Building A Framework to Promote Corporate Social Innovation: A View from Organizational Culture

Construyendo un marco para promover la innovación social corporativa: una mirada desde la cultura organizacional

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Cómo citar este artículo:
DOI: https://doi.org/10.15581/015.XXVII.2.9-49

Resumen: Se propone un marco de referencia que proporciona una herramienta analítica para identificar los elementos y preocupaciones gerenciales clave que pueden mejorar la innovación social corporativa.
Combina una revisión sistemática de la literatura y metodologías de grupos focales. La principal aportación es la elaboración de un marco de referencia compuesto por categorías analíticas basadas en la influencia de siete factores y quince elementos identificados a partir de la revisión.
Este artículo subraya la contribución significativa que algunos factores pueden desempeñar para permitir el papel de la innovación social en la cultura organizacional. Este tipo de investigación es necesaria dada la escasez de propuestas en general, y la falta de un marco integrador específico en el campo de la cultura organizacional.

Palabras clave: Innovación Social Corporativa, Cultura Organizacional, Revisión Sistemática De La Literatura, Grupo Focal

Abstract: This paper proposes a framework that provides an analytical tool to identify key managerial elements and concerns that can improve corporate social innovation (CSI) in organizational culture. It combines a systematic review of the literature and focus group methodologies. The main contribution is the development of a framework composed of analytical categories based on the influence of seven factors and fifteen elements identified from a systematic review of the literature. This article underlines the significant contribution that some factors may play in enabling the role of CSI in organizational culture. This type of research is necessary given the scarcity of proposals in general, and the lack of a specific integrative framework in the field of organizational culture.

Keywords: Corporate Social Innovation, Organizational Culture, Systematic Literature Review, Focus Group
INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, the concept of Social Innovation (SI) has increasingly captivated the attention of business leaders, policymakers, and academics alike. As a mechanism for addressing complex societal challenges, SI integrates new ideas, products, services, and models that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations (Murray et al., 2010). This dual focus on social needs and collaborative innovation underscores its transformative potential, making it a pivotal element in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Union’s growth strategy for sustainable competitiveness and inclusive transitions (Grassano et al., 2020).

Organizational Culture (OC) has emerged as a critical driver of SI within corporate environments. The influence of OC on innovation and social responsibility is well-documented, impacting employees’ innovative behavior, the work environment, and the embedding of fundamental social values (Hartmann, 2006; Téjeiro Koller, 2016). Pioneering studies by Olson (1971), Frost et al. (1985), Handy (1986), Schein (1992), and more recent contributions by Denison (1990, 1996) and Cameron and Quinn (2011) highlight how culture can steer human capital towards organizational development, providing a sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1986).

Despite the recognized importance of OC in fostering innovation, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning the integration of SI into organizational practices. Existing studies often overlook the intricate relationship between corporate social innovation and organizational culture, leading to a scarcity of comprehensive analytical frameworks that can guide managers and researchers in this domain. To address this gap, this study aims to develop a robust reference framework that identifies the key factors, elements, and managerial concerns essential for embedding social innovation within organizational culture.

Within this context, we present a study that aims to build an original reference framework that identifies factors, elements and managerial concerns which can enable social innovation within the organizational culture. There remains a scarcity of analytical tools due to the paucity of studies that link corporate social innovation and organizational culture in previous research. In order to fill this gap two research questions are addressed:

RQ1: What are the factors and elements that constitute a framework to foster a culture oriented to social innovation?
RQ2: What are the most important managerial and practical concerns to implement the framework proposed?

This investigation contributes to academic discourse by filling a notable gap in the literature, and also offers practical tools for managers to cultivate a corporate culture that promotes social innovation. By systematically managing cultural factors, elements, and practical considerations, businesses can align their social and corporate objectives, achieving economic success through innovative practices that address pressing environmental and social issues.

This study employs a dual-method approach, integrating a systematic literature review and a focus group discussion. This combination ensures a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the integration of social innovation within organizational culture and provides both theoretical and empirical insights. The choice of a systematic literature review combined with a focus group discussion offers several benefits: first, the literature review provides a broad theoretical foundation, while the focus group adds depth and context through practical insights, resulting in a comprehensive understanding. Second, in terms of validity and reliability, the systematic review ensures a rigorous and reproducible synthesis of existing knowledge, while the focus group enhances the validity of findings through triangulation with empirical data. Third, this approach bridges the gap between theory and practice, offering a holistic understanding of how organizational culture can drive innovation and practice.

This article is structured as follows. First, a conceptual background is presented highlighting the novelty of the social innovation topic in the organizational culture studies. Second, authors conduct a systematic literature review that leads to a framework that contributes to current scholarship efforts. Third, a qualitative empirical study extends the framework proposed by including managerial and practical concerns derived from a focus group. Finally, in Section 5, conclusions and new further research avenues are underlined.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Social innovation / Corporate social innovation

Social innovation (SI) is a holistic, multidimensional and interdisciplinary concept. According to Pyszka (2013) it has been analyzed from different
paradigms, including anthropology, sociology, political science and economics. Thus, SI studies burst onto the scene in the innovation literature at the beginning of this century as a process by which new forms of social relations lead to social change (Ayob et al., 2016).

Academics have made efforts to clarify SI and decipher its impact. In this vein, Murray et al. (2010, p.3) point to the “new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations”. The idea of addressing problems or challenges through innovation is also present in the definitions provided by a variety of institutions. Thus, the Centre for Social Innovation (2021) explains SI “as the creation, development, adoption, and integration of new and renewed concepts, systems, organizations and practices that put people and planet first”. Along the same lines, the OECD also mentions that social innovation seeks new answers to social problems (Forum of Social Innovation, 2000).

As described by Audretsch et al. (2021), both the novelty of SI and the wide range of academic fields that analyze it can be explained by the lack of a common definition. In their article, they relay the five elements that describe this concept, as follows: 1) A social need that must be addressed; 2) an innovative element as a new approach; 3) the implementation of a product or service; 4) improvement to a given situation; and 5) developing new relationships and collaborations. These five elements can also be found within the definition offered by Murray et al. (2010).

Having overcome initial debate about whether or not it is a fad soon to disappear (Pol and Ville, 2009), SI has become a growing field of study that, in turn, opens up new challenges for both management and policy making (van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016). Likewise, judging by the increased research, academics seem to perceive significant value in this type of innovation as a driver of social change (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014).

As a phenomenon, SI’s transversal roots are based on two perspectives—one sociological and the other economic (Martínez et al., 2017). The sociological perspective highlights SI as a transformative concept that aims toward changes in society and considers SI the solution to social problems through goals centered on practices and/or social transformations (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). By contrast, the economic perspective suggests that the nature of SI is more instrumental and associated with the introduction of novel ideas related to, for example, systems, processes, products or services that meet the needs that arise from the failure of conventional paradigms (Dawson and Daniel,
Management and business studies assume the latter approach, focusing more on the need to innovate in order to achieve both economic and social results (Tabares, 2020), and this is precisely the scope of this study.

Following the economic approach, Kanter (1999) introduced the concept of Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) as a new innovation paradigm that unites the interests of business and society to produce profitable and sustainable changes for both. Canestrino et al. (2015: 3) defined it as “the introduction of a new way, method, or system (innovation) to meet collective needs in a socially responsible manner”.

According to Tabares (2020), one of the most cited definitions of CSI appears in Mirvis et al. (2012: 3): “A strategy that combines a unique set of corporate assets (innovation capacities, marketing skills, managerial acumen, employee engagement, scale, etc.) in collaboration with the assets of other sectors and firms to co-create breakthrough solutions to complex economic, social, and environmental issues that impact the sustainability of both business and society”. The roots of CSI have even been linked to sustainable development, marketing, strategic alliances, shared value creation, hybrid organizations and corporate social responsibility, the latter having received the most attention (Dawson and Daniel, 2010; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016; Tabares, 2020; Dionisio and de Vargas, 2020).

However, despite increased research there are still gaps in the literature, particularly related to how companies can integrate these social processes into their operations and culture. In the words of Canestrino et al. (2015: 1): “despite the increasing amount of literature about SI, scholars have paid little attention to the adoption of its practices at the corporate level, that is, to the development of Corporate Social Innovation (CSI)”.

2.2. Corporate social innovation and organizational culture – research gap

A significant part of the literature has devoted its attention to understanding the impact of innovation culture on corporate performance. Previous outcomes have oscillated between three main intertwined topics: green culture, innovation for impact and sustainability culture.

Herrera (2016a) conducts a literature review and case studies to build a framework that describes factors leading to impact achieving innovation and includes culture as one of the institutional drivers underpinning its development. Besides, Jin et al. (2018) provides an integrated framework to explain
Canestrino et al. (2015), develop an empirical study to interpret the cultural insights of CSI in Italy and Iran. They focus on the role of the environment factor to distinguish culture as a key driver of firms’ propensity to adopt social innovative practices. They highlight that “this is particularly true with reference to the role that culture and cultural diversities may have in shaping firms’ orientation toward Corporate Social Innovation” (p. 1). In the same line, Mirvis and Googins (2017: 16) describe how to build a culture of CSI through a gradual metamorphosis and they explain seven practices linked to promote a culture of CSI: “[1] Enact a social vision; (2) Bring employees to the center of the effort; (3) Nurture social intrapreneurship; (4) Engage a broad spectrum of interests using connective technology and social media; (5) Reset CSR to innovation; (6) Focus on social impact; and (7) Join hands with social entrepreneurs”.

Despite relatively limited research thus far, there is still a marked lack of a comprehensive analytical framework. An in-depth integrative analysis is long overdue. In this context, the following question arises: what are the key factors and elements to enable an organizational culture of CSI? This calls for a deeper examination of what the key features may be. This challenge is addressed in the next section.

3. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Methodology

The broad purpose of this systematic literature review is to move beyond such previous research limitations by offering an integrative framework that brings together the key factors and elements which can promote an organizational culture of social innovation. The framework is based on a literature review but it takes a step further as this section does not merely present a simple theoretical review of the most relevant research on organizational culture and CSI; over and above that, it also provides a conceptual frame of reference for analyzing a topic whose treatment in the research literature to date has been fragmented. As a result, a reference framework is drawn up so as to identify the constructs and associated factors through which organizational culture may play a critical role in enhancing corporate social innovation.
The systematic literature review was conducted to collate and synthesize existing research on the nexus between organizational culture and social innovation. Following guidelines from Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003), the review adhered to a rigorous process:

1. Defining the research question: The review focused on identifying key factors and elements that foster a culture oriented to social innovation.

2. Literature search: A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as “organizational culture,” “social innovation,” “corporate social responsibility,” and “sustainability.”

3. Selection criteria: Articles were selected based on relevance, quality, and recency. Inclusion criteria encompassed peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and significant reports published in the last 20 years.

4. Data extraction and analysis: Relevant data were extracted using a standardized form and analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes and gaps in the literature.

This systematic literature review identifies articles that study social innovation, corporate social innovation, organization culture, a culture of innovation and related concepts and terms. It examined four databases (DBs), including two multidisciplinary ones (Web of Science and Scopus) and two specialized ones (Business Ultimate and RepEc/Ideas). Search parameters in terms of dates were set without a start date and until the year 2020. It was carried out with English-language scientific/peer review articles in the area of knowledge related to management. It should be noted that the RepEc/Ideas database is the only one that does not allow for filtering by scientific articles/peer review or by language. Table I details the features of each of the searches done in each database and how 191 papers were found in this first stage. It is relevant to highlight how we are not only interested in studies that link social innovation and culture, but also those relating to the culture of innovation.
## Table I: Number of articles identified by source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Formula of search</th>
<th># of papers found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web of Science (WOS)</td>
<td>TOPIC (&quot;culture of innovation&quot;) AND (&quot;social innovation&quot;) OR: (&quot;corporate social innovation&quot;) Indexes: SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, CPCI-SSH, ESCI.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>Two main descriptions of tradition: (1) as the broader socio-moral background of a community, which represents shared beliefs and practices (with their virtues), and (2) as philosophical moral inquiries from a given community. Traditions may change gradually or radically.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>TITLE-ABS-KEY (&quot;culture of innovation&quot;) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (&quot;corporate culture&quot;) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (&quot;organizational culture&quot;) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (&quot;social innovation&quot;) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (&quot;corporate social innovation&quot;)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Source Ultimate (BSU)</td>
<td>&quot;culture of innovation&quot; AND &quot;social innovation&quot; OR &quot;corporate social innovation&quot;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RepEc/IDEAS</td>
<td>Top JEL / M: Business Administration and Business Economics; Marketing; Accounting; Personnel Economics / / M1: Business Administration / / / M14: Corporate Culture; Diversity; Social Responsibility (&quot;culture of innovation&quot;) + (&quot;social innovation&quot;)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RepEc/IDEAS</td>
<td>(&quot;culture of innovation&quot;) + (&quot;social innovation&quot;)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration
Figure 1 shows the different steps taken to obtain the 103 papers that were analyzed, but one additional step is included. An Excel file with the basic data related to these 103 references is available to readers.

Figure 1. Stages to build the final database

3.2 Theoretical framework

The framework developed has two levels. First, we have identified those factors that influence the culture of innovation. Second, we describe those elements directly related to social innovation. Table II lists the main factors classified as strategic, support and transversal and shows those references that support the choice of each of the elements. To visualize the proposed framework, Figure 2 shows an integrated perspective, combining the different elements into groups as we show in the following sections.
## Building a Framework to Promote Corporate Social Innovation: A View from Organizational Culture

### Table II: Theoretical framework based on literature review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Typology regarding organizational culture</th>
<th>Elements to evaluate</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1: Purpose</td>
<td>Strategic determinate</td>
<td>E1: Sharing the social aspect of the purpose</td>
<td>Denison and Mishra (1995); Ahmed (1998); Mirvis et al. (2016); Mirvis and Googins, (2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E2: The degree of its integration into business strategy.</td>
<td>Hanke and Stark (2009); Spena and de Chiara (2012); Pfitzer et al. (2013); Herrera (2015); Canestrino et al. (2015); Herrera (2016a); Mirvis et al. (2016); Mirvis and Googins (2017); Yang et al. (2017); Roszkowska-Menkes (2018); Moleiro Martins et al. (2019); Dionisio and Vargas (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: Leadership</td>
<td>Strategic determinate</td>
<td>E3: Leadership style</td>
<td>Ahmed (1998); Hanke and Stark, (2009); Spena and de Chiara (2012); Pfitzer et al. (2013); Googins (2013); Herrera (2016a); Herrera (2016b); Van Oostrom and Fernández-Esuquinas (2017); Mirvins and Googins (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Roszkowska-Menkes (2018); Moleiro Martins et al. (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E4: Leadership communication style</td>
<td>Ahmed (1998); Hanke and Stark, (2009); Mirvis et al. (2016); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Roszkowska-Menkes (2018); Moleiro Martins et al. (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3: Environment</td>
<td>Strategic determinate</td>
<td>E5: Support levers</td>
<td>Pyszka, (2013); Mirvis et al. (2016); Yang et al. (2017); Mirvis and Googins (2017); Alonso-Martínez et al. (2019); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Dionisio and Vargas (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E6: Relationship management</td>
<td>Dawson and Daniel (2010); Mirvis (2012); Mirvis et al. (2016); Mirvis and Googins (2017); Van Oostrom and Fernández-Esuquinas (2017); Gonzalez Loureiro et al. (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia Naranjo (2018); Esen and Maden-Eyiusta (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4: Structure</td>
<td>Determinate and supportive</td>
<td>E7: Characteristics of the organizational structure</td>
<td>Ahmed (1998); Kanter (1999); Spena and de Chiara (2012); Petrakis et al. (2015); Mirvis et al. (2016); Herrera (2015); Yang et al. (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Mirvis and Googins (2018b); Roszkowska-Menkes (2018); Sansabas-Villalpando et al. (2019); Alonso-Martínez et al. (2019); Moleiro Martins et al. (2019); Dionisio and Vargas (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E8: The structure’s orientation</td>
<td>Denison and Mishra (1995); Petrakis et al. (2015); Martins and Teblanche (2003); Mirvis and Googins, (2017); Yang et al. (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Moleiro Martins et al. (2019); Sansabas-Villalpando et al. (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database</td>
<td>Typology regarding organizational culture</td>
<td>Elements to evaluate</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5: Policy, metrics and rewards</td>
<td>Determinate and supportive</td>
<td>E9: Organizational and personnel policy</td>
<td>Ahmed (1998); Spena and de Chiara (2012); Herrera (2015); Herrera (2016b); Mirvis and Googins (2017); Van Oostrom and Fernández-Esquinias (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Moleiro Martins et al. (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E10: Metrics</td>
<td>Ahmed (1998); Spena and de Chiara (2012); Crets and Celer (2013); Mirvis and Googins (2017); Yang et al. (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Sansabas-Villalpando et al. (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E11: Rewards</td>
<td>Ahmed (1998); Mirvis and Googins (2017); Van Oostrom and Fernández-Esquinias (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Sansabas-Villalpando et al. (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6: Organizational capabilities</td>
<td>Transversal</td>
<td>E12: Development of capabilities</td>
<td>Dobni (2008); Denison et al. (2012; Mirvis et al. (2016); Yang et al. 2017); Van Oostrom and Fernández-Esquinias (2017); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Sansabas-Villalpando et al. (2019); Moleiro Martins et al. (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E13: Organizational learning</td>
<td>Van Oostrom and Fernández-Esquinias (2007); Hanke and Stark (2009); Denison et al. (2012; Chiva et al. (2014); Tejeiro Koller (2016); Teece (2018); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7: Communication</td>
<td>Transversal</td>
<td>E14: Internal</td>
<td>Dobni (2008); Hanke and Stark (2009); Tejeiro Koller (2016); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Fiordelisi et al. (2019); Audretsch et al. (2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E15: External</td>
<td>Dobni (2008); Hanke and Stark (2009); Pyszka (2013); Mirvis et al. (2016); Calderón-Hernández and Valencia-Naranjo (2018); Mirvis and Googins (2018a); Roszkowska-Menkes (2018);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration
3.2.1. Strategic determinate

The following factors are classified as strategic and determinate because they are related to an organization’s reason for being in society, as well as its vision and mission. Specifically, three strategic factors are underlined by literature (see Table II for references): purpose, leadership and environment.

**F1: Purpose**

There is a consensus in the literature that purpose is a strategic factor for fostering a culture oriented towards social innovation. Purpose defines and establishes the company’s role and its contribution to society, including its social mission (i.e. human development, environment safety and life quality improvement). Purpose is considered a cornerstone of organizational design, and materializes in business strategy (Calderón-Hernández and Naranjo-Valencia, 2018; Mirvis and Googins, 2017).
E1: Sharing the social aspect of the purpose. This element aims to assess if the purpose is known and motivates the generation of a positive socio-environmental impact. As Mirvis et al. (2016) signal, many companies engaged in corporate social innovation explicitly seek to address important social, economic and environmental issues based on corporate commitment to social purpose. They thus have an additional motivational drive that can produce the perseverance and resilience needed to exchange knowledge and co-create deeper solutions. A culture of CSI implies defining the purpose of social aspects and ensuring that all the workers are conscious that the social vision must be promulgated and aligned with organizational values. Mirvis and Googins emphasize the relevance of “bringing the vision to life through purposeful engagement with society and its needs and challenges” (2017: 16).

The social aspect of purpose is crucial as Denison and Mishra (1995) and Ahmed (1998) explain, first, a mission provides purpose and meaning, and a number of social reasons why the work of the organization is important. Second, a sense of mission defines the appropriate course of action for the organization and its members. Both factors reflect and amplify the organization’s key values and strengthen the social purpose of the firm.

E2: The degree of integration into business strategy. Innovation adopted at the corporate level is understood as that initiative that aims to create social value for shareholders with the potential to alter the structure of innovation systems, improve employee motivation and change corporate identities and strategies to increase competitive advantage, while at the same time providing solutions to the needs of society (Canestrino et al., 2015; Herrera, 2015; Mirvis et al., 2016. Dionisio and Vargas, 2020). In this line, Alonso-Martínez et al. (2019) argues that each year, firms invest more resources in CSI because of social pressure, new alliances, and business model adaptation.

On the other hand, other authors such as Roszkowska-Menkes (2018), Spena and de Chiara (2012) emphasize the need to link social and environmental activities with strategic objectives and point out that there are indicators for these types of innovations which have a socio-environmental impact.

F2: Leadership

This strategic factor determines the organizational vision and mission. Leaders construct an organizational culture associated with CSI to the extent that they create a social vision for the company (Googins, 2013) or they incorporate social purpose into it (Pfitzer et al., 2013). Thus, they become benchmarks not only in the construction of a shared vision, but also for mem-
E3: Leadership style. The leadership style must provide a shared atmosphere and framework rooted in organizational values and beliefs. Facilitate innovation and creativity (Hanke and Stark, 2009; Calderón-Hernández and Naranjo-Valencia, 2018). Ahmed (1998) shows that leaders must be very sensitive to their environment and very aware of the impact they themselves have on those around them. This sensitivity allows them to bring an important human perspective to the task at hand and is critical because it is only within this awareness that the leader can begin to bridge the gap between the leader’s language and the real world of organizational culture. Direct leadership intervention ensures verification of conditions conducive to the flourishing of a sense of trust that generates enthusiasm for common fulfillment throughout the organization (Moleiro Martins et al., 2019). Spena and de Chiara (2012: 85) state that “sustainability will be the next frontier of innovation, and business leaders had better start thinking about it fast”.

E4: Leadership communication style. This element aims to evaluate the communication style of the leadership in terms of whether it communicates the values and commitments of the company, promotes openness, transparency and exchange of ideas and quality of the feedback if it favors innovation with socio-environmental impact in the tasks.

According to Moleiro Martins (2019: 81): “authority should be shared across the organization with the aim of fostering a real sense of delegating responsibilities to employees as an incentive for innovation culture”. Roszkowska-Menkes (2018) explains that the involvement of corporate leaders is also fundamental, they must recognize the fundamental role of employees. Co-creation and employer-employee dialogue is seen as a crucial process to support sustainable organizational development, and therefore, corporate social innovation.

F3: Environment

According to Calderón-Hernández and Naranjo-Valencia (2018: 20) “the most dynamic environment, as compared to the most stable environment, demands different cultural feature emphases.” which is why it is considered a determinant factor. The most innovative companies of the future will be dominated by those that not only focus their energies on technical and product innovation, but those that have managed to build lasting environments of human communities that strive for innovation through the creation of appro-
appropriate cultures and climates. This will be the energy of renewal and the drive towards a successful future (Ahmed, 1998).

**E5: Support levers.** This element relates to aspects such as local supply chain conditions, or external agents with valid knowledge to undertake research projects, i.e., open innovation (Mirvis et al., 2016). “Context accelerates business change, we can find many examples in support of this thesis, especially looking at the business leaders who plan and implement the socially responsible activities of their companies” (Pyszka, 2013: 22). Another issue related to CSI and support levers is the role of public organizations. So, Alonso-Martínez et al. (2019) show that the institutionalization of CSI is fundamental for the consolidation of the concept, especially considering the growing demands of stakeholders, such as customers, employees and civil society calls for institutional changes that influence and facilitate the diffusion of business practices and innovations in companies.

**E6: Relationship management.** This element aims to assess if the company promotes and carries out collaborations with external and internal agents, if it encourages collaborative relationships that promote the co-creation of solutions with a socio-environmental impact and if those relationships improve the competitiveness of the agents involved and enhance the positive socio-environmental impact.

Following the ideas of Mirvis et al. (2016) and Mirvis and Googins (2017, 2018a), because social innovation is characterized by difficulties in dealing with complex and diverse stakeholder relationships, some scholars have analyzed how to align and effectively manage stakeholder engagement and to maintain collaborative partnerships with local users, entrepreneurs, incubators, NGOs, accelerators, etc. As Dawson and Daniel suggest, “an organization’s ability to innovate is necessarily a result of the collective capabilities of its individuals, and their activities and relationships in supporting the organization to reach its business goals” (2010: 16). This is supported by the work done by Esen and Maden-Eyiusta “Stakeholder engagement is critical (for social innovation); you have to involve them in company decision-making processes” (2019: 36).

### 3.2.2. Support factors

These point to the quality of organizational management; they enable and allow for the visualization of features that characterize a culture in one way or another, emphasizing the presence of values that influence -or not-
the promotion of CSI. Studies such as Osburg (2013), Esen and Maden-Eyiusta (2019), Sansabas-Villalpando et al. (2019) underline the relevance of organizational management in enhancing CSI. Examples of support factors highlighted by the systematic literature review conducted are: structure and policy, metrics and rewards.

**F4: Structure**

This factor has been discussed in academic literature as a significant support factor (Martins and Terblanche, 2003; Calderón Hernandez and Naranjo-Valencia, 2018). Moleiro Martins show that “innovators (acting at product level) and entrepreneurs (acting at the level of the business) should have an organizational structure that favors innovation even without waiting for the verification of the appropriate cultures” (2019: 73). Also, Herrera (2016b) emphasizes that Structure is a critical element of governance mechanisms. The level at which key decisions and commitments are made and the level of delegation of certain activities affect the likelihood and success of impact innovation.

**E7: Characteristics of organizational structure.** This element seeks to evaluate whether the organizational structure reflects the company’s investment in social innovation.

CSI intends to implement a managed strategic investment like other corporate projects, applying all its assets and expertise through deeper cross-functional collaboration to produce new sources of revenue, generate a socially relevant innovation system and a corporate culture that can be a source of competitive advantage (Kanter, 1999; Herrera, 2015; Mirvis et al., 2016; Dionisio and Vargas, 2020). Companies must have processes in place to facilitate the development and coordination of these types of projects. Specially in cases of social innovations that seek to improve the value chain and society where knowledge sharing increases as companies invest more, leverage social ties and seek greater impact in CSI activities. However, according to Mirvis et al. (2016) knowledge sharing in CSI may result from an emergent rather than an organized process.

**E8: Orientation to change.** This element seeks to evaluate whether the company considers what is happening in the environment to introduce changes with a positive socio-environmental impact, whether stakeholders (internal and external) collaborate to introduce changes with a positive socio-environmental impact, and whether the company adopts continuous improvement practices oriented towards generating socio-environmental impact.
In this vein, “companies must understand consumer expectations and needs and, as such, employ systematic processes that collect market information and help anticipate future consumer trends” (Moleiro Martins et al., 2019: 77). The organizational structure promotes the free exchange of ideas among the different stakeholders (internal and external). It is responsive to what is happening and incorporates practices to promote positive socio-environmental impact (Yang et al., 2017; Petrakis et al., 2015; Sansabas-Villalpando et al., 2019).

Moleiro Martins et al. emphasize that “the attenuation of the hierarchical structure in the company ensures its adaptability and operational flexibility, since it bases its activities on multidisciplinary teams with transversal knowledge of the different organizational sectors. Instead of responding to requests from their immediate superior (typical of a vertical relationship), team members focus on meeting the needs of the following people in the operation process (typical of a horizontal relationship)” (2019: 77).

**F5: Policy, metrics and rewards**

Some findings of the review reveal that policy, metrics and rewards are crucial support factors with which to promote CSI at different levels of the organization (Ahmed, 1998; Spena and de Chiara, 2012; Crets and Celer, 2013; Herrera, 2016a; Mirvis and Googins, 2017; Sansabas-Villalpando et al., 2019; Moleiro Martins et al., 2019).

**E9: Organizational policies.** This element evaluates if there are policies or practices aimed at prioritizing work by objectives with a socio-environmental impact; whether there is a clear and consistent set of shared values in the companies that guide the behavior of the agents (internal and external); and if the agents involved understand the relationship between what they do and the socio-environmental impact objectives sought.

Spena and de Chiara (2012) describes the importance of established processes and environmental and social standards to develop innovations in the supply chain. The path to sustainability of innovation begins with supply chain management that is characterized by the presence of specific supplier evaluation processes, formalized supplier selection processes, supplier development, monitoring and promulgation programs.

Policies and standards cover mechanisms for implementation, problem management, stakeholder engagement and ensuring transparency through CSI performance monitoring and evaluation. Policies and standards also co-
ver the initiation, implementation, and evaluation of innovation by impact (Herrera, 2016a).

Also, according to Moleiro Martins et al., companies should define policies and practices that maximize the ability of people to (i) contact each other, (ii) communicate openly (without interdepartmental rivalry), (iii) share ideas and information, (iv) learn from each other, and (v) establish mechanisms for mutual support and trust” (2019: 80).

E10: Metrics. This element analyzes if the indicators that measure the socio-environmental impact of innovation activities were defined by consensus, if they adequately measure the socio-environmental impact and if the company has mechanisms in place to monitor the socio-environmental benefits and impact generated.

Crets and Celer (2013) insist on this element underlying non-financial KPIs related to business processes or performance management. Additionally, Mirvis and Googins (2017) cited some metrics that measure the social performance of firms, i.e. social return on investment (SROI).

Metrics are not only related to personnel but also to external agents, such as suppliers: Spena and de Chiara (2012) signal that the path to sustainability of innovation begins with supply chain management that is characterized by the presence of specific supplier evaluation processes, formalized supplier selection processes, supplier development, monitoring and promulgation programs. In a CSI culture, top management ensures that structured methods/systems are put in place so that each innovation goes through a careful selection process before actual implementation (Ahmed, 1998).

E11: Rewards. This element seeks to analyze if there exists in the company a system that rewards the agents (internal or external) that contribute to improving the socio-environmental impact and reward their collaborative work as opposed to individual work.

Mirvis and Googins signal that “successful companies are soliciting and rewarding employees for social and environmental innovation. They are also using societal engagements to develop a next generation of socially-conscious leaders” (2017: 16). Successful companies solicit and reward employees for social and environmental innovation (Mirvis and Googins, 2017). Innovative companies seem to rely heavily on intrinsic personalized prizes, both for individuals and groups (Ahmed, 1998). According to Calderón-Hernández and Naranjo-Velencia “metrics and rewards serve the function of aligning individual behavior and performance with organizational objectives.” (2018: 20).
3.2.3. Transversal factors

Finally, there is a group of factors that academia consistently cites as being promoters of an organizational culture of social innovation. However, as these factors are difficult to classify in terms of their ubiquitous nature, they have been classified as transversal. These factors are organizational capabilities and communication.

**F6: Organizational capabilities**

This refers to how the organization learns and how it manages organizational capabilities, knowledge and behaviors. Following Calderón-Hernández and Naranjo-Valencia (2018) a CSI oriented culture, a CSI-based OC is characterized by simultaneously developing operational skills (investing resources to refine and expand knowledge, skills and innovation processes in order to increase the efficiency and reliability of its activities) and exploration (investing resources to acquire new knowledge, skills and processes with the aim of achieving flexibility and novelty through greater experimentation).

**E12: Development of capabilities.** This element explores if the company invests resources in capacity building for social innovation; if learning and capacity building for social innovation is considered vital within the company to improve socio-environmental impact and members’ capabilities to innovate and promote social innovation activities.

According to Moleiro Martins et al. “the training and experience of the right people are the main source of innovation information. This implies that in an innovative organization it is expected to have an active involvement of all employees in the effort to continuously improve the quality of services and goods produced. Continuously improving quality will maximize customer satisfaction and minimize total operating costs” (2019: 77).

Calderón-Hernández and Naranjo-Valencia explain that “organizational capability is the distinctive way in which a company combines resources, policies, routines, and processes to generate organizational results.” (2018: 24).

Also, Mirvis et al. describe four types of knowledge related to CSI. “First, companies need knowledge about the local conditions in their supply chain or in a market they seek to enter. Second, companies need to understand how to produce and implement social innovations in an unfamiliar culture and context and how to work with partners. Third, companies need legitimacy with and connections to local interests and users. Finally, many firms engaged in
CSI explicitly seek to address significant social, economic, and environmental problems” (2016: 5015).

**E13: Organizational learning.** This element studies if risk-taking is an opportunity for the company to learn and improve; if it has mechanisms to exchange experiences that promote learning among the different stakeholders (internal and external); and finally, if learning is a strategic lever for the achievement of the company’s socio-environmental impact objectives.

Chiva et al. state that “organizational learning is, then, a process that develops a new way of seeing things or understanding them within organizations, which implies new organizational knowledge.” (2014: 3). Also, that organizational learning can evaluate how the company receives, interprets, and transforms environmental signals into opportunities that encourage innovation, gaining knowledge and capacity development (Denison et al., 2012).

On the other hand, authors like Hanke and Stark (2009) emphasize that a corporate culture based on social responsibility can lead to internal and external learning processes. Similarly, this idea can be applied to social innovation processes. If the participating actors have the opportunity to transfer and reflect their experiences in their daily routine, the business strategy leads to learning and innovation processes driven by participation and empowerment.

**F7: Communication**

Martins and Terblanche (2003) considered communication to be a determinant element of organizational culture that influences creativity and innovation. In fact, CSI processes focus on empowering the actors involved, i.e., users, partners or beneficiaries (Audretsch et al. 2021).

**E14: Internal communication.** This element studies if the company gives internal visibility to the people rewarded for their work in promoting social innovation activities; if it communicates adequately the social, environmental and economic contribution of social innovation; and if the internal communication channels for communicating this are adequate.

Internal communication helps to create meaning as a central element because it is the main site where meanings that inform and restrict identity and action materialize. In this sense, meaning-making is also about organizing through communication (Hanke and Stark 2009).

The role of internal communication has been treated in the field of culture of innovation. Calderón-Hernández and Naranjo-Valencia (2018) em-
phasize that to stimulate innovation and creativity internal communication must be open and transparent. In this way, the same should happen with social innovation since this promotes trust and conveys the idea that disagreement is acceptable within the organization.

Téteiro Koller (2016) signals the need for management to realize the importance of a rapid flow of information at different levels of the organization. In this sense, the role of internal communication is relevant to encouraging informal relationships and ties in order to exchange information, resources and advice, to distribute formal rules of expected behavior throughout the organization.

_E15: External communication._ This element analyzes if the company gives external visibility to the socio-environmental impact generated (sustainability or non-financial report); if the external communication channels are adequate to promote social innovation activities with other agents outside the company; and if the external communication attracts social innovation talent to the company.

Several authors such as Hanke and Stark (2009) and Roszkowska-Menkes (2018) state that communication is a crucial element for strategic social responsibility. This idea is perfectly transferable to social innovation processes because of its relevance when it comes to partnering with external agents, attracting talent and publicizing the socio-environmental impact generated by social innovation activities.

In this line, Spena and de Chiara (2012), Pyszka (2013), Mirvis et al. (2016) and Mirvis and Googins (2018a) also emphasize the need for methods to measure, report and publicize the social, environmental, and economic impacts generated by social innovation activities.

### 4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

#### 4.1. Focus group design

The focus group methodology is a qualitative method defined as “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (Morgan, 1996: 130). Compared to in-depth interviews, a focus group aims to stimulate discussion and, through analysis, to understand the meaning of participants’ statements. This methodology is especially suitable for studies for which the research objective is exploratory in
nature or which aim to confirm information (Barbour, 2007), such as the preliminary framework discussed herein. Moreover, it is an appropriate methodology for emerging conceptual realities such as that of the culture of social innovation, about which little is known as a phenomenon.

The aim of this focus group is to define the practical concerns that putting this framework into practice would imply. Participants were recruited via a theoretical purposive sampling technique of maximum variation sampling based on two types of experts, namely professionals and academics. Table III summarizes their profiles, gender, professional background, experience and current positions.

Table III: Sample: professional profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Professional background</th>
<th>Professional experience</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Industrial design</td>
<td>Teaching and research on open innovation issues</td>
<td>Full-time professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bachelor's in law</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility within the banking sector</td>
<td>Managing director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Engineer in industrial organization</td>
<td>Strategic consulting, social innovation and socio-environmental impact</td>
<td>Co-founder and Managing director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Philosopher and PhD in business administration</td>
<td>Strategic consulting, purpose, training, innovation, organizational change, etc</td>
<td>Founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bachelor's in economics; PhD in economics and business</td>
<td>Teaching, research and consulting with international organizations on service issues; innovation; regional competitiveness studies, among others</td>
<td>Full-time professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration

The work with the focus group was conducted in three structured phases:
- Phase 1: Introduction. Following the guide for moderators proposed by Bloor et al. (2001), the moderator explained the purpose of the research, as well as the topics that would be addressed in the first 10 minutes.

- Phase 2: Group discussion. The moderator opened a group discussion. The topics addressed focused on responding to the questions raised. The discussion was divided into two parts as Table IV illustrates, including the questionnaire.

- Phase 3: Closing. To close the focus group, the moderator presented a summary of the main conclusions, as well as points of agreement resulting from the debate. In addition to the above, an open question was raised regarding whether any other factor should be added to the framework.

Table IV: Focus group structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Open question: to what extent can organizational culture drive social innovation in companies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Discussion about the proposed framework. The debate was structured around three blocks | Block A. Determining and strategic factors related to organizational culture: purpose, leadership and environment. The following questions were asked:  
- What aspects of purpose and strategy would you highlight to promote Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) or Social Innovation (SI) in the company?  
- And then regarding leadership, what should we consider?  
- Regarding the environment, what variables are important? |
| Block B. Determining and supporting factors related to organizational culture: structure; policy, metrics and reward. The following questions were asked:  
- What levers does the structure have for SI?  
- Do you know of any specific examples of policies, metrics and rewards that promote SI in companies? | |
| Block C. Transversal factors: communication and capabilities.  
- What should the communication that promotes SI be like?  
- For a company that wants to implement SI, what organizational capabilities should they develop? What would you advise? | |

Source: Own elaboration

In the course of discussion, following Bloor et al. (2001), the moderator principally intervened to a) ensure all the topics in the discussion guide were covered, b) ask questions and encourage participation, exchange and discussion, c) make clarifications in order to ensure an understanding of the precise
building a framework to promote corporate social innovation: a view from organizational culture

meaning of certain concepts and ideas under discussion. The moderator was a key figure for guiding participants’ interventions towards the researcher’s agenda (Munday, 2006). An assistant researcher observed the number or proportion of members who appeared to represent a dissenting view as well as how many participants did not appear to express any view at all to record information about the level of consensus and dissension. Moreover, the assistant moderator collected as much nonverbal communication data as possible so that the focus group analysts included this information alongside the verbal data.

Regarding data, this study relied on the focus groups’ documented notes, a transcript and a matrix to help researchers to develop an accurate interpretation of the framework under study. Researchers used a transcript-based analysis. The transcribed data was analyzed alongside field notes constructed by the moderator and assistant moderator. Focus group data arises from individual data, group data, and/or group interaction data (Duggleby, 2005). The analytical techniques applied by researchers to focus group data was a modified comparison analysis rather than the creation of ad hoc data categories; researchers used pre-defined constructs and themes to categorize the data based on the theoretical framework. Finally, the researchers coded the data and presented emergent themes along with information about the degree of consensus and dissent. Analyzing and interpreting helps researchers determine the extent to which the data that contributed to the theme reached within-group data saturation. Information about dissenters increased the descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and theoretical validity associated with the emergent themes.

4.2. Findings: reference framework to promote social innovation

The main findings are presented below following the factors and elements identified in the theoretical framework and adding the practical and managerial concerns signaled in the focus group. Next, we explain briefly the practical concerns harbored about each of the 15 elements defined in the theoretical framework, which are summarized in Table V.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Practical concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1: Sharing the social aspect of the purpose</td>
<td>That it includes specific issues of social and/or environmental impact. That it is known and motivates the different stakeholders (employees, customers, suppliers, etc.) to generate socio-environmental impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2: The degree of integration into business strategy</td>
<td>The strategy should address socio-environmental impact aspects. That the socio-environmental impact objectives to be achieved are defined in a consensual manner and consider the different stakeholders. That the strategy specifies the socio-environmental impact objectives to be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3: Leadership style</td>
<td>That the leadership style motivates and encourages practices oriented towards creativity and socio-environmental impact. It should inspire the development of innovation activities with a socio-environmental impact (improvements or creation of new processes, systems, products, or services).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4: Leadership communication style</td>
<td>The communication style should convey the company’s values and commitments in terms of social innovation, innovation, and socio-environmental impact. To promote openness, transparency, and exchange of ideas. To give constant feedback to help people innovate with impact in their tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5: Support levers</td>
<td>To validate whether the sectoral, geographical, and policy/regulatory environment in which they operate promotes and recognizes that the company innovates with a positive socio-environmental impact. To analyze whether there are benchmark companies or organizations in the environment that promote sustainable practices with a positive socio-environmental impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6: Relationship management</td>
<td>To encourage and carry out collaborations with agents in the environment to boost social innovation processes. To encourage collaborative relationships that promote the co-creation of solutions with a positive social impact. That the relationships between agents improve the competitiveness of the agents that participate and enhance the positive social impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E7: Characteristics of organizational structure</td>
<td>To invest financial and material resources to develop social innovation activities. To have clear processes in place to develop this type of innovation project with a socio-environmental impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E8: Orientation to change</td>
<td>The structure contemplates what is happening in the environment to introduce changes that allow for changes with a socio-environmental impact. It facilitates collaboration to introduce or boost social innovation processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Building A Framework to Promote Corporate Social Innovation: A View from Organizational Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| E9: Organizational policies | To have policies or practices within the company that prioritize working towards socio-environmental impact objectives.  
To have a clear and consistent shared set of values that guides the way of working with socio-environmental impact.  
People understand the relationship between their work and socio-environmental impact objectives. |
| E10: Metrics | To have indicators that make it possible to account for the socio-environmental impact generated.  
To have mechanisms for monitoring the benefits and socio-environmental impact generated by social innovation activities. |
| E11: Rewards | To have a reward system that recognizes and/or rewards members, suppliers/customers whose ideas contribute to improving the socio-environmental impact. |
| E12: Development of capabilities | To invest economic and material resources in the development of capacities to innovate with socio-environmental impact for all stakeholders.  
That the members of the company have the capacity to innovate and promote activities with socio-environmental impact. |
| E13: Organizational learning | Risk-taking is seen as an opportunity to learn and improve.  
These mechanisms are developed to facilitate the exchange of experiences that promote learning among the different stakeholders. |
| E14: Internal | Visibility internally of the people rewarded for their work in promoting socio-environmental impact activities.  
That the social, environmental and economic contribution of the purpose is adequately communicated internally.  
Having adequate internal communication channels to communicate the socio-environmental impact generated. |
| E15: External | To make the socio-environmental impact generated externally visible.  
To have adequate external communication channels to promote innovation activities with a positive socio-environmental impact. |

Source: Own elaboration
E1: Social aspect of purposes. Experts emphasize that the social aspect of the company’s purpose should explicitly include social objectives, but, at the same time, be reflected in the type of product or service that the company offers. “The definition of purpose should be sufficiently broad so as not to be a short-sighted vision and should in itself make mention of the social issue” (expert nº 1). In turn, it is important that the purpose is known and motivates the different stakeholders (employees, customers, suppliers, etc.) to generate a socio-environmental impact “...if in the end a company’s product or service is not accepted by society, if they do not satisfy its needs, it is of little use to us.... There needs to be a social culture in mind, which is the one that is above all activity” (expert nº 4) Thus, the three key aspects of social innovation would be identified in the purpose: impact, competitiveness and co-creation. “...that includes social issues, but concrete issues and that is defined in a consensual way” (expert nº 3).

E2: Degree of integration in the business strategy. Experts highlight the importance of aligning business strategy with socio-environmental impact. “The strategy must be coherent with the purpose, not only measuring short-term or economic results, which are usually easier to measure within the complexity of this” (expert nº 1). In turn, they emphasize that a diagnostic analysis of social innovation must take into account the fact that stakeholders play a relevant role in the development of business strategy as an indicator of a culture of social innovation. “In terms of strategy, I saw the issue of stakeholders as fundamental because many times they don’t even know who they are, it’s amazing how little knowledge there is about stakeholders”. (expert nº 3). On the other hand, one of the experts affirms that the explicit inclusion of the SDGs in the strategy is a clear indicator of the integration of the purpose. “...aligning strategic objectives with accepted frameworks such as the SDGs” (expert nº 2) and another participant mentions the need for “strategies to be known throughout the organization” (expert nº 4).

E3: Leadership style. The experts consider that the most appropriate leadership style should be open, shared, “...should give way to the emergence of “small” leaderships. Let the “sensitive” ones (expert nº 1) on socio-environmental impact issues, promote the emergence of “small” leadership, i.e. those workers who are more “sensitive” to socio-environmental impact issues. Leadership “...must give way to the emergence of “small” leadership. Let the “sensitive” ones do it” (expert nº 1). Therefore, when carrying out a diagnostic analysis in a company, it is necessary to identify whether the present leadership style motivates and encourages practices oriented towards creativity.
and socio-environmental impact. If it inspires the development of innovation activities with impact (improvements or the creation of new processes, systems, products or services), they should be incentivized.

**E4: Leadership communication style.** Experts value consistency between leadership style and how it is communicated as the most relevant practical aspect of this element. “It must be coherent and avoid greenwashing. You must be available and have time to listen” (expert no. 2). They emphasize concepts such as credibility, transparency, openness and highlight that a future diagnostic tool should include questions that can determine whether the communication style meets these characteristics. “It must be transparent, give credibility. Encourage this type of practice, recognise it, delegate, promote autonomy and decision-making” (expert no. 4).

**E5: Support levers.** From this element, the experts underline the importance of considering the social recognition of the company on the part of society and understanding the company as a social agent and not only as an economic agent “...the importance of considering the social recognition of the company on the part of society and understanding the company as a social agent and not only as an economic agent” (expert no. 4). There was agreement on analysing whether the sectoral, geographical and policy/regulatory environment in which it operates promotes and recognises that the company innovates with a positive socio-environmental impact, as well as whether in the environment in which it operates there are benchmark companies or organisations that promote sustainable practices with a positive socio-environmental impact. “... that there are success stories and references that promote, for example, the achievement of SDGs through the company” (expert no. 3).

**E6: Relational management.** All those present agreed on the importance of analyzing whether the company promotes and carries out collaborations with agents in the environment to boost social innovation processes and share experiences. “Generate spaces in each initiative to evaluate/reflect/share the impacts achieved” (expert no. 2). They refer to the importance of diagnosing whether the company encourages collaborative relationships that promote the co-creation of solutions with a positive socio-environmental impact. “Incorporating the perspective of customers and suppliers facilitates enormous learning when it comes to visualizing shared problems and developing joint solutions” (expert no. 1). They underline the importance of analyzing whether the relationships between agents improve the competitiveness of the agents involved and whether the positive socio-environmental impact is enhanced “That collaborative relationships improve competitiveness. That they are seen
as an opportunity for differentiation to generate competitive advantage” (expert nº 4).

E7: Characteristics of the structure. The experts suggest analyzing whether the company invests economic and material resources to develop social innovation activities and whether or not the company has clear processes for developing social innovation activities. “It is essential to assign people to be responsible and that these people have resources” (expert nº 2) “SI is transversal in the organization, it must be present in all departments and areas. It should also be dealt with in the management committees (strategic objectives - purpose)” (expert nº 3).

E8: Change orientation. The participants consider it relevant to assess whether or not the structure contemplates what is happening in the environment in order to introduce changes with a positive socio-environmental impact. They emphasized that the current reality requires structures that know how to manage complexity, that are flexible and able to adjust according to changes in the environment. “…the structure must be able to manage complexity. There is no single structure, it depends on the sector, the functional area, the size. The structure can be networked or circular, and this refers to organizational design” (expert nº 1). They also refer to the relevance of assessing whether or not the company facilitates collaboration with other agents in the environment to introduce or boost social innovation processes “If you have to work with a social agent, you will have to articulate that collaboration: know how to do it. There are many who do not know how to collaborate” (expert nº 3).

E9: Organizational and personnel policies. On this element, participants suggest analyzing whether or not the company has policies that prioritize working towards socio-environmental impact objectives, “Policies that promote SI or prioritize working towards socio-environmental impact objectives should be disseminated” (expert nº 4). They also suggest validating whether the company has a clear and consistent set of shared values that guide the way of working with socio-environmental impact “Policies should be oriented towards creating a sense of community, guiding the way of working, raising awareness and telling the story” (expert nº 1). Finally, the experts consider it relevant to analyze whether people understand the relationship between their task and the objectives of socio-environmental impact “…policies oriented to specific training in SI, awareness raising activities” (expert nº 4).

E10: Metrics. Participants suggest analyzing whether indicators are in place to account for the socio-environmental impact that the company gene-
rates and whether it has mechanisms for monitoring the socio-environmental benefits and impacts generated by social innovation activities. “In each project, just as the economic impact is assessed, the social impact should also be assessed. Clear KPIs should be drawn up” (expert nº 2).

**E11: Rewards.** The experts validated the three elements to be evaluated and highlighted the need to analyze whether the company has a reward system that recognizes and rewards employees, suppliers or customers whose ideas contribute to improving the socio-environmental impact. They stressed that such initiatives need to be clearly reflected in the incentive and reward system. “Set concrete targets and reflect them in the incentive and performance appraisal system” (expert nº 2). In addition, they suggested analyzing whether they have rewards such as bonuses to employees; awards to departments and areas; initiatives that make visible and disseminate the company’s achievements and policies. “Rewards to SI drivers: bonus to employees; rewarding the department/area; publicizing and disseminating the company’s achievements and policies” (expert nº 4).

**E12: Capacity building.** Participants emphasized the relevance of analyzing whether the company invests economic and material resources in capacity building to innovate with socio-environmental impact for all stakeholders. They also stressed the importance of assessing whether or not the members of the company have the necessary capacities to innovate and promote socio-environmental impact. They highlighted a series of specific capacities such as “Encourage creativity, experimentation, critical, quantitative and qualitative capacity, connectivity” (expert nº 2); “Training in social innovation, for collaboration and cross-cutting issues” (expert nº 4); “Have social concern, capacities for teamwork, with stakeholders and creativity” (expert nº 4).

**E13: Organizational learning.** The experts consider that in order to diagnose this element, it is advisable to analyze whether risk-taking is considered as an opportunity to learn and improve. “Train flexibility and the capacity to adapt, often you have the compass but the destination and the route is still being defined” (expert nº 3). They suggest analyzing whether the company has mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of experiences that promote learning among the different stakeholders. “If you have to work with a social agent, you have to articulate that collaboration: know how to do it. There are many who do not know how to collaborate” (expert nº 3).

**E14: Internal communication.** The experts suggest exploring whether the company internally makes visible the people rewarded for their work in promoting social innovation activities, whether the social, environmental and eco-
nomic contribution of the purpose is adequately communicated internally and assessing whether the company has adequate internal communication channels to publicize the socio-environmental impact generated by social innovation activities. They affirm the need for it to be a “...constant, rapid, transparent, two-way communication that transmits trust” (expert nº 1). A communication that makes it possible to “move from anecdotal evidence to data” (expert nº 3) and for there to be “good dissemination of SI policies and good practices” (expert nº 4).

**E15: External communication.** Regarding this element, the participants consider it relevant to analyze whether the company makes the socio-environmental impact it generates externally visible and whether it has the appropriate external communication channels to promote social innovation activities with a positive socio-environmental impact. Here they highlight that it should be a “Bidirectional, rapid and distributed” communication (expert nº 2) and that the “communication should be concrete with examples and/or data that remain in the memory” (expert nº 3), and that there should be a “dissemination of positive and negative achievements and benefits” (expert nº 4).

In summary, the previous findings reveal important management aspects that should be considered in the implementation of the theoretical framework presented. These qualitative findings are particularly valuable given the scarcity of empirical studies that combine CSI and organizational culture as has been mentioned before. Having a focus group has allowed us to further emphasize some aspects that the literature on social innovation has already highlighted but also to clarify others. These insights from experts help to construct a reference framework that becomes a useful diagnostic tool for professionals and also for the empirical application of further research as will be seen in the conclusion section.

5. CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how organizational culture can foster social innovation by integrating insights from a systematic literature review and empirical data obtained from a focus group. Both the literature review and the focus group emphasized the critical role of organizational culture in promoting social innovation.

While previous literature reviews by Tabares (2021) and Dionisio & Vargas (2018) have explored aspects of social innovation and organizational cul-
ture, this study sets itself apart by developing an integrated framework that explicitly links cultural factors with practical implementation strategies for social innovation. Additionally, the inclusion of a focus group provides empirical validation and practical insights, addressing a gap often found in purely theoretical reviews. This study specifically targets the intersection of organizational culture and social innovation, in contrast to previous reviews that have focused on broader themes of corporate social responsibility and general innovation practices.

The main contribution of this work is the development of a reference framework consisting of analytical categories, including factors, elements, and managerial concerns. This framework enables us to identify ways to promote a culture of social innovation within companies. Analysis of existing literature on SI/CSI and innovation culture, together with results from the focus group, point toward seven key factors that can configure a culture of social innovation within companies, fifteen elements to be evaluated and further managerial insights for implementation. Final framework aims may enrich the body of knowledge on corporate social innovation and also serve as an analytical framework with which to conduct empirical research.

This work aims to bridge the gap between researchers and managers, fostering a broader understanding of social innovation as a type of innovation that must originate within the company to be sustainable, rather than being promoted solely through external incentives. This vision supports research that combines the concept of corporate social innovation with elements of organizational culture, helping companies understand the levers needed to develop a social innovation strategy.

This study allows us to reach the following conclusions. First, there are few studies that analyze social innovation from the perspective of corporate culture. Second, we are dealing with two concepts (SI and culture) of a holistic nature that have been studied from different disciplines: anthropology, sociology, politics, economics, philosophy and social psychology. Third, although the SI is based on the innovation literature, it is nevertheless a concept under construction and heterogeneous. However, although there are studies that show the benefits for companies of investing in corporate social innovation activities, these are not considered to be sufficient and more case studies should be published to shed more light on corporate social innovation and the potential it has within companies to make them more sustainable models. Fourth, from the literature review, it was possible to identify key factors and elements for promoting social innovation within companies. The focus group
made it possible to identify the key aspects to be taken into account when analyzing the culture of social innovation in companies. Thus we perceive the need to continue building theory on social innovation in companies along with specific frameworks that enable the development of SI in companies. Further, the opportunity is there to raise the visibility of SI and make it more known and, in this vein, we note the relevance of the internal and external communication of the benefits of corporate social innovation, little explored or described in the analyzed articles. Fifth, another of the conclusions of this study is that companies should assume that the social impact of their activities should be integrated into their strategy, which can best be achieved by developing an organizational culture that promotes social innovation activities in all areas of the company, so that it becomes part of its DNA. Lastly, these conclusions highlight the need for common indicators to measure the social, environmental, and economic impact of social innovation activities and the development of tools to diagnose the orientation of organizational culture toward social innovation.

This research combines a systematic literature review with focus group methodologies in order to obtain information from different sources and thus lend strength to the results obtained. This does not mean that these methodologies have no limitations. The literature review was limited by the exclusion of books or book chapters and also of articles not published in the English language. The focus group would have benefited from including more experts, especially international ones, to avoid results biased toward Spain. Nevertheless, this limitation has been partially overcome in that the sample, made up of academics and professionals, boasts international background and experience. In any case, these limitations do not undermine the rigor of this research, but rather present opportunities for future improvement.

In this regard, future lines of research point in two directions. On the one hand, starting from the reference framework, we would like to develop a diagnostic guide that allows companies to evaluate their culture in terms of social innovation. With this guide, they would then draw up actions aimed at fully incorporating SI into the company’s purpose. On the other hand, we would like to extend this research to the international realm, developing case studies that include several countries and, in this way, analyze cultural variables related to the people involved in implementing social innovation strategy.
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