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Identifying the Components of Organizational Culture Supporting Organizational Transformation

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify and validate the components of organizational culture that support organizational transformation. The study employed an exploratory mixed-methods design integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the qualitative phase, a metasynthesis was conducted according to the seven-stage framework of Sandelowski and Barroso to extract relevant organizational culture components from prior studies. The preliminary components were subsequently evaluated through a focus group consisting of four purposively selected experts holding doctoral degrees and expertise in organizational culture and organizational transformation. Two two-hour focus-group sessions were conducted, during which the identified components were scored, discussed, and refined. In the quantitative phase, the refined components were assessed using the classical Delphi technique. Ten experts with doctoral degrees in management and relevant teaching or professional experience participated in the Delphi panel. A researcher-developed questionnaire using a seven-point Likert scale was employed. Item consensus was evaluated using the interquartile range, overall expert agreement was assessed using Kendall's coefficient of concordance, and internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The final framework comprised 10 higher-order dimensions and 20 components of organizational culture supporting organizational transformation. Adaptability and change readiness received the highest priority, followed by leadership for transformation and learning and knowledge orientation. Other validated dimensions included participation and collaboration, communication and feedback, trust and psychological safety, strategic alignment, innovation orientation, reinforcement and organizational support, and accountability and transformation outcomes. All retained items had interquartile ranges below 2. Kendall's coefficient of concordance was 0.75, indicating strong agreement among Delphi experts. Cronbach's alpha was 0.87, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency of the final questionnaire. Organizational culture supporting transformation is a multidimensional construct in which adaptability, leadership, learning, participation, communication, trust, innovation, strategic alignment, organizational support, and accountability operate as mutually reinforcing cultural mechanisms. The proposed framework can be used as a basis for organizational diagnosis and the development of culture-oriented transformation interventions.

Keywords: Organizational Culture; Organizational Transformation; Change Readiness; Organizational Learning; Transformational Leadership; Delphi Technique; Metasynthesis

Introduction

Organizational transformation has become an increasingly central concern for contemporary organizations confronted with technological disruption, intensified competition, demographic shifts, digitalization, changing stakeholder expectations, and growing demands for organizational resilience and sustainability. Unlike limited or incremental change, organizational transformation typically entails substantial modifications in structures, strategies, processes, technologies, leadership patterns, work systems, and employee roles. Such transformation requires organizations not only to redesign formal arrangements but also to reconsider the underlying assumptions, values, norms, behavioral expectations, and shared

meanings through which organizational members interpret change. For this reason, organizational culture is widely regarded as one of the most influential contextual conditions affecting whether transformation initiatives are accepted, resisted, institutionalized, or ultimately abandoned. Organizational culture provides a collective interpretive framework that guides employees' responses to uncertainty and determines which forms of behavior are considered legitimate, desirable, or unacceptable during periods of change. Therefore, identifying the cultural components that specifically support organizational transformation is critical for explaining why some organizations successfully adapt to major changes while others experience inertia, fragmented implementation, or resistance despite having technically appropriate transformation programs [1, 2].

Organizational culture can be understood as a relatively enduring configuration of shared values, beliefs, assumptions, behavioral norms, routines, and symbolic practices that shape organizational life. Its influence extends beyond employee attitudes because it affects decision-making, leadership relationships, collaboration, knowledge exchange, innovation, organizational justice, and the capacity of organizations to coordinate diverse activities. In complex organizational systems, culture functions as an informal control mechanism by shaping how employees interpret organizational goals and how they respond to new policies, technologies, and managerial expectations. Studies in different organizational settings have emphasized that cultural characteristics are associated with integrated management, organizational disclosure, perceptions of justice, and patterns of interaction among organizational members [3-5]. Consequently, culture should not be regarded as a peripheral or symbolic dimension of organizational functioning. Rather, it constitutes a foundational mechanism through which strategic priorities and structural reforms are translated into everyday behavior. This role becomes particularly significant during transformation, when existing routines and identities are destabilized and employees require new cultural reference points to understand what the organization expects from them.

A major challenge in organizational transformation is that formal change can be implemented more rapidly than cultural change. Organizations may introduce new technologies, reporting structures, digital platforms, or business models while employees continue to rely on traditional norms and assumptions. This misalignment can create a gap between formally declared transformation objectives and actual organizational behavior. Research on digital transformation has highlighted the importance of cultural and strategic barriers that can obstruct the implementation of technological change, even where necessary technical resources are available [6]. Similarly, evidence from educational and tourism-related organizations suggests that organizational culture can serve as an important mediating mechanism linking organizational change to successful digital transformation [2]. These findings indicate that transformation cannot be sustained solely through structural redesign or technological investment. Organizations also require cultural characteristics that encourage adaptability, participation, learning, experimentation, communication, and commitment to new strategic directions.

One of the most frequently emphasized cultural requirements of organizational transformation is adaptability. Transformational contexts expose employees to uncertainty, changing role expectations, new technologies, unfamiliar routines, and revised performance criteria. Cultures characterized by rigidity, excessive hierarchy, low tolerance for ambiguity, and dependence on established procedures may therefore inhibit transformation by discouraging experimentation and reinforcing behavioral inertia. By contrast, adaptive cultures encourage organizational members to respond constructively to environmental change, revise established practices when necessary, and maintain openness toward alternative ways of working. This issue is particularly important in digital transformation, where technological change often

requires simultaneous modifications in organizational structures, strategic thinking, employee competencies, and decision-making processes [6]. Organizational agility has likewise been linked to leadership approaches and innovation-oriented cultural conditions, suggesting that adaptability emerges not simply from structural flexibility but from a broader cultural capacity to accommodate paradox, uncertainty, and continuous change [7].

Leadership constitutes another major cultural mechanism influencing organizational transformation. Leaders shape culture through the behaviors they model, the priorities they reward, the risks they tolerate, and the narratives they construct around organizational change. During transformational processes, employees often interpret leadership behavior as an indicator of whether change initiatives are genuine, temporary, or politically motivated. Leadership that encourages participation, supports experimentation, provides psychological reassurance, and communicates a coherent direction can therefore strengthen cultural readiness for transformation. Research on paradoxical leadership has shown that leaders may simultaneously support competing organizational demands, such as innovation and stability, thereby contributing to both innovation culture and organizational agility [7]. Similarly, contemporary research on digital leadership emphasizes that leaders can influence organizational sustainability through the creation and reinforcement of digital culture [8]. Leadership is also central to the development of human-centered protective cultures in technologically complex environments such as cybersecurity, where effective governance depends on shared behavioral norms rather than technical safeguards alone [9]. These findings collectively suggest that leadership-supportive culture should be regarded as a central component of transformation readiness.

Organizational learning is another key dimension because transformation requires organizations to acquire, interpret, distribute, and apply new knowledge. A learning-oriented culture promotes continuous reflection, knowledge exchange, capability development, and the willingness to revise existing assumptions. This becomes especially important when transformation is driven by emerging technologies, changing customer expectations, or new competitive models. Evidence indicates that organizational learning culture can strengthen the relationship between analytical capabilities and innovation, thereby enabling organizations to convert technological and informational resources into innovative outcomes [10]. Learning culture also contributes to the development of competencies among younger generations of employees, particularly when combined with learning agility [11]. Furthermore, organizational learning has been associated with sustainable competitive advantage through mechanisms such as cultural intelligence and the adoption of artificial intelligence [12]. These relationships demonstrate that organizational learning should not be interpreted merely as a training function; rather, it represents a cultural orientation toward continuous renewal and collective adaptation.

Closely related to learning is knowledge sharing, which allows knowledge to circulate beyond individual employees and become embedded within organizational processes. Transformational change frequently requires cross-functional collaboration, rapid problem solving, and the recombination of expertise from different organizational units. In such environments, cultures that reward information hoarding or reinforce departmental boundaries may delay adaptation and reduce organizational creativity. In contrast, knowledge-sharing cultures enable employees to exchange both explicit and tacit knowledge, thereby facilitating creativity and organizational innovation [13]. Intergenerational organizational culture can also influence innovation through knowledge-sharing mechanisms, particularly in organizations where employees from different age cohorts possess different technological experiences, professional values, and forms of expertise [14]. Knowledge sharing therefore appears to be an important cultural bridge between employee capabilities and transformation outcomes.

Transformation-supportive organizational culture also depends on communication and feedback. Major organizational change creates ambiguity, uncertainty, and sometimes anxiety because employees must interpret unfamiliar expectations and assess how changes may affect their roles and professional identities. Transparent communication reduces uncertainty by providing employees with credible information regarding the purpose, direction, and consequences of transformation. Feedback further enables employees to identify performance gaps, clarify expectations, and adjust behavior during implementation. The importance of feedback culture has been demonstrated in professional and educational contexts, where broader organizational cultural conditions influence how individuals provide, receive, and use feedback [15]. Open communication is therefore not merely an informational mechanism but a cultural signal that employee perspectives are legitimate and that transformation is a participatory rather than exclusively top-down process.

Trust, compassion, and relational quality are similarly important because transformation can challenge established identities and increase perceptions of vulnerability. Employees are more likely to engage constructively with change when they trust organizational leaders, believe that decisions are made fairly, and feel safe expressing concerns or proposing alternative approaches. Relational cultures characterized by compassion and supportive interpersonal behavior can contribute to healthier social interactions and strengthen employees' willingness to cooperate during uncertain periods [16]. Organizational justice is likewise relevant because perceptions of fairness influence whether employees interpret change initiatives as legitimate or threatening. Research emphasizing organizational justice grounded in shared cultural and ethical values further demonstrates that fairness-related norms are embedded in broader organizational cultural systems [5]. Thus, trust and psychological safety can be understood as cultural conditions that reduce defensive behavior and create space for experimentation, dialogue, and collective problem solving.

Innovation orientation represents another essential component of transformational culture. Organizational transformation often requires experimentation with new technologies, services, work processes, governance mechanisms, and business models. Innovation therefore depends not only on technical capabilities but also on cultural norms that encourage creativity, calculated risk taking, and acceptance of temporary failure as part of learning. Innovation culture has been identified as a major mechanism through which leadership contributes to organizational agility in digital transformation contexts [7]. Big data analytics capabilities similarly generate greater value when organizations possess a learning culture capable of supporting innovation [10]. Knowledge-sharing culture also supports creativity by enabling the integration of explicit and tacit knowledge [13]. Collectively, these findings indicate that organizations seeking transformation require cultural arrangements that legitimize experimentation while maintaining sufficient strategic coherence.

Human resource systems also interact with organizational culture during transformation. Sustainable human resource practices can help organizations build competencies, reinforce desirable behaviors, and align employee capabilities with changing strategic requirements. Social and cultural competencies may contribute to organizational performance through sustainable human resource management mechanisms, demonstrating that cultural capacities at both individual and organizational levels can have implications for broader organizational outcomes [17]. Empowerment is particularly important because employees must often exercise greater discretion during periods of change. Research on managerial empowerment has emphasized the importance of psychological, relational, and value-based resources in strengthening managers' capacity to act effectively [18]. Similarly, a culture that supports employee initiative and shared responsibility can reduce overdependence on formal authority and facilitate faster responses to new transformational demands.

The relationship between culture and transformation also extends to organizational sustainability and organizational health. Transformation that improves short-term efficiency but undermines employee well-being, ethical values, or long-term organizational capacity may not produce sustainable benefits. Emerging studies have therefore increasingly examined cultural models associated with organizational health, including green culture and sustainability-oriented values in educational organizations [19]. Digital leadership has likewise been connected to organizational sustainability through digital cultural mechanisms [8]. These perspectives suggest that the cultural foundations of transformation should be understood broadly enough to incorporate not only innovation and performance but also resilience, well-being, ethical responsibility, and long-term organizational continuity.

Another important consideration is that organizational culture operates at multiple levels. Individual beliefs and behaviors are embedded within teams, departments, professions, and organizational systems, while macro-level cultural arrangements are reproduced through everyday micro-level interactions. A recent systematic perspective on organizational culture change emphasizes the importance of understanding the relationship between micro-level behavioral processes and macro-level cultural patterns [1]. Transformation-supportive culture therefore cannot be created only through formal declarations of values. Cultural change requires repeated reinforcement through leadership behavior, recruitment and promotion practices, reward systems, communication routines, learning opportunities, organizational stories, and everyday interactions. This multilevel perspective helps explain why cultural transformation is often slower and more difficult than structural change.

Cultural complexity is further intensified by workforce diversity and generational differences. Contemporary organizations increasingly include employees with different technological competencies, career expectations, communication preferences, and attitudes toward authority. Intergenerational culture may therefore affect the success of knowledge sharing and innovation by shaping relationships among employees from different age groups [14]. The development of Generation Z competencies also depends on learning culture and employee learning agility [11]. These findings imply that transformation-supportive culture must accommodate diversity while simultaneously creating shared norms that facilitate coordination and knowledge exchange.

The need for such integration is particularly evident in organizations undergoing digital transformation. Digitalization requires new competencies, revised decision-making models, cross-functional cooperation, stronger data literacy, and willingness to adopt artificial intelligence and analytical technologies. Yet technological adoption alone does not ensure transformation. Organizational learning, cultural intelligence, and supportive cultural conditions influence how effectively organizations integrate new technologies and translate them into sustainable advantage [12]. Digital transformation may also be hindered by structural, strategic, and cultural barriers that interact with one another rather than operating independently [6]. Thus, a transformation-supportive culture should be understood as a systemic configuration rather than a collection of isolated traits.

Existing research also demonstrates that organizational culture affects organizational outcomes outside explicitly transformational contexts. Cultural dimensions have been associated with integrated urban management, organizational disclosure, feedback processes, innovation, sustainability, health, and employee performance [3, 4, 15]. Cultural competencies can further influence organizational performance through human resource mechanisms [17]. These diverse findings reinforce the centrality of culture but also expose a conceptual gap. Much of the existing literature examines specific

cultural dimensions in relation to isolated outcomes, whereas fewer studies attempt to identify a comprehensive configuration of cultural components specifically oriented toward organizational transformation.

The theoretical and practical significance of addressing this gap is substantial. Managers responsible for transformation need more than a general understanding that “culture matters.” They require a clearly articulated set of cultural components that can be assessed, developed, and aligned with transformation strategies. Without such specification, culture may remain an abstract concept invoked after transformation failure rather than a manageable organizational capability. A comprehensive identification of transformation-supportive cultural components can provide a basis for diagnostic instruments, leadership development, human resource interventions, communication strategies, learning systems, and change-management programs. It can also improve theoretical integration by connecting fragmented strands of research concerning adaptability, leadership, innovation, learning, knowledge sharing, trust, communication, empowerment, sustainability, and strategic alignment. The evidence reviewed across recent studies indicates that these dimensions are repeatedly associated with organizational effectiveness and change, but they have often been investigated separately rather than synthesized into an integrated framework [2, 9, 10, 19].

Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to identify and validate the components of organizational culture that support organizational transformation through the sequential integration of metasynthesis, focus-group analysis, and the Delphi technique.

Methodology

This study employed an exploratory mixed-methods design integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to identify the components of organizational culture that support organizational transformation and are compatible with different forms of organizational change. Given the multidimensional nature of organizational culture and the need to first discover relevant components from the existing body of knowledge and subsequently refine and validate them through expert judgment, the research process consisted of three complementary stages: metasynthesis, focus group inquiry, and the Delphi technique. In the qualitative phase, a systematic metasynthesis was initially conducted to identify and synthesize organizational culture components associated with organizational transformation. The metasynthesis procedure followed the seven-stage framework proposed by Sandelowski and Barroso, comprising formulation of the research question, systematic review of the literature, search and selection of eligible studies, extraction of information from the selected studies, analysis and synthesis of qualitative findings, quality control, and presentation of the synthesized findings. Both qualitative and quantitative studies relevant to organizational culture and organizational transformation were considered as potential sources of evidence in the metasynthesis stage, thereby allowing the researchers to integrate theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, concepts, and previously identified organizational culture dimensions. Following extraction and synthesis of the findings, the preliminary set of organizational culture components was subjected to further evaluation through a focus group. The focus group consisted of four experts selected through purposive sampling. Eligibility criteria included possession of a doctoral degree and recognized academic or professional expertise in organizational culture and organizational transformation. Two focus-group sessions, each lasting approximately two hours, were conducted. During these sessions, participants examined the components derived from the metasynthesis, discussed their conceptual relevance to organizational transformation, compared their interpretations, and refined the preliminary set of components. The purpose of the focus group was not to

require complete agreement among participants but rather to obtain an in-depth understanding of expert perspectives, identify conceptual overlaps or ambiguities, and determine the relative relevance of the proposed organizational culture components. In the subsequent quantitative phase, the refined components were evaluated using the classical Delphi technique. The Delphi panel consisted of 10 experts who were also selected through purposive sampling. Inclusion criteria for the Delphi panel were holding a doctoral degree in management or a closely related field and having previous teaching or scholarly experience concerning organizational culture and organizational transformation. The anonymity of participants' individual judgments, structured expert feedback, and statistical assessment of agreement were incorporated as essential characteristics of the Delphi procedure. One Delphi round was conducted because the observed level of agreement among experts met the predetermined criterion for strong consensus.

Data collection was performed using documentary extraction procedures, structured focus-group evaluation, and researcher-developed questionnaires corresponding to the successive stages of the study. In the metasynthesis stage, relevant information was systematically extracted from eligible studies concerning organizational culture dimensions, characteristics, mechanisms, and components that could facilitate, support, or influence organizational transformation. Extracted concepts were compared across the reviewed studies, conceptually coded, grouped according to similarity and conceptual relationships, and synthesized to form the initial pool of organizational culture components. In the focus-group stage, a researcher-developed evaluation questionnaire based on the components identified through the metasynthesis was used. Each identified component was presented to the four experts, who were initially asked to assign a relevance score ranging from 1 to 100 according to the extent to which the component represented an aspect of organizational culture supporting organizational transformation. Participants subsequently discussed the assigned scores, underlying interpretations, conceptual relevance, similarities and differences among components, and their applicability to organizational transformation. After the group discussion, each expert was allowed to reconsider the initial judgment and provide a final score. The results of this stage were used to refine the wording, conceptual boundaries, and composition of the components included in the subsequent Delphi questionnaire. The final researcher-developed Delphi questionnaire therefore originated directly from the findings of the metasynthesis and the expert deliberations undertaken during the focus-group sessions. For the Delphi phase, the retained items were rated using a seven-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire was considered to possess adequate content validity because its items were grounded in the theoretical and empirical literature identified during the metasynthesis and were subsequently reviewed and refined by experts specializing in organizational culture and organizational transformation. To enhance face validity and ensure that the intended meaning of each component was clearly understood by the Delphi participants, relevant definitions and explanatory descriptions were provided together with the questionnaire. Internal consistency reliability of the Delphi questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.87, indicating satisfactory reliability of the measurement instrument.

Data analysis was conducted sequentially in accordance with the exploratory mixed-methods structure of the study. In the metasynthesis stage, findings extracted from the selected studies were subjected to systematic comparison, coding, conceptual categorization, and synthesis. Similar concepts and findings were compared across studies, duplicate or highly overlapping concepts were consolidated, and conceptually related findings were grouped to develop a preliminary framework of organizational culture components supporting organizational transformation. The synthesis process was conducted according to the seven-stage Sandelowski and Barroso framework, with particular attention to systematic study selection,

extraction of relevant evidence, integration of findings, and quality control. The preliminary components generated through the metasynthesis were subsequently examined during the focus-group stage. Expert scores ranging from 1 to 100 were considered together with the qualitative discussions generated during the two focus-group sessions. The discussions were used to clarify the meaning and scope of each component, identify redundancies, resolve conceptual inconsistencies, and determine which components should be retained, modified, combined, or excluded before entering the Delphi phase. The resulting researcher-developed questionnaire was then administered to the 10-member Delphi panel using a seven-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics and measures of expert agreement were applied to determine the degree of convergence among panel members. The interquartile range was used as the primary criterion for retaining individual items, with an interquartile range of less than 2 indicating an acceptable degree of consensus regarding an item. Overall agreement among the Delphi experts was assessed using Kendall's coefficient of concordance. The calculated Kendall's coefficient was 0.75, representing a strong level of agreement among panel members. Because this coefficient demonstrated substantial convergence of expert judgments and the retained items satisfied the predefined interquartile-range criterion, the Delphi process was concluded after one round. Cronbach's alpha was additionally calculated to assess the internal consistency of the final questionnaire, and the obtained coefficient of 0.87 confirmed acceptable reliability. The final components were therefore determined through the sequential integration of evidence obtained from the metasynthesis, expert interpretation and refinement during the focus-group stage, and quantitative consensus assessment through the Delphi technique.

Findings and Results

The findings were obtained through the sequential integration of the metasynthesis, focus-group, and Delphi phases. In the qualitative expert phase, four specialists participated in the focus group. All four participants held doctoral degrees in management or closely related fields and had academic or professional experience in organizational culture, organizational change, or organizational transformation. Their professional experience ranged from 11 to 24 years, with a mean of 17.50 years. Three participants were university faculty members and one held a senior organizational consulting position in addition to academic experience. In the Delphi phase, 10 experts participated, all of whom held doctoral degrees in management-related disciplines and had prior teaching, research, or executive experience concerning organizational culture and organizational transformation. Their professional experience ranged from 9 to 27 years, with a mean of 16.80 years. Six members of the Delphi panel were university faculty members, two combined academic and executive responsibilities, and two were senior managers or consultants with substantial experience in organizational transformation projects. The combination of academic and applied expertise provided a heterogeneous but substantively relevant expert base for evaluating the proposed components. No participant withdrew from either the focus-group or Delphi phases, and all questionnaires were returned in analyzable form.

Table 1

Results of the Metasynthesis and Preliminary Extraction of Organizational Culture Components Supporting Organizational Transformation

Main Dimension	Preliminary Component	Representative Conceptual Indicators	Number of Supporting Sources	Relative Frequency (%)
Strategic orientation	Shared transformational vision	Common future orientation, strategic clarity, collective understanding of change direction	31	67.39
Strategic orientation	Alignment with organizational goals	Consistency between cultural norms and transformation objectives	28	60.87

Leadership support	Transformational leadership support	Leader encouragement, role modeling, sponsorship of change, commitment to transformation	36	78.26
Leadership support	Empowering leadership	Delegation, autonomy, participation in decision-making, psychological empowerment	29	63.04
Participation and involvement	Employee participation	Involvement in planning, implementation, and evaluation of organizational change	34	73.91
Participation and involvement	Cross-functional collaboration	Cooperation across units, collective problem solving, interdepartmental integration	30	65.22
Learning orientation	Organizational learning	Continuous learning, reflection, knowledge acquisition, lessons from change experiences	35	76.09
Learning orientation	Knowledge sharing	Open circulation of knowledge, experience transfer, collaborative learning	32	69.57
Innovation orientation	Innovation and creativity	Experimentation, generation of new ideas, openness to new methods and practices	33	71.74
Innovation orientation	Risk tolerance	Acceptance of calculated risk, tolerance for experimentation and possible failure	24	52.17
Adaptability	Flexibility and adaptability	Rapid adjustment, responsiveness to environmental change, behavioral flexibility	37	80.43
Adaptability	Readiness for change	Positive attitudes toward change, willingness to abandon outdated routines	35	76.09
Communication	Open communication	Transparency, accessibility of information, two-way communication	34	73.91
Communication	Constructive feedback	Timely feedback, dialogue, correction and learning during transformation	27	58.70
Trust and psychological safety	Interpersonal and organizational trust	Confidence in management, coworkers, and organizational intentions	31	67.39
Trust and psychological safety	Psychological safety	Freedom to express concerns, ideas, mistakes, and disagreement without fear	29	63.04
Performance orientation	Accountability	Responsibility for transformation outcomes and fulfillment of assigned roles	26	56.52
Performance orientation	Results orientation	Focus on transformation achievements, effectiveness, and measurable outcomes	25	54.35
Support systems	Recognition and reinforcement	Rewarding adaptive, innovative, and change-supportive behavior	27	58.70
Support systems	Resource support	Availability of time, knowledge, technology, budget, and structural support for change	28	60.87

The metasynthesis produced a preliminary pool of 20 organizational culture components grouped into nine broader conceptual dimensions. The highest relative frequency was observed for flexibility and adaptability, which appeared in 80.43% of the reviewed sources, followed by transformational leadership support at 78.26%, organizational learning and readiness for change at 76.09% each, employee participation and open communication at 73.91%, and innovation and creativity at 71.74%. These results indicated that the literature did not portray a transformation-supportive culture as a single attitudinal characteristic; rather, it was represented as a multidimensional cultural configuration combining strategic direction, leadership behavior, employee involvement, learning processes, innovation, adaptability, communication, trust, performance responsibility, and organizational support systems. Among the components with comparatively lower frequency, risk tolerance, results orientation, accountability, constructive feedback, and recognition and reinforcement were still represented in more than half of the reviewed evidence base and were therefore retained for expert consideration rather than being excluded at the metasynthesis stage. The findings of Table 1 thus formed the initial conceptual pool submitted to the focus group for further refinement.

Table 2

Focus-Group Evaluation of Preliminary Organizational Culture Components

Component	Mean Initial Score	Mean Final Score	Mean Change	Final Rank	Focus-Group Decision
Flexibility and adaptability	91.25	95.00	+3.75	1	Retained
Transformational leadership support	90.00	94.25	+4.25	2	Retained
Readiness for change	88.50	93.75	+5.25	3	Retained
Organizational learning	87.75	92.50	+4.75	4	Retained

Open communication	86.00	91.75	+5.75	5	Retained
Employee participation	85.50	91.00	+5.50	6	Retained
Innovation and creativity	84.75	90.50	+5.75	7	Retained
Shared transformational vision	84.00	89.75	+5.75	8	Retained
Interpersonal and organizational trust	83.50	89.25	+5.75	9	Retained
Psychological safety	82.75	88.75	+6.00	10	Retained
Knowledge sharing	81.50	87.50	+6.00	11	Retained
Empowering leadership	80.25	86.75	+6.50	12	Retained
Cross-functional collaboration	79.75	86.00	+6.25	13	Retained
Alignment with organizational goals	78.50	84.75	+6.25	14	Retained
Recognition and reinforcement	76.75	83.50	+6.75	15	Retained
Constructive feedback	75.50	82.75	+7.25	16	Retained
Accountability	74.25	81.25	+7.00	17	Retained
Resource support	72.75	80.50	+7.75	18	Retained
Risk tolerance	70.50	78.75	+8.25	19	Retained with wording revision
Results orientation	69.75	77.50	+7.75	20	Retained with conceptual clarification

The focus-group results showed that all 20 preliminary components were judged to possess sufficient conceptual relevance to remain in the study, although several were reformulated or clarified prior to the Delphi stage. The mean final relevance scores ranged from 77.50 to 95.00, indicating that none of the components was considered conceptually irrelevant by the expert group. Flexibility and adaptability received the highest final mean score of 95.00, followed by transformational leadership support at 94.25, readiness for change at 93.75, organizational learning at 92.50, and open communication at 91.75. The largest increases between the initial and final ratings were observed for risk tolerance, resource support, results orientation, constructive feedback, accountability, and recognition and reinforcement. These increases occurred after the participants discussed the distinction between general desirable organizational characteristics and those cultural features specifically required to sustain transformation. In particular, risk tolerance was reframed as tolerance for calculated experimentation rather than indiscriminate acceptance of risk, while results orientation was clarified as commitment to transformation outcomes rather than narrow short-term performance pressure. Similarly, resource support was interpreted not simply as material availability but as the culturally institutionalized willingness of the organization to allocate time, information, technology, and managerial support to change initiatives. The pattern of increased scores following discussion suggested that the focus-group process enhanced conceptual clarity and reduced differences in interpretation among the experts. Based on these results, all 20 components were retained for Delphi assessment, although wording modifications were made to improve precision and eliminate ambiguity.

Table 3

Delphi Consensus Statistics for Organizational Culture Components Supporting Organizational Transformation

Component	Mean	SD	Median	Interquartile Range	Agreement (%)	Delphi Decision
Flexibility and adaptability	6.70	0.48	7.00	0.75	96.67	Retained
Transformational leadership support	6.60	0.52	7.00	1.00	94.29	Retained
Readiness for change	6.50	0.53	6.50	1.00	92.86	Retained
Organizational learning	6.40	0.52	6.00	1.00	91.43	Retained
Open communication	6.40	0.70	7.00	1.00	91.43	Retained
Employee participation	6.30	0.67	6.00	1.00	90.00	Retained
Innovation and creativity	6.30	0.48	6.00	0.75	90.00	Retained
Shared transformational vision	6.20	0.63	6.00	1.00	88.57	Retained
Interpersonal and organizational trust	6.20	0.79	6.50	1.25	88.57	Retained
Psychological safety	6.10	0.74	6.00	1.00	87.14	Retained
Knowledge sharing	6.10	0.57	6.00	1.00	87.14	Retained
Empowering leadership	6.00	0.67	6.00	1.00	85.71	Retained
Cross-functional collaboration	6.00	0.82	6.00	1.25	85.71	Retained

Alignment with organizational goals	5.90	0.74	6.00	1.00	84.29	Retained
Recognition and reinforcement	5.80	0.79	6.00	1.25	82.86	Retained
Constructive feedback	5.80	0.63	6.00	1.00	82.86	Retained
Accountability	5.70	0.82	6.00	1.25	81.43	Retained
Resource support	5.70	0.67	6.00	1.00	81.43	Retained
Calculated risk tolerance	5.60	0.84	6.00	1.50	80.00	Retained
Transformation-oriented results focus	5.50	0.85	5.50	1.50	78.57	Retained

The Delphi results indicated a high level of expert agreement concerning the importance of the proposed organizational culture components. Mean scores ranged from 5.50 to 6.70 on the seven-point scale, and all 20 components had interquartile ranges below the predefined exclusion threshold of 2. Flexibility and adaptability again received the highest level of expert endorsement, with a mean of 6.70, a median of 7.00, and an interquartile range of 0.75. Transformational leadership support followed with a mean of 6.60, while readiness for change, organizational learning, open communication, employee participation, and innovation and creativity also received particularly high ratings. The lowest mean scores were observed for transformation-oriented results focus and calculated risk tolerance, although both remained well above the scale midpoint and satisfied the consensus criterion. The relatively low standard deviations across the components further demonstrated convergence of expert judgments. Overall agreement among the 10 Delphi participants was assessed using Kendall's coefficient of concordance, which yielded ($W=0.75$), indicating strong consensus. Since the expert panel demonstrated strong overall agreement and every retained item satisfied the interquartile-range requirement, additional Delphi rounds were not considered necessary. The questionnaire also demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.87. Taken together, these findings supported the stability and coherence of the final set of organizational culture components.

Table 4

Final Structure of Organizational Culture Supporting Organizational Transformation

Final Dimension	Constituent Components	Dimension Mean Score	Priority Rank
Adaptability and change readiness	Flexibility and adaptability; readiness for change	6.60	1
Leadership for transformation	Transformational leadership support; empowering leadership	6.30	2
Learning and knowledge orientation	Organizational learning; knowledge sharing	6.25	3
Participation and collaboration	Employee participation; cross-functional collaboration	6.15	4
Communication and feedback	Open communication; constructive feedback	6.10	5
Innovation orientation	Innovation and creativity; calculated risk tolerance	5.95	6
Trust and psychological safety	Interpersonal and organizational trust; psychological safety	6.15	4
Strategic alignment	Shared transformational vision; alignment with organizational goals	6.05	7
Reinforcement and organizational support	Recognition and reinforcement; resource support	5.75	8
Accountability and transformation outcomes	Accountability; transformation-oriented results focus	5.60	9

The final synthesis resulted in 10 higher-order dimensions encompassing 20 organizational culture components that collectively represented a culture supportive of organizational transformation. Adaptability and change readiness emerged as the highest-priority dimension with a mean score of 6.60, demonstrating the centrality of flexibility, responsiveness, and willingness to engage with organizational change. Leadership for transformation ranked second with a mean of 6.30 and incorporated both transformational leadership support and empowerment, indicating that expert participants viewed leadership as a cultural mechanism through which transformation is legitimized, communicated, and translated into employee action. Learning and knowledge orientation achieved a mean score of 6.25, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and knowledge exchange as mechanisms for adapting organizational routines during transformation. Participation and collaboration and trust and psychological safety each achieved a mean of 6.15, suggesting that

transformation-supportive cultures require both active employee involvement and a relational environment in which individuals can voice ideas, concerns, and alternative views without fear of negative consequences. Communication and feedback achieved a mean of 6.10, confirming that transparent information exchange and corrective dialogue are critical during periods of organizational change. Strategic alignment, with a mean of 6.05, reflected the importance of a shared transformational vision and consistency between cultural expectations and organizational goals. Innovation orientation obtained a mean of 5.95 and included both creativity and calculated risk tolerance, demonstrating that transformation requires not only idea generation but also cultural acceptance of experimentation. Reinforcement and organizational support achieved a mean of 5.75, while accountability and transformation outcomes received a mean of 5.60. Although these latter dimensions were ranked comparatively lower, their retention by the Delphi panel showed that incentives, resources, responsibility, and outcome orientation remained necessary for sustaining transformation over time. The overall pattern therefore suggests that organizational culture supporting transformation is best conceptualized as a multidimensional system in which adaptability, leadership, learning, participation, trust, communication, innovation, strategic alignment, supportive organizational mechanisms, and accountability operate in a mutually reinforcing manner rather than as isolated cultural attributes.

Figure 1

Final Conceptual Model of Organizational Culture Components Supporting Organizational Transformation



The final conceptual model illustrates the integration of the 10 higher-order dimensions identified through the combined metasynthesis, focus-group, and Delphi procedures. At the core of the model is organizational transformation, surrounded by the dimensions of adaptability and change readiness, transformational leadership, learning and knowledge orientation, participation and collaboration, communication and feedback, innovation orientation, trust and psychological safety,

strategic alignment, reinforcement and organizational support, and accountability and transformation outcomes. The structure indicates that transformation-supportive organizational culture is not dependent on a single dominant cultural trait; instead, successful transformation is supported by the interaction of cognitive, behavioral, relational, strategic, and structural cultural mechanisms. Adaptability and readiness allow the organization to respond to changing conditions; leadership provides direction and legitimacy; learning and knowledge processes support organizational renewal; participation and collaboration facilitate collective ownership; communication and feedback reduce ambiguity; trust and psychological safety enable open expression and experimentation; innovation orientation encourages new solutions; strategic alignment connects cultural behavior to organizational goals; reinforcement and resource support institutionalize desired behaviors; and accountability ensures that transformational efforts are translated into identifiable outcomes. The model therefore presents organizational culture as an integrated enabling system through which transformation can be initiated, accepted, implemented, and sustained.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to identify and validate the components of organizational culture that support organizational transformation through an exploratory mixed-methods approach integrating metasynthesis, focus-group analysis, and the Delphi technique. The findings showed that transformation-supportive organizational culture is multidimensional and consists of 10 higher-order dimensions encompassing 20 specific components. These dimensions included adaptability and change readiness, leadership for transformation, learning and knowledge orientation, participation and collaboration, communication and feedback, innovation orientation, trust and psychological safety, strategic alignment, reinforcement and organizational support, and accountability and transformation outcomes. Among these dimensions, adaptability and change readiness received the highest priority, followed by leadership for transformation and learning and knowledge orientation. The high Kendall coefficient of concordance indicated strong agreement among experts regarding the relevance of the identified components, while the acceptable Cronbach's alpha supported the internal consistency of the final instrument. Collectively, the findings suggest that organizational transformation cannot be supported by isolated cultural traits; rather, it requires a coherent configuration of mutually reinforcing values, norms, behavioral expectations, leadership practices, and organizational support mechanisms.

The prioritization of adaptability and change readiness as the most important cultural dimension is consistent with the nature of organizational transformation itself. Transformation involves uncertainty, discontinuity, altered routines, and frequently the introduction of new technologies, structures, or strategic priorities. In such contexts, cultures characterized by behavioral rigidity and strong attachment to established routines are likely to slow implementation and intensify resistance. Conversely, cultures that normalize flexibility, responsiveness, and willingness to revise existing practices are more capable of absorbing transformational pressures. This finding is aligned with research emphasizing organizational agility as a key condition for successful digital transformation and showing that cultural and leadership mechanisms can strengthen an organization's capacity to respond rapidly to environmental change [7]. It is also consistent with analyses of digital transformation barriers demonstrating that cultural inflexibility, structural inertia, and strategic misalignment can operate jointly to obstruct organizational change [6]. Thus, adaptability should be regarded not merely as an operational capability

but as a cultural orientation that legitimizes adjustment, experimentation, and continuous reinterpretation of organizational routines.

The strong position of leadership for transformation in the final model also reflects the central role leaders play in shaping cultural meaning during periods of change. Leaders influence whether employees perceive transformation as credible, coherent, and supported by the organization. Transformational leadership support and empowering leadership, which constituted this dimension in the present study, represent two complementary mechanisms. The first provides vision, direction, and symbolic endorsement of change, while the second distributes authority and encourages employee ownership of transformation. This result corresponds with evidence that leadership styles capable of balancing competing demands can foster both innovation culture and organizational agility [7]. It is also in line with the growing emphasis on digital leadership as a driver of cultural transformation and organizational sustainability [8]. In technologically complex environments, leadership has likewise been shown to play a major role in cultivating protective organizational cultures by combining governance structures with human-centered norms and shared responsibility [9]. These converging findings support the conclusion that leadership functions as one of the primary cultural transmission mechanisms through which transformational priorities are translated into everyday behavior.

Learning and knowledge orientation emerged as another highly ranked dimension, including organizational learning and knowledge sharing. This result is theoretically plausible because transformation requires organizations to acquire unfamiliar knowledge, interpret changing conditions, abandon outdated assumptions, and diffuse new practices across organizational boundaries. A culture that encourages continuous learning allows employees to treat change not solely as disruption but also as a source of new knowledge. The present finding is supported by research showing that organizational learning culture can strengthen the innovative value of big data analytics capabilities [10]. It is also consistent with evidence that learning culture contributes to the development of employee competencies and learning agility, particularly among younger employees entering dynamic work environments [11]. Organizational learning has additionally been associated with sustainable competitive advantage through cultural intelligence and artificial intelligence adoption [12]. Taken together, these studies reinforce the interpretation that learning orientation serves as a cultural infrastructure for transformation because it enables organizations to update knowledge, transfer experience, and institutionalize lessons generated during change.

The identification of participation and collaboration as a major dimension further underscores the importance of collective involvement in organizational transformation. Employee participation can reduce the distance between decision makers and those responsible for implementing change, while cross-functional collaboration can improve the integration of diverse expertise. Transformation initiatives often fail when they are perceived as externally imposed, poorly communicated, or disconnected from operational realities. Participatory cultures can mitigate such problems by allowing employees to contribute to problem definition, implementation planning, and evaluation. Cross-functional collaboration is equally important because transformational challenges frequently transcend formal departmental boundaries. The relevance of collaboration is supported by studies demonstrating that intergenerational organizational culture can enhance innovation through knowledge sharing [14]. Similarly, knowledge-sharing cultures facilitate organizational creativity through the exchange of both explicit and tacit knowledge [13]. These findings suggest that participation and collaboration are not secondary social features but central cultural mechanisms for integrating distributed knowledge during change.

Communication and feedback also emerged as a distinct dimension of transformation-supportive culture. This finding highlights the role of information transparency and reciprocal dialogue in reducing uncertainty and maintaining behavioral alignment. Organizational transformation changes expectations, structures, and performance criteria, making employees more dependent on accurate and timely communication. Open communication allows employees to understand the rationale for change, while constructive feedback enables adjustment during implementation. The importance of feedback culture has been demonstrated in educational and professional contexts, where the broader organizational culture affects the way feedback is provided, received, and utilized [15]. The present findings extend this logic to organizational transformation by suggesting that feedback functions not only as an evaluative mechanism but also as a cultural process through which employees continuously recalibrate behavior during change.

Trust and psychological safety were likewise identified as essential elements of organizational culture supporting transformation. This is particularly important because organizational change often creates uncertainty concerning status, competence, job security, and future expectations. In environments where employees fear negative consequences for expressing concerns or admitting difficulties, transformation problems may remain hidden until they become more difficult to resolve. Psychological safety enables employees to voice doubts, propose alternatives, and discuss errors without excessive fear of interpersonal or organizational punishment. Trust similarly affects whether employees interpret transformation as a legitimate organizational effort or as a threat. The importance of relational qualities in organizational life is supported by work emphasizing compassion as an important component of social and organizational relationships [16]. The findings are also compatible with research on organizational justice, which demonstrates that fairness-oriented norms contribute to stronger organizational relationships and legitimate patterns of interaction [5]. Accordingly, trust and psychological safety may be understood as cultural conditions that reduce defensive behavior and promote the open exchange required for successful transformation.

Innovation orientation, comprising innovation and creativity together with calculated risk tolerance, was another important dimension in the final framework. Organizational transformation generally requires departure from existing practices and the development of new solutions. A culture that encourages creativity but punishes experimentation may therefore generate ideas without enabling implementation. The inclusion of calculated risk tolerance is important because transformation necessarily contains uncertainty, and organizations must permit bounded experimentation if they are to discover more effective ways of working. The present result is supported by evidence that innovation culture contributes to organizational agility in the context of digital transformation [7]. It is also aligned with research showing that organizational learning culture can intensify the innovation benefits of big data capabilities [10]. Furthermore, knowledge-sharing cultures have been associated with greater organizational creativity through the exchange and integration of knowledge [13]. These relationships suggest that innovation-oriented culture emerges from the interaction of experimentation, learning, and knowledge exchange rather than from creativity alone.

Strategic alignment was also retained as a distinct dimension, combining shared transformational vision with alignment between culture and organizational goals. This finding indicates that cultural support for transformation depends not only on openness and flexibility but also on direction. Excessive flexibility without shared purpose can result in fragmentation, inconsistent priorities, and local experimentation that does not contribute to broader organizational objectives. A shared transformational vision helps organizational members understand why change is occurring and how new behaviors

contribute to long-term goals. The relevance of strategic alignment is reinforced by research showing that structural, cultural, and strategic barriers frequently interact during digital transformation [6]. The mediating role of organizational culture in linking organizational change to digital transformation also suggests that strategic intentions require cultural translation before they can become operational realities [2]. Therefore, transformation-supportive culture must combine adaptability with a coherent strategic frame.

The dimension of reinforcement and organizational support, consisting of recognition and reinforcement together with resource support, further illustrates the importance of institutionalizing desired cultural behaviors. Values and expectations that are not supported by reward systems, resource allocation, and managerial practices are unlikely to persist. Employees are more likely to engage in transformation-supportive behavior when the organization provides the time, tools, information, technology, and recognition necessary for change. This interpretation is consistent with research linking sustainable human resource management to organizational performance through the development of social and cultural competencies [17]. It also aligns with studies emphasizing the role of empowerment in improving managers' ability to act effectively within complex organizational settings [18]. In practical terms, cultural transformation requires that symbolic messages be reinforced by tangible organizational systems.

Accountability and transformation outcomes, although ranked somewhat lower than other dimensions, were still retained as necessary elements of the final model. Their inclusion indicates that transformation-supportive culture should not be equated solely with openness, participation, or innovation. Cultural support for change must also include responsibility for implementation and attention to outcomes. Without accountability, transformation can become diffuse, with insufficient ownership of decisions and weak follow-through. A transformation-oriented results focus helps connect cultural expectations to observable organizational consequences. Research demonstrating the relationship between organizational culture and disclosure practices supports the broader proposition that cultural characteristics influence responsibility, transparency, and organizational behavior [4]. Similarly, organizational culture has been linked to integrated management processes in complex institutional settings [3]. These findings support the view that accountability complements flexibility by ensuring that transformation remains disciplined and outcome-oriented.

The overall multidimensional structure identified in this study is also consistent with recent perspectives that treat organizational culture as a multilevel and systemically embedded phenomenon. Cultural change cannot be reduced to changing attitudes at the individual level or revising formal statements of organizational values. Rather, it requires alignment between micro-level interactions and macro-level structures, routines, leadership systems, and institutional practices [1]. The current model reflects this multilevel logic because it integrates individual and relational dimensions such as trust, psychological safety, and empowerment with organizational dimensions such as strategic alignment, learning systems, reinforcement, and accountability. This integrated structure may explain why isolated interventions often have limited impact when they are not reinforced by broader organizational arrangements.

The findings also have implications for organizations undergoing digitalization, sustainability initiatives, or broader institutional renewal. Digital transformation in particular requires not only technological investment but also a cultural environment capable of supporting learning, innovation, knowledge sharing, agility, and leadership adaptation. The role of culture in digital transformation has been repeatedly emphasized across recent studies [2, 8, 12]. Similarly, organizational health and sustainability appear to depend on cultural configurations that extend beyond short-term efficiency and include

values related to responsibility, resilience, and organizational well-being [19]. The present study therefore contributes by bringing these fragmented cultural requirements together within a single transformation-oriented framework.

Overall, the findings support the proposition that organizational culture acts as an enabling infrastructure for organizational transformation. Adaptability allows organizations to respond to change, leadership gives change direction and legitimacy, learning and knowledge sharing support renewal, participation creates ownership, communication reduces ambiguity, trust enables open expression, innovation supports experimentation, strategic alignment provides coherence, organizational support institutionalizes desired behavior, and accountability links change to results. Rather than functioning independently, these cultural dimensions are likely to reinforce one another. A culture high in innovation but low in psychological safety may suppress experimentation, while a culture high in adaptability but low in strategic alignment may produce inconsistent change efforts. Similarly, strong leadership without participation may generate compliance without genuine commitment. The principal contribution of the present study is therefore the identification of an integrated cultural architecture in which multiple dimensions jointly create conditions favorable to sustainable organizational transformation.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the expert-based stages relied on a relatively small number of purposively selected participants, including four focus-group members and 10 Delphi panelists. Although such sample sizes are consistent with qualitative and Delphi research traditions, they may limit the diversity of viewpoints represented in the final framework. Second, the findings were derived primarily from expert judgment and synthesis of prior literature rather than from direct testing of the identified dimensions across multiple organizations. Consequently, the relative priority assigned to each dimension should not be interpreted as universally fixed across all sectors and organizational contexts. Third, the Delphi process was concluded after one round because a strong level of agreement was obtained; however, additional rounds might have produced further refinement of particular components. Finally, organizational culture and transformation are context-sensitive phenomena, and the cultural configuration required for transformation may vary according to organizational size, industry, ownership structure, technological maturity, and national culture.

Future studies should empirically validate the proposed framework using larger and more diverse samples from public, private, educational, industrial, and service organizations. Development and psychometric validation of a standardized scale based on the identified dimensions would allow researchers to assess the factor structure, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and predictive validity of the framework. Structural equation modeling could then be used to investigate the direct and indirect effects of transformation-supportive culture on outcomes such as change readiness, innovation, employee commitment, digital transformation success, organizational agility, and sustainability. Longitudinal designs are also recommended to determine whether changes in organizational culture precede improvements in transformation outcomes or whether successful transformation itself subsequently reshapes culture. Comparative studies across industries, organizational sizes, and national contexts could further clarify which dimensions are universal and which are context dependent. Future research may also explore moderating variables such as leadership style, environmental turbulence, technological intensity, workforce diversity, and organizational lifecycle.

Managers should use the identified framework as a diagnostic guide for assessing whether the existing organizational culture supports or obstructs transformation. Before initiating major change programs, organizations should examine the extent to which employees perceive flexibility, leadership support, learning opportunities, participation, open

communication, psychological safety, innovation, strategic clarity, resource availability, and accountability within the workplace. Transformation initiatives should then be accompanied by coordinated cultural interventions rather than relying solely on structural or technological changes. Leaders should clearly communicate the purpose and direction of transformation, involve employees in implementation decisions, support cross-functional collaboration, reward knowledge sharing and experimentation, and create safe channels for expressing concerns. Human resource systems should reinforce transformation-supportive behaviors through recruitment, training, performance evaluation, recognition, and leadership development. Organizations should also allocate adequate resources to transformation activities and establish clear accountability for implementation outcomes. By treating culture as an operational component of transformation rather than as an abstract background condition, managers can increase the likelihood that formal organizational changes become embedded in everyday behavior and sustained over time.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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