

THE CORRELATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES FOR THE CREATION OF IDEAS IN SUGGESTION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

The Programs of Idea Management appeared in the end of the 19th century, getting popular around the middle of the 20th century with the Quality Movement. In Brazil, they were spread as a method that works toward increasing the performance levels of the practices focusing on innovation. Thus, this paper's goal is to identify the correlation between the four organizational practices regarding culture, the environment, the acknowledgment systems and the practices and techniques encouraging the creation of ideas to promote innovation in Suggestion Programs. In order to do that, the research was conducted in two steps: the first was sending surveys, via the internet, with four blocks of questions to 48 large-sized Brazilian companies. Of the sent surveys, 21 returned filled out. For the second step, the accessibility standard was adopted, resulting in 11 interviews. This way, the triangulation of the data was done to identify the practices and techniques used by the companies to improve the innovation processes and development. For the descriptive analysis of the data, the results were examined through the average score of each of the 21 organizations. For the quantitative analysis, a statistical correlation was done to the data from the four practices, in order to identify the correlation between them. The literature identifies innovation management as a work process to enable innovation and to increase competitive edge, achieving positive results within the company's goals. The Suggestion Programs stand out as a tool of continuous improvement for the products and processes, widely spread and adopted by Japanese industries through the Toyota Production System. On those programs, the employees contribute with their ideas, which are evaluated according to the company's goals. The authors of the approved ideas are rewarded and acknowledged in order to inspire an environment and culture of innovation. The main results show the relevancy of the mission and of the organizational values such as communication elements, encouragement to experimentation and freedom, investment in trainings for professional and personal development,

implementation of a profit distribution policy and the promotion of techniques centered on idea creation, which make for a set of strategies adopted by the companies to inspire and generate an innovative and creative environment.

Key-words: Organizational practices; Idea creation; Suggestion programs.

INTRODUCTION

Defining the strategic position and designating resources and efforts to knowledge production are important factors in inspiring innovation. To Arruda, Rossi and Svaget (2009), it's a routine based on the culture that establishes the characteristics and guidelines, taking root only when there is consensus and intensity to the organizational practices.

Parolin and Albuquerque (2009) notice several subsystems such as the organizational structure, work relations and human resources policies for the administration evolution. They are constituted of policies and practices, products of distinct strategies on people management, defined as control strategy and commitment strategy. For the control strategy, the collaborators are represented by numbers, costs and production factors, while for the commitment strategy, the collaborators are work partners, and the investment in them made by the company increases the organizational results.

The organizations, in this new context, focus on flexibility and on the client, emphasizing the use of the employees' ideas and skills when making a decision. They adopt actions to remove waste, they take care of the environment and they focus on increasing the value of their products, processes or services. They encourage the collaborators to share their knowledge and to put their creativity to work in order to generate innovation.

The organizations seek to develop solutions to adapt to the transformations, the universities research alternatives and the governments increase their participation in the innovation movement, introducing programs and providing conditions for the companies to insert themselves in this movement.

The Suggestion Program is a method that makes possible recording and transforming, in a systematic way, the collaborators' suggestions in innovations, disregarding the operational level. Thus, this paper's goal is identifying the correlation between the four organization practices regarding culture, the environment, the acknowledgment systems and the practices and techniques inspiring idea creation to promote innovation in suggestion programs.

The research is justified due the Suggestion Program's capacity of being used as a method able to inspire new knowledge and innovations. Thus, it needs to be managed and stimulated to transform ideas, in a systematic way, in knowledge that will facilitate the creation of innovation and, consequently, provide a competitive advantage to the organizations.

While dealing with this topic, this paper expects to contribute to the scientific community by updating the literature. For the organizational environment, the research presents a set of elements that can inspire and keep a permanent and continuous flow of new ideas for the organizational Suggestion Programs focusing on innovation.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Culture is defined by Schein (1984) as a standard of basic conjectures invented, discovered or developed by a certain group in order to learn how to deal with and adapt to external problems and internal integration. Conjectures efficiently adopted to be validated and taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel and solve problems. In the organizational scope, those conjectures tend to be reproduced. If idea creation, for example, is encouraged, the collaborators tend to create and pass on this action. The culture, then, can be an encouragement or an inhibition to the processes that originate innovation.

In this context, Arruda, Rossi and Svaget (2009, p. 40) state that the organizations must move their strategies toward eliminating or reducing obstacles to creative manifestation, providing freedom to explore and generate new knowledge. Therefore, the administrators' role, whether they are managers, coordinators or supervisors, is creating strategies aligned to the organizational values and guidelines, in order to "shape the culture and transform it in innovation's driving force".

According to that assertive, Bonache (1999) affirms that it is necessary to create a culture that allows everyone in the company to express their ideas and to get the financial resources to develop them. Schein (1996) observes that this adaptation depends on how the central elements perpetuate themselves in the processes' socialization, saving room to allow the evolution of new cultural conjectures including the new ideas. If a change occurs, it's because the data isn't in tune with the external and internal alterations.

This mission, Buch and Wetzel (2001) assert, is established through mobilization and involvement by the collaborators, who spread said mission to the whole organization afterwards. With the mission defined, the vision must be expanded to determine a strategic position. This strategy will place the organization and its connections in the business environment and it's essential for its growth, being a guideline for decision making. In the same line of thought, Lucio Jr (2008) draws attention to some external and internal reasons for the company to clearly establish its mission: inspiring managers and collaborators, guiding the designation of resources, balancing conflicts and reinforcing values and focus.

However, Buch and Wetzel (2001) notice that most organizations exhibit values of quality, of teamwork, of services, of clients or of security, but sometimes, the hidden cultural values are different. This gap's effect is extremely harmful to the organization and its members.

Thus, the changes for making the context adequate adopt an strategy of action, having the mission, values and business view well determined. The mission establishes the company's reason of existence, expressing its institutional goals and justifying its creation. The clearer the mission, the beliefs and values that are part of the culture, the greater the benefits obtained (PAROLIN AND ALBUQUERQUE, 2009). Therefore, the culture is a friendly element to idea creation with the interaction from different perspectives and personal experiences, encouraging innovating attitudes, creating an environment where the collaborators feel at ease to explore and offer their ideas/suggestions to the organization.

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR INNOVATION

Keeping an active innovation process, in a competitive context, is a necessity for the organizations that want to keep leading the market. Haner (2005) states that creativity and

innovation processes need physical work environments that support individual and team activities, considering the need for communication and interaction among them. The environment must adopt policies that support creativity and innovation, since they are a result of collective efforts and interactions.

This way, Böhmerwal (1996) defends the creation of a safe environment, with no prejudices, no negative criticisms, open, honest and trustful to raise the employees' satisfaction level. To Alencar (1998), the environment's structure is determined by factors of social, economic and cultural order, such as values, traditions and taboos imposed by society. These factors influence the individuals' behavior in the work environment and, therefore, the work productivity.

On the other hand, to Barbieri, Álvarez and Cajazeira (2009), the company's productivity depends on the leadership, the organizational strategy, the ability to interpret, the interaction with the outside environment, the management models and the organizational culture. Besides that, further elements are capable of increasing commitment and motivation at work. For example, participative management, flexibility, valuing the learning process, trust, conflict management, mistake tolerance and freedom of opinion and speech.

Other factors, pointed by Volpato and Cimbalista (2002), Dornelas (2003), Gurgel (2006) and Terra (2007), also go toward this result: the company's ability to provide a pleasant, peaceful, joyful and laid back environment in order to raise the team's morale to facilitate the creative process that generates ideas. Regarding the cost of the actions that make this environment possible, Gurgel (2006) notices that there is a certain prejudice about innovation requiring huge investments. For the author, it is enough to learn how to convert the good ideas in value, making use of the creative capacity of the people in the company. The leaders can and must transform the environment, influencing productivity, motivation and improving their collaborators performance.

Regarding this point of view, Hamel (2001) adds that the development of new technical and scientific knowledge has made indispensable the search and transformation of new opportunities into new entrepreneurial business. Entrepreneurship that, to Dornelas (2003, p.35) is equivalent to the concept of innovation, defining it as an idea that can make "something new, different, having innovation and creation of value as focus". For the author, the entrepreneur is geared towards action, different thinking, the search of new opportunities, the creation of new things able to create profit. However, the excessive rationalism and the intolerance with a certain chaos inside the company can kill ideas that could bring profit down the road.

For that not to happen, Gibson (2000) states that innovation doesn't start as an isolated capacity introduced only by R&D, for example. The organizations need to mobilize and encourage the imagination of everyone, recovering the richness inside them through systems and mechanisms that can stimulate innovating thinking. This point of view is shared by Gundling (1999), Hamel (2000), Rocha Neto (2003), Reis (2004), Stal, Campanário and Andreassi (2006) and May (2007), when highlighting that innovation is a process of creation of new concepts that generate economic results, besides, of course, integrating scientific and technological results of extreme usefulness to society.

However, Terra (2007) notices that the innovation process is heavily influenced by the policies established by the administration, such as offering rewards acknowledging individual or collective competences. These policies are strategies of motivation and encouragement to idea creation, as long as the ideas and projects being supported and carried out, along with the metrics, provide value to the organization while being clearly defined. The lack of these policies, in the author's opinion, creates a barrier pointing out that there aren't well-structured channels for the ideas' development.

SYSTEM OF REWARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT IN SUGGESTION PROGRAMS

The practice of requesting ideas from employees is old. In the United States in 1898, a Kodak employee earned two dollars as a reward for the suggestion of washing the windows in the workplace, which improved the environment's illumination (JHRA, 1997). There are different kinds of rewards for ideas: nominations, acknowledgment plaques, money, goods, etc. These rewards need to be compatible with the company's culture and with the reality of the employee receiving the reward, in order to not generate discontent. To Weiss (1991), people work for rewards, tangible (money) or not, and they need to have benefits and salaries to compensate for what they do. The author emphasizes that time weakens the desire to work and any barrier can lower motivation and thus, recommends making everyone's functions clear, in order to create the necessary motivation to participation in the productive environment.

Nelson (2007) is in favor of using acknowledgment with a determined purpose, as long as it is associated with the performance and the behavior wanted by the company. The author defends, categorically, the importance of rewarding and recognizing the collaborators in the corporative context. He stresses that the time of controlling is over and the managers, nowadays, should act as trainers, creating positive and encouraging environments to extract higher productivity. Nelson (2007) researched, with the managers, the fundamental reasons for the adoption of acknowledgment. Basically, the results showed that:

- i. Acknowledging the employees helps motivating them (90%); it works as feedback (84%); it increases productivity (78%); non-financial acknowledgment brings improvement on performances (84%); it helps reaching personal goals (69%); it helps achieving the collaborator's work goals (60%);
- ii. The research showed that 73% of the managers obtained immediate results, or soon after starting to employ acknowledgment;
- iii. Of the employees, 78% considered the supervisors' approval extremely important and 53% waited for that manifestation as soon as possible.

Nelson (2007) states that the motivation that reaches high performance levels is the one that brings out emotion, highlighting the feeling of value and respect. It is the one that creates a story to be told to friends, family and partners for years to come. Thus, the parameters that make any system of rewards or acknowledgment efficient are those that value and consider the people's individual performances, and, therefore, the reward should be adjusted to the accomplishment, as soon as the goal is achieved, reflecting the company's values and the business strategy.

On suggestion programs, the idea amount is one of the parameters established by literature to measure success (JHRA, 1997). It demonstrates the level of division of the employees and how well the communication channels and the learning processes work (BARBIERI, ÁLVAREZ and CAJAZEIRA, 2009). Shepers, Schnell and Vroom (1999) noticed that the acknowledgment and rewarding of ideas constructs a continuous flow of new ideas, creates opportunities to bring different areas together, making a network of competences, institutes a culture of innovation and increases the employees and managers' motivation, even by guaranteeing the company's commitment to the financial resources needed to the projects'

In this context, it is possible to infer that the suggestion program is correlated to the company's culture, with the innovator environment, the acknowledgment and reward structure and the practices of encouragement to idea generation inserted in the company.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This paper is a qualitative research. It is a descriptive research, due to the ample analysis of the researched reality, comprising social, economic and cultural aspects, plus the different perceptions of the 21 Suggestion Programs coordinators who answered the survey sent, via the Internet, in the first step. The second step, the exploratory part of the research, was developed through 11 interviews with Suggestion Programs coordinators.

The study's approach is qualitative with quantitative treatment of the data carried out through descriptive statistics and correlation. Content analysis was the technique used when investigating the interviews. The criteria adopted for the interviews were: i) organizations with a functional Suggestion Program for more than two years and, ii) organizations that answered the survey, making it possible to analyze the results of the first group (DIETERICH, 1999; OLIVEIRA, 2007).

The sample was established through contact, via telephone, with Human Resources coordinators of 125 organizations that would have a Suggestion Program, formal and structured for management of the employees' ideas, for more than two years.

Of the 125 organizations, three have a complete project, but haven't started the Program yet. Four of them don't have a formalized Program, one has the Program in an initial stage and 73 declared not having the Suggestion Program. Therefore, 48 surveys were sent, of which 21 were filled out and returned. The second step of data collection was through the interview. After receiving the answered surveys, a new telephonic contact was made with the 21 organizations, directly with the Suggestion Programs coordinators, soliciting an appointment for the interview. A total of 11 interviews were conducted with the Suggestion Programs coordinators.

Research tool

A questionnaire was elaborated by adapting some questions from the theoretic references. The tool was constructed in five distinct blocks. For the first, second, third and fourth blocks, the questions are closed, using a Likert scale for the alternatives. The scoring system is showed on Chart 1.

Chart 1 - Scores on the Likert scale Source: the authors

Score system for the alternatives	
I completely disagree	1
I disagree	2
I don't agree or disagree	3
I agree	4
I completely agree	5

Afterwards, each block was analyzed statistically in order to find the best-scoring organizations in the research. The questions were designed with the intention of identifying the factors of the organizational culture focused on innovation; collecting the items from an organizational environment centered on innovation; verifying the characteristics of the Suggestion Programs' acknowledgment/reward system and, finally, exhibiting the practices and techniques used by the organizations to encourage the participation of their collaborators.

To ensure the tool's reliability, Cronbach's α (alpha) was applied. According to Freitas and Rodrigues (2005), it is one of the most used estimations of reliability in a research questionnaire. Cronbach's α is obtained through the individual propositions' variance and the sum of prepositions' variance in order to investigate probable connections between items. This coefficient is determined by the following formula:

Equation 1 - Defining Cronbach's α

$$\alpha = \left(\frac{K}{K-1} \right) * \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k S_i^2}{S_t^2} \right)$$

Source: Pedroso (2010) based on Cronbach and Shavelson (2004).

Some references consider a research tool to be satisfactory when it obtains a Cronbach's α of around 0.70. This research adopted the classification suggested by Freitas and Rodrigues (2005), which presents the following scale for analysis:

Table 1 - Cronbach's (alpha) internal scale

Value of α	Consistency
$\alpha \leq 0,30$	Very low
$0,30 < \alpha \leq 0,60$	Low
$0,60 < \alpha \leq 0,75$	Moderate
$0,75 < \alpha \leq 0,90$	High
$\alpha > 0,90$	Very high

Source: Freitas and Rodrigues (2005).

Following this classification, the Cronbach's alpha of our tool was considered very high, since it obtained a value of $\alpha = 0,9346$.

The statements that were part of the questionnaire were divided, for analysis purposes, in four different blocks, as showed on Chart 2.

Chart 2 - Blocks of statements to reach the research's goals. Source: the authors.

Block	Statements	Objective
1	1 to 12	Identifying factors of organizational culture geared towards innovation.
2	13 to 24	Mapping the elements of the organizational environment centered on innovation.
3	25 to 32	Verifying characteristics of the Suggestion Programs' acknowledgment/reward system.
4	33 to 47	Diagnosing practices and techniques employed by the organizations to encourage the participation of their collaborators.

In order to find the statements that obtained the highest score in each block, every question was inserted in an Excel spreadsheet with the scores gathered in the survey. Then, a sum of these scores was made to identify which of the statements obtained the best grades. For the correlation, it was taken the arithmetic mean of the organizations that participated of the survey, summing the grades gathered for each question block and dividing it by the amount of statements in each block.

Correlation is a statistical measure standardized to explain the connection between the behavior of two or more variables. For two variables, it is defined as a simple correlation. The quantification is obtained through the correlation coefficient, which can vary from -1 to +1 (ASSAF NETO, 2003).

When the correlation coefficient equals 1, the two variables have a positive correlation, that is, there is direct correlation. When the correlation coefficient equals -1, the two variables have a negative correlation and they are inversely correlated. Finally, when the correlation coefficient equals zero, there isn't correlation, and the variables behave independently among themselves. Therefore, correlation aims evaluating the existence of connection between the observed variables.

Based on Triola (2008), for a sample with 21 elements and a reliability level of 0.05 (95%), a correlation considered significant is above 0.423. For the same sample, but with a reliability level of 0.01 (99%), a correlation considered significant is 0.537.

For a better understanding of the quantitative analysis, the codification A1, A2, A3,..., A47 was adopted, where A represents each researched statement and the numbers from 1 to 47 can identify their total.

RESULTS

The organizational culture elements focused on organizational innovation, highlighted by the Suggestion Programs' coordinators, are identified on Table 2.

Table 2 – Elements of organizational culture focused on innovation.

Questions	Answer frequency					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. The organization's mission and values are clearly defined and every collaborator knows them.	0	3	3	7	8	3.95
2. Experimentation is encouraged. There is freedom for trial and error when searching for new solutions.	0	0	4	15	2	3.90
3. The need for innovation is encouraged and perceived by everyone in the organization.	1	3	1	11	5	3.76
4. The collaborators know exactly where to find the technical information needed to solve the organization's problems.	0	2	5	13	1	3.62
5. People seek a collective resolution for problems.	0	0	7	13	1	3.71
6. The organization acknowledges that the time for idea creation is a valuable resource for releasing innovation.	1	2	1	13	4	3.81
7. New ideas are always valued.	1	2	3	9	6	3.81
8. There is space in the organization to discuss apparently "silly" ideas.	0	3	5	13	0	3.48
9. The important achievements are celebrated by all.	0	6	4	8	3	3.38
10. There is tolerance for jokes and humor.	0	6	4	11	0	3.24
11. There are informal meetings for the creation of new ideas.	6	6	2	12	1	3.38
12. Every action carried out in order to reach the organizational goals are clearly detailed, aiming at their implementation.	0	3	6	9	3	3.57

Source: the research's results.

Using Table 2 as an identifier, the statement with the highest degree of agreement was A1 - the organization's mission and values are clearly defined and every collaborator knows them, with a 3.95 score. It pictures the importance of knowing about the organization's mission and vision, which helps with the creative processes and encourages the search for alternative ideas regarding products, processes or services, as soon as every collaborator knows exactly the organization's reason of existence. In this case, the vision establishes the values represented by the set of rules coming from experiences and diversity. For Scherer and Carlomagno (2009), it works by guiding the actions and the way to be followed. It delimits the actions, defines the clients, internal and external, the suppliers, society and the others involved.

The second statement, A2 - about encouraging experimentation and the existence of freedom for trial and error when searching new solutions - presented a degree of agreement of 3.90. It demonstrated the importance of freedom and autonomy, as proposed by Arruda, Rossi and

Svaget (2009), for the success of the organizational strategies. Only with everyone's participation and collaboration the organization can increase its capacity of innovation.

The statement with the third highest score was A7 - new ideas are always valued. The success of the Suggestion Program depends, as Terra (2007) views it, on adequate channels for idea reception. This is one of the factors that make organizations adopt actions and technologies such as, for example, corporative portals.

The statements with the lowest scores - 3.38, 3.24 and 3.38 - were, respectively, A9 - the important achievements are celebrated by all, A10 - there is tolerance for jokes and humor and A11 - there are informal meetings for the creation of new ideas. Studying these results, we confirm the observations of Buch and Wetzels (2001) about the discrepancies between the desired and actual cultures presented in many organizations.

The organizational environment influences, as proposed by Alencar (1998) and Barbieri, Álvarez and Cajazeira (2009), the success of innovation. The environmental elements that stood out in the research are displayed on Table 3.

Table 3 - Results regarding the organizational environment centered on innovation.

Questions	Answer frequency					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
13. The physical work environment is adequate to the work activities' development.	1	0	5	12	3	3.76
14. The practices and knowledge needed to innovate are at everyone's disposal in the organization.	2	4	5	8	2	3.19
15. The organization's leaders acknowledge the importance of idea creation for the processes of innovation.	0	0	6	11	4	3.90
16. The criteria for assessing, evaluating and approving ideas or suggestions are clear, adequate and known.	2	3	7	7	2	3.19
17. The integration between different sectors and departments is encouraged to promote idea creation.	1	1	5	11	3	3.67
18. The relationship among the people is one of collaboration, participation, trust and respect.	1	0	1	18	1	3.86
19. The organization invests in trainings for the personal and professional development of its collaborators.	0	0	2	7	12	4.47
20. The internal communication channels favor the interaction between the collaborators.	1	0	6	9	5	3.81
21. The organizational structure is flexible, that is, it has few hierarchical levels.	0	2	5	10	4	3.76
22. The leaders are evaluated through specific metrics regarding the number of ideas generated by the Suggestion	4	7	5	4	1	2.57

Questions	Answer frequency					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
Program.						
23. Constructing competences to innovate, transforming them in results, is part of the organization's strategy.	1	1	7	9	3	3.57
24. Every suggestion/idea is evaluated clearly and transparently.	1	2	7	8	3	3.48

Source: the research's results.

The statement with the higher score of agreement was A19 - the organization invests in trainings for the personal and professional development of its collaborators, with 4.47. It pictures the organization's concern in training and developing its collaborators, encouraging the search for new ideas through the update of skills and knowledge, as exposed by Alencar (1998), Bonache (1999), Barbieri, Álvarez and Cajazeira (2009). The trainings for professional development help to spread the organization's beliefs, values and philosophy. It is a way of evaluating skills.

However, the statements regarding ergonomics in the workplace (A13), the importance of generating ideas (A15), the relationships of collaboration, participation, trust and respect (A18) and the importance of internal communication channels (A20) corroborate with the researches from Lévi-Leboyer (1994), Alencar (1998) and Amabile (2005) about human behavior. People management policies are important elements in creating a workplace environment that encourages new ideas.

The statement A22 - the leaders are evaluated through specific metrics regarding the number of ideas generated by the Suggestion Program - obtained the lowest score of agreement. It reinforces the observation made by Terra and Rijnbach (2007), about how the metrics and the mechanisms of acknowledgment and reward influence the kinds of behavior, ideas and innovations. It also demonstrates the lack of specific indicators to measure the amount of ideas and, especially, the lack of an indicator of leaders' self-evaluation.

Regarding the acknowledgment/reward mechanisms, eight statements were constructed to verify the characteristics of the acknowledgement and/or reward system on the Suggestion Programs considered important by the polled. They are displayed on Table 4.

Table 4 - Characteristics of the acknowledgment/reward system on Suggestion Programs.

Questions	Answer frequency					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
25. There is a career plan that encourages the collaborators to adopt a proactive position in the organization.	2	1	6	11	1	3.38
26. There is a low turnover rate in the organization when compared to other organizations in the same sector.	1	6	7	5	2	3.05

Questions	Answer frequency					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
28. There are plans of shareholding for the collaborators in the organization.	6	7	2	5	1	2.43
29. The organization rewards the team's performance (not only the individual performance) where the credits are shared.	3	4	4	8	2	3.09
30. There is a profit distribution policy for the collaborators in the company.	1	2	2	6	10	4.05
31. The organization offers a percentage to the ideas/suggestions that provide a good profit return for the organization.	5	4	5	6	1	2.71
32. The economic return of the Suggestion Program implementation exceeded the management's expectation last year.	2	4	8	7	0	2.95

Source: the research's results.

The statement with the higher degree of agreement was A30 - there is a profit distribution policy for the collaborators in the company - with a score of 4.05. It reflects the policies of acknowledgment and benefits provided to the collaborators due to the results reached through organizational performance. This characteristic, to Volpato and Cimbalista (2002), is part of a strategic rewarding system aiming to acknowledge merits through the collaborators' ideas and skills. To Carvalho Neto (2001), it works as a management tool aiming to increase the collaborators' commitment and participation.

On the other hand, the statement A28 - there are plans of shareholding for the collaborators in the organization - obtained the lowest score, 2.43. Under Terra's (2005) point of view, this affirms that the rewarding policies demand the recruitment of multiple-skilled collaborators, with good teamwork and long term performance plans. Carletto et al. (2006) believe that reassessing wage policies, especially regarding the shareholding programs, increases the collaborators' involvement, commitment and motivation. It is up to each organization to establish a plan of shareholding opportunities base on its collaborators' performances.

Table 5 presents the statements regarding the practices and techniques of encouragement to the collaborators' participation and their scores.

Table 5 - Regarding the diagnosis of encouragement practices and techniques to improve the collaborators' participation on Suggestion Programs

Questions	Answer frequency					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
33. There are specific metrics that evaluate the Suggestion Program results.	2	5	3	9	2	3.19
34. The Suggestion Program is aligned with the strategic organizational	1	4	4	9	3	3.43

Questions	Answer frequency					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
planning.						
35. Ideas have provided patent requests to the organization.	4	5	5	6	1	2.76
36. The organization induces specific themes for idea generation.	2	6	4	7	2	3.05
37. The Suggestion Program encourages social contact among the collaborators.	1	3	6	8	3	3.43
38. The administration publicly acknowledges, in commemorative dates, the suggesters who had their ideas implemented.	2	2	3	7	7	3.71
39. The organization allows for the same tasks to be carried out in different ways, offering financial resources and enough space for attempts of changing.	0	5	3	10	3	3.52
40. There is an open and safe atmosphere that supports the generation of creative ideas.	2	1	3	13	2	3.57
41. The collaborators may join in the decision making processes in the company.	2	0	1	8	0	3.19
42. The knowledge generated by the ideas/suggestions is registered, creating a database of free access to all administrators, managers and supervisors.	1	1	8	7	4	3.57
43. The Suggestion Program defines a time limit to present feedback to the ideas' authors (approved or not).	1	5	5	7	3	3.29
44. The organization creates spaces where the collaborators can work in teams or by themselves.	0	2	3	13	3	3.81
45. The leaders encourage interpersonal relations, the spirit of cooperation, conflict resolution and free speech.	0	1	6	12	2	3.71
46. The organization promotes techniques (such as brainstorming, problem solving methods, etc.) when it needs to generate ideas to solve problems of its interest.	0	1	5	11	4	3.86
47. There is dissemination (through internal newspapers, murals, reports or emails) for the approved ideas.	0	1	4	11	5	3.95

Source: the research's results.

The highest score, 3.95, was obtained by the statement A47 - regarding the approved ideas dissemination (through internal newspapers, murals, reports or emails). According to Milne (2007), it is a integration mechanism, a non-financial concession given to the collaborator as a selective way of appreciating and acknowledging their efforts and endeavors. Many times, it can be a practice more powerful than an award, because it gives the idea of appreciation enjoyed as a personal way of acknowledgment. The final evaluation, the selection of the approved ideas and the acknowledgment also supply a picture of participation and sharing to the Suggestion Program's management.

To Lloyd (1999) and Bonache (2000), publicity is a way of motivating the collaborators to participate with their ideas, and the difference between a financial reward and acknowledgment resides in the time in which the collective memory remembers the contribution provided by the idea for the organization.

The statement A46 - the organization promotes techniques (such as brainstorming, problem solving methods, etc.) when it needs to generate ideas to solve problems of its interest. This result, according to Michalko (2003), makes people look things under new perspectives, yielding alternative ideas for the same problem, generating better ideas for project development. Under the innovation aspect, which usually comes from simple ideas, the promoting of techniques for the generation of creative ideas teaches a different way of thinking and changes the concepts' linear and formal logic. It uses imagination, involving cognitive processes for the creation of meanings, ideas and insights. That shows that it is feasible to teach and learn creative thinking through these techniques and, still, teaching and learning it consciously. Santo's (2008) observation that the use of clear, simple and objective techniques can raise the idea generation level and, consequently, the organizations' success wasn't identified in the research.

However, it was possible to notice that the emphasis given to the idea and suggestion number is higher than the generation and reception ways. This posture does not encourage the formal process and it is based much more on each one's experience than on a structured and systematic process able to generate a constant flow of new innovating ideas.

The third highest score, 3.81, was obtained by statement A44 - the organization creates spaces where the collaborators can work in teams or by themselves. The result is coherent with the motivation theories by Lévy-Leboyer (1994), Alencar (1998), Schepers, Schenell and Vroom (1999) and Amabile (2008) regarding respecting the need of isolation of individuals. It gives a clear message of respect to the collaborators' individual needs, which stimulates the generation of new ideas.

In the data descriptive analysis, an average score was identified for each of the 21 organizations. Even with a small sample, it was possible to perform the statistic correlation for the

Among the 21 polled organizations, nine obtained grades considered high (4 to 5 points) in at least one of the blocks. However, when analyzing which among them obtained a high grade in every statement block, it came to notice that only one organization scored four points or higher.

Of the 21 organizations, 20 obtained average grades (3 to 4 points) in at least one of the blocks. The low-average grade (2 to 3 points) was obtained by seven organizations in at least one of the blocks. However, four organizations obtained this score in every block. Regarding the low grade (1 to 2 points), only 2 organizations obtained this score.

For the correlation analysis, a positive correlation was identified for all the observed variables. Regarding the organizational environment, the practices and techniques adopted for innovation and the acknowledgment and reward system in Suggestion Programs, it all indicates that acknowledging the idea generation process, the adoption of internal communication channels and the sharing of knowledge and skills are positively correlated with the mission, with the collective search for solutions, with the availability of time for generating ideas for innovation. Thus, the company's mission, an environment that encourages problem solving by offering time for productive thinking, depends on the established structure of the Suggestion Program.

The results corroborate Rijnbach's (2007) and Terra's (2007) statements about the organizations' efforts to convert ideas to innovations. The Suggestion Program contributes to the shaping of a culture of improvement, open to new ideas that may become concrete and valuable innovations.

The positive correlation found between the acknowledgment/reward system and the organizational culture and its practices and techniques shows that the administrators believe that rewards are necessary to encourage idea generation. That confirms the ideas of Böhmerwald (1996), McDermott, Mikulak and Beauregard (1996), Robinson and Schroeder (2005), Nelson (2007) and VanGundy (2007) regarding the fact that idea management depends on the reward system's structure. However, the structure of each acknowledgment or reward system is very particular. It depends on cultural, social and economic matters inside every organization. Thus, it is important to manage the award system carefully, because the collaborators earn their salaries to perform the activities they were hired for, and the awards offered by the Suggestion Program may work as a monetary complement to encourage innovations and improvements. They must not be used as a way to provide an extra income to the collaborator, since that can result in an idea "commerce". The collaborators may keep "profitable" ideas to themselves and offer them only when it's convenient for them.

The way in which the acknowledgment mechanisms are established can encourage or hamper idea generation. Because of that, the Suggestion Program scope must include the adoption of practices and techniques that assess final results, the kinds of innovations generated by the suggestions, the use of participation indicators, as well as the awards used by the acknowledgment/reward system. The index of correlation between the studied variables is presented on Table 6.

Table 6 - Index of correlation between the variables

Variables	Index of correlation
Organizational environment vs. Practices and techniques	0.67
Organizational environment vs. Acknowledgment and reward system	0.59
Organizational culture vs. Organizational Environment	0.74
Organizational culture vs. Practices and techniques	0.49
Organizational culture vs. Acknowledgment and reward system	0.55
Acknowledgment and reward system vs. Practices and techniques	0.75

Source: research data

It is observed that for every variable, there is a positive correlation. With a 99% reliability level, every variable is significant. However, the organizational culture and the practices and techniques used to encourage the collaborators' participation had an index of correlation of 0.49. That, according to Triola (2008), represents a low significance level, since a correlation considered significant, for a reliability level of 99%, is 0.537.

CONCLUSION

It is essential that the organization is clear about the concept of the word idea or suggestion. The word may work only for solving a problem, not being necessarily creative. It may be a new idea, something new in the shape of a suggestion. Thus, a clear definition is important so the Suggestion Program doesn't become a channel for complaints and requests by the employees.

In the organizations with the highest scores, the Suggestion Program is a method used as a channel of better practices for spreading the company's philosophy, beliefs and values. The rewarding system, for those organizations, is associated with performance and meeting targets, not only for the collaborators but for the leaders as well. It becomes clear that the organization's philosophy is able to offer the necessary structure for the work, and the beliefs and values can work as "hot-wiring" for the Suggestion Program, making it able to perpetuate itself.

When identifying the cultural factors centered on innovation, the factors that influenced the Suggestion Program the most were the organization's mission and values. They can aid the creative processes, encouraging the search for alternative ideas regarding products, processes or services, starting from the moment in which all collaborators seek innovation.

The relevance of the trainings for the collaborators' development was also identified, being an encouragement to the search of new ideas through developing capabilities and updating the individual skills and knowledge of the collaborators. These trainings also help consolidating the culture and, to spread the necessary practices and actions, small corrections are a part of the organization's day-to-day.

Regarding the characteristics of the Suggestion Programs' acknowledgment/reward system, the results point at the profit distribution policy, reflecting the benefits provided for the collaborators as a result of the goals achieved through the group effort for the organizational performance as a whole. The practices and techniques used by the organizations to encourage the collaborators' participation are an integration mechanism and they grant a selective way of appreciating and acknowledging the collaborators' efforts. They can be a more powerful way of reward, because it carries a message of appreciation that people enjoy receiving. It is a way of personal acknowledgment that leads the team to participate with new ideas.

It is hoped that the set of elements evidenced in this study may contribute to create and keep a constant and continuous flow of ideas in the Suggestion Programs centered on innovations. However, new initiatives are appearing regarding the conception, implementation and management of ideas. Thus, future researches are recommended to identify new flows, internal and external, of information, ideas, new opportunities or challenges to contribute to innovation management in the organizations.

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