A Construct on Fostering Innovative Work Behavior through Organizational Creative Climate and Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract
This conceptual paper observes the implication of organizational creative climate (OCC) practice and knowledge sharing (KS) initiative in stimulating individual’s innovative work behavior (IWB). Numerous studies on creative climate, knowledge sharing and innovation focus broader context as well as industry but not on Startups in Malaysia. Even though Startups are classified as an infant in a business development, but it’s proven as an essential factor for economic growth. The degree of an individual’s capability to produce creative and innovative ideas depends heavily on the climate surrounding and also on the knowledge sharing practices. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the influence of OCC and KS in fostering IWB. The proposed framework could function as a new direction for Startups in encouraging individual innovative behavior. It is also enhances theoretical developments by considering KS as mediator variable. Furthermore, it is expected to contribute to creativity and innovative theory.

Keywords: Innovative Work Behavior, Organizational Creative Climate, Knowledge Sharing, Startups.

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Introduction
The Creativity and innovation are gaining more attention in a global context, particularly in Malaysia since it is an important agenda to become a high-income nation in 2020. Creativity is a basis point for innovation in which creative thinking leads to successful implementation of innovation. Generally, innovation is the key to raise greater success either of an organization or a country. According to Global Innovation Index (GII) for 2018, Malaysia was ranked 35th out of 126 countries achieved a score of 43.0, compared to 37th in 2017 which scored 42.7. Interestingly, a study of innovative work behavior (IWB) has been tremendously a favoured issue among researchers, especially in Malaysia for the past few years. Even though, Malaysia has made an improvement in GII, the level of individual IWB in Malaysia is still moderate (Awang et al., 2014;
Hilmi et al., 2012; Sapie et al., 2015; Yunus et al., 2014). To aspire as an innovative country, Malaysia needs to emphasize on world-class mindset where the people should possess creative and innovative thinking.

Entrepreneurship can be described as a combination process of individuals’ creativity and innovative mind set, technology, and financial resources in producing new products and processes in order to enhance business performance and to compete in the market (Phan, Zhou, and Abrahamson, 2010). The participation of entrepreneurs in the Malaysian economy is significant as it is aligned with the vision of becoming a developed nation by 2020. According to Companies Commission of Malaysia (2105), there is an increase in the number of businesses registered with 5.6 million at the end of 2014 compared to 5.3 million in 2013. Clearly the role of entrepreneurship is crucial to the economic development of Malaysia (Ahmad and Xavier, 2012; CCM, 2015) besides creating innovation, employment opportunities and increased country competitiveness (Gurol and Astan, 2006). According to Chandran, Rasiah and Wad (2009), lack of entrepreneurship and innovation culture are causes of low innovation in Malaysia. In addition, Malaysia is suffering from insufficient sources of finance and information on markets as well as technology. Furthermore, lack of talent and insufficient skills are continuing problems faced by Malaysia startup entrepreneurs (MaGIC, 2014). Concerned about these kind of setbacks, Government of Malaysia has taken initiatives in improving the entrepreneurial sector, whereby various agencies of both public and private have been formed in supporting and monitoring business activity specifically startups eco-system.

A vast number of researches have predominantly found significant role of organizational climate in stimulating employee behaviors such as knowledge sharing (Akhavan et al., 2015; Chen, Chuang and Chen, 2012) and innovative work behavior (Balkar, 2015; Shanker and Bhanugopan, 2014; Tastan, 2013). In addition, climate also has powerful effects on various job outcomes such as innovation, productivity, well-being, job satisfaction and quality (Ekvall, 1996). Even though, there are studies on organizational climate, yet, it lacks the extensive study on organizational creative climate (OCC) as the antecedent of IWB (Shanker and Bhanugopan, 2014). The era of knowledge based economy, Kim and Lee (2013) highlighted that individual knowledge sharing (KS) is necessary in promoting individual innovative behavior. Moreover, Radaelli et al. (2014) stressed on the limitation of study examining the link between KS and IWB.

In the literature, many studies have focused on direct relationship, but there is dearth of study on the interconnection between OCC, KS, and IWB. Hence, this research study aims to examine the relationship of organizational creative climate and knowledge sharing in stimulating individual’s innovative work behavior. Also, it is aimed to identify the significant of KS as a mediator between OCC and IWB.

**Literature Review**

**Innovative Work Behavior**

Amabile et al. (1996) defined innovation as “the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization” (p. 1155). In other words, the success of an organization depends on the individual’s creativity in generating new ideas up to the realization of the ideas. Therefore, creative and innovative individuals are crucial in determining the success of the organization.

Over the years, different researchers identify numerous definition of IWB and compose different dimensions. Innovative work behavior is defined as “the intentional introduction and application (within an individual, group, or organization) of ideas, processes, products or procedures which are relevant to the new unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organization or wider society” (West and Farr, 1990). Furthermore, Scott and Bruce (1994) have discovered individual innovative behavior as those who are accountable and reliable in creating novel ideas, responding and improving the proposed ideas, whether in their work role and organization. Actually, the most successful of IWB involves the sequence set of behaviors starting from the generation of ideas until the implementation of the ideas generated.
Kanter (1988) initiated the concept of IWB dimensions called Kanter’s Model, which comprises three distinct dimensions, namely: idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation. Meanwhile, Kleyesen and Street (2001) indicated that IWB was divided into five dimensions comprise of opportunity exploration, generativity, formative investigation, championing, and application of ideas. However, this research study adopted De Jong and Den Hartog’s (2010) dimensions, which comprising of four interrelated behavioral activities, namely: idea exploration, idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation. This recent study indicated two phases of IWB, which are creativity oriented work behavior and implementation work behavior. The activities under creativity oriented work behavior includes exploration of opportunities and the generation of new ideas, while implementation work behavior directed towards promoting the novel idea, and implementing new knowledge or improving processes (p. 5).

This study focuses on IWB as a behavioral concept that formulate social creative environment within organization in boosting individuals IWB. The literature also reveals that numerous studies have been predicted the following three distinct factors: organizational, individual and contextual as prominent antecedents of IWB. For example, from organizational factors such as HR practices, learning organization, organizational supports, and organizational culture is related to IWB (Agarwal, 2014; Ma Prieto and Pilar Perez-Santana, 2014; Park et al., 2014; Tastan, 2015; Wojtczuk-Turek and Turek, 2013). Recently, there has been a growing interest in examining the individual personality differences towards IWB particularly focused on self-efficacy (Momeni, Ebrahimpour and Ajirloo, 2014; Nisula and Kianto, 2015), proactive goal generation (Odoardi, 2015), and self-leadership (Carmeli, Meitar and Weisberg, 2006). In a contextual factor, past researchers have revealed that job standardization, job autonomy, and job resources significantly affect IWB through increase level involvement (Bysted, 2013; Luoh, Tsaur, and Tang, 2014). Further, many researchers have studied on the role of leadership and its importance as a driving force for IWB (Rahim et al., 2015; Shunlong and Weiming, 2012; Szczpanska-Woszczy, 2015), as well as the significance of leader-member exchange on the IWB (Agarwal et al., 2012; June and Kheng, 2013; Stoffers et al., 2014; Xerri, 2012). Drawing from Scott and Bruce (1994) statement, “the study of what motivates or enables individual behavior is critical (p. 580), this study further explores in depth the antecedents of IWB particularly OCC and KS.

Organizational Creative Climate
The creative and innovative climate is pivotal as it has a stronger influence on the performance of individual and organization (Suguna, 2013). As proposed by (Ekvall, 1996), the climate is classified as a determinant of innovation. He also defined organizational climate as “a conglomerate of attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that characterizes life in the organization and exists independently of the perceptions and understandings of the members of the organizations” (p. 105). Furthermore, Campbell et al. (1970) defines OC as “a set of attributes specific to a particular organization that may be induced from the way the organization deals with its members and its environment”. Since employees spend one-third a day at the workplace, it is good to have a favorable working environment. Consequently, the harmonious climate will encourage the individual to become a creative thinker, and problem solver that leads him/her to produce innovative ideas, process, and products.

Knowledge Sharing
Knowledge is a vital asset in human capital. Patterson (2002) mentioned, knowledge factor as a positive force in creating innovative individuals besides intelligence, motivation and personality. However, the existence alone is not sufficient for individuals and organization without fully utilized it. Therefore, the activities of sharing knowledge and exchanging information should be practiced in the organization. As a result, innovation process such as problem identification and idea generation could become faster.
According to O’Dell and Grayson (1998), knowledge management refers to a multiple process of boosting organizational competitiveness by identifying, generating, sharing and fully utilizing the knowledge. Knowledge sharing is one of the crucial activities as it is viewed as the main pillar/center/middle in knowledge management (Reige, 2005). Knowledge sharing is defined as a social culture where individuals interact and exchange knowledge, experiences, and skills with one another within the department or organization (Kim and Lee, 2013). Similarly, Van den Hooff et al. (2003) describes knowledge sharing as a blending process where individuals exchange their tacit and explicit knowledge and also work closely in creating a new knowledge. Thus, reviewing the literature on KS descriptions exposes that knowledge will be benefited and valued where the input is disseminated, exchanged, transferred, and integrated throughout the group of people.

Organizational Creative Climate and Innovative Work Behavior

Both personal qualities and work environment are pivotal facets in stimulating individual creativity and innovative work behavior (Munir and Beh, 2016). Furthermore, empirical studies found that organizational climate has a pronounced impact in developing IWB (Balkar, 2015; Imran et al., 2010; Sagnak, 2012; Shanker and Bhanugopan, 2014; Tastan, 2013).

Moussa (2014) conducted a study on the relationship between creative organizational climate and innovation capability at 52 companies operating in three priority industrial sectors (food, mechanical and metallurgical, & electric and electronic) in Tunisia. The findings reveal that creative organizational climate is significantly related to innovation capability, where 65% of innovation capability is explained by creative climate. It is also found that the level of employees’ resistance towards changes in the organization is lower if more creative organizational climate takes place or applied. Similarly, a study by Suliman (2001) found the work climate as the predictor in influencing employees’ readiness to innovate. Employees who are embedded in creative climate is predicted to exhibit more in IWBs (Radaelli et al., 2014). Furthermore, Ren and Zhang (2015) studied the extent of the relationship between job stressors and organizational innovation climate on employees’ innovative behavior in China. Based on the findings, organizational innovation climate was positively associated with both stages of IWB, idea generation and idea implementation. Also, the findings indicate that innovation climate was more strongly influenced on implementation of ideas and less influenced on the generation of ideas. Notably, these findings confirm a work of Axtell et al. (2000) where organizational characteristics had a stronger effect to idea implementation than to idea generation. Nevertheless, when the level of hindrance stressor is high, there is the weak positive relationship between innovation climate and innovative behavior. Besides that, Shanker and Bhanugopan (2014) also claimed that climate for innovation significantly positively correlated with three distinct dimensions of IWB: idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization.

Drawing from the review of existing literature on the OCC and IWB research area, it can be summarized that the harmonious climate role in individual’s innovative behavior is worth examining in depth. In addition, studies investigating the relationship between these two variables are scant. Most studies did not examine the organizational creative climate per se. For example, most of the study in Malaysia investigated leaderships (Ebrahim et al., 2015; Hakimian et al., 2014, Rahim et al., 2015) as antecedents of IWB. Thus, the hypothesis is as follows:

H1: There is a relationship between organizational creative climate and innovative work behavior.

Organizational Creative Climate and Knowledge Sharing

Organizational climate plays a significant role in shaping employees’ behavior. As sharing knowledge process happens when both the sender and receiver agree to exchange their experience, skills, events and thinking (Yassin et al., 2011), hence organizational climate can influence individual perception of knowledge management (Chen and Huang, 2007).

According to Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010), organizational climate can support active knowledge sharing. However, Yih-Tong Sun and Scoot (2005) claimed that the knowledge sharing activities might be pointless where two ways of communication is not practiced. Studies by Chen
et al., (2012); Mooghali (2012); Villamizar Reyes and Castaneda Zapata (2014) have reported organizational climate significantly related knowledge sharing. Past studies also showed that dimension of creative climate such as trust (Ding et al., 2013; Staplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010; Wang et al., 2014), job involvement (Teh and Sun, 2012), conflict (Lu et al., 2011), disagreement (Van Voerkom and Sanders, 2010) have relationships with knowledge sharing. Nonetheless, Wang and Noe’s (2010) reviewed that studies on organizational creative climate on knowledge sharing are still limited and further research is needed. Thus, the hypothesis is developed as follows: 

H2: There is a relationship between organizational creative climate and knowledge sharing.

Knowledge Sharing and Innovative Work Behavior

Knowledge sharing is interconnected with organizational innovation through the employees’ learning process and socialization. Accordingly, knowledge sharing and skill transformation activities are crucial for the development of innovation systems that ultimately have extraordinary impact for the organization (Chandran et al., 2009; Mooradian et al., 2006). Indeed, knowledge-based activities are considered to have a greater implication on innovation (Rasiah and Yap, 2015; Islam, Jantan, Khan, Rahman, & Monshi, 2018). Thus, the significance of knowledge sharing in the entrepreneurship sector has been seen as a supporting tool in the entrepreneurial action particularly at the beginning stage.

Recently, a number of authors were interested in examining the relationships between KS and IWB (Akhavan et al., 2015; Mura, et al., 2013). A study by Radaelli et al. (2014) indicated that KS positively related to IWB. They also found that the antecedents of KS: ability to share, motivation to share, and opportunity to share are positively associated with an IWB. In another investigation, Kim and Lee (2013) conducted a study on the relationship of goal orientation, knowledge sharing and innovative behavior among 418 hotel workers in Korea. It was found that both types of knowledge sharing behavior significantly positively related to employee innovative behavior. The results also reveal that knowledge collecting had a stronger influence than knowledge donating on employee innovative behavior. Based on past literatures, the hypothesis is as follows:

H3: There is a relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior.

Organizational Creative Climate, Knowledge Sharing and Innovative Work Behavior

Even though there is a rich literature discussing on the IWB, unfortunately few researchers have investigated the association of CC KS and IWB particularly in Malaysia. Moreover, Luoh et al. (2014) suggested that KS be explored as a moderating effect. In Lu et al.’s (2011) study on the effects between task conflict and relationship conflicts with three distinct workplace behavior: innovative behavior, knowledge sharing and organizational citizenship behavior. The results show that task conflict is positively affected to innovative behavior and knowledge sharing behavior, while relationship conflict is negatively affected to both innovative work behavior and knowledge sharing. Another study by Kim and Lee (2013) found that two types of knowledge sharing behavior (knowledge collecting and knowledge donating) fully mediate the relationship between goal orientation and employee service innovative behavior. Several studies have also used KS as a mediator such as in the relationship between organizational social factors and employee performance (Park et al., 2015), and between functional diversity and team innovation (Cheung et al., 2016). Given a limited research on KS as a mediator, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H4: Knowledge sharing will mediate the relationship between Organizational creative climate and innovative work behaviour.

Proposed Research Framework

From the literature review, this present research attempts to propose a conceptual model of antecedents in boosting innovative work behavior as shown in Figure 1. As mentioned earlier, most studies did not integrate creative climate, knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior in Startups context.
This research study mainly investigating on Startups context, which focusing on creative climate and knowledge sharing in stimulating innovative work behavior. The sampling frame of this study will be drawn from two different sectors, namely: manufacturing and service sector. The population would be Startups as participants in the MAGIC, MIGHT, SME CORP, 1MET, PUNB, and TERAJU PROGRAMME as well as the members of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM). A set of questionnaire will be distributed to entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial members of Startups in Malaysia. A pretesting and pilot study would be conducted in determining the reliability and validity of instruments. Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) will be applied for analysing the data.

Conclusions
In conclusion, this study extends the exploration of creativity and innovation by examining the significance of creative climate and knowledge sharing in fostering innovative work behavior of Startups in Malaysia. In addition, the dearth of studies conducted on knowledge sharing acts as a mediator between creative climate and innovative work behavior.

The outcome of this study would give new insight to Startups in utilizing creative and innovative people to compete in the marketplace. Business practitioners can also benefit from this study by understanding on how and which dimensions of organizational creative climate are more favorable to employees’ innovative work behavior in order to enhance the business performance. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research study would provide a major contribution to a new body of knowledge, particularly on organizational creative climate, knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior specifically in the context of Startups.

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