Monarch Business School
Doctoral Research Plan

Leadership Culture as an Antecedent to Innovation: A Qualitative Study of American Multinational Technology Subsidiaries in Ireland

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Technology Subsidiaries in Ireland

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HQ	Headquarters
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
IT	Information Technology
LOA	Levels of Analysis
MSRM	Monarch Standard Research Method
MD	Managing Director
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development
ROI	Return on Investment
USA	United States of America
VP	Vice President

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ABSTRACT

Ireland is an innovation leader according to the Global Innovation Index, and is rated in the top ten consistently across all performance indicators since the report's inception in 2007 (Dutta et al., 2020). Ireland's economy is highly globalized (Brennan, 2022). According to the Irish Central Statistics Office, foreign direct investment comprises 288% of Ireland's GDP[1] (Brennan, 2022). In 2019, Ireland exceeded an unprecedented one trillion dollars of FDI. Despite the global COVID-19 pandemic, FDI into Ireland rose incrementally by 71 billion euros in 2020, with the technology sector showing particular resilience (Brennan, 2022). The year 2021 continued to see FDI inflows. According to the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), Ireland remains an attractive location for multinational subsidiary operations despite raising its corporate tax rate from 12.5% to 15% in 2021 (Mehboob, 2021). Ireland made this adjustment to align with the minimum European corporate tax rate proposed by the OECD as part of their inclusion framework (Brazys & Regan, 2021; Rootsma, 2021). Ireland's innovation capacity is cited as a critical strategic pillar attracting multinational investment (Siedschlag et al., 2021). The United States is the largest investor in Ireland accounting for almost three-quarters of total FDI. Ireland's overall innovation profile is healthy. However, studies concerning the understanding of contributing factors for this success appear limited.

A supportive culture that fosters innovation is referred to in the academic literature as an "innovation supportive culture". Studies to date highlight the central role of leadership in mediating a supportive culture that fosters innovation (Bhutto et al., 2018; Denti & Hemlin, 2012; Soken & Barnes, 2014; Von Stamm, 2009). The contemplated research will explore the impact of the leadership dimensions of trust, power and communication on innovation supportive culture in subsidiaries of US multinational technology companies in Ireland. The research will seek to understand the leadership dimensions between Irish subsidiary leadership and US Headquarter leadership to unpack the effect these dimensions have on levels of subsidiary innovation. The research endeavors to contribute to the innovation literature by responding to the call for a multidimensional exploration of organizational culture (Dobni, 2008) and the multinational subsidiary literature by providing a greater appreciation of the role of innovation supportive culture (Birkenshaw & Hood, 1998). Given Ireland's economic dependence on multinational investment and its overall innovation success, coupled with the scholarship pointing to leadership as a central mediator of innovation supportive culture, the research may be perceived as a valuable proposition of interest to the IDA, their multinational clients and subsidiary management in Ireland.

Keywords: *Innovation, Leadership, Trust, Power, Communication,*
          Foreign Direct Investment, Culture, Ireland.

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[1] FDI is not automatically included in GDP. It is included only when money is spent to create economic activity to form physical capital.

1.0   INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Foreign direct investment (FDI) has been a keystone of Ireland's economic policy since

the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) was founded in 1949 (Barry & Bergin, 2019)

and FDI is considered a proxy indicator of innovation. FDI remains a strategic

imperative for the Irish government and Ireland has successfully generated conditions

for export-led growth, taking advantage of the European single market (Regan &

Brazys, 2021). Ireland's specific strategy has been to insert itself into the global value

and wealth chains of US Multinationals and to act as a platform for these companies to

sell into the European market (Regan & Brazys, 2021). Despite growing skepticism of

the Irish growth model, investment inflows remain buoyant, and have accelerated in the

last ten years with particular emphasis on the technology, science and pharmaceutical

sectors (Cunningham et al., 2020). FDI reached an all-time high in 2019, culminating in

investment revenues of one trillion U.S. dollars (Hardiman et al., 2021). According to the

IDA, Ireland is attractive because of its political stability, educated workforce, population

demographics and business infrastructure (Parada Morales, 2020). The IDA also cites

Ireland's innovation capability as one of the key pillars for attracting investment (Hore et

al., 2017).

Multinational corporations headquartered in the United States comprise the majority of

FDI investment in Ireland with over 1,600 operating subsidiaries (Bohle & Regan, 2021).

Subsidiaries can be defined as an operational unit controlled by the multinational

located outside the home country which can perform a single activity or an entire value

chain of activities (Birkenshaw, 1997; Birkenshaw & Hood, 1998). The academic

literature on subsidiaries has undergone somewhat of a shift from early writing focused

on the multinational assuming ownership specific advantages developed at corporate

headquarters and leveraged overseas via traditional centralized span of control and

hierarchical management structures, to flatter organizational structures, focused on power sharing and the integration of work streams (Rodrigues et al., 2021). Following Ghoshal's (1986) seminal work on innovation processes, several studies were published that focused on understanding the different roles that subsidiaries can play in the multinational (Ambos et al., 2021). This research acknowledges that the subsidiary is not just an instrument of the parent company, rather, it has a certain degree of freedom in shaping its own role (Birkinshaw, 1997). This is congruent with subsidiary innovation performance levels in Ireland (Ambos et al., 2021).

A growing body of literature has discussed different dimensions of organizational culture that can encourage innovation. While numerous cultural dimensions supporting innovation have been discussed in the literature, several are somewhat consistent across the other studies. These are: autonomy (Aiman-Smith & Mullen, 2007; Kim et al., 2022; Cantwell et al., 2007; Miron et al., 2004; O'Reilly III, 1991), teamwork (Cantwell et al., 2007), support for change (Cantwell et al., 2007; Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2002), risk-taking (Cantwell et al., 2007; Miron et al., 2004; O'Reilly, 1991), trust and openness (Ahmed, 1998; Ekvall, 1996; Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2002; Mathisen & Einarsen, 2004), and constructive conflict (Amabile, 1996; Jehn, 1995). Miron et al. (2004) also identify tolerance of mistakes and low bureaucracy as prevalent dimensions of innovative cultures.

The role of leadership is central to mediating the aforementioned dimensions of innovation and supportive culture because leadership directly impacts organizational climate (Li et al., 2018; Naranjo-Valencia & Calderon-Hernández, 2018). The conditions to exercise an innovation and supportive culture may depend upon the leadership dynamics between the subsidiary and the HQ (Meyer & Schotter, 2020). The

contemplated research will seek to understand the leadership dimensions of power, trust and communication that impact the aforementioned attributes of innovation and supportive culture. With this in mind, the contemplated research will attempt to:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the nexus within the academic literature relating to power, trust and communication theories. The research will seek to explore the relationship between subsidiary management and headquarters management concerning these dynamics, particularly emphasizing the influence these leadership dynamics have on innovation levels in the subsidiaries;

2. Explore the contributing factors to innovation levels in Irish subsidiaries with a view to understanding if any other attributes to an innovation and supportive culture outside of the aforementioned dimensions surface;

3. Develop a new conceptual framework that may provide deeper insight into the contributing factors of innovation in Irish subsidiaries.

It is believed that the scope of this contemplated research has not been completed elsewhere. It provides an opportunity to contribute original knowledge to the scholarship domains around subsidiary management, FDI and innovation supportive culture in the Irish multinational context.

2.0   PROVISIONAL RESEARCH QUESTION

With the above discourse in mind, the provisional research question has been developed as:

"What are the characteristics of a new conceptual model of leadership culture that fosters innovation in subsidiaries of American technology multinationals in Ireland?"

3.0   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The contemplated research aims to respond to the provisional research question by
way of a triangulation of research data as shown in Figure 1. A literature review of
existing seminal authors and content analysis of existing corporate data will be
conducted via desk research. Interviews with management in Irish subsidiaries and
multinational headquarters will be conducted via field research.

Figure 1
Methodological Triangulation

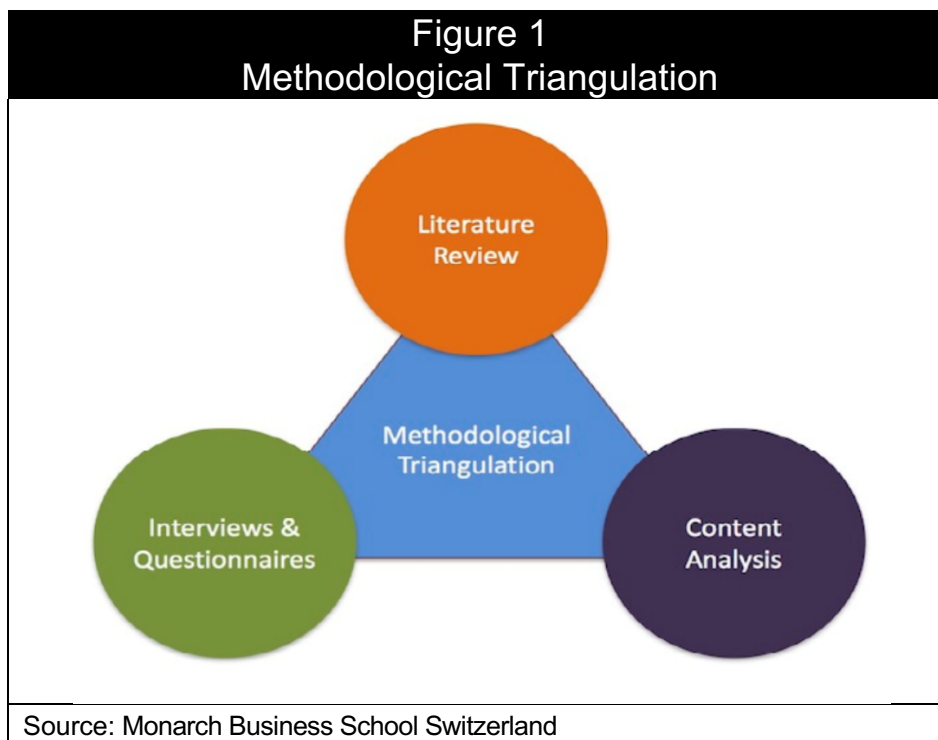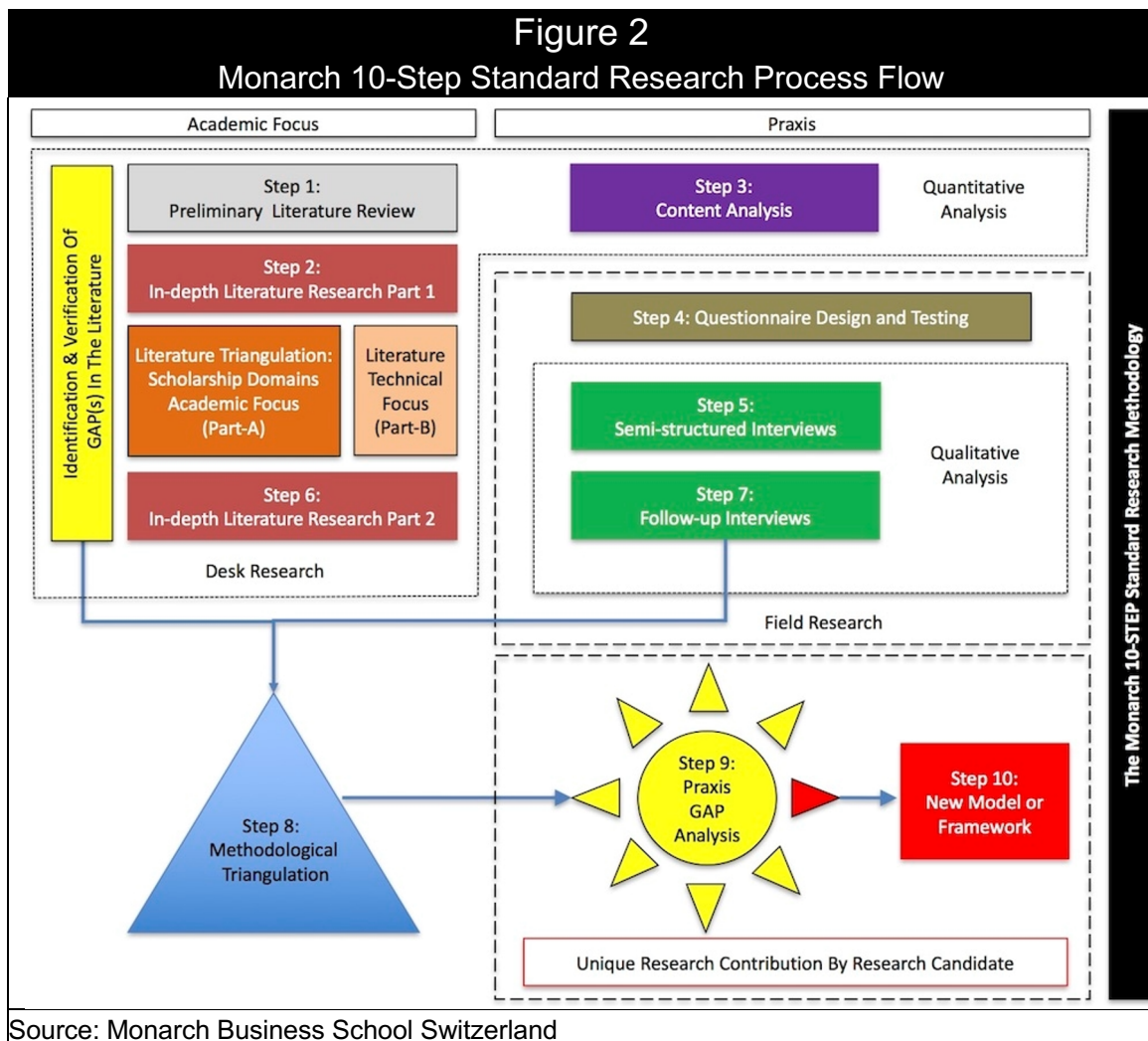Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland

Figure 2 illustrates the Monarch Standard Research Process Flow followed within the
contemplated research. The MSRP contains 10-steps outlined as follows:

Step 1: Preliminary Literature Review**:** The research begins with a survey and review of
the works of seminal authors within the academic scholarship domains of theories on
trust, power and communication. The preliminary literature review provides a framework
to the contemplated research, identifies critical concepts and theories and develops a
better understanding of the nexus of the scholarship domains.

Step 2: In-depth Literature Review – Part 1: An in-depth review and critique of the works
of the seminal academic authors will be completed to provide a solid academic
foundation for the contemplated research. The gap in the literature will be identified in
relation to the provisional research question.

Figure 2
Monarch 10-Step Standard Research Process Flow

Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland

Step 3: Content Analysis: A content analysis of publicly available data will be
completed. The content analysis will respond to the provisional research question and
use annual reports, white papers, and information found in professional journals and
like documents.

Step 4: Questionnaire Design & Testing: The development of the questionnaire will be informed by the review of the academic literature and technical documents. The questionnaire will be tested with several volunteers in advance to perfect the flow and timing and ensure that the questions are clear, concise and have a direct bearing on the focus of the contemplated research.

Step 5: Semi-Structured Interview Process: All interview participants are expected to be knowledgeable concerning the contemplated research. A total of 50 interviews will be conducted with participants.

Step 6: In-Depth Literature Review – Part 2: A second in-depth literature review will be completed to add more specificity to the research analysis. The interview responses will also inform part 2 of the literature review.

Step 7: Follow-Up Interviews: To achieve a more specific view informed by the first interviews and the second literature review, a subset of 20 respondents from the first round of interview samples will participate in the follow-up interviews.

Step 8 & 9: Triangulation of the Data and Gap Analysis: A triangulation of the research data informed by the literature review, content analysis and interview responses will be completed. It will assist in determining whether the existing academic knowledge is congruent with the practical application in the field. The analysis result should determine whether a Praxis Gap exists between the academic (theoretical) and the practical (applied) domains.

<u>Step 10: Development of Framework and Recommendations</u>**:** Building on the gap

analysis completed in Step 9, an analysis of the existing frameworks within the

academic domain will be considered. This analysis will evaluate whether the

frameworks sufficiently address the requirement for practical application within the

industry. A list of managerial recommendations will be developed based on the
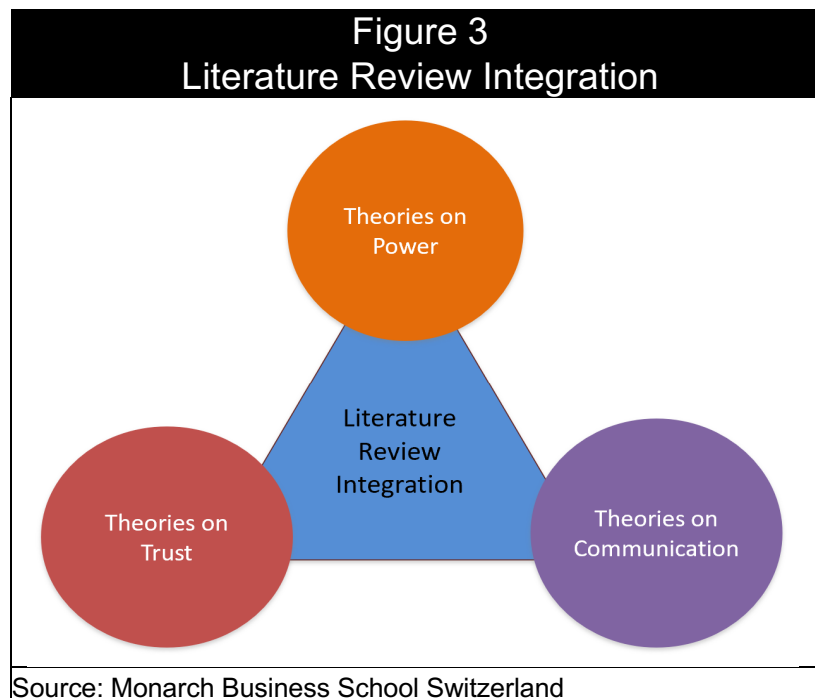
research findings.

4.0   STAKEHOLDER SCHEMA & PARTICIPANTS

The field research component consists of a two-part semi-structured interview process.

The interviews will be limited to the meso-level sub-group as shown below in Table 1

and will concentrate on management interviews within the Irish subsidiary.

Table 1 Level of Analysis & Stakeholder Schema				
Level	Type	Group 1	Group 2	Stakeholders
MACRO	Societal	-	-	Industrial Development Authority, Government of Ireland.
MESO	Organizational /Institutional	50	20	Senior VP level, VP level, Senior Director level, Director level, Senior Manager level, First Line Manager level.
MICRO	Individual	-	-	Employee level, Team Leader level.
Total Respondents→		50	20	
Source: Delaney (2022) based on Monarch Business School Switzerland				

5.0   LITERATURE TRIANGULATION

The theoretical framework will be structured based on an integrative literature review

approach as shown in Figure 3. The selection of this distinctive form of research will aid

in gathering new knowledge pertaining to innovation and supportive culture in

subsidiary companies in Ireland. Simultaneously, the relationship dynamics between the

subsidiary and HQ management will be explored and evaluated. The academic areas

considered critical to the research question are: theories on power in organizations,

theories on trust and theories relating to communication.

Figure 3
Literature Review Integration

Theories on Power

Literature Review Integration

Theories on Trust

Theories on Communication

Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland

5.1   THEORIES ON POWER

When understanding organizational life, power generally has negative connotations

(Fineman, 2000). It usually signifies the maintenance of hierarchies and subordinated

positions in line with Max Weber's control paradigms in classical organizational theory

(Weber, 1947). But as Clegg, Courpasson & Phillips (2006) note, this is a one-sided

view of the concept. It may function in such a manner, but the phenomena may also be

productive in some situations. As Clegg, et al. (2006) posit, power need not always be

regarded as something to be avoided.

Mary Parker Follet's 'Power-With' concept is an innovative vision of power and authority

(Caldwell & Crippen, 2015; Fox, 1968). Follet focused on the science of achieving

organizational goals through people and fostering a culture of cooperation between

management and staff (Metcalf & Urwick, 2004). Follett believed genuine power is not

'power-over' but 'power-with' (Parker, 1984). Follet proposed that by jointly developing

power with workers, managers set the stage for a level playing field (Kriss, 2016).

Follet posited a new perspective on power, offering the view of power as an expandable

force with employee empowerment and power sharing (Boje & Rosile, 2001; Eylon,

1998; Follett,1932; Spillane & Joullié, 2022; Tjosvold & Sun, 2006). Sharing control

provides personal enrichment for everyone and boosts morale. To eliminate power

over, Follet recommended using integration to solve conflicts. Follett's vision was

ultimately transformational, spawning widespread movements in participatory

leadership and inclusive management practices, constructive conflict resolution, and

employee empowerment and teamwork in organizations (Coleman, 2021).

In the context of subsidiary management, it is argued that power dynamics are felt by

individual actors in organizations (Hinds et al., 2015). Headquarter's propensity to

control their investment as they optimize ROI juxtaposed with subsidiary management's

constrained feelings of working under mandates are worth investigating (Ambos et al.,

2010; Andersson et al., 2005; Birkinshaw & Hood, 1998). Power interrelates with trust

because shared power structures require established levels of trust to be enacted in the

first instance (Dovey, 2009). A working culture as described by Follett in terms of

expanding power and delivering results through a collective of people appears

congruent with an innovation-supportive culture discourse.

5.2 THEORIES ON TRUST

Theorists conceive of Trust as an expectation surrounding other people and their

behavior. Therefore, it is primarily viewed as natural cognition (Bhattacharya et al.,

1998; Rotter, 1971). Barber (1983) characterized trust as a set of socially learned and

socially confirmed expectations that people have of each other, of the organizations and

institutions in which they live, and of the natural and moral social orders that set the

fundamental understandings for their lives. Despite the divergence in

conceptualizations, scholars agree that trust is fundamentally a psychological state

(Rousseau et al., 1998). To say that one trusts someone or something refers to a

psychological condition that may involve cognitive, affective, and behavioral

components according to the understanding of trust furnished from the literature.

Researchers have suggested that an adequate theory of trust must incorporate the

social and relational dimensions of trust (Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Mayer et al., 1995;

Tyler & Kramer, 1996). Kramer et al. (1996) emphasize that social rather than purely

instrumental motives drive trust behavior, considering how actors' concerns and

identity-related needs and motives influence trust-related cognition and choice. Kramer

et al. (1996) argue that the relationship should be the focus when studying trust, not the

particular discrete economic or social transaction.

Trust also appears as a behavioral construct in the literature. Researchers argue for the

usefulness of conceptualizing trust in terms of the choice behavior of individuals (Kreps,

1990; Miller, 1992). Viewing trust as a rational choice has become the dominant

perspective in the economic and sociological literature (Barbalet, 1996; Li & Betts,

2003). As Williamson (1993) argues, trust decisions are similar to other risk-related

choices. Individuals are presumed motivated to make rational, efficient choices to

maximize expected gains or minimize expected losses from their transactions. To trust

is to place one's confidence in the other party in the relationship (Shepherd &

Zacharakis, 2001; Smith, 2001). Trust is preceded by the perceived trustworthiness of

the party, the expectation the trustor places on the trustee's behavior, and the emotional

bonds between the trustor and the trustee (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

Innovation depends upon the collaborative learning, idea generation and idea

realization practices of stakeholders in an organization (Dovey, 2009). The effective

execution of these practices requires individuals and groups to make themselves

vulnerable either to the rejection of their ideas, the lack of recognition from others or by

revealing 'ignorance' and thereby investing faith in others not to take advantage of self-

initiated vulnerability (Brown, 2012). Therefore, all three of these practices, that

underpin innovation in organizations, can be said to depend on the level of

interpersonal trust between stakeholders (Ellonen et al., 2008; Jones III, 2017; Lazányi,

2017; McAllister, 1995; Zaheer et al., 1998).

Trust is a fragile resource because it may be difficult and time-consuming to develop yet

it can be easily and quickly broken (Dovey, 2009; Ring, 1994). Trust that has been

constructed and nurtured through sensitive and self-reflective human relationships over

many years can be broken in a few moments by thoughtless and self-serving behavior

(Nooteboom, 2022; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). Thus, building intra and inter-

organizational trust require broad relational vigilance, openness, commitment and

respect (Shamah & Elsawaby, 2014; Qin, 2019). To benefit from local innovation,

multinational corporations must build and maintain high-quality relationships with their foreign subsidiaries (Porter & Stern, 2001).

5.3 THEORIES ON COMMUNICATION

Communication theory is enormously varied and multifaceted in scope (Craig, 1999). The body of knowledge accumulated over the centuries is extensive (Craig, 2016). Communication theory has had a different history in Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014). Scholars have begun to attend to distinctions between western and non-western communication theories (Miike, 2007). Non-western approaches tend to focus on wholeness and unity whereas western perspectives often measure parts without necessarily being concerned with an ultimate integration of those parts (Littlejohn & Foss, 2010).

Craig (1999) proposes a vision for communication theory that takes a step toward unifying this field. Craig argues that communication will never be united by a single theory or group of theories. Rather, theories will always reflect the diversity of practical ideas about communication in ordinary life so the field of communication will always be characterized by a multiplicity of approaches (Craig, 2007). At its most fundamental level, however, convergence points toward transmitting, exchanging or sharing information (Bolisani & Scarso, 1999). Communication is relational and constitutes dynamic interactions (Condit, 2006).

Organizational communication is often described as 'the glue' that binds together the various components of the organization, thereby enabling the achievement of company objectives (Cacciattolo, 2015; Davis, 1953, Goudar, 2010). It is argued that effective communication inside organizations determines to a large extent, factors such as staff

satisfaction (Goldhaber et al., 1978), retention (Tanius et al., 2017), motivation (Furlich, 2016), morale (Wentworth, 1990), creativity levels (Amabile, 1996) and innovation levels (Hynes & Mickahail, 2019; Stachova et al., 2017).

6.0 RESEARCH TIMELINE & BUDGET

The contemplated research is expected to conclude over a 36-month period. Table 2 illustrates the duration of each task anticipated within the research process. Although every effort will be made to implement the steps within the research timeline, variation in the plan may be encountered due to variables beyond the researcher's control, such as: resource constraints or accessibility of participants, which may result in the prolongation of the field research stages. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face and over Microsoft teams. Each interview will be recorded and will last approximately 60 minutes.

Table 2 Research Timeline													
		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
PART A	Initial Literature Search	■	■										
	Main Literature Search – Part 1			■	■								
	Research Plan				■								
	Section 1 - Background				■	■							
	Section 2 – Supporting Literature					■							
	Content Analysis					■							
	Official Submission Of Chapters 1,2,3 And Slide Presentation To Obtain Authorization To Continue On To Field Research												
PART B	Interviews – Part 1								■				
	Main Literature Search – Part 2							■	■				
	Interviews – Part 2								■				
	Section 3 - Synthesis								■	■			
	Section 4 - Recommendations									■	■		
	Manuscript Perfecting										■	■	
	Submission												■
Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland													

The contemplated research will be privately funded. No additional resources or funding

will be requested from UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland. No funds will be

received from any public body in carrying out the contemplated research. The total

budget of the research is approximately 8,000 Euros. The budget is presently fully

funded, and research may begin immediately upon approval.

Table 3 Research Budget	
Item	Euros
Hotel Accommodations	1,000
Books and Articles Purchases	2,500
Travel Expenses	1,500
Software and Digital Recording	1,500
Manuscript Publications	1,000
Miscellaneous	500
Total Costs	**8,000**
Source: Monarch Business School Switzerland	

7.0 RESEARCH PLAN APPROVAL

The contemplated research has been approved by the Administration and the candidate

may commence research. The candidate is not to deviate from the proposed research

plan unless expressly confirmed by both the Supervisor and the Administration in

written format.

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Approved by the Administration on
15-September-2022
By: Dr. Jeffrey Henderson, Ph.D.

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