THE EFFECT OF CREATIVE CULTURE ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT IN AN ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The process of employee creative engagement can be triggered by creating a creative culture in an organization. Hence, creativity is a philosophy and principle that should be adopted by every organization that desire success and creative engagement on the part of employees. This study critically examined the role of creative culture of an organization in influencing employee creative engagement. To achieve this objective, a total of 89 staff drawn from the academic and non-academic staff of Covenant University in Ogun State, Nigeria, was sampled. The data collected were analysed using regression analysis. The result showed that creative culture has positive significant effect on employee creative engagement. Based on the findings of the study, the implication for management of organizations is that there is a need to ensure that a creative culture is incorporated and embedded as an organizational policy geared towards fostering employee creative engagement.

Keywords: Creativity, Creative Culture, Employee Creative Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Creativity enables an organization to become the market leader in their fields based on improved efficiency in proffering solutions to consumer problems (Amabile & Mueller, 2008). However, many organizations do not have this fundamental capacity. A key factor in this shortcoming is a failure of organizations to build up a culture where creativity is given the topmost priority because organizations don't become creative by simply hiring creative people but mostly by creating creative cultures (Moses et al., 2016). (Landry, 2012) opined that when workers are creatively engaged, they propose new and beneficial products, concepts, or processes that make available important raw materials to an organization for improvement and success. Hence, organizations should be in search of how to nurture individual originality and teamwork because it is a key basis for novelty that is essential in the market. The process of employee creative engagement can be triggered by creating a creative culture (Gichohi, 2014; Nawaz et al., 2014). Hence, creativity is a philosophy and principle that should be adopted by every organization desiring success and performance on the part of employees (Schneider et al., 2009; Adeyeye et al., 2016). However, many organizations especially in Nigeria do not take creativity into consideration; rather they set stringent rules and regulations which employees must follow which mostly foster routines in carrying out work roles (Sonenshein, 2016). In this

kind of setting, employees are not allowed to bring out new ideas or ways of carrying out activities. To this end Schneider et al. (2009); have focused on the impact of the physical work environment in supporting creativity in the place of work. Carmeli et al. (2015) also focused on employee engagement, creativity and team work. These previous researches on workplace creativity have laid emphasis on the individual as the primary determinant of workplace creativity. However, there is a need to examine the effect of creative culture on employee creative engagement particularly in the Nigerian context.

Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H_0: *Creative culture does not affect employee creative engagement.*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative Culture

Culture is considered to be critical and essential to the success of any organization and the rudimentary mechanisms of the culture of an organization namely; shared values, beliefs, and expected behaviour wields a major effect on creativity which is usually engrossed into the culture and management processes of successful organizations (Harvey, 2014). Therefore, core values and norms associated with an organization are developed, shared and accepted by employees (Moses et al., 2016). These norms and core values, shared by employees form the foundation of assumptions as regards appropriateness or otherwise of creative behaviour in an organization (Thompson, 2018). Consequently, these assumptions, norms and core values, translate into a pattern of behaviour and activity formulated into structure, procedure, policy and management practices (State & Iorgulescu, 2014). These peculiar organizational patterns directly influence creativity at the workplace (Glăveanu, 2017).

Therefore, this study defines a creative culture as shared beliefs, values, and expected behaviour within an organization that fosters originality and novel work, emphasizing the generation of new and inventive ideas. The basic reflections of a creative culture include a risk-taking ethos, team work, workplace autonomy and workplace transparency (Sonenshein, 2016). A creative culture is believed to be a potential determinant of increased employee engagement this owes to the fact that a creative culture can prevent expression of creativity among employees and it can also encourage creative behaviours within an organization (Falola et al., 2018). Therefore, establishing a clear creative culture in an organization encourages employees to use intrinsic motivation to generate creative ideas (Zhou & Hoever, 2014).

Employee Creative Engagement

Employee creative engagement refers to the harnessing of employee inputs to their work roles not only in psychological, cognitive and physical aspects but also in creative expression of themselves during role performances (Li & Sandino, 2018). Employee engagement relates to employees' opinions and views about the organization, its management and working conditions (Aslam, 2017). The psychological aspect relates to employees' perception of each of these four factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organization and its management (Contreras et al., 2017). The physical characteristic of employee engagement relates to the exertion of physical energies by employees geared towards accomplishing their roles. Employee engagement in cognitive terms also connotes intellectual and mental involvement in

the performance of organizational roles (Contreras et al., 2017). However, beyond the aforementioned, an important aspect of employee engagement is the expression of creativity that lends to originality, ingenuity, and inventiveness in the performance of work roles (Olokundun et al., 2017). Therefore, harnessing employee inputs and also fostering creativity in the workplace can be better achieved through employee creative engagement (Nawaz et al., 2014).

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used to collect information from employees of the selected university. Survey was engaged as research method and the data collected were obtained through the distribution of structured copies of questionnaire to both academic and non-academic staff of Covenant University in Ogun State, Nigeria. The choice of Covenant University is hinged on the fact that the leading private institution in Nigeria is known for its faced paced culture of creativity which drives employee engagement in an uncommon but successful manner. The study population as obtained from the human resource department of the institution is given as 1,126 employees. A total of one hundred and ten (110) copies of questionnaire were administered based on multistage sampling technique (stratified and simple random sampling) to both academic and non-academic staff of the institution based on the recommendations of (Bartlett et al., 2001). Eighty-nine (89) copies of questionnaires representing about 81% were retrieved. The study used regression analysis to test the hypothesis to examine the effect of creative culture on employee creative engagement in the selected university. Creative culture was assessed using a four-item measure (Figure 1). These items are: risk taking ethos; team work; work place autonomy; work place transparency. Employee creative engagement was assessed using a four-item measure. These items are; psychological involvement; cognitive involvement; physical involvement; creative behaviour. Responses ranged by 5-point Likert scaling from 1="*Strongly disagree*" to 5="*Strongly agree*." Convergent reliability and Confirmatory Factor Analysis were used for the assessment of composite reliability and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct.

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STUDY

CRE 01 ,…, 04 are four measures of creative culture. Table 1 depicts the convergent reliability and Confirmatory Factor Analysis used for the assessment of composite reliability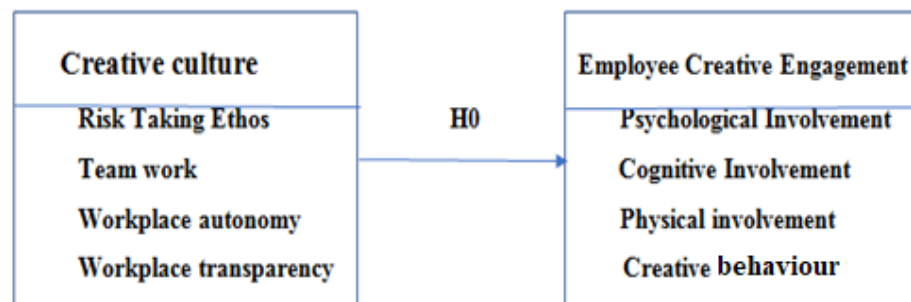 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct. In line with Biggs et al. (2014) recommendation all scale and measurement items in the research instrument are significant. The factor loadings are above the threshold of 0.70, each construct composite reliability also exceeds 0.80 as well as construct Average Variance Extracted estimate (AVE) exceeds 0.50. The factor

loadings for the specific measures of construct ranged between 0.896 and 0.900. Hence, the degree of fitness of the measures of the model is valid.

Table 1 CREATIVE CULTURE						
	Loading	**Indicator Reliability**	**Error Variance**	**Composite Reliability**	**AVE**	**No of Indicators**
Constructs and Indicators	**> 0.7**		**<0.5**	**≥ 0.8**	**≥ 0.5**	
Creative Culture				0.94307	0.8975	4
RTE01	0.896	0.8028	0.1972			
TEM02	0.896	0.8028	0.1972			
WPA03	0.898	0.8064	0.1936			
WPT04	0.900	0.8100	0.1900			
Note: All loadings are significant at $p<0.0001$.						

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 2 EMPLOYEE CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT						
	Loading	**Indicator Reliability**	**Error Variance**	**Composite Reliability**	**AVE**	**No of Indicators**
Constructs and Indicators	**>0.7**		**<0.5**	**≥ 0.8**	**≥ 0.5**	
Employee Creative Engagement				0.94338	0.898	4
PSI01	0.899	0.8082	0.1918			
CGI02	0.897	0.8046	0.1954			
PHV03	0.899	0.8082	0.1918			
CRB04	0.897	0.8046	0.1954			
Note: All loadings are significant at $p<0.0001$.						

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

CRE 01, …, 04 are four measures of employee creative engagement. Table 2 depicts the convergent reliability and Confirmatory Factor Analysis used for the assessment of composite reliability and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct. In line with Biggs et al. (2014) recommendation all scale and measurement items in the research instrument are significant. The factor loadings are above the threshold of 0.70, each construct composite reliability also exceeds 0.80 as well as construct Average Variance Extracted estimate (AVE) exceeds 0.50. The factor loadings for the specific measures of construct ranged between 0.897 and 0.899. Hence, the degree of fitness of the measures of the model is valid.

RESULTS

H_0: Creative culture does not affect employee creative engagement.

Table 3 MODEL SUMMARY				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.339[a]	0.115	0.105	0.65466
a. Predictors: (Constant), Creative culture				

Source: Field Study Result, 2018.

Table 3 is the model summary. It shows the extent to which variance in the dependent variable variance (employee creative engagement) is explained by the independent variable (creative culture). In this case, the R-square value is 0.115 expressed by a percentage; this means that our creative culture explains 11.5% of the variance on employee creative engagement. The adjusted R-square shows a 0.105 (that is, 10.5%) variability of the independent variable (employee creative engagement). The standard error of the estimate is 0.65466, which signifies the error term. This means that a unit increases in creative culture will lead to an increase in employee creative engagement.

Table 4 ANOVA[a]					
Model	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1 Regression	4.831	1	4.831	11.273	0.001[b]
Residual	37.286	87	.429		
Total	42.117	88			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Creative Engagement					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Creative Culture					

Source: Field Study Result, 2018.

Table 4 shows the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. The ANOVA table tests the null hypothesis to determine if it is statistically significant. From the results, the model appears to have a good fit, indicated by positive value F-value of 11.273. Also, the table shows a statistically significant relationship between creative culture and employee creative engagement ($p < 0.01$). The implication of the statistical result is that imbibing a creative culture in the organization will positively impact on employee creative engagement. Hence the null hypothesis should be rejected.

Table 5 COEFFICIENTS[a]					
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**T**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1 (Constant)	2.946	0.346		8.504	0.000
Creative Culture	0.297	0.088	0.339	3.357	0.001
a. Dependent Variable: Employee creative engagement					

Source: Field Study Result, 2018.

Table 5 shows the simple model that expresses the extent to which a creative culture affects employee creative engagement. In this table, the beta co-efficient which relates to creative culture is 0.339. It makes a strong contribution to explaining the dependent variable. Hence, we can infer that a creative culture has a positive influence on employee creative engagement at a significant level ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The result from the analysis showed that engaging a creative culture can motivate employee creative engagement within an organization. This aligns with the work of Amah et al. (2013) who stated that managers can create a corporate culture that will enhance them to inspire and also motivate their employees towards the achievement of organizational goals. It also expounds the study of Motilewa et al. (2015) who argued that the degree to which the members

of an organization are able to engage in work roles as a consequence of imbibing the culture of an organization is activated by the competency of an entrepreneur or the management of an organization. However, considering the benefits of creativity to organizational productivity and success, it is pertinent to state that fostering a creative culture in an organization is at the center of achieving organizational productivity and success. Furthermore, beyond employees imbibing the culture of an organization and simply engaging in work roles, it is important that employees creatively engage in work roles which involve engagement not only in psychological, cognitive and physical aspects but also in creative expression of themselves during role performances which is better achieved by creating a creative organizational culture.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

This study concludes that the adoption of a creative culture that not only makes demands on the psychological, cognitive and physical inputs of employees but also involves the creative expression of themselves during role performances is critical to organizational success. Therefore, managers should ensure that a creative culture is incorporated an embedded as an organizational policy geared towards fostering employee creative engagement. There should be a clear-cut culture of honesty and openness. Performance should be managed effectively and employees should be made to see the link between their work roles and organizational goals. Managers should ensure to encourage employees to come up with novel and original ideas that could be implemented in order to boost employee morale for engagement. Employee feedback should be invited and responded to. This is consequent upon the fact that employees will be encouraged to creatively engage if they realize that their ideas are put into consideration when solving problems and improving the quality of services or products offered to customers. Employees should be allowed a considerable level of freedom and autonomy in handling responsibilities. Clear career paths should be created that provide opportunities for employee growth, learning and development. Employees should not perceive creative engagement as a means of coaxing people to do what is wanted but rather as a process of creating organizational conditions that foster better performance. Employees should be able to give open feed backs and honestly share concerns and views. Finally, the workplace should foster positive and supportive relations among employees in order to enhance creative collaborations and team work.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCHES

This study has some limitations. By using Covenant University, the possibility of generalization of results is not high. We also only focused on the effect of creative culture on employee creative engagement. The factors that affect employee creative engagement in an organization are fundamentally different in each business model and context, which were not considered in this study. Further studies may focus on expanding the sample size and scope of the survey, considering the impact of other factors and in a different sector.

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