



**MANAGERIAL CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR IN TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study examined managerial cultural intelligence and innovative work behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria: the moderating effect of psychological empowerment. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population for this study was 283 supervisors in four major telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of 166 was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using partial correlation to test the moderating effect. Findings revealed that psychological empowerment significantly moderate the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and innovative work behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. This highlights the critical role of psychological empowerment as a catalyst that can either amplify or diminish the effects of managerial cultural intelligence on fostering innovative work behavior. Thus, the study recommends that management of telecommunication companies should involve employees in the decision-making process and seek their input and ideas. This can be achieved through regular team meetings, brainstorming sessions, and employee suggestion programs. By including employees in decision-making, organizations tap into their diverse perspectives and enhance their sense of psychological empowerment, thereby fostering a conducive environment for innovation.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural Intelligence, Innovative Work Behaviour, Psychological Empowerment*

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## INTRODUCTION

Employee innovative work behavior is of great importance for organizations as it contributes to their competitive advantage and long-term success (De Jong and Den Hartog (2010). This behavior allows organizations to adapt to changing market conditions, enhance their productivity and efficiency, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Employee innovative work behavior refers to the extent to which employees engage in creative and innovative activities within their work roles (Bin Saeed, Afsar, Shahjeha & Imad Shah, 2019). It involves generating and implementing novel ideas, suggestions, and solutions to improve work processes, products, or services. Furthermore, it enables organizations to stay ahead of their competitors by developing new products, services, and business strategies. The authors argue that fostering employee innovative work behavior requires a supportive organizational climate that encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and idea sharing. It also necessitates providing employees with the necessary resources, training, and autonomy to engage in innovative activities.

Managerial cultural intelligence, on the other hand, refers to the ability of managers to effectively navigate and adapt to cultural differences in the workplace. It involves having knowledge of different cultural norms, values, and practices, as well as the ability to apply this knowledge in a way that fosters collaboration and innovation. The study by Shafait et al. (2021) suggests that when managers possess high levels of cultural intelligence and create an empowering work environment, employees are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors. This is because psychological empowerment provides individuals with the confidence and motivation to take risks, generate new ideas, and contribute to the overall innovation of the organization. The

combination of managerial cultural intelligence and psychological empowerment creates a synergistic effect, leading to enhanced innovative work behavior among employees

Psychological empowerment plays a crucial role in enhancing the effects of managerial cultural intelligence on innovative work behavior. According to Shafait et al. (2021), psychological empowerment refers to the individual's perception of having control over their work and the ability to make meaningful contributions. It encompasses four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. When employees feel empowered in their work, they are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors.

Psychological empowerment promotes workers' increased job confidence (Jin & Da 2012). They believe that behavior is the most significant aspect in an organization's success. Despite organizational constraints, these individuals are enthusiastic and optimistic when it comes to communicating fresh and innovative ideas. Employees that exhibit psychological empowerment are also more likely to use professional judgment when confronted with unanticipated challenges (Lee & Nie, 2013). Employee psychological empowerment in a company is intended to ensure that the organization's Total Quality Management (TQM) is maintained. To achieve TQM, managers must instill courage and trust in their staff, which can be accomplished through organizational psychological empowerment (Thamizhmanii & Hasan, 2010). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the moderating effect of psychological empowerment on the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and innovative work behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria.

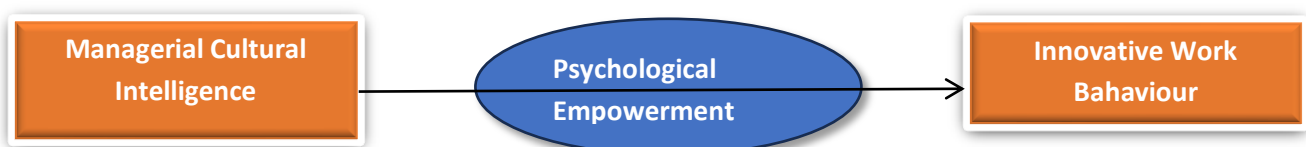


Figure 1: Research conceptual model

Source: Desk Research (2023)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

#### Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory

The theory was developed and advanced by Yun Kim who contended that adapting to a new culture when confronted with one, consequently leads to new thoughts, that assist an individual to be multicultural (Kim, 2017). The theory maintains that all human experience conforms as they shift to a new cultural environment (Kim, 2017). The capability to deal with the stress associated with uncertainty and ambiguity in a cultural environment that is new will produce better cultural adaptability. Culturally intelligent managers can perform better due to their capability of adapting to a new cultural setting (Kumar, Rose and Subramaniam, 2008).

Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory (CCAT) is a framework that explains how individuals adapt to a new culture. According to LE Anderson (1994), the theory posits that individuals go through a series of stages when adapting to a new culture, including the honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment and adaptation stages. In the honeymoon stage, individuals experience excitement and curiosity about the new culture. However, the negotiation stage is characterized by frustration and anxiety as individuals encounter cultural differences that they do not understand. During the adjustment stage, individuals begin to understand and accept cultural differences. Finally, in the adaptation stage, individuals become comfortable with the new culture and can function effectively in it. The CCAT also highlights the role of communication in the adaptation process. Communication competence is crucial for successful cross-cultural adaptation, as it allows individuals to understand and effectively communicate with members of the new culture. In conclusion, the Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals adapt to a new culture, and highlights the importance of effective communication in the adaptation process.

This theory provides insight of how cultural intelligence contributes to employee performance by providing emphasis that to adapt successfully in a different environment than the one a person is used to, requires the focus of acquiring new cultural communication processes, being culturally aware and be willing to put aside original practices. A successful adaptation in local culture reduces strain and stress, which in turn may improve employee performance (Kraimer, Wayne and Jaworski, 2001; Ramalu et al., 2010; Ramalu, Wei and Rose, 2011). People with cultural intelligence that is high are expected to perform in their job better as they are more able of adapting themselves in a cultural situation that is new (Tsai and Lawrence, 2011; Ramalu et al., 2011).

Similarly, motivational cultural intelligence aids in adaption in culture because individuals with higher motivational CQ have an intrinsic interest in other cultures and expect to be successful in culturally diverse situations (Ang et al., 2007). An individual who is behaviorally more intelligent is capable of varying his behavior which helps them to adapt to the culturally different environment and they have a sense of fitting in a particular situation (Ang et al., 2007) which in turn enhances their performance.

The theory indicates similarities to CQ because they both describe the ability of an individual to adapt to various cultural settings (Earley, Ang & Tan, 2006). Successful adaptation is one of the vital competencies of culturally intelligent individuals which is also like what adaptation theory represents. Finally, CQ is one of the important elements of successful interactions of managers in global markets (Alon & Higgins, 2005) because it is related positively to cross-cultural adaptation outcomes (Templer, Tay & Chandrasekar, 2006; Ward, Wilson & Fischer, 2011).

#### Managerial Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence (CQ) originates from the need to understand effectiveness in an intercultural social context (Pauluzzo, 2021). Cultural intelligence is a person's "capability for successful adaptation to

new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context” (Kistyanto, Rahman, Adhar Wisandiko & Setyawati, 2022). High cultural intelligence refers to a person’s ability to generate new interpretations and behavior in a culture where his/her learned cues and behaviors do not fit. Cultural intelligence helps individuals to accomplish understanding, and address misunderstandings effectively (Presbitero, 2016). There are different conceptualizations of cultural intelligence. According to Kistyanto, Rahman, Adhar Wisandiko & Setyawati (2022), cultural intelligence comprises of three components (cognitive, motivational, and behavioral). In order to achieve high cultural intelligence, an individual must possess all components simultaneously but how these components interact with each other was not specified. Moreover, metacognitive and cognitive components were described jointly in Earley and Ang (2003) conceptualization of CQ. Later on, Ang *et al.* (2007) proposed that CQ has four components (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral). Metacognitive CQ refers to an individual’s conscious cultural awareness and a general know-how of different cultures (Dogra, 2018).

Kistyanto, Rahman, Adhar Wisandiko and Setyawati (2022) defined cultural intelligence as an individual capacity to work and effectively manage social interactions in different cultural settings. It is a specific form of intelligence focused on the ability to learn, evaluate and behave effectively in different situations characterized by cultural diversity (Ng, Ang & Rockstuhl, 2022). This multi-dimensional construct enables the individual to learn continuously and have a better coexistence with people of other cultures. It consists of four bases of “intelligence”: meta-cognitive, which refers to the awareness that individuals have for interactions with individuals of different cultures; cognitive, which refers to the specific knowledge one has about the rules, habits and conventions in new cultural backgrounds; motivational, that captures the motivation that an individual has to

learn and act effectively in various situations; and behavioural, conceptualized as the flexibility of an individual to demonstrate appropriate actions with individuals from other cultural contexts (Akpan & Inyang, 2022).

In cross-cultural interactions, metacognitive CQ helps individuals to adapt to unfamiliar cultural values, norms, and beliefs and makes them proactive and flexible to learn quickly about the new cultures without being bounded by their own previous cultural knowledge (Min, Kim & Agrusa, 2023). Cognitive CQ is “knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultures that has been acquired from educational and personal experiences” (Ang *et al.*, 2007). Cognitive CQ specifies an individual’s solid knowledge of cultural similarities and differences. Motivational CQ refers to an individual’s interest in learning about new situations and cultures and enjoyment in interacting with diverse people. Behavioral CQ represents an individual’s ability to take appropriate verbal or non-verbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures (Ott & Michailova, 2018).

Similarly, CQ may serve as an important antecedent of work-related outcomes particularly in the multinational work environment. CQ originates from the need to understand effectiveness in an intercultural social context (Earley and Ang, 2003). CQ is a person’s “capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context” (Earley and Ang, 2003, p. 9). High CQ refers to a person’s ability to generate new interpretations and behavior in a culture where his/her learned cues and behaviors do not fit. CQ helps individuals to accomplish understanding, and address misunderstandings effectively (Presbitero, 2016). There are different conceptualizations of CQ. According to Earley and Ang (2003), CQ comprises of three components (cognitive, motivational, and behavioral). In order to achieve high CQ, an individual must possess all components simultaneously but how these components interact with each other was not specified.

### **Employee Innovative Work Behaviour**

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 behaviour of employees that directly and indirectly encourages the development and introduction of innovations on the workplace (Spiegelaere, Gyes, Vandekerckhove, & Hootegeem, 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.

De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) described innovative work behaviour (IWB) as individuals' behaviours 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 behaviour in the workplace; there is always some need for discretionary innovative actions to adapt to new situations and unusual circumstances (Janssen, 2003).

### **Concept of Psychological Empowerment**

Psychological empowerment is defined as the perception that drives an employee to take an active role in controlling and influencing work (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995; Stander and Rothmann 2009). It is linked to employees' views, which influence their attitudes and behaviors at work (Askel, Serinkan, Kiziloglu, & Aksoy, 2013). It has to do with employee motivation and dedication to their employment. The

organization's comfort environment, which is cultivated by the organization, influences these attitudes (Spreitzer, 1995; Wang & Lee 2016). The key principle of psychological empowerment is to pay attention to how people perceive their experiences and to comprehend their job obligations (Spreitzer, 2008).

Psychological empowerment promotes workers' increased job confidence (Jin & Da 2012). They believe that behavior is the most significant aspect in an organization's success. Despite organizational constraints, these individuals are enthusiastic and optimistic when it comes to communicating fresh and innovative ideas. Employees that exhibit psychological empowerment are also more likely to use professional judgment when confronted with unanticipated challenges (Lee & Nie, 2013). Employee psychological empowerment in a company is intended to ensure that the organization's Total Quality Management (TQM) is maintained. To achieve TQM, managers must instill courage and trust in their staff, which can be accomplished through organizational psychological empowerment (Thamizhmanii & Hasan, 2010).

### **Meaning**

According to Spreitzer and Quinn (1997), meaning is defined as the value employees assign to their jobs in accordance with their beliefs and standards, as well as the fit between the requirements of a task or work goal set by the organization and the job's own personal values or ideas (Spreitzer, 1995). A work goal's monetary value in relation to an individual's personal ideals is what it is called (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

According to Brief and Nord (1990), meaning is a match between an employee's beliefs, values, and behaviours and the demands of his or her work role. In sense, when employees do not believe their work is important, they are more likely to be apathetic and less willing to participate in the commitment's events. They are also more likely to be distracted from their work tasks (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). When employees believe that their job responsibilities are important, they are

more likely to put forth more effort in understanding problems from multiple perspectives and searching for different solutions using information from a variety of sources, according to research (Gilson & Shalley 2004; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Amenumey and Lockwood (2008) describe meaning of work as intrinsic concern for a specific job, and employees believe that this is one of three critical psychological states of intrinsic motivation.

### **Impact**

Impact describes a belief that individual employee can influence the system in which they are embedded (Spreitzer, 1995). Impact meant that whether employees believe they are able to make a difference in their organization. In other words, impact is the degree to which employees can influence organization strategy, administrative or operating outcomes at work (Krishna, 2007). Thomas & Velthouse (1990) on the other hand, defines impact cognition as the perception that one's behavior has an effect on one's task environment. Additionally, they argue that impact cognition is the perception of environmental resistance to personal impact regardless of ability. Impact cognition is therefore distinct from competence cognition where a person feels that they could perform if given the opportunity.

In terms of psychological empowerment, impact has been referred to as the converse of learned helplessness in a work setting (Spreitzer, 1995). Ashforth (1989) suggests that impact is the ability to influence work outcomes, whether strategic, administrative, or operational. The effect of impact on nonstandard workers is less clear than the other psychological empowerment cognitions. However,

Ashforth (1989) argues that a lack of opportunity for impact at work is negatively related to employee satisfaction and commitment to their duties and hence low productivity. This follows that when impact exists, employees would feel that they could perform better and have significant influence in the organization.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population for this study was 283 supervisors in four major telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of 166 was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The research instrument was validated by supervisors' vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level.

### **RESULTS**

The multivariate analysis in this section examines the assumed role of psychological environment as a moderator in the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative behaviour of telecommunications companies in South-South, Nigeria. The Decision rule is that if the difference between the zero-order correlation and the controlled correlation  $< 0.01$ , then there is no significant difference, and the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 1: Partial Correlations for the moderating effect of Impact**

Control Variables			Managerial Cultural Intelligence	Employee Innovative Behaviour	Impact
-none <sup>a</sup>	Managerial Cultural Intelligence	Correlation	1.000	.964	.950
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	136	136
	Employee Innovative Behaviour	Correlation	.964	1.000	.950
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	136	0	136
	Impact	Correlation	.950	.950	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		Df	136	136	0
Impact	Managerial Cultural Intelligence	Correlation	1.000	.637	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		Df	0	135	
	Employee Innovative Behaviour	Correlation	.637	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		Df	135	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Impact as a dimension of psychological empowerment does not significantly moderate the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative work behaviour.

From a critical look at the zero partial correlation, the study found that the relationship both between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative work behaviour are positively correlated with impact as a dimension of psychological empowerment, as the control variable. Removing the effect of this control variable reduced the

correlation between the other two variables to be 0.964 and significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Since the difference between the zero-order correlation and the controlled correlation  $(0.964 - 0.637) = 0.327 > 0.01$ ; hence from the decision rule, there is a significant difference and thus the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that impact as a dimension of psychological empowerment has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative work behaviour of telecommunications companies in South-South, Nigeria.



**Table 2: Partial Correlations for the moderating effect of meaning**

Control Variables			Managerial Cultural Intelligence	Employee Innovative Behaviour	Meaning
-none <sup>a</sup>	Managerial Cultural Intelligence	Correlation	1.000	.964	.897
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	136	136
	Employee Innovative Behaviour	Correlation	.964	1.000	.901
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	136	0	136
Meaning	Correlation	.897	.901	1.000	
	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	
	Df	136	136	0	
Meaning	Managerial Cultural Intelligence	Correlation	1.000	.815	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		df	0	135	
	Employee Innovative Behaviour	Correlation	.815	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		df	135	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

**Ho<sub>11</sub>:** Meaning as a dimension of psychological empowerment does not significantly moderate the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative work behaviour.

From a critical look at the zero partial correlation, the study found that the relationship both between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative work behaviour are positively correlated with meaning a dimension of psychological empowerment, as the control variable. Removing the effect of this control variable reduced the correlation between the other two variables to be 0.964 and significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Since the difference between the zero-order correlation and the controlled correlation  $(0.964 - 0.815) = 0.149 > 0.01$ ; hence from the decision rule, there is a significant difference and thus the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that meaning a dimension of psychological empowerment has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative work behaviour of telecommunications companies in South-South, Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that psychological empowerment significantly moderate the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and employee innovative behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. This finding agrees the results of Kaur and Mittal (2020) who investigated the relationship between the meaningfulness of one's work, employee engagement, and affective commitment in the workplace and found that there is a positive relationship between the meaningfulness of one's work, employee engagement, and affective commitment. Also, the finding is consistent with Naser and Afnan (2013) who found that empowerment has become a component of business thinking. The findings of this study is that employees in Jordanian private hospitals perceive themselves as highly empowered and experience a high level of satisfaction. In addition, the results indicated that 56% of the variation in employee satisfaction results from the implementation of psychological empowerment. The results also supported the proposition that employee psychological empowerment leads to higher

satisfaction in Jordanian hospitals. The study recognizes the need to continue the implementation of psychological empowerment.

Similarly, Kaur and Mittal (2020) carried out a study on meaningfulness of Work and Employee Engagement: The Role of Affective Commitment. The main purpose of this research was to study the relationship between meaningfulness of work, employee engagement, and affective commitment. The findings of the given study confirmed a positive relationship between meaningfulness of work, employee engagement, and affective commitment.

Furthermore, the finding agrees with the result of Fürstenberg, Alfes and Shantz (2020) who carried out a study on meaningfulness of work and supervisory-rated job performance and found that that meaningfulness was positively and significantly associated with promotive voice behaviors. It is noteworthy that meaningfulness is directly and significantly related to supervisory-rated job performance. Moreover, our results revealed a significant indirect effect of meaningfulness on job performance ratings through promotive voice behaviours.

This study's finding also provides empirical support to the finding of Britt, Adler and Bartone (2001) and Britt, Dickinson, Castro, and Adler (2007) who examined meaningfulness in the context of military work and defined and measured it as a combination of being engaged in important work during the course of military operations and experiencing events during the course of deployment that set the deployment in a broader context. McCarthy and Friedman (2006) focused on meaningful work in the context of a nursing home, defining it as acts that lead to a sense of achievement and interaction with residents. These studies raise important questions about the comparability of the experience of meaningfulness across occupational groups.

The current finding also is in alignment with the finding of Insan (2012) who carried out a study to

investigate the impact of empowerment on organizational commitment and job satisfaction of employees of the national electricity company and found a significant effect of the empowerment on the organizational commitment. In Nigeria Adekunle, Samuel, Olugbenga and Kehinde (2014) carried out a study on the personal characteristics and training opportunities as determinants of organizational commitment among Nigeria national parks' employees. They found out that although the employees had greater opportunities for training, their organizational commitment level was low. There were significant but weak correlations between organizational commitment and training opportunities. They proposed that for a more comprehensive understanding of other possible determinants and antecedents of organizational commitment of nature conservation organizations' employees, further studies should include more factors in analytical model.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study concludes that psychological empowerment significantly moderates the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and innovative work behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. This highlights the critical role of psychological empowerment as a catalyst that can either amplify or diminish the effects of managerial cultural intelligence on fostering innovative work behavior.

Thus, the study recommends that management of telecommunication companies should involve employees in the decision-making process and seek their input and ideas. This can be achieved through regular team meetings, brainstorming sessions, and employee suggestion programs. By including employees in decision-making, organizations tap into their diverse perspectives and enhance their sense of psychological empowerment, thereby fostering a conducive environment for innovation.

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