Chapter 2
Employee Creativity to Deliver Organizational Performance Improvements:
A Multiple Case Study Research Design

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to present an empirical model aimed to explore relationships among the elements within the process of employee creativity as driver for organizational performance improvement. The analysis employs a multiple case study research design, focusing on four organizations. The results derive approaches to improving organizational performance. Those approaches' characteristics are: an emphasis on openness to experience in developing novel ideas; the prevalence of creative self-efficacy on the creative behavior. A mutual combination of these characteristics leads to four possible outcomes, pictured in a 2 × 2 matrix as approaches to improving organizational performance. The proposed research design can be used to analyse how changing the form of skill and ability facilitates improvements of organizational performance. The chapter concludes with discussions and limitations, proposing a future research agenda.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological development and intense global competition have made organizations increasingly reliant on creativity to survive and succeed (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst, & Cooper, 2014). In this dynamic and competitive environment, organizations face the challenge of fostering creativity and innovation in order to enhance performances (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). In this context, innovation and creativity represent fundamental drivers to best enhance and support the success of organizations (Wang, Rode, Shi, Luo, & Chen, 2013).

Therefore, in order to improve organizational performance, organizations must promote creative behavior among their employees (Herrmann & Felfe, 2013). This involves the need to use and analyze factors and elements able both to improve the understanding about the employee creativity and to provide useful insights for improving organizational performance. From a research perspective, the challenge for business and managerial science research lies in developing a literature review and empirical applications in order to propose more rigorous approaches, useful for organizational performance improvement.

Although some theoretical contributions have stressed several antecedents of employee creativity as a key-value drivers for organizational performance, there is still a need for a better understanding of the approaches for the identification of the relationships among the elements within the process of employee creativity as driver for organizational performance improvement.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore relationships among the elements within the process of employee creativity as driver for organizational performance improvement. Two research questions lead the research:

1. What are the relations between the components of employee creativity?
2. How these relationships enhance organizational performance?

This chapter responds to the questions and present a multiple case study approach, in order to studies the impact of employee creativity in organizational performance in four companies. The proposed method provides an easy and useful tool for leaders dealing with addressing complex problems with innovative solutions and fostering employee creativity. From an interpretive point of view, the model points at the paths grounding the performance improvement of organizations. On the other hand, the model can inspire the definition of guidelines driving the design and implementation of actions aimed to stimulate employee creativity in a dynamic environment. The proposed method adopts the perspective that employee creativity, in the forms of organizational performance, is the driver of innovative processes and outputs. Specifically, the authors adopt the notion of employee creativity concept to

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