



Fostering Organisational Dynamic by Promoting Creativity of Employees in the Public Sector

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Creative performance among employees, manifests itself in an organisation's ability to continuously generate new knowledge, improve product performance, offer new products or services, all of which add value for customers. Today, public organisations face the challenge of creating environments conducive to freeing employees' creativity. To study the factors stimulating creativity, a public sector in Oman was studied. A survey was administered to 88 employees. Several factors believed to be predictors of creativity were examined. These include organisational climate and culture, individual attributes, job characteristics, and leadership. Regression analysis was used to analyse the data. Several of the examined attributes exert zero or little influence on individual desire to submit creative initiatives. This pioneering study, in the Sultanate of Oman, will help employees be creative in public sector undertakings, improving organisational performance in general, and improving the quality of service to the general public in particular.

Key words: *Employee creativity, Workplace innovation, Public sector, Sultanate of Oman.*

Introduction

Creativity and innovation are rarely discussed in the public sector as a means of enhancing performance and satisfying the public. In the Oman public sector, creativity and innovation management are still in the early stages of development. The subject of creativity and innovation have attracted our attention, as there is an excellent potential for creating a system

that public organisations can depend upon to develop employee creativity as a valuable asset. The drivers of this study are twofold: first, there is a lack of research addressing innovation in the Omani public sector; second, innovation is tremendously underestimated as a value that can drive organisations toward continuous improvement. This is evidenced by the lack of a systematic approach toward evaluating and promoting individual initiatives at work. This study investigates an important part of creativity at work, i.e., the individual initiatives submitted by employees working in the public sector as a means of satisfying the never-ending demand for organisational improvement.

Karakelle (2009) explained that creativity is perceived as an engine for modernisation, and it has been a subject for numerous studies concerning when, how, and why people instigate creative thinking. Given the complexity and ambiguity surrounding this issue, it was appropriate to explore the subject from different perspectives. While genes and personality traits have received extensive attention as determinants to individual creativity, many researchers have stressed organisational climate as a factor to creativity (Batey & Furnham, 2006; Sardana, 2015). The terms “creativity” and “innovation” are used interchangeably in the literature to indicate a similar phenomenon. Each, however, has its own unique, distinguishable characteristics.

Sternberg (1999) defined creativity as “the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e., useful, adaptive concerning task constraints).” Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, and Kramer (2004) (as cited in Rank, Pace, & Frese, 2004) clarified the difference between the two terms:

All innovation begins with creative ideas. We define innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organisation. In this view, creativity by individuals and teams is a starting point for innovation; the first is necessary but not a sufficient condition for the second.

Thus, innovation can be seen in an organisation as a collective effort to implement creative work produced as a result of individual or team creativity. It implies the expectation and recognition of favourable outcomes. Several researchers recently used innovation as a more inclusive two-component concept encompassing both idea generation and application. In the Omani public sector, the best use of creative ideas might not be realised even with the emergence of genuine creativity due to several reasons that will be described. Because individual creativity concerned with the generation of ideas will be the central theme of this research, we believe employing the term “innovation” to describe such a particular idea formulation would be inaccurate.



Public Sector Organisational Overview

This public sector organisation, which will not be named to protect the participants' identities, was established to carry out essential roles in the country, including serving the presidential court of his Majesty the Sultan. This government organisation resembles other public sector ministries with regard to most policy and internal structures in use. The main human resource activities such as recruitment and selection, reward system (promotion, incentives, etc.), and performance appraisal are substantially similar to any public sector organisation in Oman. This organisation was chosen as a representative sample of the public sector in Oman.

The growing need to establish more customer-oriented services in Oman resulted in several public sector organisations adopting innovative programs to satisfy internet-literate citizens. Initiatives are continually offered, which are directed at promoting imaginative thinking in order to enhance services or produce solutions to common problems at work. This organisation has recently initiated a series of steps toward improving performance and modernising with less bureaucratic functions. In order to improve performance, qualified managers were appointed within different departments and levels of the organisation. Ambitious training programs were commissioned through public and private institutions, and reengineering of the organisational structure to accommodate new functions and tasks were undertaken. It is reflective of the strong commitment toward better delivery of services and enhancement of performance.

Public Versus Private Sector Innovation

Although the public sector does not face the market forces that induce private sector firms to innovate, it faces economic, political, and ideological imperatives that can challenge its role, legitimacy, and efficacy (Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, 2014). Furthermore, with many obligations to serve the public, governments around the world have encouraged creativity at work. Locally the Ministry of Education, for example, has been known to seek creative thinking and widespread participation of constituencies in strengthening education in Oman. The Ministry of Housing and the Oman Royal Police, through their use of information technology, have revolutionised the way citizens interact with different service outlets managed by these two organisations.

Private organisations sell their services and products in markets with the values of their offerings easily quantified by volume and money generated. By contrast, government organisations are supposed to serve the public under the rule of law equally and universally in areas like security, education, justice, and health. Hence, government programs often generate outputs that are hard to capture or to value in a systematic or integrated manner. The

type of creative initiatives would be expected to fall within areas such as new methods of service delivery, process enhancement, cost-saving mechanisms, improving efficiency and effectiveness, and rarely will be in a tangible form (Mohamed, Khalifa, Al-Shibami, & Alrajawi, 2019). The organisation under study has been finalising the functional areas where creativity is most needed. Nevertheless, it might be argued that creativity is unbounded to a specific type. Instead, it can fall within several dimensions, such as improving human interactions, social wellbeing, and a nurturing environment at work.

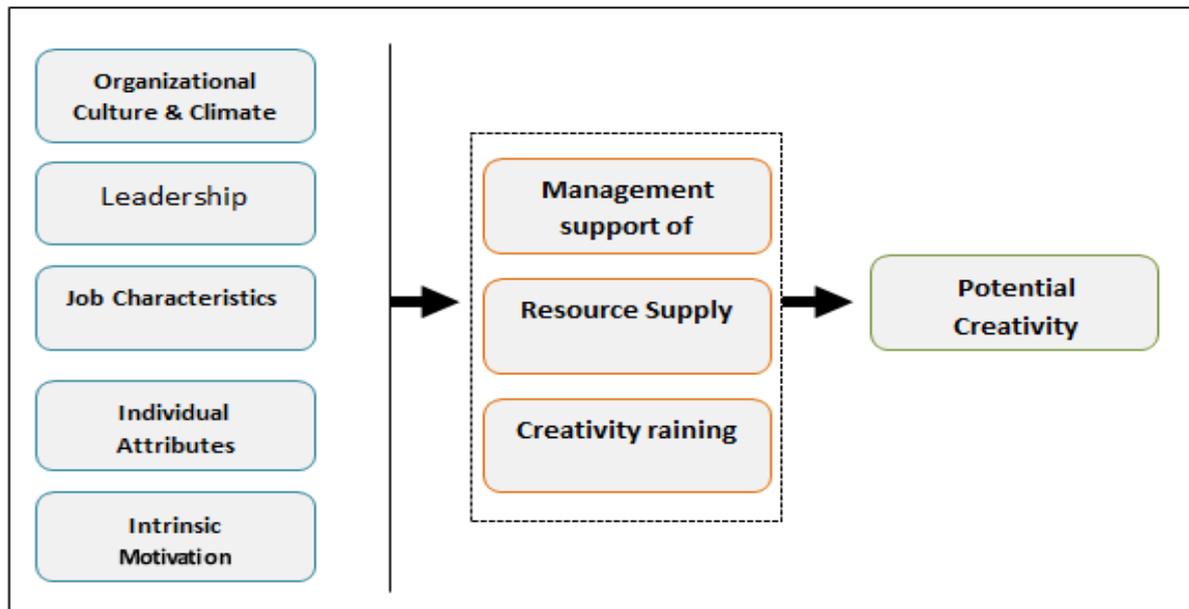
Most of the research has defined creativity as an outcome (Fortwengel, Schuessler, & Sydow, 2016; Gilson & Shalley, 2004). However, there is great value in understanding how individuals come to develop creative ideas. For example, they may be able to link different sources of information to come up with unique approaches to a problem, which, in turn, will offer better clarification of the relationship between the problem and other elements. Considerable theoretical work supported by researchers like Amabile (1988); Christina, Zhou, and Oldham, (2004) has suggested that the creative process involves several stages: 1) identifying a problem/opportunity; 2) gathering information or resources; 3) generating ideas and; 4) evaluating, modifying, and communicating ideas. These four stages are critical in understanding creativity in organisations. At every step, there are undoubtedly personal and contextual characteristics that are more desirable. For example, it may be that individuals who are adept in openness to experience are most likely to generate creative ideas, while those who are extroverted are most likely to communicate these ideas to colleagues. It may also be that individuals exhibit high levels of creativity when the context facilitates both idea generation (e.g., a supportive formal program that encourages employees to contribute to creative initiatives) and idea communication.

Literature Review

Determinants of Creativity in Organisations

Amabile's (1982, 1988) model of creativity provides a partial framework for this research study. Amabile proposes three components necessary for individual innovation: domain-relevant skills (job competence), creativity relevant skills (creative personality traits), and intrinsic task motivation. These three components were integrated into the model depicted in Figure 1. This model should provide a framework for understanding different aspects of creativity in public organisations such as organisational culture, climate, and leadership. Potential creativity is realised when management and necessary resources actively support individual characteristics and organisational factors. The questionnaire was designed to capture some of the elements corresponding to this model.

Figure 1. Determining Creativity at Work: A Hypothetical Model



Organisational Culture and Climate

Conventional research on organisational innovativeness has explored the determinants of innovation in an organisation. Researchers tried to explain why certain individuals, teams, or organisations are more likely than others to initiate novel and useful ideas (Anderson, Nik & Zhou, 2014; Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). Just as the private sector has recognised creativity as the driving force to remain competitive, public sector organisations also realise that creativity is essential for innovation in the face of the ever-changing economic environment. They, like many private sector companies, treated employees' creativity as a critical factor for innovation. The culture and climate of the public bureaucratic organizations have resembled, to some extent, those cultural characteristics found in the private sector. However, as Vigoda-Gadot and Shoham (2005) contend, while theories about private sector innovation are extensive and well established, the same knowledge is not always transferred (or transferable) to modern bureaucracies. Also, classic bureaucracies lack formal tools for the evaluation of innovation and suffer from an absence of standard criteria that benchmark creativity and renewal processes. The absence of such measurements may be due to the perception of innovation as threatening the stability of the old administrative order (Vigoda-Gadot & Shoham, 2005).

Individuals and organisations tend to oppose rapid changes that contradict their cultural orientations. In a public sector sphere, where the tradition of prior knowledge, experience, and conservative institutional solutions strongly influence management's decisions, resistance to creativity and change is widespread. In addition, the internal structure of public

organisations is based on vertical communication channels, rigid decision-making mechanisms, and other constructs that restrain the innovative process, including a salary system that is fixed and does not link creativity with compensation. There are consequences for failed initiatives that result from innovative ideas. Based on the research studies undertaken in the past decades, we now understand that there is a direct link between a motivational orientation of an individual, creativity that leads to higher performance, and the organisational climate (Hennessey, 2003). Appropriate person-situation atmosphere is a prerequisite for creativity. Jiang and Walsh (2016) suggested that the creative behaviour of organisational participants is a complex person-situation interaction influenced by events of the past as well as salient aspects of the current situation. Within the person, both cognitive (knowledge, cognitive skills, and cognitive styles/ preferences) and non-cognitive (i.e., personality) aspects of the mind are related to creative behaviour (Jiang & Walsh, 2016).

Walker (2007) found that when organisational innovations are associated with organic characteristics, these innovations are likely to be achieved where decision-making is close to the front line when problems occur. There are many components of culture that encourage creativity, including encouragement, freedom, recognition, and desire to achieve. Jaskyte and Kisieliene (2006) argued that values placed on creativity, risk-taking, pride in employees, enthusiasm about their capabilities, future-oriented strategy, risk-taking, result orientation, stimulation, and challenge are also believed to influence employee creativity.

Leadership

One key contextual factor that influences employees' creativity is leadership (Chow, 2018; Amabile & Mueller, 2008). While previous studies have examined the role-specific leadership behaviours play in supporting or suppressing creativity, a paucity of research has been developed to pinpoint the roots of these behaviours (Zhou & George, 2003). Studies suggest that the quality of the relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate is related to innovativeness. In essence, theories posit that supervisors and subordinates engage in a role development process that clarifies the amount of decision latitude, influence, and autonomy the subordinates will be allowed. The focus, thus, should be whether subordinates are granted greater autonomy and decision latitude, both of which have been shown to be essential to innovative behaviours (Shin & Zhou, 2017).

Research on the relationship between behaviours of leaders and individual innovation has investigated transformational leadership, participative leadership, and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. As cited in Jong and Den Hartog (2007), three studies have shown mixed results on the effect of leadership on creativity. In one study, the researchers used an electronic meeting system with students in a laboratory experiment to investigate the impact of leadership on creativity-relevant processes and outcomes. As a by-product, they found a

positive impact of transformational leadership. Another examination by Jaussi and Dionne (2003) found little effect of transformational leadership on creativity. In contrast, field research by Shin and Zhou (2003), as cited in Jong and Den Hartog (2007) in South Korea, showed that transformational leadership was positively related to follower creativity.

Job Characteristics

Several studies have explored the relationship between job characteristics and employee creativity (Chow, 2018; Jiang & Walsh, 2016). According to Jafri, Demand, and Choden (2016), complex jobs would contribute to employee creativity. Having autonomy to decide about performing certain job activities, needing to use a variety of skills, seeing the significance of the job's outcomes, and receiving feedback from the job itself should encourage employees to be more creative. When tasks are complex and challenging, individuals are likely to be excited about their work activities and interested in completing these activities in the absence of external controls or constraints. The level of interest and excitement produced by a job is then expected to foster creative achievement at work. Also, complex situations may demand creative outcomes by encouraging employees to focus simultaneously on multiple dimensions of their work, whereas profoundly simple or routine jobs may inhibit such focus.

The design of jobs has long been considered an essential contributor to employee creativity. When individuals work on complex tasks (i.e., those characterised by high levels of autonomy, feedback, significance, identity, and variety), they are likely to experience high levels of intrinsic motivation and to respond to this motivation by developing creative ideas. Specifically, complex jobs should enhance individuals' interest in their work activities and their desire to complete these activities (Christina, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). They also found that there is a significant relationship between employee self-reports of job complexity and the number of creative ideas they submitted to organisation suggestion programs. The individual attributes described in this paper refer to the personality and cognitive style dimensions in addition to the knowledge and expertise that are acquired through accumulated experience at work. All of these dimensions can affect how individuals recognise and apply various thought processes that may facilitate creativity.

Personality and Cognitive Factors

Several types of research tried to correlate certain personality traits with creativity and innovative capabilities (Amabile & Mueller, 2008; Fortwengel, Schuessler, & Sydow, 2016). However, there is no agreement on a particular set of traits. Barron and Harrington (1981) identified core traits that include high valuation of aesthetic qualities in experience, broad interests, attraction to complexity, high energy, independence of judgment, autonomy,



intuition, self-confidence, ability to resolve crises or to accommodate apparently opposite or conflicting traits in one's self-concept, and a firm sense of self as creative. To what extent these traits are possessed by the employees at the organisation would be an interesting research topic that can be pursued in future research — much of the early work examining the effects of personality used either Creative Personality Scale (CPS) or measures of one or more dimensions associated with the Five-Factor Model of personality (FFM) (Christina, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). The CPS measure is intended to provide an index of an individual's overall creative potential.

Those who score high on the measure are expected to approach problems with broad interests that enable them to identify divergent information and opinions. Also, these individuals are thought to possess the self-confidence and tolerance for ambiguity to persist in developing their original ideas. In 1976, Kirton introduced the Adaption-Innovation Theory, which received attention in the literature for its linkage of cognitive style and creativity. Kirton (1976) divided individuals regarding creativity in cognitive styles into two categories: adaptors and innovators. He described adaptors as individuals who prefer to “do things better” and innovators as people who prefer to “do things differently.” Kirton (1976) postulated that understanding the cognitive styles of adaptors and innovators would greatly enhance organisational cultures. The two types can be further described through specific preferences.

Adaptors: prefer to improve the team and organisation within the existing framework, according to the consensually agreed-upon structure. Kirton (1976) defined adaptors initially with the following descriptors: (a) concerned with solving problems rather than finding them, (b) seeking solutions to problems in tried and understood ways, (c) maintaining high accuracy in long spells of detailed work, (d) rarely challenging rules, (e) sensitive to maintaining group cohesion, and (e) providing a safe base for the innovator's riskier operations.

Innovators: tend to overhaul the entire work process. They are less concerned with acting by existing structures. Kirton (1976) described innovators as (a) seemingly undisciplined, approaching tasks from unsuspected angles, (b) treating accepted means with little regard in pursuit of goals, (c) capable of detailed tasks only in short bursts, (d) providing the dynamics to bring about periodic revolutionary change, and (e) having low self-doubt when generating ideas.

Knowledge and Expertise

It is essential to examine the knowledge and expertise of individual employees when judging their level of creativeness. Amabile (1988) identified both "domain-relevant skills" and



"creativity-relevant skills" as being important for creativity. These two categories include the knowledge, technical skills, and talent needed to produce creative products (domain-relevant skills), as well as cognitive skills and personality traits linked to creative performance (creativity relevant skills).

Intrinsic Motivation

Employees' job satisfaction has been cited as a factor influencing creativity in the workplace. For example, research done by Stevens (2006) concluded that there is a significant correlation between job satisfaction and creativity. Employees with a high Motivating Potential Score, indicating high levels of job satisfaction, also had a high Creative Environment Index score, meaning the perception of a work environment that is supportive of creativity. Scholars have long argued that individuals are likely to be most creative when they experience high levels of intrinsic motivation since such motivation increases their tendency to be curious, cognitively flexible, risk-taking, and persistent in the face of barriers, all of which should facilitate the development of creative ideas (Al-Asfour, 2012; Christina, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). Consistent reports show that working primarily for extrinsic motivation has, counter to what most practitioners seem to assume, a negative impact on creativity. Instead, one should focus on intrinsic motivation. People are motivated to develop ideas when they feel they thereby can positively impact their work situation and found that the prospect of better work predicted submitting suggestions (Stenmark, 2005).

Hypotheses Formulation

H1: Organisational culture and climate are positively related to employees' creative performance.

H2: There is no relationship between job characteristics and the self-reported desire to offer new creative initiatives.

H3: There is a positive relationship between the appropriate resources and supportive supervision that employees receive, and the level of initiatives submitted by employees as judged by participants.

H4: Employees demographic background (years of experience, job level, sex, education) is positively related to their perception of work creativity.

H5: Organisational culture and climate is positively related to the perceived usefulness of previously submitted initiatives.

Research Method

The survey method was used to collect data for this research study, and it was translated into the Arabic language so that the participants could understand the survey. The translation was

reviewed by several dual-language speakers (Arabic-English) to remove any misunderstanding or ambiguity. The Five-Point Likert scale-based questionnaire was distributed to employees at different levels of managerial and professional positions. The survey was designed to provide information on the factors promoting creativity and to identify selected barriers that inhibit employees from contributing their creative thinking. Four dependent variables were measured: innovative contribution at work, the desire to generate ideas, a description of the number of initiatives submitted (e.g., low, moderate, and plenty), and finally, the participants' opinions about the usefulness of previously submitted initiatives.

Participants Profile

Eighty-eight employees from the Medical Service, Communication and Information System, and Administrative Development Directorates participated in this study. All the respondents are working in the capital, Muscat. There are 58 (65.9%) male and 30 (34.1%) female respondents. The majority of the participants (61.4%) have 10 years of experience or more, as indicated in Table 1. Of the total number of participants, 43% work in jobs classified as professional (technicians, paramedics, nurses, doctors, etc.) while the rest are performing administrative work. Participants are working at several organisational levels. The majority of the participants possess a bachelor's degree (31.8%). Table 2 breaks down participants' qualifications according to the five levels.

Table 1: Participants' years of experience

Years Worked		Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-3	11	12.5	12.5
4-6	16	18.2	30.7
7-9	7	8.0	38.6
10 or More	54	61.4	100.0
Total	88	100.0	

Table 2: Educational level of the participants

	Level of Education	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than High	5	5.7	5.7
High School	16	18.2	23.9
Associate Diploma	23	26.1	50.0
Bachelor Degree	28	31.8	81.8
Graduate Degree	16	18.2	100.0

Analysis of the Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this study were tested using regression models. To test hypothesis one, multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict the percentage of reported submission level of initiatives in relation to four predictors. The predictors are shown in Table 3. The overall variance rate explained by the four predictors was 6%. Three predictors were positively related to the outcome variable, while one control variable (sense of belonging to the organisation) has a negative coefficient. None of the variables were significant under the three significant levels. The F-ratio is not significant in this analysis. Therefore, H1 is not supported.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Relationship Between Organisational Culture and Climate and Employee Creative Performance

Variable	Organizational Culture and
Submitted initiative receiving attention	0.04222
Appreciation received	0.06196
Sense of belonging to the organization	-0.07280
Perceived usefulness of exposure to work experience outside the organization	0.00327
Constant	1.1137
R ²	5.9%
F-ratio	1.22

* p < .05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001

To test the second hypothesis, three predictors were assessed in relation to the outcome variable (the desire to submit new initiatives). The hypothesis was assessed through independent variables that asked participants to evaluate the desire of colleagues to improve work, perceived usefulness of previous ideas, and the ability of staff to recognise innovative opportunities, as shown in Table 4. One independent variable was found to be significant: the perceived usefulness of previously submitted initiatives. The F-ratio was also found to be significant (p<.01). Based on this finding, we reject the second hypothesis and confirm a positive relationship between job characteristics and self-reported desire to offer new creative initiatives.

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Relationship Between Job Characteristics and the Self-Reported Desire to Offer New Creative Initiatives

Variable	Desire to offer new creative initiatives
Desire of colleagues to improve work	0.04419
Perceived usefulness of previously submitted initiatives	0.22743 **
Ability of staff to recognize innovative opportunities	0.02358
Constant	1.2209
R ²	14.1%
F-ratio	4.56 **

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

The regression analysis of the third hypothesis revealed no significant results (see Table 5). The three predictors altogether account for only 5.3% of the variance in the dependent variable. One independent variable, surprisingly, is inversely related to the dependent variable (level of the initiative submitted by employees), which are the resources available to the employee for making creative efforts. Because none of the coefficients or the F-ratio are significant, we reject H3.

Table 5: Regression Analysis for Relationship Between the Appropriate Resources and Supportive Supervision and the Level of Initiatives Submitted by Employees

Variable	Level of submitting initiatives
Having coordinator to manage initiative within each directorate	0.0927
Resources available to employee for making creative initiatives	-0.10633
Lack of encouragement from supervisors and superiors	
Constant	1.9740
R ²	5.3%
F-ratio	1.55

* P < .05

The fourth hypothesis assesses whether years of experience, job level, sex, education, the importance of gifted talents, and the ability to recognise opportunities for improvements would positively influence participants' desire to offer new initiatives. Table 6 provides an overview of the results. The overall regression model explained 3.4% of the variation in the

independent variables. Three variables were inversely related to the dependent variables, which are sex, level of education, and the necessity of having gifted talents. None of the coefficients were significant. Based on this finding, we cannot confirm H4.

Table 6: Regression Analysis for Relationship between Employees Demographic Background and Personal attributes and Their Desire to Offer New Initiatives

Variable	Demographic Background and Personal Attributes
Experience	0.04380
Job Level	0.04445
Sex	-0.0137
Level of education	-0.04231
Necessity of having gifted talents	-0.07846
Ability of staff to recognize innovative opportunities	-0.07367
Constant	2.1226
R ²	3.4%
F-ratio	0.48

* p < .05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

The last hypothesis was formulated to find out whether individual initiatives that have been previously submitted are very helpful in improving work given four predictors, as indicated in Table 7. Observing the results, two associated p values are significant. It can be said that the organisational culture and climate exerted an influence on employees' perceived usefulness of submitted initiatives. The F-ratio is very significant. Hypothesis H5 was confirmed by this fact.

Table 7: Regression Analysis for Relationship Between Organisational Culture and Climate and the Perceived Usefulness of Previously Submitted Initiatives

Variable	Perceived usefulness of submitted initiatives
Submitted initiative receiving attention	0.6553 **
Perceived usefulness of exposure to work experience outside the organization	0.2962 *
Appreciation that an employee is getting	0.1379
Sense of belonging to the organization	0.0434
Constant	2.3428
R ²	18.8%
F-ratio	4.46 **

* p < .05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Discussion

In general, the obtained determinations of the coefficient, the adjusted R², using regression analysis were low, which implies there could be other factors not contemplated in this study. In three models, the behaviour of the dependent variable was minimally explained by the predictor variables, and variation was defined by the dependent variables, which might imply that the relevance of some variables doesn't fit some models as indicated by the adjusted R². Analysis of the data yielded several insights. As indicated in Table 3, the sense of belonging to the studied organisation was negatively related to the participants' reported submission of initiatives. This may imply confirmation of the widespread notion of employees' deep attachment to public organisations. The inverse relationship, as the analysis revealed, can also be attributed to another factor, which is the participants' misinterpretation of this broadly defined abstract concept. Nevertheless, the feeling of appreciation has the highest coefficient among the four variables assessed. Conventionally, attention given to initiatives in the form of review and feedback is essential for motivation and understanding of the overall quality of the proposal to the organisation.

Selecting among the best alternative variables that can be used to indicate an organisation's culture and climate is challenging, let alone correlating them with creativity. The four predictors are few among many other organisational behaviours that can be further assessed with this subject. Therefore, the rejection of Hypothesis 1 should be approached with caution. Consistent with the literature review, there is a positive relationship between job characteristics and the self-reported desire to offer new creative initiatives (Table 4). In the second hypothesis, the reported willingness of colleagues to improve work was positively related to the participant's expressed desire to submit new initiatives. Also, the perceived



usefulness of previously submitted initiatives is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Participants' belief in the value of past initiatives is crucial in improving the desire to provide future initiatives. Also, identification of opportunities for improvement is the first and among the most critical factors that motivate employees to find other non-practiced ways to approach these opportunities. It is a synonym to the necessity that ignites the creativity in the quest for satisfying needs. The overall F-ratio of this model is very significant.

The third hypothesis tried to link resources and support with the perceived level of the initiative submitted by employees. While the analysis shows no significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables, as indicated in Table 5, some predictors contributed more than others. For example, having a coordinator to manage creativity at work was the weakest, while lack of encouragement from supervisors and superiors predicted the highest percentage. To our surprise, we found that resources available to employees for making creative initiatives have an inverse relationship with the level of effort submitted by employees. One explanation for this finding can be the fact that most initiatives at this studied entity (a service-oriented organisation) do not require substantial commitment of resources and these initiatives are produced by individual employees who under most circumstances will demand small or no amount of resources given the size and the type of their creative ideas.

In the fourth hypothesis, it was predicted that employees' demographic background and personal attributes would positively influence their desire to offer new initiatives. Personal attributes (sex, qualification, and necessity of gifted talents for creativity) were inversely related to the dependent variable (the desire to submit initiatives). Studies have shown that creativity is not restricted to a particular person, nor has it been found to be correlated with qualifications.

In addition, based on a more qualitative look at applications submitted to American Government Awards, Walters (2001) as cited in Borins (2002) concluded that "innovative ideas spring up from all over the place – both inside and outside of organisations, and from middle, bottom, and top layers of an organisation. Innovation, it turns out, has little regard for title or level of education" (469). Another supportive study was conducted by Ettl, Goves, Vance, and Hess (2014) in a research and development department of an industrial corporation; it showed that for individuals to develop innovative behaviour, it was not necessary for them to have a highly creative cognitive style. However, there is a positive relationship between the experience of the individual and the reported desire to submit an initiative. The attachment of employees and their belonging to the organisation can be expected to increase as they spend more years working for the organisation. Furthermore, familiarity with tasks and accumulated knowledge contribute to this finding. The studied



organization has emphasised job security and maintained low staff turnover leading to a higher percentage of people with accumulated experiences.

The last hypothesis predicted that there is a positive relationship between organisational culture and climate and the perceived usefulness of previously submitted initiatives. This hypothesis was accepted based on two associated coefficients that are significant; submitted initiative received attention ($p < .01$) and perceived usefulness of the exposure to work experience outside the organisation ($p < .05$). The F-ratio 4.46 is very significant ($p < .01$). The exerted effect of organisational culture and climate on creativity is well documented. The attention given to the submitted initiative is a prerequisite task for other necessary subsequent steps that should be interchangeably carried out by both the individual and his or her organisation.

Barriers to Creativity

Leaders and managers face the challenge of releasing and managing the creative talents of individuals at work. Inhibitors consciously or unconsciously influence creative willingness. Real and perceived barriers and inhibitors may exist. Since perceptions influence behaviour, even false barriers are of importance to those who desire to increase innovative readiness. Barriers or inhibitors block, suppress, and drive into hiding the creative talents of individuals. Groth and Peters (1999) interviewed 1781 people in Texas and reported their perception of barriers at organisations.

They categorised their responses into three categories; self-imposed barriers (stress, lack of interest, fear, lack of knowledge, lack of goals and objectives, no confidence, desire, etc), professional environment barriers (stress, expectations, recognition, social norms, time constraints, fear of challenge, etc), and environmentally-imposed barriers (intrusion of daily tasks, interruptions, pressure, lack of tools and resources, time, peer pressure, standards and regulations, etc).

Table 8 Barriers to Creativity in Studied Organisation Sorted by the Value of the			
Barriers	N	Mean	SD
The absence of morale and financial incentives	88	4.37	.914
Ignoring simple initiatives can discourage employee from making other proposals in the future.	88	4.32	.953
Absence of a compelling strategy to improve work at individual	88	4.11	.868
Lack of resources available to the employees for making creative initiatives (time, financial support, information, etc.)	88	4.09	1.024
Lack of encouragement from supervisors and superiors	88	4.03	1.088
Previous initiatives are not written nor made available to all staff for reference.	88	3.97	.928
Lack of evaluation criteria in annual performance appraisal specifically designed for creativity.	88	3.95	1.038
The absence of a clear policy on how to evaluate a proposal	88	3.95	.958
Resistance to change and the desire to follow the status quo	88	3.82	1.150
Work environment and its regulation do not favor innovation	88	3.80	1.116
Generalised job tasks without any specialized area	88	3.72	1.005
Lack of job knowledge (low knowledge of various aspects of the job).	88	3.72	1.103
Employees' unwillingness to improve work and their lack of interest.	88	3.53	1.295
Limited areas where employees can be creative at in their respective departments.	88	3.47	1.061
Fear of ideas' larceny by other people at work	88	3.35	1.145
Educational level of the employee if under the university level	88	2.95	1.016

A variety of factors inhibit people in their willingness to use their creative talents. Table 8 shows what participants thought to be constraints and barriers to creativity from our study. The perceived barriers are sorted by their mean values. The reported barriers by the participants of this study should be of interest to decision-makers. At the top of the list, as indicated in Table 8 comes the absence of moral and financial incentives. Incentive facilitates the integration of creativity in an organisation. The second barrier, to our surprise, was ignoring simple initiatives that can discourage employees from making other proposals in the future, which could open the door for more discussion on the accommodation of simple initiatives through a better management program. The least rated barrier was the educational



level of the employee if under the university level, and this coincides with what has been published in the literature.

Conclusion, Recommendations, and Managerial Implications

The creation of a systematic approach that stimulates idea generation is a prerequisite task in any creativity improvement program. The most prominent method is to motivate employees through financial incentives. The success of this program will significantly depend on how individual units will assess employees' contributions and to what extent employees themselves will understand the significance of the program. A qualitative and quantitative assessment of each unit's production of creative ideas should be an integral part of the innovative management program at the organisation where we conducted our study. This can be accomplished through documentation that details specific features of creative ideas according to standards deemed appropriate by leaders of the organisation. Moreover, statistical indicators should be included in the annual reports of individual directorates.

To fully attain sustainable creativity at work, an innovation management system must be established. A possible approach is to develop an administrative section that reports directly to the Secretary-General of the organisation and with the responsibility of overseeing program implementation and maintaining its standards. In each directorate, a lead person in charge of organising employees' initiatives is an essential element in this program.

In every organisation, its culture should be conducive to creativity and innovativeness. A celebrative culture that embraces creativity and champions innovators can be integrated with the current organisational culture. It is noticeable that there is a lack of a reward system that is specifically designed to compensate for creativity, which should be part of the organisation. Within each directorate, formal job descriptions have been well-documented as a conventional approach to standardised tasks and to produce consistency across different jobs. However, over-reliance on routine activities conveyed in job descriptions might hinder creativity. Therefore, the innovative capability can be integrated into the culture by training personnel to be more creative at work. This can be communicated formally through job descriptions or informally through norms aligned to an individual's job. For example, physicians are expected to be aware of different components that form relationships in the hospital information system (HIS) that he or she is using. The expectation of the organisation, in this case, would be on how to improve the system for better decision making in ways that have not been known. Even though this is not part of a physician's routine activity, for example, it is part of an implicit contract that should be considered beyond the specific duties of the physician.



As this study has found, barriers to creativity at work can be minimised by the organisation itself. First, resources should be made available to employees with creative ideas. The sorts of resources usually required are financial support, information, and allocation of time to research a proposal. While resources might not guarantee the submission of creative work, they encourage accuracy and motivation. Second, it is necessary to identify those individuals who are continually producing innovations and consider their activities in future promotions. Lack of interest in improving work can be widespread in government institutions, and the selection of inappropriate leaders can have devastating effects on performance. The organisation has taken the right step by integrating this criterion in the performance appraisal that now has to be conducted twice a year. Third, knowledge about a job is essential in understanding the elements that contribute to creativity. This means that jobs should have a degree of autonomy, and employees should be profoundly involved in various tasks. Identification of opportunity for improvement is by itself is an essential nucleus that can lead to creativity. Hence, it is recommended that employees thoroughly understand roles, regulations, procedures, and various bodies of knowledge surrounding their jobs.

Additionally, it should be made customary procedure that, once an opportunity has been identified, the employee should take an active role in communicating insights through the written format. This step, however, should not be seen as supportive of bureaucratic formalities. It is imperative to comprehend different aspects of the creative initiative through a well-documented written proposal for dissemination and evaluation. Individuals should not discuss the topic of creativity and innovativeness without touching upon an essential issue of measurement and evaluations. While the task is tremendously difficult, as creative works are supposed to be novel and should not fall within the standard familiar functionality, several aspects can be evaluated.

Evaluation requires unbiased thinking and audacious decisions to accept or reject proposals. Future prospects of the program will significantly depend on how the evaluation process reflects understanding, appreciations, and recommendations to each employee's initiative. The previously mentioned evaluation should not be separated from the overall impact of the creative work on each directorate. This implies that the organisation should implement potential proposals, and their benefits should be realised. However, the implementation part should be left to the experts' judgment at the individual directorate and the final decision of higher authority for higher-order initiatives.

Evaluation at the organisational level should also include measuring innovative capability at individual directorates and their readiness and capacity to adopt employees' intellectual, creative outputs. For example, tangible benefits attained from implementing an initiative should be estimated. These benefits can range from a reduction of expenses, improving efficiency, or increasing productivity. Assigning monetary value is an appropriate way to



evaluate initiatives. The internal administrative audit, conducted annually at the organisation, can assess the adoption of employees' proposals even though there is no formal guideline that exists for this purpose. Auditing of this type offers an opinion of a third party that can be viewed as systematic and unbiased.

Creativity and innovation are valuable assets that can be nourished through the right mix of developing organisational culture, personal attributes, developing leadership, and job characteristics. These determinants interact with each other to create favourable or unfavourable outcomes for creativity. Despite being a public sector organisation, several potential factors can produce fertile ground for cultivating creativity. Top management should engage in the regular practice of encouraging individuals and teams to develop and champion proposals for process and services improvement, thus unleashing the talents and energies of employees. It should be a culturally accepted norm that all employees are expected to initiate growth and to display innovativeness. We found no significant relationship between creativity and factors such as gender, level of education, and the need for special talents. On the other hand, organisational culture and climate are the most important factors that can exert influence on employee creativity and lead to better management of innovation.

Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of the study are similar to those frequently occurring in the literature of comparable nature. The study has used self-reported items. There can be considerable variations in interpreting different variables by each participant, including the foremost question, what do creativity and innovation mean to each participant? This means that the subject brings various definitions to different people. The dependent variables used may not be adequate, and their validity or reliability may not be able to be assessed easily. The self-reported interest and previous submission of innovative ideas are highly subjective, and no actual validation of responses was provided. Additional research should examine the issue of employees' creativity with, including assessment of creative initiatives themselves for clearer classification.

Future research can close the gap between theories and practice in this area. In particular, the research needed to explore the relationship between employees' level of creative contribution through submitted ideas in organisations and several predictors such as creativity training, type of work, and other relevant organisational factors. We suggest examining creative work in more detail for inclusion in further studies of an empirical nature. Researchers also should look at the experience of the newly introduced employees' initiatives programs in organisations and whether such programs have changed the way employees perceive and



value creative initiatives. Additionally, the subject, given its complexity, should be studied at different stages of development, from submission to the implementation of a creative idea.

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