Organizational Climate and Employee Innovative Work Behaviour: A Literature Review

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Abstract: In searching for ways that organizations can increase their innovative outcomes, the role of human resources, organizational climate and their management, has become more central in the past decade. An organizational climate that is supportive of innovative behaviour is labelled an innovative climate. This study examines the relationship between organizational climate and innovative work behaviour. It is a conceptual paper and thus largely based on desk research methodology. Based on extant literature positive innovative climate in the organization has a significant and positive effect on the innovative work behavior of the employees whereas, negative innovative climate in the organization has a negative impact on the innovative work behavior of the employees. It is suggested that a climate of positive affectivity within an organization may provide a secure base from which teams can generate both creative ideas and ensure their implementation.

Key words: Organizational Climate, Innovative Work Behaviour, Innovation, Idea Generation, Idea Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, globalization and rapid technological advancements have raised a situation where organizations encounter challenges like varying customer demands and increased competition. To keep pace with these changes and to maintain a competitive edge, organizations need to innovate that is to explore and implement new ideas. Organizations bring innovation in their product, service; introduce new technology, new managerial or administrative practices and bringing changes in other elements of the organization. To build an innovative workplace employees are heavily relied upon and must bring innovations in their processes, methods and operations (Ramamurthy, Patrick, Flood & Sardessai, 2005). In the present scenario, innovation is not confined to specialists, scientists and other research and development professionals but organizations for long-term success to encourage and develop the innovative potential of all of

their employees. Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) is described as the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, in order to benefit performance (Janssen, 2000). It helps to develop new and creative ideas and to encompass their implementation.

In the rapidly changing competitive work environment, organizations are increasingly faced with the need to get engaged into innovative work behaviours to get enduring competitive work advantage and delivering newly developed product. Changing surroundings, access of the people to the information, changing demands of the clients, new and advanced technology, and rapidly changing circumstances play an important role in today's expanding world. Rapidly changing hierarchical needs and demands of the customers and suppliers put a great deal of emphasis on employees' innovative work behaviour nowadays (Jung, Chow, & Wu, 2003; Yukl, 2002). To meet this challenge, successful organizations, nowadays, prefer to hire innovative employees (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery & Sardessai, 2005). Getz and Robinson (2003) reported that eighty percent ideas in the organization are generated by employees who are innovative.

In organizational context, organizational culture, resource factors and climate of the organization are the conditions that support creative performance of individuals (Sundgern, Dimenas & Gustafsson, 2005). The climate of the organization is assumed by the employees through organization's practices and procedures, which in turn formulate and shape their priorities. Solomon et al. (2004) found organizational climate to be an essential factor that affects the individual's innovative behavior.

Organizations in the 21stcentury are facing more challenges than ever before. These challenges are not unique to any specific organization or industry, but affect all organizations, regardless of their structure or size. Organizational climate in particular is constantly challenged by changes impacting organizations today (Nair, 2006). From human relations approach, employees have been accepted as the most important component of organizations. In order to make organizations much more effective and productive, perceptions of employees have become more important. As the concept is related to perceptions of employees, organizational Climate has been attracting many researchers (Arabaci, 2011).

The climate of an organization refers to those aspects of the environment that are consciously perceived by organizational members (Armstrong, 2003). In short, it refers to how the members of an organization perceive it as it goes about its daily business. There is a general agreement that organizational climate is a multi-dimensional concept, and that a number of typical dimensions could be described. Organizational climate is defined as the shared perceptions, feelings and attitudes organizational members have about the fundamental elements of the organisation which reflect the established norms, values and attitudes of the organization's culture and influence individuals" behaviour either positively or negatively (Gerber, 2003).

Climate or atmosphere in workplace has impact on employee's motivation, behavior, attitudes and potentials, which, in turn is predicted to influence organizational productivity (Adenike, 2011). In other words, the climate or the organizational climate is considered very important in the life of organizations due to its clear effects and relations to the various regulatory activities. It affects employees" satisfaction and performance and, thus, the success of the organization and its ability to continue (Al-Saudi, 2012). For these reasons, organizational climate has been a topic of

considerable research over the last thirty years, both theoretically and empirically (Dawson et al., 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Organizational Climate

Schneider et al. (2011) conceptualized climate as employees' shared perceptions of organizational events, practices, and procedures. These perceptions are assumed to be primarily descriptive rather than affective or evaluative (Schneider *et al.,* 2011; cited in: Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey, 2013). Organizational climate is the set of measurable properties of the work environment that is either directly or indirectly perceived by the employees who work within the organizational environment that influences and motivates their behaviour (Holloway, 2012). Organizational climate is defined as the recurring patterns of behaviour, attitudes and feelings that characterize life in the organization more related to atmosphere and values (Aiswarya & Ramasundaram, 2012). An organizational climate refers to the values, beliefs that are not visible but exist within the employee's behaviour and action (Moghimi &Subramaniam, 2013). In literature, there is no generally accepted definition of organizational climate. Because it is a complex, multilevel, and multidimensional phenomenon derived from employees" perceptions of their experiences within an organization, stable over time and widely shared within an organizational unit (Dawson, Gonzalez-Roma, Davis & West, 2008). Schneider and Reichers (1983) define organizational climate as a shared or summary perception that people attach to particular features of the work setting. According to Watkin and Hubbard (2003) organizational climate is ''how it feels to work in a particular environment and for a particular boss, more precisely it is a measure of employees' perception of those aspects of their environment that directly impact how well they can do their jobs.

Innovative Work Behaviour

A comparatively new dimension of research emerged in the field of innovation in recent years is individual's future oriented and self-initiated behaviors. These actions are aimed at changing or bringing improvement in one's current situation (Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006). Such behaviors include proactive work behavior and innovative work behaviour (Janssen, 2000). The connotation of innovative behavior is to generate innovative output and benefit to the organization. Employee's behaviors aimed towards making new products, processes and services are included in such behavior (Scott and Bruce, 1994). Innovative work behaviour is more applied in nature as it is to result in innovative output. The two concepts of creativity and IWB are thought to be overlapped and used interchangeably by many researchers (De Jong, 2006). Innovative work behaviour is defined by De Jong (2006) as Individuals' behaviors directed toward the initiation and intentional introduction of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedure within a work role, group or organization.

De Jong (2007: 19) described innovative work behavior (IWB) as "individuals' behaviors directed towards the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group or organization) of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures". According to Baer (2012) and Kanter (1988), IWB refers to the development and initiation of novel and useful ideas and implementing these ideas into new and improved products, services or ways of doing things. Rules and regulations and procedures are not sufficient to ensure effective employee behavior in the workplace; there is always some need for discretionary innovative actions to adapt to new situations and unusual circumstances (Janssen, 2003). Especially the firms operating in

technology domain should be more creative and innovative rather than they did in the past in order to survive, compete, grow and lead (Jung et al., 2003). IWB implies that individuals go beyond the scope of their job requirements to be innovative of their own free will. It includes idea generation as well as the types of behavior needed to implement improvements that will enhance personal and/or business performance. The construct of IWB thus captures both the initiation and implementation of ideas. In doing so, IWB differs from more limited constructs such as employee creativity which focuses on the discovery and generation of ideas (De Jong, 2007). Initiation for idea generation is a divergent phase, including activities such as the recognition of problems and thinking about ways to improve things. This phase results in more suggestions for innovations, such as new products, services or work processes. Implementation is a convergent phase directed towards the development and launch of innovations in order to acquire their benefits (King and Anderson, 2002). King and Anderson (2002), described innovation process as two main phases: initiation and implementation. The dividing line between the two phases is believed to be the point of the first adoption of the innovation; that is, the point at which the decision is made to implement the idea. First phase ends with the generation of the idea and second phase ends with the realization of the idea (King and Anderson, 2002).

Scott and Bruce (1994) first regarded innovative work behavior as a multistage process and stated that innovation consists of multistage and discontinuous activities as idea generation, idea promotion and idea implementation and individuals can be expected to be involved in any combination of these behaviors non sequentially and at any time. Based on in-depth interviews with managers of an R&D facility and drawing on Kanter's (1988) work on the stages of innovation, they developed a six-item scale. Leaving out the transfer task, Scott and Bruce's (1994) measure captures the behaviors of idea generation, coalition building and idea realization as Kanter (1988) stated four major dimensions: idea generation, coalition building, idea realization and transfer. Janssen (2000), referring to Scott and Bruce (1994), he regarded IWB as consisting of three dimensions, namely idea generation, idea promotion and idea implementation.

Innovative work behaviour is generally outlined in the context of how individuals could facilitate the achievement of initiation and intentional introduction of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures (Leong & Rasli, 2014). Innovative work behaviour thus includes behavior of employees that directly and indirectly encourages the development and introduction of innovations on the workplace (Spiegelaere, Gyes, Vandekerckhove & Hootegem, 2012). In current working environment, innovative work behaviour is one of the important factors for organizational growth and development in both private and public sectors (Abdullatif, Johari, & Adnan, 2016). It is aligned with Hakimian, Farid, Ismail and Nair (2016) that innovative work behaviour can be as competitive advantage for an organization.

Innovation is also seen as a various process with different activities and different innovative work behaviour essential at each stage (Ghani, Hussin & Jusoff, 2009). Therefore, an individual can be anticipated to involve in any blends of these behaviours at any particular time (Dörner, 2012). Innovative work behaviour may result from individual reaction toward high work load (Ramamoorthy *et al.,* 2005). Employees try to adapt themselves to the high work load by generating, promoting and implementing ideas to adapt themselves or work environment (Akram, Haider & Feng, 2015). In ensuring efficiency and to absorb the dynamic change in current competitive market, organizations are increasingly relying on the innovativeness of their

employees (Akram *et al.,* 2015). This trend encouraged the organizational scholars to investigate those organizational factors that have a strong impact on the innovative work behaviour of employees (Abdullatif *et al.,* 2016).

Stages in Innovative Work behaviour
The innovation process is made up of two core segments, initiation and implementation. The initiation segment of the innovation process ends as soon as the idea is produced, whereas the implementation phase ends when the idea is implemented (King & Anderson, 2002). Thomas (2006) further added that in the organizational settings, these ideas are usually produced by individuals or teams that are vital for success of organizations. These ideas are cherished by creative thinking, made up of four steps naming; preparation (gathering information, doing analysis, and search solutions); incubation (letting the mind work sub-consciously to carry on the process); illumination (inspiration, when an individual is relaxed and not essentially thinking about the problem, there is a possibility that it can come to individual's mind); and verification (it is about testing the ideas, solutions, obstacles and insights for applicability). Innovation when taken in a broad sense has some important components: generating new ideas and their implementation. According to Thomas (2006) there are three stages of innovation process; naming: Generation of ideas (production of new ideas and improvement of the recent ones); harvesting ideas (gathering, examining and evaluating the ideas); developing and implementing the ideas (study, testing, enhancement and development of the ideas and implementing them).

Individual innovation begins with idea generation that is the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain (Amabile & Rigolizzo, 2015). These ideas are the first task of innovation process and can stem not only from creative ideas that originate within organization but also from the ideas adapted from the existing situation which resulted in innovation as well. Perceived work-related problems, incongruities, discontinuities, and emerging trends are often instigators of the generation of novel ideas (Drucker, 2014). Problems at the existing work flow, insufficient response to customer requests or market trends change can be examples to such instigators (De Jong & Hartog, 2007). Employees respond to these situations with new ideas such as developing new products and services, reengineering the working styles and/or processes (Kanter, 1988 cited in Ömür, 2019).

The next task of the innovation process consists of idea promotion to potential allies. At its core, innovation is a sociopolitical process that can be expected to be resisted by organizational members who are committed to the existing frameworks of thoughts and actions (Janssen, 2003; Kanter, 1988; cited in: Janssen, 2005). Therefore, a worker's innovative behavior is likely to be obstructed by resisting co-workers who have an interest in safeguarding the existing paradigm or who want to avoid the uncertainty and insecurity surrounding change. Taken together, on the basis of literature on resistance to change, co-workers are likely to resist a worker's innovative ideas for change because of their desire to avoid the insecurity and stress surrounding change, their habits and preferences for familiar practices and actions, their wish to reduce cognitive dissonance, and their commitment to the established framework of theories and practices. This resistance to change can be conceived as interpersonal conflict in the sense that the innovative worker who is pushing forward ideas for change is obstructed or irritated by the resisting co-workers who prevent this change. Besides conflict with co-workers, a worker's innovative behavior might also be resisted by other actors in the work environment, such as supervisors,

subordinates or other stakeholders of the organization (Janssen, 2003). That is, once a worker has generated an idea, he or she has to engage in social activities to find friends, backers, and sponsors surrounding an idea, or to build a coalition of supporters who provide the necessary power behind it (Kanter, 1988; cited in: Janssen, 2000).

The final task of the innovation process concerns idea realization by producing a prototype or model of the innovation that can be experienced and ultimately applied within a work role, a group or the total organization (Kanter, 1988 cited in Ömür, 2019). Simple innovations are often completed by individual workers involved, while the accomplishment of more complex innovations usually requires teamwork based on a variety of specific knowledge, competence, and work roles (Kanter, 1988 cited in Ömür, 2019). Additionally, implementation of human resources strategies, administrative policies such as labor health and safety or team work implementations can also be evaluated in terms of innovation. For example, starting a teamwork activity in a public department governed by highly formal rules where many people cannot even communicate each other healthily can also be considered as an innovative practice. Innovations may vary from those that are relatively minor, to those that are of great significance. Some innovations can be introduced in an hour while others may take several years. Some innovations are unplanned and emerge by accident. In contrast some innovations are planned and managed (West, 2002).

Organizational Climate and Innovative Work Behaviour

There are a number of factors which are found to affect innovation. These factors affect individual's innovativeness at different levels. At individual level; personality features, cognitive ability and job features; at the work group level; leadership and work group features and at organizational level; factors included are work organization and organization's environment or climate (De Jong, 2006). Organizational climate was found to be one of the key factors associated with the organization. For the organizations to gain strength and success it is important to build a climate that facilitates and supports creativity. The organization's climate is the frequent patterns of behavior, attitudes and feelings, which are displayed in the daily environment of the organization and the individuals of the organization experience and understand it (Isaksen &Lauer, 1999). Organizational climate has been presented as a multidimensional construct with four dimensions, comprising of autonomy and control, degree of structure, rewards and consideration, and warmth and support (Parker, Baltes, Young, Huff, Altmann, LaCost & Roberts, 2003).

Managers who understand how to positively impact the climate of innovation and work behavior supportive of innovativeness will create the most opportunities for innovation in their organizations which, in turn, may enhance the performance of organizations (Shanker, Bhanugopan, Van der Heijden & Farrell, 2017). can and Karabey (2007) state that human capital plays a major role to succeed and it is so important to establish a workforce in the organization that generates and implements continuously new ideas and it is essential to build a strong organizational climate that supports innovation in order to have this workforce in today's rapidly changing business environment. Innovation can only be nurtured and grow in a climate that encourages the new ideas. Such a climate will work as a tool for focusing employees' attentions on innovation and developing a collective mentality that supports innovation (can & Karabey, 2007).

Cooper and Santora (2008), mentioned that climate for organizational innovation is a useful proxy when it is difficult to get direct behavioral measures of innovation across diverse organizations and industry sectors. Yeoh and Mahmood (2013) and Imran et al. (2010) also found a significant positive relationship between innovative organizational climate and innovative work behavior. Mumford and Gustafson (1988) have argued that organizational innovation also depends on whether the organization has a climate that supports innovation. Even when individuals have developed the capacity for innovation, their willingness to undertake productive efforts may be conditioned by beliefs concerning the consequences of such actions in a given environment. When an organization's culture emphasizes reliable and efficient operations without making any mistakes or is not highly concerned with innovation, employees will be discouraged from taking initiative in their work even if they are given autonomy. In part, this is due to employees fearing potentially negative consequences associated with risky decisions. However, when an organizational culture values initiative and innovative approaches, employees are more likely to take calculated risks, accept challenging assignments and derive intrinsic enjoyment from their work (Yukl, 2009).

CONCLUSION

In today's business world, innovation has become vital in all areas. It has become essential that firms must take place in the market with innovative products and services, also make innovations in business processes in order to be able to adapt to continuously changing conditions, respond to highly diversified customer needs, control the costs and therefore gain sustainable competitive advantage. We may argue that the primary way for the firms of participating in their field of activity with more innovative product and services is to motivate their human resources to innovativeness. Similarly, Imran and Anis-ul-Haque (2011) argued that the organizations willing to maintain their competitive edge foster the innovative work behavior of their employees. Generation and realization of creative ideas in an organization can only be possible if employees at all levels are provided with necessary resources and encouraged for innovation.

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