THE NEXUS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

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Abstract. In today's dynamic and highly competitive industrial landscape, fostering employee creativity has become a critical driver of innovation and sustainable organizational success. The proposed research will seek to understand the effects of organizational culture, psychological empowerment and creativity of employees. The positivist philosophical approach will guide the study, stressing objective measurement and testing of hypotheses. The method utilised is deductive research, which is based on the hypothesis that organizational creativity can be reared systematically with specific internal practices applied. A quantitative research design to examine this hypothesis will work through an applied structured questionnaire as the main tool of data collection. The study will involve a survey design in a cross sectional time frame, whereby the set of data will be captured in one instance of time. The selection of the study population, which is comprised of employees in the manufacturing industry in Malaysia, will be based on a nonprobability purposive sampling strategy where the study population will be relevant to the study objectives. This situation forms a pertinent background to how internal organizational outcomes are significant in creativitys at the employee level. Achieved results will not only constitute a part of academic literature but also of some additional guidelines concerning employee creativity improvements through the development of cultural, leadership, and knowledge management frameworks.
Keywords: *employee creativity, organizational culture, psychological empowerment, task complexity, transformational leadership, knowledge sharing*

Introduction

Organizations are under increasing pressure to innovate and adapt quickly and fast changing environments. Employee creativity, the production of new and beneficial ideas, is no longer optional; it is a fundamental engine of organizational resilience and competitive advantage. Industries like manufacturing are demanding more creative and innovative outcomes as growth catalyzes, and it is a skill that all members have to obtain to a certain extent. Employees at all levels the reason is, because they are involved in the process of new ideas. The defining characteristic of the current era is rapid and unpredictable change, which compels organizations to adopt new rules

continuously. In response to restructured work environments shaped by technological advancements, global integration, and intensified competition, organizations must constantly adapt (Sonmez Cakir and Adiguzel, 2019; Chaubey and Sahoo, 2018). Coping with extreme competition underscores the need to foster creativity, which is pivotal for creativity and gaining a competitive advantage (Matsuo, 2022). Emphasizing employee creativity in complicated work settings where fast change and problem solving are vital for preserving competitiveness as a key engine of organizational creativity and flexibility. In such settings, the interaction between organizational culture, leadership style, and knowledge sharing becomes significant in determining innovative results among staff members (Alshawabkeh et al., 2024; Zywiolek et al., 2022; Andleeb et al., 2020). Navigating these challenges and technological advancements requires organizations to enhance their adaptive capabilities (Andleeb et al., 2020). This includes "thinking outside the box," incorporating fresh perspectives or existing ideas to solve complex challenges more effectively.

Creativity, characterized by novelty, originality, and utility, is increasingly recognized as essential for achieving organizational goals and surviving in today's business environment, and solving complex challenges becomes far more efficient when approached creatively (Zywiolek et al., 2022). It stands as a primary driver of competitive advantage and future organizational development (Chae and Choi, 2019). Amabile (1988) observed that employee creativity is a crucial factor in global workplaces, serving as an antecedent for productive and effective performance outcomes. Organizations strategically focus on enhancing creativity due to its vital role in the competitive global market (Bantha and Nayak, 2023; Chaubey et al., 2019). Employee creativity enables organizations to compete and survive not only in the short term but also over the long run by harnessing and utilizing innovative ideas (Żywiołek et al., 2022). Since Amabile's seminal work on employee creativity (Amabile, 1988), numerous studies have investigated antecedents related to creativity.

Literature review and conceptual framework

Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a concept that has undergone intense research over the years and attained prominence, especially in the 1980s. Cameron and Quinn (2006) reported that this epoch started a considerable change in the acknowledgement of the organizational culture as the determinative element in constructing organizational strategic path. Studies are still taking place as far as organizational culture is concerned due to how it creates competitive advantage, enhances knowledge sharing, and creativity in organizations. Organizational culture has taken on a growing interest, leaving its mark both, theory and in practice. This is because they have an interest in understanding that organizational culture has a notable impact on the approach used by companies in operation and strategy (Andleeb et al., 2020). Being part of organizational behavior also causes creativity and promotes innovation in the organization (Andleeb et al., 2020). Organizational culture is based on the philosophy, policies, and practices of human resource management, which determine behaviors and practices within the organization (Andleeb et al., 2020). The role of organizational culture is also clear since it affects the deliberate and subconscious choices and has a direct relationship with improved organizational performance (Sonmez Cakir and Adiguzel, 2019).

Organizational culture has been extensively studied. Researchers analyze it from the knowledge sharing perspective as well as creativity and competitive advantage. Since organizational culture can arise from organizations' policy, practice, and philosophy, it is logical to view it from several points of view (Andleeb et al., 2020). Perhaps this led to the emergence of several definitions. Organizational culture has been defined in multiple ways across different academic and research efforts, leading to some level of ambiguity regarding its precise meaning. Internationally, it is an everyday awareness of a group that shares the same assumptions and belief systems as well as ethics and morals (Sonmez Cakir and Adiguzel, 2019). Organizational culture is the understanding of emerging common explanations and organizational behavior. On the other hand, incorporates the adopted languages, stories, and ceremonies in the definition, besides beliefs and values (Sonmez Cakir and Adiguzel, 2019). Organizational culture is understood as a set of basic, underlying assumptions, promoted values, symbols, and attitudes that collectively define an organization. Organizational culture has also been described as "the pattern of variations within a society, or, more specifically, as the deep level values and assumptions that contribute to the effectiveness of a group or organization".

Although scholars are quite unanimous that organizational culture is a set of values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions that influence behavior in an organization, most of them vary in their focus. Dwells upon deep, underlying assumptions and the artifacts (stories, symbols and rites) in which culture is manifested. Cameron and Quinn (2006) consider culture as a strategic determinant, implying its use in the strategic direction and competitive positioning of an organization. The awareness of collective ethics, morals, and belief systems as the collective consciousness of the shared ones is highlighted by Sonmez Cakir and Adiguzel (2019), and it shows the social glue that motivates employees to act in a particular way. Regardless of these differing views, the definitions narrow down to the concept that organizational culture is a structural and symbolic power that shapes decision making, sharing knowledge, and creativity. In this case, organizational culture can thus be conceptualized as the system of common assumptions, values, and practices used to guide the behavior of employees and also enable creativity in the manufacturing environment. The following table summarizes the key concepts of organizational culture.

Organizational Culture (OC) and Psychological Empowerment (PE)

Intrinsic motivation and psychological empowerment are affected by deciding the belief of the employees in terms of the importance of their tasks, sense of competence, professionalism, and the influence they bear on their work. Studies indicate that psychological empowerment has much to do with organizational elements, especially culture at the workplace that influences the attitudes and perceptions of employees on their position. A culture within an organization is very important in influencing the cognition of employees towards their understanding of empowerment and strengthening their feeling of independence and control. Provided that the organizational environment promotes these factors, it is more probable to succeed in the psychological empowerment. Stressed, organizational culture works as one of the main elements in the organization's structuring and assists in comprehending such complicated phenomena as empowerment. He hinted that a clear cut culture promotes the psychological empowerment process. To support it, research shows that organizational culture plays an important role in psychological empowerment as it determines the norms and values

at the workplace (Aji, 2017). Granted, the level of this impact in different organizations differs, but, on the whole, it will be positive (Aji, 2017). The academics have also emphasized the fact that various forms of organizational cultures have different impacts on psychological empowerment. The Competing Values Framework (CVF) by Cameron and Quinn (1999) identifies four types of organizational culture, namely, the clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy. All of these contribute differently to the empowerment of employees. As an illustration, clan culture, focusing on cooperation and engagement of employees, is especially good at promoting psychological empowerment (Aji, 2017). On the same note, environments in workplaces that promote autonomy and active involvement are environments that foster empowerment. A good organizational culture enhances the faith that employees have with regard to their psychological empowerment (Aji, 2017). The study of educational organizations has established that culture at the workplace has a vital impact on the psychological empowerment of core faculty personnel. The findings have located a high correlation between culture and empowerment, and more specifically that the cultures based on hierarchy and clan carry their feel thereof (Aji, 2017).

The practice is that people have talked much about the impact of organizational culture on creativity performance. Nonetheless, the psychological empowerment as the moderating factor between the organizational culture and innovative behavior in the complex working environment is gaining increasing attention. The recent evidence even indicates that the factor that can incredibly contribute to the growth of psychological empowerment is dynamic organizational cultures that favor adaptability and autonomy of employees and, as a result, advance their creativity and the overall organizational performance (Gholami, 2025). Moreover, experiments in various environments, including the healthcare industry, educational systems, and technological enterprises, confirm the correlation between empowering cultures and staff motivation, in particular, when stressful conditions of a high degree of work complexity arise. The developments highlight an emerging concept of the role of organizational culture and psychological empowerment as mutually reinforcing forces leading to organizational effectiveness and creativity. Accordingly, this study hypothesizes the following: H1: Organizational Culture (OC) has a positive relationship with Psychological Empowerment (PE).

Psychological Empowerment (PE) and Employee Creativity (EC)

Massive support has been given to the idea of psychological empowerment as one of the determinants of employee creativity. Amabile (2012; 1998) says that employee creativity is boosted by the actions of various aspects such as intrinsic motivation, self efficacy, relevant skills, organizational culture and psychological factors. Such a factor, as intrinsic task motivation, is an essential element of the componential theory of creativity and can be evaluated as one of the core factors in creativity promotion (Amabile, 2012). The study indicates that intrinsic motivation stimulates creativity because employees can generate creative ideas, products, or services that are unique and unprecedented. Psychological empowerment also serves as an intrinsic motivator, driving both individual and organizational performance (Duan et al., 2018). Moreover, Amabile (1988) included psychological empowerment as one of the dimensions of creativity alongside expertise, divergent thinking, and recognition. Psychological empowerment is known to be a motivational construct comprising four cognitions: meaning, competence, self determination, and impact. Mainly constructed by individuals' own views, for instance, how they control the work environment and impact

it. This extends to possessing the ability to perform tasks effectively, also known as competence and the perception that their part of work is meaningful. The autonomy in initiating actions is also referred to as self determination. Therefore, empowered employees are more likely to act proactively and contribute creatively to their organizations. Such employees actively engage in the creative process, suggesting new ideas and approaches to their work (Alhosani et al., 2019). Psychological empowerment aligns closely with intrinsic task motivation and acts as a critical enabler of creativity by transforming knowledge and skills into innovative outputs.

Empowered employees exhibit greater independence, initiative, and resilience, fostering a conducive environment for creativity. Freedom and autonomy at work enhance their capacity to generate innovative solutions and accomplish tasks in novel ways. Empirical studies also support the positive impact of psychological empowerment on employee creativity. For instance, a meaningful relationship between psychological empowerment and creativity, highlighted that empowered employees are more likely to exhibit innovative behaviors due to increased self confidence and autonomy. Psychological empowerment persuades employees to take their own individual decisions, which improves self efficacy. According to research conducted by Sun et al., there is a direct relationship between creativity and quality work. Self determination also contributed to creativity, and with empowered employees, also emphasized these; they showed increased independence and influence. Freedom and autonomy offered at the workplace further allow them to think creatively and attain innovative solutions. Creativity is increased through psychological empowerment, which enables employees to have control over their work. The empowered individuals are personally more assured, less tied by restrictions, and tend to come up with more innovative ideas. The empowered employees will be more capable of making contributions to the organizational decision making and adjusting to a change. This independence fosters innovativeness too because workers are not usually bothered by conventions (Amabile, 1988).

Studies have also proved that psychological empowerment encourages employees to make creativity one of their targets in the organization (Amabile, 1983). People easily come up with innovative ideas to improve the efficiency of the department and the organization once they feel that they have the right to make decisions (Duan et al., 2018). In short, arousing in an employee the feeling of autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and meaningfulness of a job, psychological empowerment has a positive effect on creativity. Based on this premise, this hypothesis is founded on the idea that employees have the potential to become creative and adaptive members of their organizations upon being empowered, endowed with freedom and equipped with resources to be able to act freely within the organization. This evidence is to support the premise that psychological empowerment positively affects the creativity of employees. This way, the research study will have the following hypothesis: H2: Psychological Empowerment (PE) has a positive relationship with Employee Creativity (EC).

Underpinning theories

The componential theory of creativity

Amabile (1998) categorizes creativity into three components: expertise (domain knowledge), creative thinking ability (imaginative problem solving), and motivation (drive to excel) (Chaubey and Sahoo, 2018). This theory explains the employee

creativity process, emphasizing natural capabilities for creative efforts. It identifies three primary components: creative thinking skills, expertise, and intrinsic task motivation. Creativity emerges where these components intersect (Amabile, 2012). Innovation has surged in recent decades, increasing the demand for creative skills. While creativity and innovation are often used interchangeably, they differ. Creativity initiates problem solving, whereas innovation advances and implements creative ideas with organizational approval (Whorton et.al, 2017). Creativity introduces novel approaches but entails risk, challenging routine behaviors, and organizational norms. Key literature on employee creativity includes works by Amabile (1997; 1988; 1983). Few creativity theories exist, with major models including Sternberg and Lubart's Investment Theory, Csikszentmihalyi's Systems Model, and Amabile's Componential Theory. Csikszentmihalyi examines creativity's cultural interactions, while creativity as an investment in novel ideas with growth potential. However, these models fall outside this study's scope, as the Componential Theory is more relevant to organizational creativity.

Employee creativity is placed as the primary outcome variable shaped by the interaction of organizational culture, transformational leadership, and knowledge sharing within the conceptual framework of this study. Acting as the internal motivating engine that converts external organizational inputs into creative activities, psychological empowerment mediates these interactions. Task difficulty also impacts how psychological empowerment influences creativity, as more difficult activities could either enhance or limit creative expression depending on the degree of empowerment. This theoretical base helps learn how psychological states at the micro level and organizational factors at the macro level combined can predict employee creativity, thus facilitating an in depth understanding of creativity in a complex working environment. Amabile (1983) describes creativity as the generation of ideas or the results that are not only novel but also suitable (Amabile, 2012). Based on the theory, the existence of creativity is located on the continuum scale, and individual creative performance differs due to the presence or absence of one or more components of creativity (Amabile, 2012).

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework are shown in *Figure 1*.

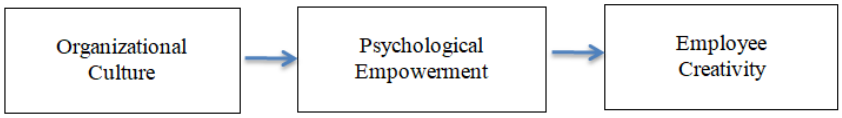


Figure 1. *Conceptual framework.*

Materials and Methods

Research design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design by using a correlational approach. The Google Forms platform was used to deliver a structured questionnaire that was used to gather primary data. Meanwhile, secondary data were drawn from academic journals, books, e-books, and reliable online sources, which provided theoretical support and helped contextualize the findings. The combination of

primary and secondary data developed the analysis and enhanced the validity of the outcomes.

Population and sampling

Sampling is the method of choosing study participants. The researcher should take into account a number of aspects, such as time constraints and participant accessibility, when selecting an effective research sample strategy. The two basic methods employed in the determination of the sample sizes as relates to sample selection are probability and non probability. There are a number of ways through which the researcher can select the research sample within the frame of the population, which mainly depends on the non probability sampling that is dominated by the beliefs and judgments made by an individual. Although the non probability approach would be useful in pilot testing, it may fail to find out the extent to which the problem under investigation is present. It will not be possible to identify and trace all potential candidates who could be part of the sample population; hence, the non probability sampling was used in the study. In a situation where it is impossible to determine the plausibility of a given population member or element being contained in the sample, a non probability sampling method is applicable. Here, it is very important to bear in mind that. In contrast, the generalizations made as a result of a non probability sample can be used to form the basic theory of inferential methodology; it has been established that in order to enable researchers to generalize about the whole population, it has to be done through probability input.

In the given investigation, the non probability sampling strategy will be formed with the help of purposeful sampling. Since the concept is based on the evaluation of the attributes of the representative sample by the researcher, purposeful sampling is also referred to as judgmental. Purposive sampling is based on the decisions of a researcher concerning objects and people typical of the thing being researched or representative of specific knowledge about the issues in question. The given research relies on purposive non probability sampling since it will choose respondents among employees performing creative activities in the Malaysian manufacturing industry, which will guarantee that the selected respondents will have the experience and knowledge valuable to the research questions. Although it has a greater generalizability, random or probability sampling might introduce participants who have very little or no experience in the area of work that relates to creativity and water down the validity and applicability of the results. With the help of purposive sampling, the study will make sure that the obtained data is narrowed down to reflecting the perceptions and behaviors of the employees, the organizational culture, leadership, and knowledge sharing practices of which are the most relevant to the creative outcomes.

Conclusion

The proposed research will seek to understand the effects of organizational culture on the creativity of employees; it will also determine whether psychological empowerment mediates these effects. Additionally, the study aims to assess whether task complexity moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee creativity. The positivist philosophical approach will guide the study, stressing objective measurement and testing of hypotheses. The method utilised is deductive research, which is based on the hypothesis that organizational creativity can

be reared systematically with specific internal practices applied. A quantitative research design to examine this hypothesis will work through an applied structured questionnaire as the main tool of data collection. The study will involve a survey design in a cross sectional time frame, whereby the set of data will be captured in one instance of time. The selection of the study population, which is comprised of employees in the manufacturing industry in Malaysia, will be based on a nonprobability purposive sampling strategy where the study population will be relevant to the study objectives. This situation forms a pertinent background to how internal organizational outcomes are significant in creativitys at the employee level. Achieved results will not only constitute a part of academic literature but also of some additional guidelines concerning employee creativity improvements through the development of cultural, leadership, and knowledge management frameworks, with the psychological empowerment serving as a mediator.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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