Methodological design of a case study research based: innovative learning from the perspective of two technology startups

Diseño metodológico de un estudio de caso basado en la investigación: aprendizaje innovador desde la perspectiva de dos startups tecnológicas.

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Ethical Statement. Although the article does not present direct data from the research, the study gathered information from the staff of the companies on which the case study design is based. The authors confirm that the collection of qualitative and quantitative data was conducted following the ethical protocol of the Helsinki Declaration. The necessary consents were obtained to collect the information, and the subsequent data processing was anonymized. The authors confirm that the research has been approved by the ethics committee of the European University, with the internal code CIPI/23.005.

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ABSTRACT

The use of case studies in the classroom, especially in the field of business is a methodology that, since its implementation at Harvard University in the early twentieth century, has focused on active learning not only with respect to the subject matter itself, but also with respect to how to learn to solve problems analytically and critically. It has focused on active learning, not only with respect to the subject of study itself, but also with respect to how to learn to solve real world scenarios from an acute perspective. Nowadays there is a growing need for innovation in business schools based on learning from case studies seeking to reflect the changes and trends of the most contemporary organizations. This article value lies in how a case study of two Valencian technology startups focused on the development and implementation of their innovative organizational culture can be taken to design a case study research based. For its development the traditional stages of a case study are taken as a basis and a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods is used. Subsequently, supported on the results obtained, a Harvard Deusto case study research based is designed for its publication and application.

Keywords. Case study, organizational culture, innovation, research transfer, startup

RESUMEN

El uso de estudios de caso en las aulas, especialmente en el ámbito de la empresa, es una metodología que, desde su implementación en la Universidad de Harvard a principios del siglo XX, se ha enfocado hacia el aprendizaje activo, no solo respecto al tema de estudio en sí, sino también en cómo aprender a resolver problemas de forma analítica y crítica. Actualmente, es cada vez más necesaria la innovación en facultades de Empresa a partir del aprendizaje basado en estudios de caso, buscando que reflejen los cambios y tendencias de las organizaciones más contemporáneas. El valor de este artículo, en concreto, reside en cómo a partir de la realización de una investigación en 2 startups tecnológicas valencianas centrado en el desarrollo e implementación de su cultura organizacional innovadora, se logra diseñar un estudio de caso tipo Harvard basado en dicha investigación. Para su realización se toman como base las etapas tradicionales de una investigación de caso y se emplea una triangulación de métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos. Posteriormente, a partir de los resultados obtenidos se diseña, para su publicación y aplicación, un caso de estudio Harvard Deusto.

Palabras clave. Estudio de caso, investigación, cultura organizacional, innovación, transferencia de investigación, startup
INTRODUCTION

In the last 10 years, the educational system has undergone a shift in approach. The perspective introduced by Bologna into the higher education system in 1999 (Wächter 2004), technological advancement, current VUCAH (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous, and Hyperconnected) and BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, and Incomprehensible) environments, increased professional competition, the profile of Generation Z (1995-2005) currently studying at universities, the importance of quality, and placing the student at the center of learning models have promoted a more experiential teaching approach (Morris 2019). A practical methodology close to reality where the student becomes an active part of learning and develops critical analysis. Additionally, the profile of Generation Z has highlighted the importance of bringing dynamic and current topics to the classroom that interest current generations: organizational culture (OC), diversity, technology, environment, among others.

The case study addressed in this article is one of the various active methodologies that ensure this learning, especially in the business field, where the interrelation between company-student-teacher offers attractive, realistic class dynamics that provide significant value to the participants. Additionally, it offers advantages for student learning as it facilitates knowledge assimilation. Firstly, it is based on real and attractive topics for students, allowing them to practice problem-solving from an analytical and critical approach (Yuen et al. 2011). Secondly, a practical and innovative approach enables progress in the study and understanding of trends in organizational management and development. In this sense, it is appropriate to focus case studies on understanding and epistemological advancement to explain the adaptation of traditionally managed business concepts. Moreover, beyond the application of the traditional case method, which seeks organized dialogue about a real situation using experience to convey practical knowledge, it is of interest to apply the case study based on research. This modality, already applied in Sociology, Political Science, Marketing, or Business Administration, also has relevance in the Human Resources context (Mishra and Alok 2022). Thus, the main virtue of research-based case studies lies in their typically integrative perspective based on an empirical study of a contemporary phenomenon within a real context, applying observational methods; especially qualitative ones (Yin 1994).

This article illustrates the construction of a research-based case study focused on the development and implementation of an Innovative Organizational Culture (IOC) in two renowned Valencian startups (located in the entrepreneurial hub of La Marina in Valencia, Spain) that perceive OC (innovative). To conduct the research, a triangulation of qualitative methods (in situ observation, focused interviews, and document analysis) and quantitative methods (CO survey questionnaire design, data collection and analysis) was used. The research was structured around the question (formulated by company managers along with the researchers) of whether their OC can indeed be classified as innovative and if employees of the two companies under investigation share and assume it. After a review of theoretical models to frame the study (Schein 2010; Halabi et al. 2015), six categories of analysis were constructed that later allowed the development of an empirical model of innovative OC. Once the research phase was completed and based on part of the obtained results, a case study focused on showcasing the successful IOC model presented by the startups Zeus and Sesame was designed for publication in the Harvard Deusto Business Review (HDBR). This case study will allow students to learn how two technology startups have designed and implemented an OC model that seeks employee commitment, keeping people at the center of the business. Furthermore, they will be able to understand the communication processes and Human Resource management. Finally, they will comprehend new aspects of this OC and respond to identified challenges.

1 COI: Cultura Organizacional Innovadora, aquella basada en valores, principios y prácticas ejecutivas que denotan un cambio de paradigma en la dirección de la empresa y forma de actuar de su plantilla (Lobo, 2010).
In conclusion, the following two research and learning objectives have been achieved:

1. Design research tools in OC applicable to new technology company environments.
2. Construct a case study on IOC in technology startups applicable to the business and Human Resources fields.

Active Learning Methodologies

Currently, learning processes in the classroom are in constant change and update according to the needs of all involved parties (teachers-students-company-environment) and in response to new experiential and student-centered teaching approaches (Guo et al. 2020). Commonly, this is called methodological renewal. This occurs largely due to the intricate context we currently live in (VUCAH and BANI environments) which proposes new challenges and perspectives. Rapid technological advancement, globalization, and sustainability issues, among others, result in new labor scenarios and future trends that require students to solve problems with different competencies and skills than traditional ones. Consequently, and in contrast to classical learning methodologies, various methodologies are born that seek to promote participation, deep understanding, and the development of contemporary skills by students (Seow et al. 2019). This new approach is captured by so-called active or participative methodologies. These are characterized by being processes of knowledge and experience exchange for collaborative problem-solving and individual and group knowledge construction (López Noguero 2005). Case studies, Project or Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Collaborative Learning (CL), flipped classroom, experimental learning, cooperative learning, Game-Based Learning (GBL), peer learning, among others, are examples of such methodologies (Santos et al. 2019) (see Annex I).

Case Study: Application in the Classroom of a Research-Based Study

The case study is a classroom learning methodology that emerged and popularized at Harvard University in the early 20th century and has progressively been incorporated into other universities. Currently, there is growing interest in its application both in the classroom and in the field of research for its realism (Goudarzvand Chegini 2018).

This methodology is based on the analysis and discussion of real-life experiences and situations, bringing students closer to current contexts and allowing them to apply theoretical concepts to specific and complex situations. This fosters more meaningful and applicable learning. It also applies critical and analytical thinking due to the detail and richness of information in these cases, allowing the exploration of multiple aspects and dimensions of a problem. Additionally, it promotes the active role of students in learning and facilitates knowledge assimilation as students analyze problems and challenges, propose solutions and alternatives, which are ultimately resolved in the classroom. It also allows understanding and interpreting data, facts, and opposing opinions, making judgments, communicating information, defending decisions, and developing critical thinking, among others (Estrada Cuzcano and Alfaro Mendives 2015; Goudarzvand Chegini 2018). Finally, the fact that it can be presented in multiple formats (video, audio, etc.) offers versatility that other types of methodologies do not guarantee in the classroom.

However, with the aim of bringing students even closer to reality and allowing experiential learning, the case study from a 360º perspective appears, which involves adding active research-based methodologies, company visits, case explanation in the classroom, or practices, seeking to bridge the gap between lectures and professional practice (Garcés Suárez et al. 2022).

For the correct development of this qualitative approach methodology, various prominent authors in the area, from Yin, Eisenhardt, Friedman, Simons, Quinn Patton, Merriam, to Stake, Schön, Box, or Creswell (Walker et al. 2015; Piekkari and Welch 2018), suggest the stages or steps to follow for the successful creation of a case study applicable in the classroom (see Annex II). These are eleven stages: case selection, purpose definition, data collection, data analysis,
contextualization, theory development and findings, results presentation, validation, interpretation, generalization and transfer, and ethics.

The case study has been on the rise in recent years in educational institutions and top-tier scientific and popular journals. An example of this is the case study of the entertainment company Marvel used in the classrooms of IESE Business School to analyze the company's strategy, business model, revenue sources, competitive advantages, and future challenges. The case is based on public data and interviews with Marvel executives; also from other companies in the sector. As a result of its use, students learned about the entertainment industry, brand management, innovation, diversification, and internationalization. On the other hand, in the field of Management, the Harvard Business Review (founded in 1992) stands out, focusing on this methodology to promote the improvement of management practice and the search for other procedures that allow companies to be more effective (Gómez et al. 2023).

Despite its multiple advantages, its application is not without difficulties. For example, the subjective interpretation by students of the proposed context, the lack of resources for its preparation and development, or the lack of diversity in situations and problems. In this regard, theoretical reviews state that teachers and the educational institution must be the main axes for the proper development and implementation of this methodology (Ellet 2007).

Evolution of Topics and Generational Trends for Case Study Development

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021), a challenge for education is finding topics and projects that connect and motivate new generations, who have access to a lot of information and multiple stimuli. Capturing their attention and interest is essential to finding motivation and active student participation.

From the beginning of case study use to the present, topics and perspectives have evolved according to different generations and contexts. Regarding currently published cases and considering the instructions of the Harvard Business Review (HBR), which collects a large number of case studies, a great variety of topics related to new Management and the concerns of new ways of doing things can be observed: strategy and leadership, organizational change, diversity and inclusion, innovation, strategic decision-making, sustainability, work-life balance, and team management (Goleman 2022).

Analyzing topics by generations that interest university students (mainly Generation Z) and postgraduate students (mainly Generation Y), areas of study directly connecting with their generation and posing disruptive social, economic, and environmental problems are observed. Artificial intelligence, sustainability, new management forms, entrepreneurship, organizational culture, work-life balance, blockchain and Fintech, diversity and inclusion, virtual reality, Big Data, among others, are topics that connect with students and awaken a prior interest in them, facilitating knowledge assimilation. Addressing these topics in the classroom with case studies positively conditions their attitude towards the methodology and predisposes them to better concept assimilation (Rymaszewska et al. 2017).

In addition to the above, current topics that allow connecting different sectors or facets of students' lives generate special interest in them. For example, Harvard cases such as: the debate about online businesses, Lady Gaga as a marketing phenomenon to understand the economy and business complexities, or Star Wars to give readers arguments to define customer loyalty. All these cases are directly linked to many of this Generation's characteristics. They are people, companies, and projects that have achieved astonishing success with their contact, creation, or links with communication, media, and digital technology, elements characteristic of this social group's daily activities (Deflem, 2017)
Innovative Organizational Culture as a Research-Based Case Study

Considering the described scenario, the opportunity arises to conduct a research-based case study of two technological startups, Zeus and Sesame, part of the same business group. Both are located in the same physical space in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of “La Marina” (an innovative business hub in the Valencian Community, Spain). These companies have been developing an IOC based on the motto Data&People, connecting with a technological collaborator profile and young generations (mainly Generation Y and Z), constituting the majority of their human capital. They are pioneering entrepreneurial companies in terms of product and management, connected with young generations both through their Human Resources and their strategic location and relations with the entrepreneurial and university environment. Hence, the interest arises to conduct an academic study, and through a University-Company collaboration agreement, a research is carried out to assess the implementation status of the companies’ IOC and how it is perceived by all their Human Resources.

The primary research objective is to analyze the characteristics of their IOC to identify which cultural variables are innovative and perceived as such by employees and, identify the most valued ones. Additionally, the research of the IOC concept gives rise to a more epistemological development that can provide a conceptual theoretical framework to the study. From the beginning, the research team had the clear possibility of designing a Harvard case from the findings of this research.

In this case, the theoretical interest was to delve into the concept of OC, specifically understanding the transition from a traditional culture to an innovative culture (IOC). The analysis of OC has been studied since the beginning of the fourth industrial revolution at the end of the second decade of the 21st century. In recent years, attention has focused on how culture affects the relationship between companies and stakeholders (Denison Consulting 2021). The need to engage employees in VUCAH environments involves implementing strong OCs that connect with new generations. Therefore, it is an area of study likely to interest business students in undergraduate and graduate degrees, the business community, and Management and Human Resources researchers.

Currently, generations studying at universities or newly entering the job market tend to identify with flexible companies that also opt for hybrid work forms, work-life balance, flat organizational structures, motivating challenges and projects. They also value incentive systems, career development, and enjoyment; characteristics inherent to an IOC (Monsalve and Fajardo 2023). The studied companies respond to this type of organization.

METHODOLOGY

To design the case study, research was first conducted. As Yin (1994) points out, the virtue of research-based cases lies in their typically integrative perspective based on an empirical study of a contemporary phenomenon within a real context, applying observational methods, especially qualitative ones.

The contemporary study phenomenon of this research is OC in technological companies. The study methodology combines qualitative and quantitative methods to provide more robust results. Subsequently, after analyzing the data, a Harvard case study was designed, developed, and published. Therefore, our proposal distinguishes two differentiated phases: (1) Research phase: Research on the OC of Zeus and Sesame companies is conducted. (2) Case study design phase: A Harvard case study is written for subsequent publication and classroom use based on research findings (see Figure 1).
Opting for a research-based case study, helps better understand organizational phenomena and aspects by analyzing reality in its daily context (Hancock et al. 2021). Although in the business field there has been discussion about the convenience of such research due to its qualitative nature, it is currently recognized as one of the most suitable research methodologies for understanding new contexts in the business world. Various authors such as Hinojo and Fernández (2012) or Lara and Gómez (2020) point out how in the first decade of the 21st century, the use of research-based case study methodology related to business (Castro 2010) increased significantly. (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007; Gibbert et al. 2008). For Sarabia (1999), the appropriate methodology in a discovery phase is qualitative, so applying it to the business world makes increasing sense as it helps make decisions in management and organization.

From Research to Case Study: Organizational Culture Study of Zeus and Sesame

Following the main phases of a research-based case study, the phases and stages followed in our model are detailed below: Firstly, Phase 1 focused on research consists of three stages: (1) Research design (2) Research execution and (3) Analysis and conclusions. Secondly, Phase 2, case study, comprises two stages: (1) Harvard case design and (2) Publication and dissemination.

1st Phase: The Research

Stage 1: Research Design

To approach the case study research design, three fundamental aspects are considered: the subject to be studied, the area of interest, and the research questions. As for the first, the case study is conducted in two technological companies located in the Hub of La Marina, Valencia, Spain. The concept to analyze is OC and the research questions of the study are:

Q.1: Can the organizational culture (OC) of these companies be classified as innovative (IOC)?
Q.2: Do employees of both companies share and assume the same IOC?

The study is designed based on a triangulation of methods combining qualitative methodology (in situ observation, focused interviews, and data and documentation analysis) and quantitative methods (OC survey, questionnaire design, data collection and analysis). Initially, to focus the study, and as in all applied research, it was necessary to know Zeus and Sesame, focusing on their history, evolution, vision, and mission. Various types of documentation were collected: press news, web information, sociodemographic data provided by the Human Resources department, and procedural manuals, among others. Additionally, in this exploratory phase, the research team visited both companies to observe the work environment and their practices. Simultaneously, a literature review on OC and IOC was conducted to select the main issues under study (Schein 2010; Halabi et al. 2015). During this stage, and after the review, six categories of analysis were constructed, which later allowed the development of an empirical OC model and the creation of a case study.

Stage 2. Research Execution

To conduct the research, a mixed-methods approach was applied, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques consecutively. Figure 2 shows a summary of the methodology used in this stage.
To begin with, and to understand managers’ perception of the OC of both companies (definition, values, and organizational practices), n=7 structured interviews were conducted with managers from both companies. They held positions in different departments. The choice of participating managers was initially proposed by management, considering key managerial positions by area. Subsequently, based on availability and discourse saturation, the researchers decided the final sample.

The interviews were conducted based on a thematic guide focused on the following thematic axes resulting from the prior literature review (see Figure 2):

1. Pillars of the culture of Zeus and Sesame: values and philosophy
2. Recruitment: selection and onboarding
3. Communication
4. Teamwork
5. Retention
6. Performance evaluation
7. Commitment

The analysis of the discourses collected in the interviews, along with the collected documentary information and in situ observations, allowed the development of a conceptual design of different categories of analysis summarizing the core of the IOC of the studied companies.
As can be seen in the conceptual model (Figure 3), the IOC works in the different categories that determine Human Resources policies. For each of them, the strengths (in green) and weaknesses (in red) are indicated.

To summarize, it can be seen that the categories of recruitment (especially the onboarding process), commitment (based on a shared vision, recognition of achievements and enjoyment), teamwork (supported by collaborative spaces, innovative projects, sense of belonging) and communication (transparency, continuous feedback and use of technologies and social networks) are the categories that best reflect the IOC and are more established in terms of practices. On the contrary, the performance and retention categories are those that need to be developed and adapted in practice, since they are weaker in relation to the implementation of performance evaluation, retention or promotion processes. It is from this developed conceptual model that the questionnaire is designed and on which the Harvard case study, published in the HDBR journal is based.

After completing the qualitative analysis, an ad hoc questionnaire was designed (Annex III), to find out the employees' opinion of their CO, their degree of commitment and satisfaction, their degree of acceptance and their perception a possible COI. The questionnaire was reviewed by the Human Resources department of each company. After its construction, a pretest was carried out to subsequently carry out the final field study. Table 1 shows the technical data sheet for the quantitative study.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1. Quantitative study data sheet</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
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<td>Trust level</td>
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<td>Data processing</td>
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As the study universe was a finite and localized population, the questionnaire was sent to all departments and levels of the companies. The final sample of 146 employees represents 75% of the population. Consequently, a 95% confidence level and 5% sampling error were achieved.

Stage 3. Analysis and Conclusions
After completing the research, qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (OC survey) data analysis was conducted. The analysis determined the characteristics of the companies' OC, employee perception, and whether it is perceived as IOC. The research confirmed that the companies had a strong innovative OC, which is a significant part of their success as it fosters employee commitment and satisfaction. Essentially, their IOC is characterized by being an innovative business culture where flexibility, adaptation, teamwork, and enjoyment combine with a strong strategic vision. Additionally, it was confirmed that effective communication is another strength of Zeus and Sesame, who base their policies on transparency, closeness, and trust with their employees due to its importance in leadership (Goleman 2022). Regarding the enjoyment category, both companies strongly support it, consistent with the needs of new generations, highlighting the importance of workers' emotional experience. Finally, it was found that there was no difference in the perception of IOC between the two companies, as managers suggested in their discourse. Both Zeus and Sesame collaborators feel part of the same culture and work philosophy, which constitutes another pillar of success in implementing a cohesive IOC in the studied business group.

The qualitative and quantitative research results, along with the final conclusions and diagnosis, were presented by the research team to the companies' managers in two workshops held at their facilities. This helped the companies gather data to improve or enhance certain aspects and the research team to gather feedback on the results and discuss the importance of continuously building an IOC reflected in daily practices.

2nd Phase: Case Study Design

Once the research was completed, the research team began designing a case study focused on presenting the strong points found in the IOC of the analyzed companies, as it was considered a success case. The case reflects the importance of building and implementing a strong IOC in technology startups within a local and national context. It also describes the main values and philosophy that support this IOC; its study is attractive to new generations of students in business and Management areas.

Stage 1. Harvard case construction

After clarifying the theme to be presented in the case, the construction of it was based on the esteemed business magazine and real case studies, Harvard Business Review (HBR). HBR is a highly respected business magazine and multimedia platform focusing on management, strategy, innovation, and other business-related issues. Founded in 1922, HBR is published by Harvard Business Publishing, a subsidiary of Harvard Business School. HBR addresses a wide range of topics related to business management and leadership. It includes articles written by leading academics and professionals in various areas and addresses key issues in the business world and the economy. Covered topics include business strategy, innovation, leadership, human resources management, marketing, finance, and technology, among others. Besides the printed magazine, it offers online content, books, events, and other resources aimed at providing valuable and insightful information for business leaders, managers, and professionals in different fields. Many of its articles and case studies are widely used in executive education programs and business courses (Drucker 1987). HBR's reputation is based on its commitment to academic and practical excellence, providing cutting-edge perspectives on the challenges and opportunities businesses face today. Over the years, HBR's trail has been followed by universities internationally. For instance, the University of Deusto (1886), located in Bilbao and San Sebastián (Spain), stands out for its extensive research interest in areas such as Social Sciences, Business, or Law, among others. Recently, HBR and the University of Deusto established an official collaboration for the Spanish university to launch official case studies in its HDBR magazine.

Based on the guidelines estimated by HDBR and HBR, the case study design began, focusing on the qualitative research previously mentioned. It focuses on presenting the successful evolution
of companies A and B regarding the implementation of their IOC, explaining their values and philosophy. In this regard, the most notable innovative values and practices derived from the research are considered. Finally, it poses and leaves open for analysis and reflection the central question of how, in a situation of business growth and hiring increase that company B was experiencing, they can maintain their innovative culture while applying it in management processes identified as weak: performance evaluation systems design and career plans to retain talent.

Stage 2. Publication and Dissemination

After the case study construction and review by the HDBR (Harvard Deusto Business Review) expert committee, it was published in July 2023 in both digital and physical formats (Gómez et al. 2023). Additionally, since the ultimate goal of research-based case studies is to bring real cases to the classroom, dissemination was carried out in the University library to take this as a reference. The case was also provided to companies A and B, hoping these summarized and concisely presented results would benefit the companies. Ultimately, it was conveyed to the University faculty to apply this case as a cross-disciplinary classroom activity, i.e., applicable to undergraduate and graduate degrees in the Social Sciences faculty due to its transversality.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this article, the relevance of designing research-based case studies that imply an epistemological advancement in current concepts relevant to the business and Management area has been highlighted. The importance of following an appropriate methodological design based on data triangulation (Yin 1994; Castro Monge 2010) has been emphasized, allowing a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon.

It has been shown how the case methodology, originated at Harvard University in the early 20th century, has evolved in terms of interest themes, adapting to current environments and the new Y and Z generations currently pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies at the university. There is a wide range of new innovative methodologies, but the case method stands out for its realism and successful application both in the classroom and in the research field (Goudarzvand Chegini 2018).

Considering this, an example of constructing a research-based case on IOC in two technology companies, mainly composed of Y and Z generation employees, whose IOC has been shown to be consistent with the values of the people working in it, from the CEO to the different managers and employees, has been presented.

Several innovative aspects are considered contributions of the described methodological process:

- The research is conducted within the framework of a university-company agreement. This allows access to primary data from the studied companies, direct collaboration with managers, and focusing the research on a real company need.
- The Research Phase follows the classic mixed research model and creates ad hoc data collection instruments, both the interview guide and the questionnaire. Moreover, it creates a questionnaire that is a proprietary model that can be contrasted in the same scenario in a future longitudinal study.
- Results presentation: an additional phase by the team. In two workshops, the main findings of each research stage are presented to representatives from different departments of the studied companies. The workshops are held at the company’s facilities, resulting in an exchange of ideas, feedback between the company and researchers, later applied to the case study design.
Case design: the same research team designs the case based on the most relevant research findings, adapting it to the Harvard case methodology and more specifically to the HDBR magazine.

The fact that this case focusing on how technology companies implement an IOC capable of engaging people in an increasingly technological environment has a great theoretical and practical interest. In line with various studies (Rueda-Barrios et al. 2008), the case demonstrates the importance of an organization having a series of cultural characteristics oriented towards innovation, allowing them to take on new challenges and attract future generations. This interest results in the publication of the case study in the HDBR magazine in a monograph specifically dedicated to workplace changes (Gómez et al. 2023).

Another consequence of the research is the importance of involving both the research team and the company managers in both the research phase and the case design phase, ensuring direct learning transmission from a real environment to a university environment. Furthermore, an interaction with the company is created, allowing a fluid relationship for ongoing collaboration. Establishing such collaborations is crucial, as Bartunek and Rynes (2014) point out, to generate knowledge more tangible and relevant for students and future business professionals. Replicating this “way of doing” in future case studies is recommended, surpassing the more traditional method.

Finally, the following objectives have been achieved. On the one hand, designing a methodological framework for conducting IOC research applicable to new technology company environments. On the other hand, constructing a case study in technology startups applicable to various undergraduate and master’s degree subjects in business and Human Resources areas. This demonstrates that research in current companies can be translated into practical cases like those published in HBR or HDBR.

The case method remains an essential tool in innovative learning methodologies, promoting competencies and learning outcomes that would otherwise be complex. It is worth noting that while universities should be seen as beacons of knowledge, students should be able to translate this theory into a complex, changing, and raw work environment upon completing their studies. In this regard, if teachers apply research-based case studies, their inclusion in the labor market will be more organic and successful.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH LINES

One of the main outputs of case studies is precisely the feedback obtained after its application in classrooms. This confirms that the case’s methodological construction was correct and that the expected learning outcomes were achieved. Concerning this study, the case will be applied from January 2024 in the classrooms of the European University of Valencia, so no data on knowledge learning in it has yet been collected. Feedback on the practical case is expected during that period. It would be particularly interesting for the case application to be extendable to other universities and different degrees, as the IOC concept is a cross-cutting issue in multiple disciplines, and subjects such as Leadership, Business Ethics, and Human Resources could incorporate it.

Regarding the research-based case construction stages described in this work and based on the previous works of Walker et al. (2015) and Piekkari and Welch (2018), it would be necessary to delve into the interpretation and epistemological generalization phases of the IOC concept.

Another limitation of the case, which in turn represents a potential future research line, would be the comparison within a case study of IOC in other national and international technology companies. Sometimes, case studies include comparisons between companies to provide greater richness and a more holistic view of the cases. It is proposed to include in a case study of IOC the comparison of two technology companies with international presence areas. Additionally, the following question arises: is it possible to replicate this case study research in other startups in
different contexts? Future research could analyze the IOC concept in a case study but in a sector other than technology.

Due to the growing importance of Management professionals having a good understanding of research methods and broadening their vision (Kueenzi 2023), the pertinence of involving students in the research phase is proposed. This would improve their motivation towards research and acquire the necessary skills and competencies in the job market.

Finally, the presented analysis suggests designing case studies based on topics relevant to the needs and concerns of students currently in the classroom (mainly Generation Y and Z); for example, Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability, Branding, Organizational Commitment, among others.

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### Annex I. Active methodologies

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<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Acquired Competencies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project or Problem-Based Learning (PBL)</td>
<td>Students work with complex, real-world projects or problems that need to be solved.</td>
<td>Collaborative approach, research curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Learning (CL)</td>
<td>Students work together or in groups to achieve certain learning objectives.</td>
<td>Communication, problem solving, mutual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flipped Classroom</td>
<td>Teachers propose that students review course content autonomously before class to then discuss it in class, where the teacher acts as a guide.</td>
<td>Problem solving, student-student and student-teacher interaction, improvement of autonomous learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Learning</td>
<td>Students participate in experiments or demonstrative activities where they put theory into practice.</td>
<td>Practical verification of theoretical content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>Students work in small groups on specific tasks or projects.</td>
<td>Collaboration, shared responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game-Based Learning (GBL)</td>
<td>Teachers bring games or simulations to the classroom to facilitate understanding of concepts or course content.</td>
<td>Active participation, motivation, organic learning, creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Learning</td>
<td>Students share information among themselves to learn from each other.</td>
<td>Think outside the box, mutual understanding, communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-Based Learning (RBL)</td>
<td>Students create original or self-conducted research.</td>
<td>Research curiosity, motivation, curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service Learning</td>
<td>Students engage in actions benefiting the community.</td>
<td>Broadening knowledge and skills, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directed Learning</td>
<td>Students take greater control of their learning, set goals, select resources, and learning strategies that suit their needs.</td>
<td>Autonomy, motivation and curiosity, research curiosity, problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Based Learning (PBL)</td>
<td>Students engage in activities similar to PBL but focus on problem-solving with an emphasis on addressing them.</td>
<td>Problem solving, conflict management, teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge-Based Learning (CBL)</td>
<td>An educational approach focusing on problem-solving by students and practical knowledge application. In this method, students face real-world challenges or complex problems and work as a team to find solutions.</td>
<td>Teamwork, real problem solving, SDGs, data-driven and research curiosity, communication and collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Own elaboration base on Walker et al., 2015, Piekkari and Welch, 2018
## Annex II. Traditional stages case study elaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage No.</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Case Selection</td>
<td>The researcher decides whether the case study will focus on individuals, organizations, events, groups, or any other entity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Purpose Definition</td>
<td>Establish the main objectives of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Collect relevant information from multiple sources, considering various collection methods (observation, interviews, records, questionnaires, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Code the collected information into categories, patterns, key themes, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Contextualization</td>
<td>Situate the case in broader environments or contexts; correlate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Theory Development or Findings</td>
<td>Look for emerging patterns or theories to better understand the case, potentially generating new theories or validating existing ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Results Presentation</td>
<td>Communicate findings to involved entities and students in an organized manner (written reports, presentations, group discussions, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Validation</td>
<td>Consider triangulation. Compare multiple data sources or external reviewers to evaluate the quality and validity of findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Generate conclusions beyond the results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Generalization and Transfer</td>
<td>Consider extrapolating the results to other contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Adhere to ethical principles throughout the process (informed consent for participants, data privacy and confidentiality protection, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex III. OC Questionnaire (Own elaboration, 2022)

**Cuestionario cultura organizativa ZEUS-Sesame**

El grupo de investigación en Innovación Social y organizativa de la Universidad Europea de Viena, está llevando a cabo un estudio sobre Cultura organizacional en las empresas Zeus y Sesame. El objetivo principal es conocer la opinión y las percepciones de todas las variables ideadas y relacionadas con ambas organizaciones.

Por ello, su participación en el siguiente cuestionario es muy importante.

De conformidad con lo establecido en la Ley Orgánica 3/2018, de 5 de diciembre de protección de Datos Personales y garantía de los derechos digitales, se informa de que los datos de carácter personal que voluntariamente nos facilite a través de los cuestionarios serán incorporados a una base de datos confidencial. La finalidad de esta base de datos es el archivo, la gestión y el análisis de los mismos con fines académicos.

En caso de duda, contactar con Fatima Gómez Sota:

[Fatima.gomez@universidaddevienna.es](mailto:Fatima.gomez@universidaddevienna.es)

Gracias por su participación.

---

**Protección de datos**

Se ha informado a de que mis datos personales serán protegidos e incluidos en un fichero que deberá estar sometido a las garantías de la Ley Orgánica 3/2018, de 5 de diciembre, de Protección de Datos Personales y garantía de los derechos digitales.

Tomando ello en consideración, al hacer clic en el botón de “EL CONSENTIMIENTO” a participar en este estudio.

---

**Datos sociodemográficos**

8. ¿Cuánto tiempo has estado trabajando en esta empresa (escoge una de las modalidades anteriores)?

   - [ ] Menos de 2 meses
   - [ ] Entre 2 y 6 meses
   - [ ] Entre 6 y 1 año
   - [ ] Entre 1 y 3 años
   - [ ] Entre 3 y 4 años
   - [ ] Más de 4 años

9. ¿Cuál es tu estado civil? (*

   - [ ] Soltero/a
   - [ ] En pareja
   - [ ] Casado/a
   - [ ] Viudo/a
   - [ ] Vuelto/a

10. ¿Cuál es tu nacionalidad? (*

    - [ ] Española
    - [ ] Latinoamericano (no español)
    - [ ] Británico/a
    - [ ] Italiano/a
    - [ ] Otro

**Cultura organizativa**

11. De las siguientes características, selecciona cuál define mejor la cultura organizativa de tu empresa.

   - [ ] Comunicación abierta y facilitación de acceso a marchas superiores
   - [ ] Perspectiva como punto fundamental (Empresariales, proveedorías, etc.)
   - [ ] Alto nivel a la colaboración de partes profesionales y personales
   - [ ] Renalidad del ser v.
12. ¿En qué medida la cultura de tu empresa favorece los siguientes valores? 

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<td>Trabajo en equipo</td>
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<td>Proximidad</td>
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<td>Autoridad</td>
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<td>Ambición</td>
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<td>Transparencia</td>
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<td>Innovación</td>
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<td>Perfeccionismo</td>
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<td>ética</td>
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<td>Aplicabilidad</td>
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13. ¿En qué medida la empresa favorece los siguientes aspectos organizativos? 

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<tr>
<td>Flexibilidad horaria</td>
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<td>Teletrabajo</td>
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<td>Trabajo itinerante</td>
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<td>Equipo colaborativo</td>
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<td>Libertad de elección</td>
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<tr>
<td>Espacios de trabajo</td>
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<td>Espacios individuales</td>
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<td>Libertad de vestimenta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fácil comunicación</td>
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<td>Conexiones</td>
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14. ¿En qué medida tu empresa apuesta por fomentar las siguientes políticas laborales? 

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<td>Re integración académica</td>
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<td>Políticas de conciliación</td>
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<td>Políticas de responsabilidad social</td>
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<td>Políticas de formación continua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comunicación personalizada</td>
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15. Indica tu grado de acuerdo con respecto a las siguientes afirmaciones. 

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>En el proceso de selección, se apoya más en las habilidades profesionales que por los titulados académicos.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Me ha sentido acompañado/a durante todo el proceso de onboarding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durante el proceso de onboarding se transmite de forma clara la cultura de la organización</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uso del tiempo y espacios de trabajo</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

16. En tu empresa, ¿cómo es tu modalidad de trabajo? (Presencial, itinerante, teletrabajo, híbrida) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modalidad</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siempre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En ocasiones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particularmente</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nunca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

353
17. La flexibilidad y las distintas modalidades de trabajo (teletrabajo, trabajo presencial) son consecuencias fundamentalmente de...

Márkalo solo un ítem:
- La COVID-19
- La cultura organizativa de mi empresa
- Ambos factores

18. ¿En qué espacio de trabajo realizas la mayor parte de tus tareas?*

Márkalo solo un ítem:
- En las mesas individuales (Oficina)
- En las mesas de trabajo compartidas (Oficina)
- En los salones (Oficina)
- En la cafetería o terazas (Oficina)
- En mi casa
- En otros lugares

Desarrollo y relación

19. ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones explica mejor la rotación del personal en tu empresa? *

Márkalo solo un ítem:
- Ofertas más competitivas en el mercado laboral
- Mala gestión de la salud mental (sarcasmo, violencia, depresión, etc.)
- Mi compañero/a de trabajo no cumple con los requisitos de la empresa
- Falta de un plan de carrera personalizado
- Fondo de empresas en la misma generación
- No percepción de desarrollo personal en mi empresa

20. Selecciona el principal motivo que te retiene en tu empresa: *

Márkalo solo un ítem:
- La sicología y liderazgo del CEO
- El ambiente innovador de la empresa
- La cultura organizativa de la empresa
- Las personas
- El tipo de desarrollo

21. ¿Existe algún tipo de evaluación del desempeño periódico en tu empresa? *

Márkalo solo un ítem:
- Sí, se me evalúa con regularidad
- No se me evalúa con regularidad
- No se me evalúa, pero el sistema de evaluación está en proceso de elaboración
- No se me evalúa

Compensación y compromiso

22. Cuando se alza un logro, esto, ¿celebramos? *

Márkalo solo un ítem:
- Sí, todo el departamento junto
- Sí, solo ocasionalmente
- No, las celebraciones no son habituales en esta empresa

Cierra

23. Selecciona tu grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con respecto a las siguientes afirmaciones:

Márkalo solo un ítem por ítem:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>En esta empresa se</th>
<th>La empresa se</th>
<th>Se fomenta un</th>
<th>Se puede el</th>
<th>Cuando se</th>
<th>Si se</th>
<th>Sí se en algunos aspectos:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fomenta la diversidad (páginas, generacional, cultural, etc.)</td>
<td>implica positivamente en equipo</td>
<td>es equitativo de</td>
<td>talento y la</td>
<td>producen</td>
<td>tenga</td>
<td>casos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. ¿Cuál es tu grado de acuerdo con respecto a las siguientes afirmaciones?

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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI empresario refleja los valores de su generación</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NI empresa es un reflejo del ambiente empresarial valenciano</td>
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<tr>
<td>La forma de trabajar de mi empresa no es de una manera</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ni existen oportunidades de trabajar en mi empresa</td>
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<tr>
<td>La cultura de mi empresa se comparte por toda la organización</td>
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</table>

24. Para finalizar, menciona un aspecto de la cultura organizativa de tu empresa que, en tu opinión, debería mejorar.

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