

## **Ethnographic Exploration of Multinational Corporate Culture and Innovation at Lazada Logistics Bandung**

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### **Abstract**

This study employs an ethnographic communication approach to explore how multinational corporate culture influences innovation at Lazada Logistics Indonesia's Bandung Regional branch, with a focus on communication practices, organizational culture, and multicultural dynamics. Findings reveal a complex relationship among factors contributing to innovation. Lazada's multinational culture, characterized by workforce diversity and inclusive communication, fosters creativity and collaboration. Data were collected over two months through participant observation, five in-depth interviews, and fifteen focus group discussions with participants across management, operational, and support staff. The use of multiple languages, primarily Bahasa Indonesia supplemented by English, promotes inclusivity while also presenting challenges such as language barriers. Leadership emerged as a key facilitator, with transformational leadership styles effectively inspiring employees. However, challenges include balancing operational demands with innovation, managing cultural diversity, and addressing communication barriers. These findings contribute to understanding how trusted community-embedded structures mediate the translation of organizational culture into innovative behavior in LMIC-adjacent corporate settings.

**Keywords:** *Multinational Corporate Culture; Innovation; Communication Practices; Organizational Culture; Ethnographic Communication; Leadership*

## 1. Introduction

In an era of accelerating globalization, multinational companies (MNCs) face increasingly complex challenges in managing organizational communication, cultural diversity, and innovation across national contexts (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1992; Sesariza, 2020). In the logistics sector, where operational adaptability and coordination are essential, organizational communication and corporate culture play strategic roles in supporting innovation and maintaining competitiveness (Leonardi, 2021; Yuan et al., 2022). Rapid digital transformation in Southeast Asia has also intensified the need for collaborative communication ecosystems capable of integrating multicultural workforces into innovation-oriented organizational environments.

Corporate culture is widely recognized as a critical determinant of organizational performance and innovation capacity within multinational corporations (Schein, 1985). In MNCs, organizational culture often emerges as a hybrid system integrating global corporate values with local cultural practices (Adler & Gundersen, 2008). Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (1980; 2010) explains that dimensions such as power distance and collectivism significantly influence organizational communication and innovation participation. Previous studies further indicate that culturally diverse teams possess stronger creative problem-solving capabilities when effectively managed (Stahl et al., 2010; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Kim & Park, 2020; Liu et al., 2021). However, cultural diversity may also create communication barriers and hierarchical tensions that potentially constrain collaboration and employee participation in innovation activities.

Effective organizational communication is therefore central to innovation development within multinational organizations. Ethnography of communication, developed by Hymes (1962), provides a useful framework for examining how communication practices are shaped by cultural contexts and organizational interaction. Recent studies emphasize that innovation is not solely determined by formal organizational structures, but also by communication flexibility, employee participation, and collaborative interaction embedded in everyday organizational life (Men & Yue, 2019; Bisel et al., 2020; Men et al., 2021). In digitally connected workplaces, communication technologies and informal interaction spaces increasingly facilitate collaborative problem-solving and knowledge-sharing processes (Leonardi, 2021).

Recent communication studies in Indonesia also highlight the growing influence of digital communication culture on organizational interaction and participatory engagement. Solihin (2024) explains that digital transformation has reshaped communication patterns, interaction

flexibility, and collaborative participation within contemporary organizational environments. Communication practices in digital environments are no longer limited to formal information exchange but also involve symbolic interaction, cultural negotiation, and interpersonal adaptation within multicultural communication spaces. These developments indicate that innovation processes are closely associated with communication inclusivity and organizational collaboration.

Leadership additionally plays an important role in fostering an innovation culture within multinational organizations. Transformational leadership has consistently been identified as an effective approach for encouraging creativity, psychological safety, and employee engagement (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Studies by Jena and Pradhan (2018) and Ruck et al. (2017) demonstrate that employees are more likely to participate in innovation activities when leaders promote communication openness and participatory interaction. In multicultural organizational settings, leadership also functions as a cultural mediator, bridging global organizational expectations with local communication norms (Men et al., 2021).

Despite extensive studies on corporate culture and innovation, important gaps remain regarding how communication practices shape innovation processes within multinational logistics organizations in emerging economies. Existing studies mainly focus on manufacturing and technology sectors while paying limited attention to lived communication experiences and cultural negotiation within operational logistics environments (Tran et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2020). This limitation is particularly relevant in Southeast Asian contexts, where organizational communication is strongly influenced by collectivist values and hierarchical interaction patterns (Hofstede, 2010).

Lazada Logistics Indonesia presents a relevant context for examining these dynamics. As a subsidiary of Alibaba Group operating within one of Southeast Asia's most competitive logistics markets, Lazada Logistics integrates global innovation practices with local Indonesian cultural elements. The Bandung Regional branch represents a multicultural organizational environment involving employees from diverse linguistic, ethnic, and professional backgrounds interacting within highly dynamic operational settings. Such conditions reflect broader transformations in organizational communication culture in Indonesia's digital era, where communication technologies and multicultural interaction increasingly shape organizational participation and innovation processes (Solihin, 2024).

This study, therefore, aims to examine how multinational corporate culture influences innovation at Lazada Logistics Indonesia Bandung

Regional branch through an ethnographic communication perspective. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) identify key cultural and communication factors contributing to organizational innovation; (2) examine how multinational corporate values interact with local Indonesian communication practices; and (3) analyze how leadership behavior, communication media, and employee interaction shape innovation participation and organizational collaboration. Theoretically, this study contributes to organizational communication and innovation literature by integrating ethnographic communication perspectives with multicultural organizational culture studies within the context of multinational logistics corporations in Indonesia.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Research Approach**

This study employed an ethnographic communication approach as developed by Hymes (1962) to examine how communication practices shape and are shaped by multicultural organizational contexts within Lazada Logistics Indonesia Bandung Regional branch. Ethnographic communication was selected because it enables in-depth exploration of communicative behaviors, cultural interaction patterns, organizational meaning systems, and innovation dynamics embedded within everyday workplace activities. Through this approach, the study focuses not only on formal organizational communication structures but also on informal interaction practices, symbolic communication processes, and cultural negotiations occurring among employees from diverse backgrounds. The approach is particularly relevant in multinational corporate environments where communication practices become central to organizational adaptation, collaboration, and innovation development.

The study integrates perspectives from organizational communication, intercultural communication, ethnography of communication, and innovation studies to analyze the relationship between corporate culture and innovation practices. This interdisciplinary perspective allows the researcher to examine how leadership behavior, language use, communication flexibility, and cultural diversity influence employee participation and innovation processes within operational settings. In this context, communication is understood not merely as information exchange but as a social and cultural process shaping organizational meaning, participation, and collective interaction.

### **2.2 Research Setting and Participants**

The study was conducted at the Bandung Regional branch of Lazada Logistics Indonesia over a two-month fieldwork period from March to April 2024. The branch was selected because of its strategic

operational role, multicultural workforce composition, and active implementation of innovation-oriented organizational practices within the Indonesian logistics sector. The Bandung Regional branch also represents the interaction between global corporate culture and local Indonesian organizational practices, making it suitable for ethnographic communication analysis.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation across organizational levels and communication roles relevant to the study objectives. Participants included management staff, operational employees, and support divisions involved in organizational communication and innovation activities. Five key informants participated in in-depth interviews, while fifteen participants joined focus group discussions (FGDs). Participant observation was conducted continuously during the fieldwork period through direct immersion in workplace communication activities, including meetings, operational coordination, brainstorming sessions, and informal interaction spaces.

## **2.3 Data Collection Techniques**

### ***2.3.1 Participant Observation***

Participant observation was conducted to examine communication practices, interaction patterns, leadership behavior, and organizational culture within daily workplace activities. The researcher observed formal and informal communication processes occurring during operational meetings, brainstorming sessions, cross-department coordination, and everyday employee interaction. Detailed field notes were recorded systematically throughout the observation period to capture communicative events, symbolic interaction, and cultural negotiation processes.

### ***2.3.2 In-Depth Interviews***

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with five key informants selected based on their involvement in communication practices, innovation activities, and organizational coordination. Interviews lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and were audio-recorded with participant consent. Interview questions focused on communication dynamics, cultural diversity, leadership interaction, language use, innovation participation, and organizational challenges within the multinational corporate environment.

### ***2.3.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)***

Focus group discussions were conducted to explore collective perspectives regarding communication practices, organizational culture, innovation participation, and multicultural interaction. Three FGD sessions involving fifteen participants from different organizational divisions were organized to encourage discussion and interaction among

participants. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes and was subsequently transcribed for thematic analysis.

#### ***2.3.4 Document Analysis***

Document analysis was conducted to complement primary data obtained through observation and interviews. The analyzed documents included internal communication materials, organizational policies, training documents, innovation program reports, and company communication guidelines. These documents were used to contextualize communication practices and innovation structures within the organizational environment.

#### **2.4 Data Analysis**

Data analysis employed thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, consisting of data familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. Data from participant observation, interviews, FGDs, and document analysis were coded systematically using NVivo software to facilitate organization and interpretation of themes. Coding processes were conducted collaboratively to ensure consistency and analytical rigor.

The analysis focused on identifying themes related to communication practices, multicultural interaction, leadership behavior, innovation participation, language dynamics, and organizational culture. The interpretation process also examined how communication practices functioned as mechanisms for negotiating cultural meaning and facilitating innovation within the multinational corporate environment. Through this approach, the study analyzed how organizational communication shapes innovation processes and employee engagement within everyday workplace interaction.

#### **2.5 Research Validity and Ethical Considerations**

To ensure data validity and interpretative credibility, this study applied source triangulation by comparing findings from participant observation, interviews, FGDs, and document analysis. The triangulation process strengthened analytical consistency regarding communication practices, organizational culture, and innovation dynamics within the research setting. In addition, prolonged engagement during fieldwork enabled a deeper understanding of organizational interaction patterns and minimized superficial interpretation of communicative events.

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection, and all participants provided informed consent before participating in the study. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process by using coded identifiers instead of personal names. The researcher also applied reflexive awareness during fieldwork to minimize

interpretative bias and maintain analytical transparency throughout the ethnographic communication process.



**Figure 1.** Research Flowchart of Ethnographic Communication Study at Lazada Logistics Bandung

### 3. Results

The following section presents empirical findings organized around three core themes that emerged from thematic analysis of participant observation field notes, in-depth interview transcripts, and focus group discussion data: (1) communication practices and multicultural dynamics, (2) organizational culture and innovation structures, and (3) leadership behavior and employee engagement in innovation. Each theme is elaborated through sub-themes, supported by verbatim participant quotes and field observation data. Quotes are attributed by source (Informant 1–5 for in-depth interviews; FGD Group 1–3 for focus group discussions) and participant role where relevant.

#### 3.1 Theme 1: Communication Practices and Multicultural Dynamics

The Bandung Regional branch exhibited a distinctly multilayered communicative environment shaped by the intersection of corporate language policy, national cultural norms, and individual linguistic repertoires. Field observations conducted over two months documented that daily workplace communication drew primarily on Bahasa Indonesia across operational levels, while English functioned as the prestige language of formal institutional communication, used selectively in meetings involving expatriate staff, formal reporting, and cross-regional coordination. This linguistic duality produced a communication ecology in which employees navigated multiple registers and codes depending on interlocutor, setting, and perceived stakes of the interaction.

Three sub-themes were identified within this theme: (1a) language stratification and participation inequality; (1b) the compensatory role of informal communication channels; and (1c) cross-cultural meaning negotiation in daily interaction.

### **3.1.1 Sub-theme 1a: Language Stratification and Participation Inequality**

A structurally significant finding was the emergence of a language-based stratification dynamic in formal innovation forums. Employees with higher English proficiency, predominantly management-level and expatriate staff, dominated formal brainstorming sessions, while operational and support staff with lower English proficiency reported reduced participation. This pattern was consistently documented in field observations across eight formal meetings attended during the fieldwork period. As one informant observed:

*“There is sometimes a gap. When meetings go into English, some team members become quiet, not because they have no ideas, but because they are less confident with the language. The ideas stay in their heads.”*

(Informant 1, Regional Operations Manager, male, 10 years tenure)

This observation was corroborated by a second informant who described the phenomenon from the perspective of a mid-level coordinator:

*“I have suggestions during meetings, but I am not always fast enough in English to say them at the right moment. By the time I think of the words, the discussion has moved on.”*

(Informant 3, Logistics Coordinator, female, 4 years tenure)

Field notes further recorded that in bilingual meetings, the ratio of contributions shifted markedly along linguistic competence lines: in three observed cross-departmental sessions, English-proficient participants accounted for approximately 80% of verbal contributions despite representing fewer than half of attendees. This pattern suggests that formal innovation structures, while ostensibly inclusive, may systematically disadvantage non-English-proficient employees in practice.

### **3.1.2 Sub-theme 1b: Informal Channels as Compensatory Ideation Spaces**

*A consistently identified compensatory mechanism for formal participation barriers was the appropriation of informal communication channels, particularly mobile messaging applications (WhatsApp) and face-to-face interactions during breaks and shared meals, as primary spaces for idea generation and peer coordination. FGD participants across all three groups reported that informal channels offered lower psychological stakes and reduced language pressure, enabling broader participation in ideation processes.*

*“We share our ideas more freely in the group chat than in formal meetings. It feels safer. Nobody judges your grammar in WhatsApp.”*

(FGD Group 2, Operational Staff, Participant 4)

Another FGD participant elaborated on how informal channels bridged the gap between idea generation and formal submission:

*“Often, the real discussion happens at lunch or in the chat. Then, when there is a formal meeting, the idea is already developed, and we just present the final version. The informal space is where the thinking actually happens.”*

(FGD Group 1, Mixed Departments, Participant 2)

Field observations confirmed that WhatsApp groups dedicated to specific teams and cross-departmental projects were active outside formal working hours, with idea-related exchanges documented as late as 10 PM on working days. This suggests that the organizational boundary between formal and informal innovation activity was highly permeable in practice.

### **3.1.3 Sub-theme 1c: Cross-Cultural Meaning Negotiation**

Beyond language, field observations documented ongoing negotiation of cultural meaning in everyday interactions. Employees from Sundanese, Javanese, and Chinese-Indonesian backgrounds navigated distinct communicative norms around directness, hierarchy acknowledgment, and face-saving in disagreement. Expatriate staff, primarily from China and Singapore, were observed to employ more direct communicative styles that occasionally created friction with local Indonesian relational communication norms.

*“Different backgrounds bring different angles. Sometimes it is slow to reach an agreement because we think differently about how to say things. But the result is usually richer because we consider more perspectives.”*

(Informant 4, Department Head, male, 7 years tenure)

These communicative dynamics were actively managed by some team leaders through cultural bridging practices, including explicit framing of disagreement as constructive, use of humor to defuse tension, and private follow-up conversations after group discussions to ensure quieter voices were incorporated.

**Table 1.** Theme 1 Sub-themes, Key Findings, and Representative Quotes

Sub-theme	Key Finding	Representative Quote
1a. Language stratification	The English proficiency gap systematically reduces formal meeting participation among operational staff	<i>“The ideas stay in their heads” (Informant 1, Operations Manager)</i>

Sub-theme	Key Finding	Representative Quote
1b. Informal channels as ideation space	WhatsApp groups and informal interactions serve as primary compensatory spaces for idea generation across language levels	<i>“The informal space is where the thinking actually happens” (FGD Group 1, Participant 2)</i>
1c. Cross-cultural meaning negotiation	Cultural diversity enriches ideation but requires active mediation to bridge differing communicative norms	<i>“The result is richer because we consider more perspectives” (Informant 4, Department Head)</i>

### 3.2 Theme 2: Organizational Culture and Innovation Structures

The second theme concerns how Lazada’s organizational culture institutionalizes innovation and the structural tensions that emerge between innovation ideals and operational realities. Three sub-themes were identified: (2a) formal innovation infrastructure; (2b) the innovation-operations tension; and (2c) fear of failure as a cultural inhibitor.

#### 3.2.1 Sub-theme 2a: Formal Innovation Infrastructure

Lazada’s corporate culture explicitly positioned innovation as a core organizational value, operationalized through a suite of structured mechanisms. These included quarterly innovation challenges in which employees could pitch ideas to senior management, bi-weekly cross-departmental brainstorming sessions, a digital idea submission portal accessible to all staff, and an internal recognition program that rewarded implemented innovations. Field observations documented active participation in these mechanisms, particularly among management and senior operational staff.

*“The company really does invest in innovation. We have the portal, we have the challenges, we have the meetings. The structure is there. The question is whether people actually use it.”*

(Informant 2, Innovation Program Coordinator, female, 6 years tenure)

Document analysis of internal communications confirmed that innovation was consistently foregrounded in company-wide messaging, with the branch receiving quarterly targets for the number of innovation proposals submitted and implemented. This quantification of innovation activity indicated an organizational culture that treated innovation not merely as an aspiration but as a measurable performance expectation.

### **3.2.2 Sub-theme 2b: The Innovation-Operations Tension**

A recurring and structurally significant tension emerged between the organizational aspiration for innovation and the daily demands of logistics operations. Four of five informants independently identified time constraints and operational pressure as the primary barriers to sustained innovative engagement. The logistics context, characterized by time-sensitive delivery targets, customer service demands, and high-volume throughput requirements, created a work environment in which innovation activity was persistently displaced by operational urgency.

*“We want to innovate, but the daily targets don’t wait. The packages still need to be moved. Innovation becomes something we do on the side, after everything else is done. And often there is no time left for the side.”*

(Informant 2, Operations Manager, male, 8 years tenure)

This tension was further described by a department head who highlighted the structural misalignment between innovation incentives and performance evaluation criteria:

*“Innovation is in our values, yes. But when my performance review comes, they ask about delivery rates and customer satisfaction scores, not how many new ideas I contributed. So naturally, that is where my energy goes.”*

(Informant 4, Department Head, male, 7 years tenure)

### **3.2.3 Sub-theme 2c: Fear of Failure as Cultural Inhibitor**

FGD data revealed that a perceived fear of failure, particularly pronounced among junior and operational staff, functioned as a significant cultural inhibitor of innovation participation. Participants consistently described a gap between the company’s official encouragement of risk-taking and the implicit performance culture that penalized visible failure, creating a psychological safety deficit that constrained bold ideation.

*“Officially, mistakes are for learning. That is what they say. But when your KPI is affected by a failed experiment, you think twice before trying something unconventional. The message you receive is contradictory.”*

(FGD Group 3, Support Staff, Participant 3)

This perception was shared across FGD groups, with participants from operational backgrounds particularly expressing reluctance to propose ideas that deviated from established procedures. One FGD participant described a self-censorship dynamic in idea submission:

*“I have ideas, but I filter them a lot before submitting. I only put forward things I am quite sure will work. Anything too different or experimental, I keep to myself. It is not worth the risk of looking foolish in front of management.”*

(FGD Group 2, Operational Staff, Participant 6)

**Table 2. Theme 2 Sub-themes, Key Findings, and Representative Quotes**

<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Key Finding</b>	<b>Representative Quote</b>
2a. Formal innovation infrastructure	Lazada has invested in structured innovation mechanisms; uptake is highest among senior staff	<i>“The structure is there. The question is whether people actually use it” (Informant 2)</i>
2b. Innovation-operations tension	Operational KPI pressure systematically displaces innovation activity; performance incentives are misaligned with innovation goals	<i>“Innovation becomes something we do on the side” (Informant 2, Operations Manager)</i>
2c. Fear of failure	Psychological safety deficit creates self-censorship in idea generation, particularly among junior/operational staff.	<i>“Anything too different, I keep to myself. It is not worth the risk” (FGD Group 2, Participant 6)</i>

### **3.3 Theme 3: Leadership Behavior and Employee Engagement in Innovation**

The third theme addresses the role of leadership in shaping the innovation climate at the branch level. Three sub-themes were identified: (3a) transformational leadership as a cultural signal; (3b) hierarchical constraints on bottom-up innovation; and (3c) recognition and professional development as engagement enablers.

#### **3.3.1 Sub-theme 3a: Transformational Leadership as Cultural Signal**

Leadership practices were identified by all five informants as the most consequential single factor in shaping the local innovation climate. Branch leaders who actively participated in innovation forums, brainstorming sessions, and idea evaluation processes were perceived by employees as credible champions of innovation culture. This behavioral

visibility, rather than formal authority or policy mandates, functioned as the primary cultural signal that innovation was genuinely valued.

*“When the manager participates in the brainstorming, actually sits down and contributes, people feel it is real. When they just send an email saying ‘please innovate’, it doesn’t mean as much. Actions are more convincing than messages.”*

(Informant 5, HR Staff, female, 5 years tenure)

A second informant elaborated on how leader modeling shaped team-level innovation norms:

*“If my direct supervisor is excited about a new idea and shares it openly, even if it doesn’t work out, I feel more comfortable doing the same. But if the leader only rewards results and not the process, we learn to play it safe.”*

(Informant 3, Logistics Coordinator, female, 4 years tenure)

### **3.3.2 Sub-theme 3b: Hierarchical Constraints on Bottom-up Innovation**

Despite the transformational orientation of several branch leaders, the organizational hierarchy itself functioned as a structural constraint on bottom-up innovation contribution. Multiple FGD participants described a communicative asymmetry in which ideas generated at lower organizational levels faced significant barriers in reaching decision-making levels. Formal channels such as the idea submission portal were perceived as inadequate substitutes for direct access to decision-makers.

*“The portal exists, but we do not know what happens to our ideas after we submit them. Sometimes there is no feedback for months. It feels like throwing a paper into a box and not knowing if anyone opens it.”*

(FGD Group 1, Mixed Departments, Participant 5)

Field observations of cross-departmental meetings corroborated this dynamic, documenting multiple instances in which ideas raised by operational staff were acknowledged but not followed up on in subsequent sessions, while proposals from management-level participants were more consistently tracked and developed. This pattern reinforced perceptions of hierarchical bias in innovation recognition.

### **3.3.3 Sub-theme 3c: Recognition and Professional Development as Engagement Enablers**

Recognition mechanisms and professional development opportunities emerged as positively associated with employee innovation engagement across all three FGD groups. Participants who had received public acknowledgment for innovative contributions, through branch-wide announcements, performance commendations, or inclusion in innovation project teams, reported higher perceived psychological safety and greater willingness to propose novel ideas.

*“When my idea was recognized in the town hall, I felt that my voice actually mattered here. After that, I participated much more actively. It is not about the prize, it is about feeling seen and valued.”*

(FGD Group 3, Support Staff, Participant 1)

Professional development opportunities, including cross-functional project assignments, access to training programs, and mentoring from senior innovation leads, were also identified as significant enablers. FGD participants described these opportunities as signals that the organization invested in employee growth, which in turn increased organizational commitment and innovation motivation.

*“When the company sends you to a training or puts you in a cross-department project, you feel trusted. That trust makes you want to contribute more, not less.”* (FGD Group 2, Operational Staff, Participant 3)

**Table 3.** Theme 3 Sub-themes, Key Findings, and Representative Quotes

<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Key Finding</b>	<b>Representative Quote</b>
3a. Transformational leadership as a cultural signal	Leader behavioral modeling, not formal authority, is the primary driver of innovation culture at the branch level	<i>“Actions are more convincing than messages” (Informant 5, HR Staff)</i>
3b. Hierarchical constraints on bottom-up innovation	Formal submission channels lack feedback loops; hierarchical bias in idea recognition discourages lower-level participation	<i>“It feels like throwing a paper into a box and not knowing if anyone opens it” (FGD Group 1, Participant 5)</i>
3c. Recognition and development as enablers	Public recognition and development opportunities significantly increase psychological safety and innovation motivation	<i>“That trust makes you want to contribute more, not less” (FGD Group 2, Participant 3)</i>

#### 4. Discussion

This study examined how multinational corporate culture shapes innovation at Lazada Logistics Indonesia's Bandung Regional branch through an ethnographic communication lens. Three principal findings are discussed in relation to existing literature.

#### **4.1 Communication Practices and the Language Divide**

The language stratification documented in this study, whereby English proficiency influenced participation in formal innovation forums, resonates with Tange and Luring's (2009) finding that linguistic diversity in MNCs can create exclusionary dynamics that undermine team cohesion and collaborative innovation. This study extends their argument by documenting how this dynamic plays out specifically at the branch level of an Indonesian logistics MNC, where the gap between official multilingual policy and lived communicative practice is particularly pronounced. Unlike studies conducted in European or North American MNC contexts, the Bandung findings suggest that informal channels (notably mobile messaging platforms) function as compensatory spaces that partially mitigate formal participation barriers, a mechanism not prominently theorized in existing literature.

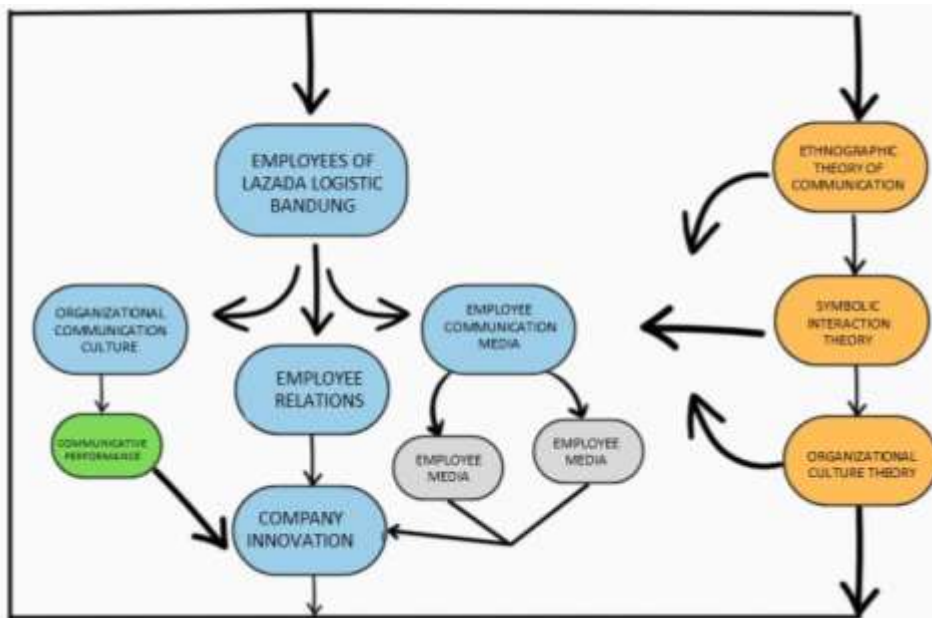
#### **4.2 Organizational Culture and Fear of Failure**

The tension between innovation aspiration and operational pressure identified here aligns with Damanpour and Aravind's (2012) observation that organizational constraints and risk aversion can inhibit innovation even within formally supportive cultures. However, this study adds nuance: the fear of failure documented among Lazada employees is not simply a product of individual risk tolerance but reflects a structural contradiction between the company's articulated innovation culture and its performance management system. This finding has direct implications for practitioners: alignment between innovation rhetoric and incentive structures is a prerequisite for culturally embedded innovation. This gap was not evident in prior studies of Alibaba's innovation practices at the headquarters level (Kanter, 2006), suggesting that global innovation culture does not automatically translate to subsidiary branches in LMIC contexts.

#### **4.3 Leadership as Cultural Mediator**

The centrality of transformational leadership in this study is consistent with Bass and Avolio's (1994) foundational work and with Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes's (2002) evidence linking employee engagement to innovation outcomes. A distinctive contribution of this study is the documentation of how leadership visibility and participation in innovation rituals, rather than formal authority, functioned as the primary cultural signal for employees. This suggests that in high power-distance organizational contexts (Hofstede, 1980), leader behavioral

modeling may be more influential than structural innovation mechanisms. This finding diverges from studies in lower power-distance settings where structural mechanisms (e.g., idea submission systems) drive innovation independently of leader involvement, highlighting the importance of cultural context in translating organizational innovation strategies into behavioral outcomes.



**Figure 2.** Framework Thinking of Organizational Communication and Innovation

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework used in this study to explain the relationship between organizational communication culture, employee communication media, employee relations, and innovation practices within Lazada Logistics Bandung Regional branch. The framework demonstrates that organizational communication culture and communication media significantly influence employee interaction patterns, collaborative communication, and innovation participation within the organization. The integration of ethnographic communication theory, symbolic interaction theory, and organizational culture theory indicates that innovation is shaped not only by formal organizational

structures but also by everyday communication practices, symbolic negotiation, and interpersonal interaction among employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. This finding supports Hymes' (1962) argument that communication practices are socially and culturally embedded processes that influence organizational behavior and meaning construction.

The framework also highlights the role of employee relations and communicative performance as intermediary mechanisms connecting organizational culture with innovation outcomes. Informal communication channels, collaborative interaction, and employee engagement create communicative spaces that facilitate knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving processes. This finding aligns with Eisenberg and Goodall (2004), who emphasized that informal organizational communication strengthens collaboration and innovation development within organizational settings. Furthermore, the framework demonstrates that leadership participation and communication flexibility contribute significantly to the development of psychologically safe environments that encourage employees to express ideas more openly. In the context of Lazada Logistics Bandung, multicultural interaction and communication diversity were found to simultaneously support creativity while also creating challenges related to language barriers and communication hierarchy.

Another important aspect reflected in Figure 2 is the interaction between communication media and organizational culture in shaping innovation dynamics. Employees utilized both formal and informal communication media, including meetings, internal platforms, and WhatsApp group communication, to coordinate operational activities and exchange innovative ideas. The findings indicate that informal digital communication spaces functioned as compensatory environments where employees felt more comfortable participating in idea-sharing activities compared to formal organizational forums. This condition suggests that innovation processes within multinational organizations increasingly depend on flexible and participatory communication ecosystems rather than solely hierarchical communication structures. Such findings extend the work of Adler and Gundersen (2008), who argued that effective multicultural communication is essential for maintaining collaboration and organizational adaptability within multinational corporations.

In addition, the framework demonstrates that organizational innovation emerges from the interaction between structural organizational factors and everyday communicative behavior. The multicultural organizational environment at Lazada Logistics Bandung enabled the integration of diverse perspectives, experiences, and communication styles that enriched collective problem-solving processes. However, the study

also found that differences in language proficiency, communication confidence, and hierarchical structures occasionally constrained broader employee participation in innovation activities. This finding supports Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory, particularly regarding how power distance and communication norms influence participation and organizational interaction. Therefore, Figure 2 not only serves as a conceptual representation of the study but also illustrates how communication processes function as central mechanisms mediating the relationship between multinational corporate culture and innovation outcomes.

The framework further indicates that innovation within multinational logistics organizations should be understood as a socially negotiated and communication-driven process rather than merely a technological or managerial outcome. Employees actively construct innovation practices through interaction, collaboration, and cultural adaptation within daily organizational activities. Consequently, the effectiveness of innovation initiatives depends substantially on the organization's ability to create inclusive communication environments that support participation, cultural sensitivity, and collaborative engagement. This finding reinforces Martins and Terblanche's (2003) argument that supportive organizational culture and communication openness are fundamental conditions for fostering sustainable innovation within organizations.

Overall, Figure 2 provides an integrative explanation of how organizational communication culture, employee interaction, communication media, and multicultural dynamics collectively shape innovation processes at Lazada Logistics Bandung Regional branch. The framework contributes theoretically by integrating ethnographic communication perspectives with organizational culture and innovation studies within the context of multinational logistics organizations in Indonesia. Practically, the framework suggests that organizations seeking to strengthen innovation capacity should pay greater attention to communication inclusivity, leadership participation, and the management of multicultural interaction within everyday workplace communication processes.

#### **4.4 Limitations**

This study has several limitations that should inform the interpretation of findings. First, the sample was drawn exclusively from Posyandu-active, in this context, organizationally engaged, employees at a single branch, which may overrepresent innovation-oriented perspectives and limit generalizability to less-engaged employees or other Lazada branches. Second, the two-month fieldwork period, while sufficient for

thematic saturation in interviews and FGDs, may not fully capture seasonal or project-cycle variation in innovation activity. Third, as the researcher had prior familiarity with the organizational context, reflexive bias management was prioritized but cannot be entirely eliminated. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, include comparative branches, and integrate quantitative innovation outcome measures to complement ethnographic findings.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that multinational corporate culture at Lazada Logistics Indonesia's Bandung Regional branch exerts a significant but contextually mediated influence on innovation. The central finding is that innovation capacity is not simply a function of cultural diversity or formal innovation structures, but is critically shaped by the interaction between communicative practices, leadership behavior, and the alignment, or misalignment, between organizational rhetoric and structural incentives.

Three actionable implications emerge for practitioners. First, organizations operating in linguistically diverse contexts should invest in multilingual facilitation strategies and formalize informal ideation channels to ensure equitable innovation participation. Second, performance management systems should be explicitly aligned with innovation goals to resolve the structural contradiction between operational KPIs and risk-tolerant innovation culture. Third, leadership development programs should prioritize behavioral modeling and participatory innovation rituals rather than relying solely on formal communication of innovation mandates.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the ethnography of communication literature by demonstrating how communicative dynamics at the micro-level of a logistics branch mediate the translation of global corporate innovation culture into local practice. It also advances understanding of how power-distance cultural dimensions shape the relative effectiveness of structural versus leader-driven innovation enablers in Southeast Asian MNC contexts.

Future research should pursue longitudinal ethnographic designs, comparative multi-branch studies, and mixed-method approaches incorporating quantitative innovation output metrics to validate and extend the findings presented here. Comparative studies across logistics MNCs operating in Indonesia and comparable LMIC settings would further strengthen the generalizability of these conclusions.

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