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ROLES OF TYPE OF ORGANIZATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON EMPLOYEES' LEVEL OF CREATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of type of organization and organizational culture on creativity among employees. Three hundred employees (179 males; 121 females) between the ages of 18 and 63 years (M_{age} = 36.02; SD = 9.62) participated in the study. They responded to measures of organizational culture and creativity. Results revealed that employees in public sector organizations tended to be more creative than those in private sector organizations. Organizational culture significantly predicted creativity such that employees in a more friendly organizational culture tended to be more creative than those in less friendly organizational culture. The implications of these findings for theory and practice were discussed.

Keywords: Organizational culture, creativity, public sector employees

INTRODUCTION

Creativity may be considered as an important tool for optimal performance and global competitiveness in this era of globalization. Any organization that desires to maintain growth or continue existence must move beyond the level of knowledge acquisition to enhancing creativity among employees. Creativity may be defined as the combination of various pieces of knowledge acquired to produce new ideas and patterns for improved productivity and better organizational performance. Creativity enhancement may be viewed from the perspective of individual employee and from the organizational perspective, that is, the effort from the part of individual employee to engage in creative thinking and the impact on the part of the organization to provoke creativity. According to Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin (1993), that creativity on the part of individual employee and the organization serves as a major transformation instrument

that could bring about unprecedented growth and development which enhances effectiveness and survival tendency in any organization.

Researchers (e.g. Florida, 2002) have identified that neither ability to compete, knowledge acquisition or technological knowledge serves as tool for growth in this 21st century, but creativity on the part of individual and the organization, which assists in enhancing innovation, effectiveness and survival (Amabile, 1996). Interest of researchers in this important concept has led to different definitions some perceive it as a character trait in individual employee and others perceive it to be a process embarked upon by individual or the organization (Amabile, 1988), the latter seems to be the focus of this research. Amabile (1988) define creativity as ability to give birth to new and useful ideas, while Kirton (1976) emphasized the importance of adaption, improvement and application of knowledge acquired. This implies that through knowledge acquisition, and adapting it to one's environment, new thoughts and ideas begin to spring forth by applying the knowledge gained.

Creativity could transcend beyond the generation of new ideas to production, services, processes, procedures and engagement in teamwork (Woodman *et al*., 1993; Chen & Chang, 2005; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Zhou & George, 2003). Creativity could further include creatively proffering solution to existing problems in the organization, new ideas of business strategies and innovations in the area of job processes and organizational restructuring, which could eventually lead to appreciable growth and moving away from the usual way of performing duties assigned which may not be productive as such to a new and more productive approach (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Shalley & Gilson, 2004).

Creativity on the part of individual employee or the organization could be enhanced by a lot of factors, especially from the organization. These factors include support from the supervisors and the co-employees, organizational culture and the type of organization (private or public). Studies revealed that management, individual characteristics of employee, and collective culture exerted great influence on creativity among employees in both private and public sector organizations (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihlayi & Rathunde, 1993; Rasoulian, Bagheri, Kheirkhah & Shariflou, 2012). However, little or nothing has been done on the type of organization that promotes creativity most, together with the effect of organizational culture shall be examined in this study, knowing that the underlining assumptions, values and norms in each organization may vary from one organization to another, especially between private and public.

Exhibition of creativity in any organization may have to do with the type of organization (private or public) involved and may also serves as an important contributing factor that could enhance or inhibit the exhibition of creativity by employees, due to the fact that, the organizational culture that exists in private may not be the same in the public organizations. Private organizations may be defined as organizations owned by

individual or group of individuals with the sole responsibility of creating ideas that will be transformed into goods and services that will enhance profit making and managed by the rules of the shareholders or corporate body. In addition, private organizations are always in competition with other organizations in order to have an edge over others in profit making and so, from time to time they expect their employees to come up with new ideas that could enhance their productivity.

While public organizations may be perceived to be government owned organizations which may not totally be committed to profit making but provision of services that will better the lives of the citizenry and so there is no competition with other organizations that could provoke creativity in their employees. Public organizations are usually, being supervised or managed by a long chain of management, and they are being ruled by policies made in line with laws of that country, which may not allow for creativeness as emphasized by Florida (2002), that absence of open culture and climate inhibits the exhibition of creativity by employees.

This argument was supported by the findings of Rasoulian *et al*. (2012) that management, personal characteristics of employee and collective culture exerted great influence on creativity in both private and public organizations. This suggests that both private and public organizations must operate open culture that could enhance good relationship between employees and management, which would create conducive atmosphere for creativity to emerge and thrive successfully.

For creativity to emerge in employees the needed resources must be available and the cultural values that exist in either the private or public organizations must be the type that could enhance the emergence of creativity in the lives of the employees as reported by Rasoulian *et al*. (2012. To build a culture-based creativity whether in private or public organization, there may be need to build on self-efficacy of employees, improvement on technical knowledge, exchange of ideas through knowledge sharing from time to time and a relatively conducive organizational climate that could assist in enhancing creativity in employees as revealed by Rasoulian *et al*. (2012) that basic and vocational education exerted more influence in enhancing creativity in private organizations than public organizations. When all these are in existence in a particular organization, creativity may become lifestyle in such organization which invariably impact positively on the productivity level of such organization and it may not be an overstatement to state that the type of organization may likewise determine the type of organizational culture that exists in such organization.

Organizational culture may be defined as the basic and cherished values and norms that are expected to be internalized and use as a guide in performing the duties assigned by every member of the organization. Organizational culture deals with belief systems and practices that exist in an organization for a period of time (Pheysey, 1993). Deal and Kennedy (1992) further assert that organizational culture involves values, beliefs and practices that serve as rules and regulations in the organization as well as

guiding the conduct of the employees in such organization. The issue of organizational adaptation to the environment and internal integration as a result of belief patterns and practices established by each organization also serves as the culture of such organization (Schein 1992). Furthermore, Tichy (1982) defines organizational culture to be a 'bond" that glue an organization together and possesses a common attributes which is peculiar to the organization that differentiate it from others (Forehand & von Gilmer 1964). This means that each organization is known with its own peculiarities as a result of the organizational culture put in place. The role of organizational culture in provoking creativity in employees cannot be overemphasized, because, the characters that will be exhibited by employees may in most cases depend on the type of culture established by the organization, whether it is the type that provokes creativity in employees or not.

According to interactionist model (Woodman *et al.* 1993), that either environmental or situational and personality factors exert their influence on exhibition of creativity among employees as they interact among themselves and between the employees and the organization. This suggests that apart from individual characteristics, organizational culture could encourage or discourage the display of this important and profitable character in an employee, meaning that the organizations has a lot to do in assessing their culture from time to time in order to ascertain the efficacy of such in enhancing the exhibition of creativity in their employees.

Dimensions of organizational culture according to Martins (1997) involves mission and vision (goal objective, purpose of setting up that organization which automatically becomes the goal of every employee as they become part of the organization, ways of attaining the set goals (organizational structures put in place in order to achieve the goal), approaches or processes of management (which includes planning, organizing, leading and controlling), relationship among the employees and between the management and the employees and the leadership qualities. All these aforementioned dimensions form the basic culture of any organization which could influence employee's creativity positively or negatively.

Amabile (1988) further outlined some components that could influence creativity among employees. These include available resources in the arena of job assigned; skills possessed by the employee to maintain creativity and the motivating factors made available that could enhance creativity. An employee would be interested in taking the risk of inventing new ideas that could lead to better performance if he/she perceives or receives organizational support (Amabile, 1997). Research (e.g. Scott & Bruce, 1994) has shown that employees display high level of creativity in jobs that allow them to use their discretion than jobs that are routinely performed and also found out that interpersonal relationship between leaders and work team had significant effect on employee's creativity. In addition, Madjar, Oldham and Prat (2002) in their study found that organizational support for creativity exerted a significant effect on creativity in spite of inadequacy of such individual personality. Furthermore, Martins and Terblanche (2003)

emphasized that the degree to which creativity is being exhibited by employees tends to be influenced by the organizational culture of such organization.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant difference between the private and public sector organizations in exhibition of creativity by employees.
2. Organizational culture will significantly predict creativity such that employees exposed to a more friendly organizational culture will be more creative than those in less friendly organizational culture.

METHOD

Design and participants

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. A total of 300 employees from both private and public organizations working and residing in Abuja (FCT) Nigeria were selected using simple random sampling techniques. The participants included 179 males (59.7%) and 121 females (40.31%). The age range was between 18 and 63 with a mean age of 36.02 years and SD of 9.62. One hundred and seventy-four (58%) were from private organizations while 120 (40%) were from public organizations. As regards marital status, 115 (38.3%) were single, 169 (56.3%) were married and 16 (5.3%) were divorced. The educational qualifications of the participants include School Certificate 25 (8.3%), 59 (19.7%) had OND/NCE, 147 (49.0%) had HND/BSC, 65 (21.7%) were Postgraduates. Their job status involved junior level 73 (24.3%), 136 (48.3%) were in the intermediate level and 82 (28.7%) were in the senior level. The nature of employment revealed that 92 (30.7%) were on temporary appointment, 178 (59.3%) were on permanent appointment, while 30 (10%) were contract employees.

Measures

Organizational Culture Scale (OCS), developed by Tang, Kim and Donald(2000), was used to measure organizational culture of employees. It was a 15-item scale which measures family orientation (1-5), open communication (6-9), team approach (10-12) and knowledge of manager (13-15). The scale was scored on a five-point Likert-type ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5. Sample of the item includes "My Company tries to create a unique family atmosphere", "my manager encourages people", "I have a chance to meet my manager and "my manager often communicates the overall organizational goal to us". Tang *et al* (2002) reported a reliability coefficient of .79, but in this study, the researcher obtained a reliability of .86.

Employee Creativity Scale (ECS), developed by Kleysen and Street (2001), was used to measure employees' creativity. It was a 35-item scale divided into five sections, which include inspiration (1-6), clarification (7-12), evaluation (13-18), distillation (19-

24) and incubation (25-35). The response was scored on a five-point Likert-type ranging from strongly agree = 1 to strongly disagree = 5. Kleysen and Street (2001) reported a reliability coefficient of .95, while the researcher in this study obtained a Cronbach alpha of .88.

Procedure

An introduction letter which explained the purpose of the study to participants was attached to the scales which were administered to the participants after permission had been sought and obtained from the relevant authorities of the various organizations employed in this research work. With the assistance of the heads of the units/departments used, three hundred and twenty questionnaires were administered, but were able to retrieve three hundred. Although there was no time frame, but the participants were encouraged to respond as soon as possible to the questionnaires. Some were collected back immediately, while some were retrieved later. It took the researcher a total number of three weeks to gather the data.

RESULTS

The result of the correlation analysis is shown in table 1.

Table 1:

Summary of Relationships among the Variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Organization type	1		
2. Organizational culture	.13*	1	
3. Creativity	.17**	.54**	1

Note: *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. N = 300.

The result from Table 1 shows that organization type had a significant positive relationship with creativity [r (298) = .17, p <.01]. Also, the result reveals that organizational culture had significant positive relationship with creativity [r (298) = .13, p <.05].

To know whether type of organization (private or public) determined employees' level of creativity, an independent t-test was employed. The analysis is shown in Table 2.

Table 2:

Summary of t-Independent Test on Type of Organization and Employees'

   Creativity

Type of Organization	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Private	174	82.41	11.06	292	-2.88	<.05
Public	120	85.99	9.5			

The results in Table 2 indicate that employees in public sector organizations showed a significantly higher level of creativity than those in private sector organizations [t (298) = -2.88, p <.05]. The results in Table 2 confirmed hypothesis 1.

In order to ascertain the predicting pattern of organizational culture on creativity, a simple regression analysis was employed. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3:

Prediction   Pattern   of   Organizational   Culture   on   Creativity

Predictor	β	t	R	R²	F
Organizational culture	.54	11.04**	.54	.29	66.78**

Note: ** p < .01. N = 300.

The results in Table 3 show that organizational culture significantly predicted creativity such that employees exposed to a more friendly culture tended to be more creative than those exposed to less friendly culture ($β$ =.54, t (298) = 11.04, p < .01). Organizational culture contributed 29% to the observed changes in employees' creativity. This supported hypothesis 2.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the role of type of organization and organizational culture on creativity. It also investigated the relationship among type of organization, organizational culture and creativity. Furthermore, it examined the predicting pattern of type of organization and organizational culture on creativity and lastly, difference between private and public organization in enhancing creativity was also examined.

Hypothesis 1, which stated that type of organization would influence employees' level of creativity, was supported. This suggests that type of organization was an important factor in promoting creativity in employees in any organization. This supported the findings of Rasoulian *et al*. (2012) that management, individual characteristics and collective culture exerts great influence on the exhibition of creativity by employees in

both private and public organizations. It further established the interactionist model by Woodman *et al* (1993) that environmental and personality factors exert influence on employees' creativity. The implication of this finding is that the type of organization either private or public has a lot to do in enhancing the degree of creativity display by the employees in such organization and the culture established in such organization also determines the level of creativity exhibited by the employees working in that organization. This may suggest that the public organizations are now putting in place factors that could enhance creativity such as organizational support (Madjar *et al*., 2002), allowance for discretionary performance of duties by employees (Scott & Bruce, 1994) and availability of resources in work, the skills possessed by the employee and other motivating factors put in place (Amabile, 1988). Other factors like supervisor support, reward system, organizational justice and fairness in dealing with employees and opportunity for growth and development may also enhance creativity in employees.

Hypothesis 2, which stated that organizational culture would predict creativity, was supported by the results of the analysis in Table 3. These results supported the findings of Martins and Terblanche (2003) and Woodman *et al* (1993), that the culture of the organization and personality factors have great influence on creativity of employees. This suggests that culture of any organization contributes greatly to the enhancement of creativity by the employees. Organizational support (Madjar *et al*., 2002), allowance for discretionary performance of duties by employees (Scott & Bruce, 1994) and availability of resources in work, the skills possessed by the employee and other motivating factors put in place (Amabile, 1988) are some of the factors that could contribute to organizational culture that would enhance creativity in employees.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the first hypothesis had shown that type of organization and organizational culture had positive relationship with creativity, which means that both independent variables were important factors that contributed to emergence and exhibition of creativity in any organization. Also, findings from the second hypothesis also revealed that type of organization alone did not predict creativity, but organizational culture did and the combination of the two variables. This can be concluded that the culture that exists in whether private or public was the most important factor that could really influence the level of creativity displayed by employees in such organizations and this culture entails a lot of factors that have been stated above. And lastly, findings from the third hypothesis showed that differences existed between private and public in terms of creativity among employees. It could be inferred from the findings that public organizations operated culture that enhance creativity among employees than the private sectors.

The implications from these findings were that both type of organization and organizational culture contributed to creativity among employees, but organizational culture tend to have more strength in affecting the degree of creativity. The implication of this is that organizational culture that is open, supportive and possesses other factors outlined in the discussion section be it in private or public organizations would enhance creativity in their employees

The theoretical implication of the findings in this study was that, it established the componential employees' creativity theory (Amabile, 1983) that availability of resources for employees to perform their duties, assisting employees to develop needed skills and providing motivational incentives contribute greatly to culture of any organization and which could really boost the creativity level among employees in any organization. The findings also established the interactionist model (Woodman *et al.*, 1993) that the interaction of both situational and behavioural factors among groups and organizations affects the level of creativity displayed among employees. It could, therefore, be recommended that organizations should put in place organizational culture that would promote creativity among employees.

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