

Entrepreneurial Leadership and Creativity in Projects: A Moderated-Mediation Mechanism

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership (EL) and creativity in projects. Additionally, the study also examines the mediating effect of innovative work behavior (IWB) and the moderating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE). Employing a questionnaire survey, the researcher collected 210 responses. Multiple regression was used to analyze the data. The results of the study demonstrate a positive relationship between EL and creativity in projects. Furthermore, IWB partially mediates the relationship between EL and creativity in projects. The results also suggest that ESE moderates the relationship between EL and IWB. Theoretical and practical implications of the current study are highlighted at the end of the paper.

KEYWORDS

Creativity in Projects (CIP), Entrepreneurial Leadership (EL), Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a versatile process which includes all the steps from identifying a specific goal to motivating and supporting the employees'/team members to achieve that goal (Chen, 2020). It is a soft skill which does not teach what to think but definitely enlighten how to think in a specific situation (Anning, 2018). During the last fifteen years, a number of theories regarding leadership have been emerged including charismatic, transformational, visionary and inspirational, which focused on the exceptional abilities of the leader (Bednall et al., 2018). According to the study of Laguna (2019), there is no single leadership style that can be claimed as best suited for all the situations; the success of a leader depends upon the ability to adapt a leadership style according to the requirement of the time.

Leadership style matters a lot in managing a project and can result in increased output and sustainability (Zaech, 2017). An effective style of leadership is required for projects because the limited- time nature and diverse team members makes them less committed and interested, hence giving rise to mismanagement, conflict and miscommunication (Xie, 2018). Leadership in projects is a combination of management and leadership, where as a leader, achieving objectives is the focus and as a leader, influencing, guiding and directing are the emphasis (Leitch, 2013).

It is important to have a strategic advantage (difficult for competitors to copy) for the long-term sustainability of the firms, which can be accomplished with a creative approach to supposed (Tlaiss,

DOI: 10.4018/IJCRMM.2022010104

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2019). Many have agreed that Entrepreneurial Leadership (EL) is of considerable value for dominant firms (Paudel, 2018). On the word of Kim (2017) and Bagheri (2018), EL creates unique goals for the organizations that are innovative and creative and endorse a sense of risk taking.

In the present age of innovation, there is an increasing demand of the innovative work in the behaviors of the team members and creativity (Pradhan, 2019). Thus leaders need to know ways of producing innovative work behavior (IWB) at individual level, no doubt the collective move will attain the novelty and creativity in the projects that may consequently gain the attraction and satisfaction of customers as well as move a step ahead of the competitors (Javed et al., 2017).

This research aims to explain Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the process by which EL influence the IWB of employees (Mokhber et al., 2016; Afsar, 2017). This theory has established the connection among individual features, behavioral factors and environmental factors (Ng, 2016). According to SCT, employees with a high degree of self-efficacy perform riskier and tougher tasks than persons with low self-efficacy who views the problem as unpredictable and risky (Jaiswal, 2015). Hmieleski (2008) has shown that self-efficacy, in particular Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), improves IWB and creativity for workers (Newman, 2019). As the researchers studied leadership literature, they found that leadership practices begin in the business world and investigated a bivariate correlation that this will be insufficient without recognizing the corporate context in which organizational creativity is concerned (Tabassi et al., 2016). It is therefore important to recognize and analyze factors that can influence organizational innovation with leadership behaviors (Bani, 2018). Drawing from the previous literature, (Newman, 2019) verifies that ESE may improve the association of Entrepreneurial Leaders and IWB. Additionally, the prior studies show little attention in exploring the moderating role of ESE (Chen, 2017), this study would be insightful in exploring the impact of EL on IEB and taking ESE as moderating variable and that eventually extending the current knowledge gap. Based on the rational and justification, from the studies of Pradhan, (2019), Nasifoglu et al., (2020), and Yang et al., (2019), the present study thus, designed to examine the role of EL on CIP with a mediated-moderation effect of ESE and IWB, so the roles of the predictor variables may stimulate and encourage creativity in highly complex and competitive manners.

Contribution of the Study

This study extends the literature of project management in the following ways. The previous studies explored the connection between participatory leadership and employee creativity through a mediator and moderator model that is emotional safety and creative route commitment (Chen, 2020). Nasifoglu (2020) conceptualized the model to form the connection between High performance work practices and competitive advantage through mediation-moderation effect of IWB and employee creativity. Moreover, Li (2020) also examined the existing theory with new variables such as connection between EL and IWB with organizational innovative environment that is ESE between EL and IWB. Keeping the notion behind the mentioned studies and their recommendations, the current study hence, extended the existing body of knowledge through novelty in the theoretical model where EL is examined with CIPs through IWB and then tested ESE as a moderated variable to determine the relation between EL and IWB. This model has not yet studied in the past thus the study will help the leaders/managers in finding out the ways of producing creativity in projects.

The problem that has already been explored by Pradhan (2019) in his study conducted in manufacturing firms in Eastern India that most of the projects became failure due to the inability of the leaders/managers that they can't use their effective leadership skills to gain creativity in projects. Thus, the similar issue has been addressed in Pakistani context.

Various statistical techniques and tools that were employed to check the relationship among the variables that were sampling technique, simple regression analysis, sample size, and measurement scales, yet very few studies have been done to adopt all the stated techniques in a single study. Thus, the current study has also gain its methodological contribution where the scales were checked through the measurement models, and the relations were tested using Preacher and Hayes (2004) moderation-mediation model with SMART PLS.

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