized the importance of culture in the survival and success of organizations. According to the findings of a study conducted by (Gordon and DiTomaso, 1992), the strength of the culture, regardless of its content, is predictive of the company's performance in the short run.

Similarly, (O'Reilly et al., 2014) discovered clear links between OC and firm performance in terms of financial performance, market evaluation, reputation, and employee attitudes. Following that, other empirical studies established a positive link between the OC and the OP. More recently, the findings of (Bhuiyan, Baird and Munir, 2020) demonstrate that

organizational culture, specifically results-oriented culture and team orientation, has a direct influence on financial and non-financial performance.

However, the results of the study by (Sinha and Dhall, 2020) suggest that there is no significant direct effect of OC on OP. Similarly, (Kotter and Heskett, 1992) found a minor positive correlation between OC strength and long-term economic performance.

In light of the above discussion, we observe that, while some studies investigating the link between OC and performance have revealed a positive correlation between the two variables, the literature shows mixed results in some cases, with no strong and reproducible proof of this positive effect.

2. The indirect relationship between OC and performance: the need of mediators or moderators

Previous studies' mixed results have sparked debate concerning the nature of the relationship between OC and performance. Many authors agree that there is no direct influence of OC on OP and that exogenous variables and/or intermediate mechanisms are required, through which OC acts and influences OP. As a result, it is critical to conduct further research on these mechanisms.

To accomplish this, we will discuss the study approach used in this research work before presenting in a second point the analysis of the results of the documentary research. This will allow us to retain a variable to study later and to propose a conceptual model to be tested empirically.

2.1 Research Methodology

This search aims to identify relevant scientific publications, dealing with the indirect relationship between OC and performance, to be included in our review. To achieve this, an electronic documentary search in English was conducted in appropriate databases and specialized journals as recommended by (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003 ; Petticrew and Roberts, 2006).

The keywords « organisational culture », « performance », « organisational performance », « mediate », « moderate », « mediation » et « moderation » were searched with an intentional focus on articles published in English during the period between 1980 and 2022, at the level of the best peer-reviewed academic journals (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003 ; Petticrew and Roberts, 2006).

The choice of this period is justified by the introduction of the concept of OC in the early 1980s and the multiplication of works since then (Haffar et *al.*, 2021).

The databases that were used as objects of the research were EBSCOhost (Business Source Complete, APA PsycArticles, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection) (268 results), Emerald (126 results), Elsevier Science Direct (61 results), ProQuest One Business (164 results), Wiley Online Library (41 results).

A total of 660 initial results were found. After reviewing the references obtained, the list was reduced to 161 articles based on the relevance of the article to our research and the quality of the journal.

The following criteria were used to reduce the number of articles:

1. Exclusion of articles dealing only with the direct relationship between OC and performance;
2. Exclusion of articles dealing with a performance other than « corporate performance, business performance, operational performance, financial performance »;
3. Exclusion of redundant articles at the level of the databases searched;
4. Exclusion of articles where the independent variable was not OC and the dependent variable was not performance;
5. Inclusion of articles dealing with mediation or moderation between OC and performance, resulting from a search conducted on the Google scholar search after verification of the existence of those articles at the level of the classification established by the site « Scimago Journal & Country Rank ».

2.2 Results Analysis

Finally, as aforementioned, 161 articles dealing with at least one of the two terms searched were selected for the reading and analysis phase. Following the completion of this preliminary analysis, 27 articles were selected for the final phase. These articles discuss the relationship between OC and performance in the presence of a mediating or moderating influence.

The analysis of these articles highlights the role played by several mediators and moderators in the relationship between OC and OP. These prior research investigated a total of 19 mediating and moderating variables, which are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: List of mediating and moderating variables studied in previous research

1. Quality management practices/TQM	11. Marketing effectiveness
2. charismatic leadership	12. Corporate social responsibility practices
3. Contextual ambidexterity	13. Organizational Commitment
4. Environmental unpredictability	14. Environmental Pressures
5. Organizational Capabilities	15. Innovation
6. Market focus	16. The accounting information system
7. Communication	17. Intrapreneurship
8. Management maturity	18. Customer satisfaction rate
9. Cultural consensus	19. The norm for adaptability
10. Entrepreneurial orientation	

Source: The authors of this article

The multitude of variables tested, as indicated in Table 1, shows the interest of researchers in the use of mediating and moderating variables in the relationship between OC and performance. Also, there are three variables that stand out: TQM/quality practices, with 5 five studies devoted to this subject; innovation with 3 dedicated studies; organizational commitment with two studies.

According to the results analysis, 20 of the 27 studies deal with the role of mediator, for a total of more than 74%. This demonstrates the preponderance of studies indicating a significant influence of OC on performance, which meets the first criteria of mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

Furthermore, mediation and moderation were confirmed in 25 of the 27 cases analysed, or in 92.5% of the cases. It should be highlighted that the impact of this mediation/moderation can be significant, partial, or limited to specific types of cultural characteristics.

Additionally, the studies cover 22 countries, with developed countries accounting for 41% and developing countries accounting for 59%. The United States of America (U.S.) ranks first with six studies, followed by Ireland, Iran, Pakistan, and Tunisia, each having two national studies completed. Five studies were conducted in Arab countries: two in Tunisia (2), one in Saudi Arabia (1), one in Oman (1), and one in Palestine (1).

With regard to the analysis of articles by year of publication, a concentration of these studies on the 2000s emerges, with a substantial number of studies carried out during 2020 (6 in total), 2017 (5) and 2015 (3).

Table 2, below, summarizes these articles studied by specifying the year of their publication, the research subject, the mediating/moderating variable studied, the country of research and the results obtained.

Table 2: Literature review on the relationship between OC and OP with a mediating/moderating variable

N°	Year	Authors	Study title	Mediating/moderating variable	Country	Conclusion
1	2022	(Gamage and Tajeddini, 2022)	A multi-layer organizational culture framework for enhancing the financial performance in tourism and hospitality family firms	Moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation	Sri Lanka	Moderation was Confirmed
2	2022	(Khalfan et al., 2022)	Effect of leadership and quality culture on quality management practices and operational performance of construction companies in Oman	Mediating role of the practice of Quality Management	Oman	Mediation was Confirmed
3	2021	(Imran et al., 2021)	The mediating role of innovation in the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance in Pakistan's banking sector	Mediating role of innovation	Pakistan	Mediation was Confirmed
4	2021	(Kiziloglu, 2021)	The effect of organisational culture on organisational performance: the mediating role of intrapreneurship	Mediating role of intrapreneurship	UK	Mediation was Confirmed
5	2020	(Khedhaouria et al., 2020)	The Relationship between Organizational Culture and Small-firm Performance: Entrepreneurial Orientation as Mediator	Mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation	Tunisia	Mediation was Confirmed
6	2020	(Sinha and Dhall, 2020)	Mediating effect of TQM on relationship between organisational culture and performance: evidence from Indian SMEs	TQM mediating role	India	Mediation was Confirmed
7	2020	(Morched and Jarboui, 2020)	Is business performance linked to organizational culture? A study from Tunisian SMEs through subjective measures	Moderating effect of environmental uncertainty	Tunisia	Moderation was Confirmed

N°	Year	Authors	Study title	Mediating/ moderating variable	Country	Conclusion
8	2020	(Aboramadan <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	Organizational culture, innovation and performance: a study from a non-western context	Marketing innovation mediating effect	Palestine	Mediation was Confirmed
9	2020	(Bhatti, Rehman and Rumman, 2020)	Organizational capabilities mediates between organizational culture, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational performance of SMEs in Pakistan	Mediating role of organizational capacities	Pakistan	Mediation was Confirmed
10	2020	(Bhuiyan, Baird and Munir, 2020)	The association between organisational culture, CSR practices and organisational performance in an emerging economy	Mediating role of corporate social responsibility practices	Bangladesh	Mediation was Confirmed
11	2019	(Kuo and Tsai, 2019)	The effects of employee perceived organisational culture on performance: the moderating effects of management maturity	Moderating effects of management maturity	Taiwan	Moderation was Confirmed
12	2018	(Kwarteng and Aveh, 2018)	Empirical examination of organizational culture on accounting information system and corporate performance Evidence from a developing country perspective	Mediating role of the accounting information system.	Ghana	Mediation was Confirmed
13	2017	(Ikhsan, Almahendra & Budiarto, 2017)	contextual ambidexterity in smes in indonesia: a study on how it mediates organizational culture and firm performance and how market dynamism influences its role on firm performance	Mediating role of contextual ambidexterity	Indonesia	Mediation was Confirmed
14	2017	(Nikpour, 2017)	The impact of organizational culture on organizational performance: The mediating role of employee's organizational commitment	Mediating role of the employee's organizational commitment	Iran	Mediation was Confirmed
15	2017	(Jogarathnam, 2017)	How organizational culture influences market orientation and business performance in the restaurant industry	Mediating effect of market orientation	U.S	Mediation was Confirmed
16	2017	(Rafailidis, Trivellas and Polychroniou, 2017)	The mediating role of quality on the relationship between cultural ambidexterity and innovation performance	Mediating role of quality	Greece	Mediation was Confirmed

N°	Year	Authors	Study title	Mediating/ moderating variable	Country	Conclusion
17	2017	(Al-Matari and Bin Omira, 2017)	The Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment on the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Performance in Public Sector: Evidence form KSA	Mediating effect of organizational commitment	KSA	Mediation was Confirmed
18	2016	(Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez and Sanz-Valle, 2016)	Studying the links between organizational culture, innovation, and performance in Spanish companies	Mediating role of innovation	Spain	Mediation was Confirmed
19	2015	(Gambi <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	The relationship between organizational culture and quality techniques, and its impact on operational performance	Mediating role of quality techniques	India	Mediation was Confirmed
20	2015	(Valmohammadi and Roshanzamir, 2015)	The guidelines of improvement: Relations among organizational culture, TQM and performance	Mediating role of the TQM	Iran	Mediation was Confirmed
21	2015	(BOYCE <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	Which comes first, organizational culture or performance? A longitudinal study of causal priority with automobile dealerships	Mediating effect of customer satisfaction rate	U.S	Mediation was Confirmed
22	2014	(CHATMAN <i>et al.</i> , 2014)	Parsing organizational culture: How the norm for adaptability influences the relationship between culture consensus and financial performance in high-technology firms	Moderator effect of the norm for adaptability	U.S and Ireland	Moderation was Confirmed
23	2014	(Gu <i>et al.</i> , 2014)	The effects of organizational culture and environmental pressures on IT project performance: A moderation perspective	Moderating effect of environmental pressures	U.S and China	Moderation was Confirmed
24	2012	(Wilderom, Van den Berg and Wiersma, 2012)	longitudinal study of the effects of charismatic leadership and organizational culture on objective and perceived corporate performance	Mediating effect of charismatic leadership	Netherlands	Mediation was Confirmed
25	2012	(Chatman <i>et al.</i> , 2012)	organizational culture and performance in high-technology firms: the effects of culture content and strength	Effects of cultural consensus	U.S and Ireland	Moderation was Confirmed

N°	Year	Authors	Study title	Mediating/ moderating variable	Country	Conclusion
26	2008	(Garnett, Marlowe and Pandey, 2008)	Penetrating the Performance Predicament: Communication as a Mediator or Moderator of Organizational Culture's Impact on Public Organizational Performance	Communication as a mediator or moderator	U.S	Mediation /Moderation were Confirmed
27	2000	(Sin and Tse, 2000)	How does marketing effectiveness mediate the effect of organizational culture on business performance? The case of service firms	Mediating role of marketing effectiveness	Hong Kong	Mediation was Confirmed

Source: The authors of this article

3. Conceptual model

An examination of the findings of prior studies reveals that OC alone is insufficient to guarantee performance enhancement. Several variables mediate, if not moderate, the link between the two constructs.

The relationship between OC and performance is established in the literature more by mediation mechanisms than by moderation variables (Sin and Tse, 2000; Valmohammadi and Roshanzamir, 2015; BOYCE *et al.*, 2015; Gambi *et al.*, 2015; Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez and Sanz-Valle, 2016; Al-Matari and Bin Omira, 2017; Nazarian, Atkinson and Foroudi, 2017; Nikpour, 2017; Rafailidis, Trivellas and Polychroniou, 2017; Ikhsan, Almahendra and Budiarto, 2017; Jogaratnam, 2017; Kwarteng and Aveh, 2018; Aboramadan *et al.*, 2020; Khedhaouria *et al.*, 2020; Sinha and Dhall, 2020; Bhatti, Rehman and Rumman, 2020; Bhuiyan, Baird and Munir, 2020; Kiziloglu, 2021; Imran *et al.*, 2021; Khalfan *et al.*, 2022).

That is why, for the sake of this article, we will assume the dominant perspective of these studies, and we will seek to investigate the role of a mediator in the relationship between OC and performance in the future.

Quality management and TQM practices emerge as an important factor mediating the relationship between OC and performance. Several research studies have proved its added value to the relationship. (Gambi *et al.*, 2015; Valmohammadi and Roshanzamir, 2015; Rafailidis, Trivellas and Polychroniou, 2017; Sinha and Dhall, 2020; Khalfan *et al.*, 2022).

Also, the importance of implementing TQM practices has increased in the face of growing pressures from the global market, ever more demanding customers and demand for high quality

products offered at lower cost (Patyal and Koilakuntla, 2018). In addition, a successful implementation of TQM would improve all business processes, increase customer and staff satisfaction, gain competitive advantage and ultimately improve organizational performance (Gambi *et al.*, 2015; Patyal and Koilakuntla, 2018).

This direct and positive relationship between TQM and organizational performance has been suggested by several studies (Terziovski and Samson, 1999; Prajogo and Sohal, 2006; Valmohammadi and Roshanzamir, 2015; Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez and Sanz-Valle, 2016). Other studies have found that TQM has a negligible direct effect on performance, particularly operational performance (Khalfallah *et al.*, 2022).

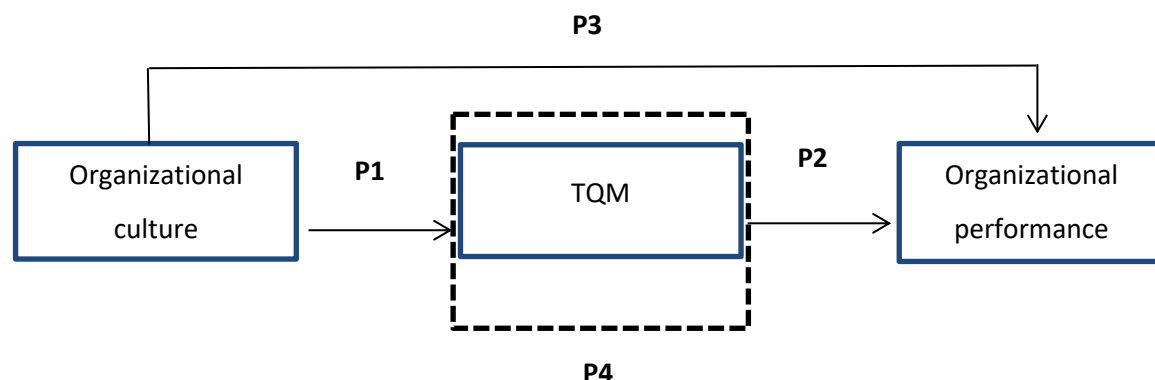
Furthermore, one of the critical factors for the successful implementation of TQM is OC (DETERT, SCHROEDER and Mauriel, 2000; Gorondutse, Ali and Hilman, 2021). It creates an enabling and appropriate environment to support TQM initiatives (Patyal, Ambekar and Prakash, 2020).

On a theoretical level, we will use RBV theory (Barney, 1991) to investigate the relationship between OC and organizational performance, as well as the mediating role of TQM in this relationship. As a result, the OC, as well as successful TQM implementation, could be sources of competitive advantage, leading to improved performance (Barney, 1986).

Therefore, based on the discussion presented below, the following proposals can be suggested:

- P1: Organizational culture would positively influence the implementation of TQM;
- P2: TQM would positively impact organizational performance;
- P3: Organizational culture would positively and directly influence organizational performance;
- P4: Organizational culture would positively and indirectly influence organizational performance through its effect on TQM.

Based on this, the following conceptual model (Figure 1) can be proposed:

Figure 1: Research framework

Source : Conceptual model from (Valmohammadi and Roshanzamir, 2015; Sinha and Dhall, 2020) adapted by the authors

This conceptual framework makes it possible to trace the mechanisms through which organizational culture impacts organizational performance. It sheds light on the importance of a culture conducive to TQM to ensure its success. Which, in turn, through its plausible dimensions and practices, will improve organizational performance.

Furthermore, the use of this research framework is an extension of the work of (Valmohammadi and Roshanzamir, 2015; Sinha and Dhall, 2020) and will allow testing their model in the Moroccan context and add additional validity to the model.

Conclusion

The survival of businesses in general, and Moroccan businesses in particular, is dependent on their ability to continuously enhance their performance in the face of a challenging and globalized economic climate. In order to establish the impact of OC on OP, we examined and analysed prior research findings. Following that, we undertook an in-depth investigation of the mediating/moderating role of several variables in this relationship.

Finally, it turns out that the TQM is one of the mediating variables most significantly impacting this relationship. Therefore, this article suggests propositions and a conceptual framework to be tested empirically, to examine the direct and indirect relationship of OC on firm performance through its effect on TQM.

The current study makes a significant contribution to the literature by presenting a state of the art of scientific studies that have been conducted as well as mechanisms of influence of the OC on the OP. This allows these studies to be extended and the roles of mediators and moderators

to be confirmed in various contexts. Furthermore, by using the (RBV) theory, this study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the OC and TQM as resources that lead to superior business performance.

On a managerial level, the current study provides an overview of the results of previous studies on the factors capable of improving enterprise performance in the presence of OC and TQM. This enables managers to recognize the importance of OC and to sustain a successful implementation of TQM practices in order to improve their company's performance. However, this analysis remains limited due to the choices made in terms of time, the nature of the articles selected, and the methodology used. In this, other studies could be conducted taking into account reviews of a different nature.

This research has provided us with a variety of avenues for future studies, and offers the opportunity to empirically test the conceptual model and the research proposals suggested at the level of the Moroccan context. Also, future research may focus on other mediating variables such as communication, consumer satisfaction, or entrepreneurial orientation.

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