



EFFECT OF WORKPLACE SUPPORT ON EMPLOYEE PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND INNOVATIONS IN MARKET AND SOCIAL RESEARCH FIRMS (MSRFs) IN KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out the effects of workplace support on employee psychological empowerment and innovations in Market and Social Research Firms (MSRFs) in Kenya. This was motivated by inconsistent empirical findings of the previous scholars on the effect of organizational climate on innovation. Besides, it was inspired by the omission of the employee psychological empowerment as intervening. The study used cross-sectional research design. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The study found the effect of work place support on EPE had partial effect but insignificant effect on innovation. The findings offered more insights to the theorists of intrinsic motivation that intrinsic motivation taps on some organizational climate factors to promote innovation. The result could be helpful to human resources practitioners and policy makers when deciding on a mix of organizational climate factors to promote innovation in institutions. Consideration of multiple organisational factors as opposed to a single factor to enhance innovation at micro level in their work place is hinted.

Key Words: Coworker Support, Supervisor Support, Employee psychological empowerment and Innovation

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century global business environment is bedeviled with fast changing technology, growing volatility, global competition, organization change, social conflicts, environmental degradation and high rate of unemployment among others (George, 2007; Runco, 2004).

To overcome the above challenges, organizations must pursue innovation by all means being a critical factor for competitiveness and success. Without innovative companies, a national economy can hardly be competitive (George, 2007; Batey, 2012). It has been depicted that creative nations focus on innovation as a critical resource that drives their economic prosperity while lack of innovation has resulted to economic stagnation (Toynbee, 2004; Amabile & Khaire, 2008). It is empirically depicted in the global market research sector, that less innovative African nations and organizations for example, have stagnated and meagerly share 5% of the global market research revenue compared to the more creative economies of USA and Europe and Asia which dominate the sector's revenue at 95% (ESOMAR, report of 2011).

Although researchers have concurred that innovation is very critical for solving problems affecting organizations, nations', society, change managers', scholars', individuals, organizations on their part have found it difficult to maintain high level of employee innovation. (Shalley et al., 2009; Shalley et.al. 2004; Shin & Zhou, 2003). Additionally, most organizations consider innovation from a financial perspective and at a strategic level, neglecting other factors at micro level which too have impact on the innovation. Scholars have paid less attention to factors of organizational climate and innovation at employee level. This is a fact supported by Spreitzer et.al. (1995) who further argued that organizational climate factors can positively influence level of innovation in organizations, but are inadequate in the absence of

psychological empowerment of employees and their managers.

Use of different models, individual characteristics and different number of questions in the instrument used by different scholars had too resulted inconsistent findings on the relationship between organizational climate and innovation (Hunter et.al. 2004). An example was a study assessing leadership characteristics which found that structured and task oriented leadership climates neither inhibit or promote creativity and innovation (Ekval, 1996). Another study by Dul & Ceylan, 2011 found that, the perception of working environment (organizational climate) and characteristics of certain individuals within the environment such as supervisors and leaders can either promote or inhibit the level of innovation. Recent studies continue to yield varied results as depicted by Fenlin, (2007) who found inverted U-shape relationship, Ndanuko (2012) found a positive significant relationship while Prohit and Wadhwa, (2012) and Haque (2014) found a negative association. These inconsistent results caused Mathsen and Einasen (2004), Boso, (2013), Mumford and Hunter (2004) and Hunter et.al. (2007) to argue that the inconsistency could be due to something else unknown yet.

This study therefore, considered employees rating of supervisor support and co-worker support and employee psychological empowerment indicated by meaning, competence, impact, and self-determination as the mediating variable between workplace support and innovation. Innovation was measured by idea generation and implementation. Since most of the previous analytical methodology applied were correlation and regression analyses which did not resolved the inconsistency, this study progressively applied structural equation modelling technique to analyse these multiple relationships in order to improve the accuracy in the effort to further improve the results.

Problem Statement

Innovation has been found to be one of the most critical tool in today's fast changing environment that can enable organizations, change managers, employees to overcome the many challenges (George, 2007; Batey,2012). ESOMAR ,(2011) reported that failure to respond to the growing need of innovation has resulted to less innovative African organizations to stagnate and meagerly contributing only 5% of the global market research revenue leaving firms from more creative economies of USA, Europe and Asia to dominate the sector's revenue at 95%.

African organizations therefore, must pursue innovation by all means for without it, there cannot be competitive and national economy can hardly be competitive too (George, 2007; Batey, 2012).

The growing importance of creativity and innovation has forth with continued to discern a need for identifying those factors that promote innovation to solve the many global and organizational challenges experienced in this century (Eustace & Martins, 2014).This growing need to solve the many emerging problems have resulted to organizations considering innovation majorly from a financial perspective and at a strategic level, neglecting other factors at the macro level which too have impact on innovation. This innovational strategy myopia, has left organizations challenged to cultivate high level of employee innovations as assets they hold (Shalley et al., 2009; Shalley et.al. 2004; Shin & Zhou, 2003). In attempt to cultivate high level of employee innovativeness in organizations, scholars have identified several factors that may influence their innovation (Amabile & Khaire, 2008).Among the factors identified that can stimulate employee innovativeness is the perception or feeling employees form about the working environment (organizational climate) and characteristics of certain employees (Amabile, 1996; Dul &Ceylun, 2011). If these organizational climate

factors and individual characteristics are assessed, they can help estimate the level of innovation existing and propose interventions to improve it for organizations to derive growth (Dodd, Smith and Wards, 2002; and Moss, 2007).

Some scholars forth with studied organizational formal rules and structures as organizational climate dimensions to assess employee innovations and reported that the two factors can positively influence level of innovation in organizations, but are inadequate in the absence of other variables outside organizational climate. To delve deeper in area of organizational climate influence, other scholars have tried to test its impact on employee innovations using different measurements in their studies. Some based on outcomes, others based on levels of operations, others on different rating styles and different models, different techniques of data analyses but they all produced varied results (Furnham et al., 2008; Amabile, Gryskiewicz, 1989; Sylvia, 2008 Kaufaman, Plucker and Baer, 2008; Mumford, 2003, Runco.2004; Alice, 2011 and Hunter et.al. ;2004).The common analytical methodologies applied in most of those previous studies were correlation and regression (Alice, 2011)which did not resolve the inconsistency either. Other recently documented results on effect of organizational climate on innovation, include inverted U-shape relationship (Fenlin, 2007), significant positive relationship (Ndanuko, 2012) and negative influence (Prohit & Wadhwa, 2012 and Haque, 2014).Some of differing results have also been reported on link between empowerment and innovation with some scholars reporting positive relations ion (Çakar and Ertürk, 2010; Ertürk, 2012; Helms, 2006; Muindi, 2011) while others found a negative relationship or instead no significant link between the two variable. Kmiecik et al. (2012), in his study concluded that empowerment did not affected the company's ability to innovate.

Such outcomes caused some scholars to unanimously agree that the inconsistency is due to something else unknown yet, given that the models used have been found to have internal consistency (Mathsen and Einasen, 2004; Boso, 2013; Mumford and Hunter, 2004 and Hunter et.al. 2007). This motivated the researcher, with reference to the findings by Wenberge and Banas (2000) that certain organizational climate factors combined with other macro factors can resolve this inconsistency. The researcher's motivation was further strengthened by Alice et.al. 2011; Furnham, & Batey 2006 who had found that focusing on employee psychological empowerment stimulate innovation when leaders provide employees with social, emotional and technical support. Given that such insight has not attracted many scholars, and those who attempted focused on managers alone, leaving out the lower cadre staff (Nijstand and Stroebe, 2006 ; Thomison and Choi, 2006), this portended a gap for the researcher to fill. Given that the debate on inconsistency have left the scholars divided on the influences of organizational climate to innovation, organizations still remain unaware of critical organizational climate variables to focus on if they want to yield high levels of innovations (Muturi, Ochieng & Douglas, 2015). It is on this premise that the researcher considered a model with now organizational climate variables mediated by psychological empowerment to find out the influence they have on employee empowerment and innovation in organizations to further document and attempt to add a voice in previous findings.

This study therefore, considered supervisor support, co-worker support and employee psychological as the mediating variable for innovation which was measured by factors on idea generation and implementation by the employee which has not been tried before.

Research Objectives

To establish the relationship between workplace support, employee psychological empowerment and innovations on Market and Social Research Firms (MSRFs) in Kenya.

Hypothesis

- H01. Workplace support has insignificant effect on employee psychological empowerment and innovation in MSRFs in Kenya
- H02. Employee psychological empowerment has insignificant mediating effect on organizational climate and innovations on MSRFs in Kenya.

Literature Review

Concept of Employee psychological empowerment

Empowerment is a continuous variable; people can be viewed as more or less empowered, rather than empowered or not empowered. Psychological empowerment is the motivational concept of self-efficacy. It is an intrinsic task motivation exemplified by four cognitive elements. These include meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Meaning describes the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in regard to an employee's own ideals or standards (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Meaning is the fit between the work requirements, role, beliefs, values, and behaviors (Brief & Nord, 1990; Hackman & Oldham, 1980) as cited in Spreitzer (1995). Competence refers to employee's self-efficacy in regard to belief and capability to perform activities with skill he/she has (Gist, 1987). It is the personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy (Bandura, 1989). Self-determination on its part is the individual's sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). Self-determination reflects freedom in the initiation and continuation of work behaviors and processes about work methods, pace, and effort (Bell & Staw. 1989; Spector, 1986) as cited

Spreitzer (1995). Impact is the degree to which an employee can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at workplace (Ashforth, 1989). The four dimensions are argued to combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment which further enhance creativity and innovation. If one the variables is missing, less empowerment is felt, though not completely eliminated. Empowerment is not an enduring personality trait generalizable across situations, but rather, a set of cognitions shaped by a work environment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Empowerment reflects people's perceptions about themselves in relation to their work environments (Bandura, 1989). Finally empowerment is not a global construct generalizable across different life situations and roles but rather, specific to the work and specific meaning unique across organizations.

When employees enjoy support of their organizational members they develop a sense of positive psychological conditions ideal for innovation. This emerging psychological condition has further attracted scholars to study the area focusing on employee empowerment with a view to improve innovations at workplace as it has been found to have a positive effect on trust, innovation and organizational performance (Berraies, Chaheer Yahia, 2014).

The concept of innovation

Creativity and innovation constructs are reported to be closely related and significantly overlap in terms of characteristics (Angle, 1989). In contrast, creativity is the generation of novel and useful ideas, primarily at the macro level (Amabile et al., 1996). Innovation on its part is the process by which these ideas are captured, filtered, funded, developed, modified, clarified, and eventually commercialized and/or implemented. Creativity is the precursor of innovation. In order for an organization to remain relevant and competitive in

pursuit of its purpose, leadership must pay attention to both ends of the process, generating creative ideas frequently and utilizing its innovation process to realize the potential value of those ideas. This growing importance of creativity and innovation portends the need for identifying those factors that promote or stifle creativity and innovation to solve the many global and organizational challenges experienced in this century (Eustace & Martins, 2014). This has resulted to many studies proliferating focusing on different interests and approaches in trying to identify those factors that influence creativity and innovation as well as understanding more about the two constructs (Govindarajan & Trimble, 2010). Some scholars interested in this area, have focused on innovation on the premise of problem solving ability of the generated ideas (Govindarajan & Trimble, 2010). In all the studies, researchers have concurred that innovation is very critical for solving the global and organizational challenges sustainably (Dul & Ceylan, 2011; Nystrom, Ramamurthy & Wilson, 2002).

Although researchers have concurred that innovation is very critical for any organization, nations, society, change managers, scholars, individual development and change, organizations on their part have found it difficult to maintain high level of employee innovation in organizations (Shalley et al., 2009; Shalley et al., 2004; Shin & Zhou, 2003). To address the issue of low level of employee innovation in organizations, scholars have identified several factors that may influence innovation (Amabile & Khaire, 2008). Among the factors identified that can stimulate innovation is the perception or feeling employees form about the working environment (organizational climate) and characteristics of certain employees within the environment such as supervisors and leaders (Amabile, 1996; Dul & Ceylan, 2011). If these organizational climate factors and individual characteristics are assessed, they can help estimate

the level of innovation existing and propose interventions to improve it (Dodd, Smith and Wards, 2002; and Moss, 2007).

Theoretical Review

Intrinsic Motivation Theories

The theory states that, an individual is intrinsically motivated to behave in a certain way when he feels internally rewarded by the behavior chosen, (Deci, 1975), Deci and Ryan, 1985). To be creative and innovative on products, processes and services, individuals must feel internally motivated and rewarded. Intrinsic motivation is driven by competence, relatedness and autonomy. It is also shaped externally by recognition, reward, co-operation, autonomy and curiosity. The challenge now is how the owners of the business can create an ideal climate to intrinsically promote continuous innovation which is rewarding, challenging and interesting to all individuals (Brown, 2007 and Elsevier, 2014). The two authors look at the leader as the person responsible for this kind of climate, this has motivated the researcher to consider leadership as an organisational climate factor that can influence employee psychological empowerment to promote innovation which from the reviewed literature has rarely been applied in this perspective before.

Theorists of intrinsic motivation have identified and generalized the factors that may increase intrinsic motivation for innovation, to include recognition, challenges, curiosity, rewards and fun but have not assessed the extent of increment at an industry and employee specific level. This study used training support, workplace support (supervisor and co-worker), and transformational leadership as climate variables, mediated by employee psychological empowerment to estimate the level of innovation to find out their effect on innovation in Market

research industry in Kenya which has not been done in the past.

Componential Theory of Creativity and Innovation

The componential theory of creativity proposed by Amabile (1983) is founded on social and psychological components critical for individual to be eliciting creative products or solutions. The theory bases its definition of creativity as the production of ideas or outcomes that are both novel and appropriate to some goal. This theory encompasses organizational creativity and innovation, with the effect of the work environments created by managers in organizations. The size of creativity that an individual produces at any given point is a function of the creativity components operating, at that time, within and around that person.

The theory is grounded on the premise that innovation is a deliberate introduction and application within a role, group or organization, ideas, processes, products or procedures, new to the particular department of adoption, started with a view to significantly benefit the individual, the team, the organization or the wider society. For organizations to survive and be sustainable, innovation and creativity must be accelerated. The theory postulate that creativity and innovation is dependent on the level of expertise (skills, training and knowledge), environment he/she is operating in particularly social environment (Personality) and the intrinsic motivation. Support of innovation by the leaders is critical for high level of creativity and innovation.

A weakness of this theory is that control of what to innovate is needed because not all innovations and creativities are beneficial (Hunter 2007). The theory take human being as the parameter for innovation rather than profit or outcomes. The theory

stipulates that innovation of a person is dependent on the judgment of others. Innovation, which is taken to mean commercialization of creativities, can have both impersonal and interpersonal processes of social comparison and judgment. This assumption overlooks that small innovation can also be important in the process. Creativity is majorly associated with individuals, while innovation implementation is taken to be accomplished by groups, organization or societies.

Empirical Literature Review

Impact of supervisor support on innovation

Supervisors who recognizes employee's diversity earns the firm respect by valuing different cultures entertained in the business. Whereas the supervisor and diverse workforce play a double role of driving innovation and attracting great talents, retaining those talents is under the watch of the management of a firm (Forbes insight, 2012). Delarue & De Prins (2004), argue that the supervisors who positively recognize the members of the various teams in the firm encourage outstanding performance, continued performance, and improved performance which are outcomes of increased level of innovation. Managers should strive to give feedback to employees as this encourages them to continue with innovative activities. Therefore, without feedback, the employees will be unable to measure the results of their efforts. The growth of team/individuals innovative behavior depends on the frequency of feedback (contact) concerning their performance (Moreland, et al., 1996). For innovation to elicit, a managers must identify skills and knowledge necessary to complete the assigned tasks. In particular, Bacon and Blyton (2006) proposed to supervisors to teach their workers self-management and the interpersonal skills as they are very ideal for innovation success. These important skills enhances communication or promotion of innovative ideas and interpersonal relationship. The self-

management team skills enable employees manage his/her own activities and resources while working within the limits of the organization's duties (Letts, Ryan & Grossman, 2000).

Delarue & De Prins (2004), argue that the supervisors who positively recognize the members of the various teams in the firm encourage outstanding performance, continued performance, and improved performance which are signs of increased level of innovation. Managers should strive to give feedback to employees as this encourages them to continue with innovative activities. Therefore, without feedback, the employees will be unable to measure the results of their efforts. The growth of team/individuals and innovative behavior of the people depends on the frequency of feedback concerning their performance (Moreland, et al., 1996). For innovation to elicit, a managers must identify skills and knowledge necessary to complete the assigned tasks. In particular, Bacon and Blyton (2006) proposed to managers to teach their workers self-management and the interpersonal skills as they are very ideal for innovation success. These important skills enhances communication or promotion of innovative ideas and interpersonal relationship for co-worker support. The self-management team skills enable employees manage his/her own activities and resources while working within the limits of the organization's duties (Letts, Ryan & Grossman, 2000).

Supervisors must be proactive and partner with trade unions, anticipate change and know what is happening in the wider world of work (Ulrich, 1997). There's strong evidence that a positive climate for employees created by supervisors will lead to superior economic performance and innovation (CIPD, 2004). The achievement of business goals and financial returns is increasingly dependent on delivery by front-line employees

depending on their supervisor support. This emerges from the operation of a mix of HR/high-performance work practices in the context of a supportive management. It can't be imposed from the top but depends on developing employee security, trust and buy-in to the goals and values of the organization, (Johnson, 2004). With the increased importance of the positive climate, the human resources has shifted its focus to quality, innovation

and reduction of the cost. Morale which depicts how an employee feels about him or herself is reinforced by the supervisor support and encouragement (Johnson, 2004).

Effect of Coworker support and Innovation

Co-worker support entails co-workers assisting one another in their in terms of sharing knowledge, expertise, encouragement and moral support (Zhou and George, 2001). Co-workers may bring their knowledge and expertise when an employee is faced with a difficult and novel task that requires a solution (Scott and Bruce, 1994). Employees may also acquire innovative ways from supportive co-workers that can result to efficiency (Perry Smith, 2006). Working with helpful, supportive co-workers promotes a climate where new ideas can be discussed more openly and freely. Coworker support therefore, denotes the extent to which employees believe their coworkers willingly provide them with work-related assistance to aid in the execution of their tasks. Such co-worker support, motivate followers to enlarge their jobs and to engage in more pro-social behaviors that are needed to achieving collective goals. This is exemplified by helping coworkers with heavy workloads, sharing resources, and providing advice to coworkers who encounter work problems among others. Existing empirical studies also demonstrate employees who receive more support from their coworkers might obtain more job resources to deal with stressful and innovative tasks. Coworker

support has been found to be positively related to individual innovative behavior at work (Arora & Kamalanabhan, 2013). In particular, Bacon and Blyton (2006) proposed to managers to teach their workers self-management and the interpersonal skills as they are very ideal for innovation success. These important skills enhances communication or promotion of innovative ideas and interpersonal relationship for co-worker support.

The mediating effect of Psychological Empowerment and Innovation

Psychological empowerment is the motivational concept of self-efficacy. It is an intrinsic task motivation exemplified by four cognitive elements. These include meaning, impact competence and self-determination. Meaning describes the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in regard to an employee's own ideals or standards (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Meaning is the fit between the work requirements, role, beliefs, values, and behaviors (Brief & Nord, 1990; Hackman & Oldham, 1980) as cited in Spreitzer (1995). Competence refers to employee's self-efficacy in regard to belief and capability to perform activities with skill he/she has (Gist, 1987). It is the personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy (Bandura, 1989). Self-determination on its part is the individual's sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). Self-determination reflects freedom in the initiation and continuation of work behaviors and processes about work methods, pace, and effort (Bell & Staw. 1989; Spector, 1986) as cited Spreitzer (1995). Impact is the degree to which an employee can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at workplace (Ashforth. 1989). The four dimensions are argued to combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment which further enhance creativity and innovation. If one the variables is missing, less empowerment is felt, though not completely

eliminated. Empowerment is not an enduring personality trait generalizable across situations, but rather, a set of cognitions shaped by a work environment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Empowerment reflects people's perceptions about themselves in relation to their work environments (Bandura, 1989). Empowerment is a continuous variable; people can be viewed as more or less empowered, rather than empowered or not empowered. Finally empowerment is not a global construct generalizable across different life situations and roles but rather, specific to the work specific meaning and is unique across organizations. When employees enjoy support of their organizational members they develop a sense of positive psychological conditions ideal for innovation. Employee empowerment has been found to have a positive effect on trust, innovation and organizational performance (Berraies, Chaer Yahia, 2014). Researchers have pointed out that employee empowerment is a critical factor for innovation (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2007; Ertürk, 2012; Fernandez and Moldogaziev, 2013). Such empowerment motivates employees to share their innovative ideas and use their skills in order for organizational success. Some researchers reported positive link between empowerment and innovation (Çakar and Ertürk, 2010; Ertürk, 2012; Helms, 2006; Muindi, 2011) while others found a negative relationship or no significant link between these variables. Kmieciak et al. (2012), in his study concluded that empowerment did not affect the company's ability to innovate. Jung et al.(2003)'s study revealed that this managerial practice has a negative effect on organizational innovation. In the light of such contradictory results, it was interesting to identify organisational variables that could strengthen employee psychological empowerment to mediate the relationship between organizational climate and innovation. Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2007) argued that empowerment strengthens

organizational trust which emanate from leadership and very critical for promoting innovation.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Marketing and Social Research Association (MSRA) firms in Kenya. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design because it facilitated the collection of data from the employees of many different firms in one industry at one point in time (Kerlinger, 2007). The population of the study consisted of all the employees in the marketing research firms in Nairobi because most of these MSRA firms were domiciled in Nairobi. The population for this study was all the employees, supervisors and the top managers of the MSRA firms. Therefore, the target population for this study was all the employees, supervisors and the top managers of all the fifteen MSRA firms. The sampling procedure used to select 770 respondents from the target population of this study was probability sampling.

Research Findings and Discussion

The questionnaire was administered to each of the 770 employees in all the fifteen MSRA firms situated within Nairobi. Out of these, 387 questionnaires were returned which made up to 50.26% response rate. On the gender of the respondents, majority were male (57.1%) while the female were slightly lower to male constituting of 42.9 % of the respondents. Most of the employees interviewed were aged below 45years with the majority of them (72.4%) aged between 18-31 years indicating that MSRFs are youthful, male inclined organizations.

Effect of Workplace Support on Empowerment and Innovation

The results showed that workplace support had a positive significant effect on empowerment but insignificant effect on empowerment. This partially

accepted the null hypothesis earlier stated **HO1 “That supervisor and co-worker support had insignificant effect on employee psychological empowerment and innovation”.**

This implied that the workplace support, which generates from the supervisors and co-workers enhanced the meaning to employees' work and it improves employees' competence. Hence, it was directly proportional to the employees' psychological empowerment. A workplace climate where employees felt that their job was important and valued by the organization, they felt empowered. This meant that employee job competence and meaning significantly empowered them. However, workplace support did not enhance employees' self-determination. This is because when the employees feel a workplace climate that does not support their freedom and autonomy on their job, or does not support co-workers to help them, may result to a feeling of powerlessness, which can reduce their self-determination to innovate.

According to the results workplace support had insignificant effect on innovation. The workplace supports that made the employees to be innovative in generating new ideas and implementing them was not yet effective. Consequently, the organizational climate based on workplace support in MSRFs did not have significant effect to innovation may be because the workplace support was not yet conducive to the employees. Our findings did not support a previous study that found employees' innovative behavior depends greatly on their interaction with others in the workplace (Anderson et al., 2004; Zhou & Shalley, 2003). This differed with findings by Oldham and Cummings (1996) cited by Zhang & Begley (2011) who found supportive supervision with concern for employee needs to facilitate innovative behavior of the employees encouraging empowerment through

autonomy as a condition, if at all innovation is expected to emerge as was found by Zhang & Begley (2011). Theoretically, Amabile, 1996; Martins and Terblanche, 2003 and Pierterse *et al.*, 2010) asserted that empowerment, support, resources and coworker support influence innovation. Our result did not support this theoretical evidence. The results were also inconsistent with the findings by Jorem, (2007) who found that support, consultation, recognition and autonomy are key triggers of innovation. High level idea support by Leaders which significantly elicited innovation was found to be enhanced by training (Isaksen and Isaksen, 2011).

Effect of Employee Psychological Empowerment on Innovation

Employee psychological empowerments have significant effect on innovation. However, using both direct and indirect effect empowerment had insignificant effect on innovation. This implies that employee psychological empowerment had partial mediating effect between organizational climate and innovation. This partially agreed with our hypothesis; **HO2 Employee psychological empowerment has insignificant mediating effect on organizational climate and innovations on MSRFs in Kenya.**

The results were consistent with the recommendation by researchers who pointed out that employee empowerment is a critical factor for innovation (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2007; Ertürk, 2012; Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013. Similarly, Berraies, Chaher and Yahia (2014) found employee empowerment has a positive effect on trust, innovation and organizational performance. However our results were inconsistent with Kmiecik et al. (2012) who in their study concluded that empowerment did not affect the company's ability to innovate. Besides, another study by Jung et al. (2003) contrasted ours by revealing that this

managerial practice has a negative effect on organizational innovation.

Supervisor support and co-worker support were found to measure the same thing which then was reported as workplace support. The result showed that workplace support had significant effect on empowerment but insignificant effect on innovation. This did not concur with findings by Oldham and Cummings (1996) cited by Zhang & Begley (2011) who found supportive supervision with concern for employee needs to facilitate innovative behaviour of the employees. This indicated therefore, that, although workplace support empowers employees, this may not be a necessary result to innovation unless some conditions are met. MSRFs may therefore consider encouraging empowerment through autonomy as a condition, if at all innovation is expected to emerge as was found by Zhang & Begley (2011).

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Supervisor and co-worker support were found to measure the same thing and were reported as workplace support. This support had significant effect ($P = 0.000$) on competence and meaningfulness of the job (empowerment 1) but insignificant effect ($P = 0.504$) on empowerment 2 (self-determination) and innovation ($P = 0.247$) respectively. The results further revealed that, workplace support at MSRFs had insignificant effect on innovation even when the mediating variable was omitted ($P = 0.247$). Our findings did not support a previous study that had found employees' innovative behaviour depends greatly on their interaction with others in the workplace (Anderson et al., 2004; Zhou & Shalley, 2003). The finding to some extent also contrasted with Amabile, 1996; Martins and Terblanche, 2003 and Pierterse *et al.*, 2010) who asserted that empowerment, support, resources and coworker support influence innovation. Workplace Support to

include task support, social support, and economic support by the leader was also reported by (Tusluk, Farr and Klein, 1997) to influence innovation which was inconsistent with our results. Our contrasting result could have been caused by the parameters we applied and the structural equation modeling method of analysis which is able to assess relationships of variables more accurately and at the same time unlike most of the previous studies which applied correlation and regression methods of analysis of workplace support (Alice et al., 2011). Our factors included supervisor contact hours with the employee, recognition, involvement in decision making and co-worker encouragement which our study found insignificantly fit to represent workplace support. Among them, the factors that statistically and sufficiently fitted the statistical thresholds were co-worker frequency of help and willingness to share as the tested and fitted to represent workplace support. The same factors significantly influenced employee psychological empowerment anchored on competence and meaningfulness of their job. This employee psychological empowerment had earlier been found to be an ideal situation for effective employee training to take place. This has been verified by Hsiang, (2014) who found that negative effect of training was stronger with low employee psychological empowerment. Workplace support did not influence employee's self-determination (empowerment 2) which we found to significantly mediate employees' innovations at MSRFs in Kenya.

Conclusion

This study has yielded a moderate empirical validity for its theoretical models that was to establish the relationship between workplace support, employee psychological empowerment and innovations. The findings supported transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation theories. However, the findings did not support the componential theory.

We also found workplace support from leaders and supervisors who strengthened their competences and designed meaningful jobs empowered employees but did not affect their determination. This again put workplace support critical to drive a feeling of competent and their job importance which can reduce with absence of this support. This concurs with the transformational leadership theory where the leader influences employee's behavior and feelings. This verify why many scholars have considered workplace support in the studies of organizational climate to predict employee feelings and behavior.

Implications of the Study for Theory, Policy and Practice

The objective of the research was to assess the relationship between workplace support with employee psychological empowerment as the mediating variable to influence innovation. The study provided some insights on this area that organizations can apply to promote innovations.

Policy implications

Innovations is an economic game changer. Kenya prides herself to have innovative workforce. The result of the study offers some insights to innovation policy makers on how to promote innovation at workplaces using workplace support and employees 'psychological empowerment. The result indicated that focusing on workplace support and employee psychological empowerment was likely to offer a compelling link between workplace support and innovation which has been missing. Increasing workplace support through training on high level idea support is likely to improve

empowerment which further increases perceptions of possibilities and seeing no obstacles to innovate.

Further Research Recommendations

Our results indicated partial mediating effect of employee psychological empowerment on innovation and workplace support. This therefore forms a foundation for future studies wishing to test other organizational climate variables' effect on innovation mediated by psychological empowerment of the employees. This study can in future be replicated on the government parastatals to test any peculiarity. Future studies may consider longitudinal study and 360 degree rating to observe a trend and consistency for a more firm conclusion on the effects of organizational climate on innovation. This will help to broaden the available literature on effects of organizational climate on innovations and offer Human Resources practitioners an organizational development toolkit to improve employee innovative performance.

The study applied cross-sectional survey design which is commonly used in social sciences owing to its very nature of cost and time saving. However this design did not offer a trend on effects of organizational climate and innovation over a period of time and therefore a longitudinal design may be more ideal in future studies.

The choice of the questions and application of all quantitative approach without a qualitative perspective may have biasedly tilted the outcome. The choice of the questions too may not have offered all the probable alternatives. Future studies may choose to incorporate a qualitative approach together with the quantitative to assess the relationship between organizational climate and innovation of employees.

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