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## PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AND MODERATING ROLE OF JOB AUTONOMY

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### ABSTRACT

Employee creativity has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational adaptability and long-term competitiveness in contemporary work environments characterized by rapid technological change and increasing uncertainty (Anderson et al., 2014; Shalley et al., 2004). The present study examines the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee creativity by investigating psychological wellbeing as a mediating mechanism and job autonomy as a moderating condition. Drawing upon organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the study proposes that perceived organizational support enhances psychological wellbeing, which subsequently promotes employee creativity. Job autonomy strengthens this relationship by providing employees with discretion and flexibility necessary to translate creative ideas into work outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Data were collected from 412 employees working in education and service-sector organizations. Hierarchical regression analysis indicates that perceived organizational support positively influences psychological wellbeing and employee creativity, psychological wellbeing partially mediates this relationship, and job autonomy strengthens the wellbeing-creativity link. The study contributes to organizational behaviour literature by integrating support-based and psychological perspectives to explain employee creativity and offers practical implications for organizations seeking to foster innovation through supportive and autonomy-enhancing work environments.

Keywords: Perceived organizational support, psychological wellbeing, job autonomy, employee creativity, organizational behavior.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Creativity has become an essential organizational capability in an increasingly competitive and dynamic business environment where continuous innovation is necessary for long-term sustainability and growth (Anderson et al., 2014; Shalley et al., 2004). Organizations increasingly rely on employee creativity to enhance adaptability, improve processes, and maintain competitive advantage in knowledge-driven economies (Amabile, 1996). Employee creativity, defined as the generation of novel and useful ideas within a work context, represents a fundamental precursor to innovation and organizational effectiveness (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Although creativity was traditionally considered an individual attribute, contemporary research emphasizes the critical role of organizational context in shaping creative outcomes (Shalley et al., 2004).

Perceived organizational support (POS) represents one of the most influential contextual factors affecting employee attitudes and behaviour. POS refers to employees' general belief that the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organizational support theory suggests that employees reciprocate favorable treatment through positive attitudes and discretionary behaviours that benefit the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Empirical evidence indicates that organizational support enhances job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and performance outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2017). However, the psychological mechanisms through which organizational support translates into creativity remain insufficiently examined.

Psychological wellbeing represents an important explanatory mechanism in this relationship. Psychological wellbeing reflects positive emotional functioning, purpose in life, personal growth, and effective psychological adjustment (Ryff, 1989). Employees experiencing higher levels of wellbeing demonstrate greater cognitive flexibility, resilience, and openness to experience, which facilitate creative thinking (Amabile et al., 2005; George & Zhou, 2007). The broaden-and-build theory proposes that positive emotions expand individuals' cognitive and behavioural repertoires, enabling exploration and innovative problem-solving (Fredrickson, 2001). In addition to psychological states, job characteristics influence the expression of creativity. Job autonomy, defined as the degree of freedom and discretion employees possess in performing tasks, has been consistently linked with intrinsic motivation and creative performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Employees with higher autonomy are better positioned to experiment with alternative approaches and implement innovative ideas (Zhou & George, 2001).

Despite growing research attention, limited studies have simultaneously examined organizational support, psychological wellbeing, and job autonomy within a unified framework. The present study addresses this gap by examining wellbeing as a mediating mechanism and autonomy as a moderating condition. By integrating organizational support theory, broaden-and-build theory, and self-determination theory, the study provides a comprehensive explanation of how supportive organizational environments foster employee creativity.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Outcomes** Organizational support theory posits that employees develop global beliefs regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their welfare (Eisenberger et al., 1986). These perceptions emerge through organizational practices such as fairness, supervisor support, recognition, and provision of resources. When employees perceive strong organizational support, they experience socio-emotional fulfilment and develop stronger emotional attachment toward the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Meta-analytic findings confirm that perceived organizational support is positively associated with employee attitudes and performance outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Recent research suggests that organizational support also promotes creativity by fostering psychological safety and reducing fear of failure, both of which are essential for idea generation and experimentation (Amabile, 1996; George & Zhou, 2007). Employees who perceive organizational appreciation are more willing to engage in discretionary behaviours and propose innovative solutions.

### **2.2 Psychological Wellbeing and Creativity**

Psychological wellbeing has gained increasing attention in organizational research as both an outcome and a resource influencing employee performance (Ryff, 1989). Employees experiencing positive psychological functioning are more likely to demonstrate cognitive flexibility, persistence, and openness to new experiences, all of which facilitate creativity (Amabile et al., 2005). The broaden-and-build theory explains that positive emotions broaden individuals' thought-action repertoires and build enduring psychological resources that support innovation (Fredrickson, 2001).

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that positive affect enhances creative performance by encouraging exploratory thinking and adaptive problem-solving (George & Zhou, 2007). Thus, psychological wellbeing functions as an important psychological mechanism linking supportive work environments with creative outcomes.

### **2.3 Job Autonomy and Creative Behaviour**

Job autonomy represents a central component of job design theory and has been consistently associated with intrinsic motivation and proactive behaviour (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Self-determination theory posits that autonomy satisfies a fundamental psychological need for self-direction, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation and creativity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Employees who

experience autonomy are more likely to experiment with new approaches and implement creative ideas because they possess greater control over task execution (Amabile, 1996; Zhou & George, 2001).

## 2.4 Theoretical Integration

The present study integrates organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to explain employee creativity. Organizational support provides socio-emotional resources that enhance psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing broadens cognitive processes and facilitates creative thinking, while job autonomy strengthens the translation of psychological resources into creative behaviour. This integrated framework offers a comprehensive explanation of how organizational and psychological factors jointly influence creativity outcomes.

## 3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The proposed hypotheses are developed based on organizational support theory, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, and self-determination theory. These theoretical perspectives collectively explain how supportive organizational environments influence employee psychological states and subsequently affect creativity-related outcomes.

### 3.1 Perceived Organizational Support and Psychological Wellbeing

Perceived organizational support reflects employees' beliefs that the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When employees perceive support from their organization, they experience reduced stress, increased emotional security, and a stronger sense of belongingness. Organizational support provides socio-emotional resources that enhance employees' psychological functioning and overall wellbeing. Organizational support theory suggests that supportive treatment satisfies employees' socio-emotional needs, leading to positive psychological outcomes (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees who perceive fairness, recognition, and concern for their welfare are more likely to experience positive affect, emotional stability, and psychological adjustment. Empirical research consistently demonstrates that perceived organizational support contributes to improved psychological wellbeing by reducing job-related strain and enhancing positive emotional experiences (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Therefore, perceived organizational support is expected to positively influence psychological wellbeing.

H1: Perceived organizational support positively influences psychological wellbeing.

### 3.2 Psychological Wellbeing and Employee Creativity

Psychological wellbeing represents an important psychological resource that facilitates creative thinking. Employees experiencing positive emotional states demonstrate greater cognitive flexibility, openness to new experiences, and willingness to explore alternative solutions. The broaden-and-build theory suggests that positive emotions broaden individuals' thought-action repertoires, enabling them to generate novel and useful ideas (Fredrickson, 2001). Creativity requires exploration, experimentation, and persistence, all of which are enhanced by positive psychological functioning. Employees with higher wellbeing are more resilient when facing challenges and more motivated to engage in creative problem-solving (Amabile et al., 2005; George & Zhou, 2007). Consequently, psychological wellbeing is expected to positively influence employee creativity.

H2: Psychological wellbeing positively influences employee creativity

### 3.3 Mediating Role of Psychological Wellbeing

Although perceived organizational support creates favourable work environments, its influence on creativity may occur indirectly through employees' psychological experiences. Supportive organizational practices enhance employees' wellbeing, which subsequently promotes creativity by increasing cognitive flexibility and intrinsic motivation. From a theoretical perspective, psychological wellbeing explains how organizational support translates into creative behaviour. Employees who

feel psychologically healthy and emotionally supported are more likely to invest effort in creative activities and explore innovative solutions. Therefore, psychological wellbeing is expected to mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee creativity.

H3: Psychological wellbeing mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee creativity.

#### 3.4 Moderating Role of Job Autonomy

While psychological wellbeing enhances creative potential, employees may differ in their ability to express creativity depending on job characteristics. Job autonomy provides employees with freedom and discretion in task execution, allowing them to experiment with new methods and apply creative ideas. Self-determination theory suggests that autonomy enhances intrinsic motivation and encourages proactive behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Employees who experience both psychological wellbeing and high autonomy are more likely to translate positive psychological states into creative outcomes. In contrast, limited autonomy may restrict employees' ability to implement innovative ideas despite experiencing high wellbeing. Therefore, job autonomy is expected to strengthen the positive relationship between psychological wellbeing and employee creativity.

H4: Job autonomy moderates the relationship between psychological wellbeing and employee creativity such that the relationship is stronger when job autonomy is high.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among perceived organizational support, psychological wellbeing, job autonomy, and employee creativity. A quantitative approach is appropriate as the study aims to test theoretically derived hypotheses and examine relationships among variables using statistical analysis techniques. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to employees across education and service-sector organizations. Procedural remedies were implemented to reduce response bias, including voluntary participation, anonymity assurance, and random ordering of questionnaire items to minimize common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

#### 4.2 Research Context and Sample

The study was conducted among employees working in education and service-sector organizations where creativity and problem-solving constitute important aspects of job performance. Employees from multiple functional areas were included to enhance generalizability of findings. Only full-time employees with at least six months of organizational tenure were included to ensure adequate exposure to organizational practices and support mechanisms. A total of 460 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 412 usable responses were obtained after data screening, resulting in a response rate of approximately 89 percent. The final sample size satisfies recommended requirements for regression-based analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

#### 4.3 Measurement of Variables

All constructs were measured using previously validated scales widely used in organizational behaviour research. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Perceived Organizational Support was measured using the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). The scale measures employees' perceptions regarding organizational care, recognition, and appreciation of employee contributions

Psychological Wellbeing was measured using the Psychological Wellbeing Scale developed by Ryff (1989). The scale captures dimensions such as positive functioning, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, and emotional wellbeing, thereby assessing employees' overall psychological functioning and adjustment.

Job Autonomy was measured using items adapted from the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976). The scale assesses the extent to which employees experience independence, discretion, and freedom in scheduling their work and determining work procedures.

Employee Creativity was measured using the Employee Creativity Scale developed by Zhou and George (2001), which evaluates idea generation, innovative problem-solving, and the extent to which employees suggest new and useful ideas for improving work processes and performance.

#### 4.4 Data Analysis Strategy

Data analysis was conducted using hierarchical regression analysis to examine direct, mediating, and moderating relationships. Variables were entered sequentially to assess incremental variance explained by predictors. The interaction term between psychological wellbeing and job autonomy was computed to test moderation effects. Multi collinearity diagnostics were examined using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values to ensure independence of predictors. Statistical significance was evaluated using standardized regression coefficients and changes in R-squared values in accordance with established multivariate analysis procedures (Hair et al., 2019).

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### 5.1 Preliminary Data Screening

Prior to hypothesis testing, the dataset was examined for missing values, outliers, and normality assumptions to ensure the suitability of data for multivariate analysis. Responses with excessive missing values were removed during the data screening process, resulting in a final sample of 412 usable responses. Descriptive examination of skewness and kurtosis values indicated that all variables fell within acceptable ranges, suggesting approximate normal distribution of the data. Multicollinearity diagnostics were conducted using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, all of which remained below recommended threshold levels, confirming the independence of predictors (Hair et al., 2019). Procedural remedies such as anonymity assurance and random ordering of questionnaire items were implemented to reduce common method bias in accordance with recommendations by Podsakoff et al. (2003).

#### 5.2 Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. All constructs demonstrated reliability values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency among scale items (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). High reliability values suggest that the measurement instruments consistently capture the intended constructs within the study context. The reliability results also support the suitability of previously validated scales for examining perceived organizational support, psychological wellbeing, job autonomy, and employee creativity in education and service-sector organizations.

**Table 1. Reliability Analysis**

S.No	Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
1	Perceived Organizational Support	8	0.92
2	Psychological Wellbeing	6	0.89
3	Job Autonomy	5	0.87
4	Employee Creativity	6	0.90

These results indicate that the measurement scales developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), Ryff (1989), Hackman and Oldham (1976), and Zhou and George (2001) demonstrate adequate reliability in the present study.

### 5.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine relationships among study variables. The results reveal significant positive relationships among perceived organizational support, psychological wellbeing, job autonomy, and employee creativity. The magnitude and direction of correlations are consistent with theoretical expectations and prior empirical findings (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Amabile et al., 2005). The absence of excessively high correlations further indicates that multicollinearity is not a concern.

**Table 2. Correlation Matrix**

VARIABLE No	VARIABLE	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4
1	Perceived Organizational Support	3.74	0.68	1			
2	Psychological Wellbeing	3.69	0.64	.59**	1		
3	Job Autonomy	3.58	0.71	.51**	.54**	1	
4	Employee Creativity	3.82	0.66	.62**	.65**	.57**	1

(\*\*p < .01)

The findings suggest that employees who perceive higher organizational support tend to report higher psychological wellbeing and creativity levels. Similarly, job autonomy demonstrates significant positive associations with both wellbeing and creativity, supporting the theoretical assumptions underlying the study.

### 5.4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. Perceived organizational support was entered in Model 1, psychological wellbeing in Model 2, and the interaction term between psychological wellbeing and job autonomy in Model 3. The results indicate that perceived organizational support significantly predicts employee creativity in Model 1. The inclusion of psychological wellbeing in Model 2 significantly increases the explained variance, indicating its substantial contribution to creativity outcomes.

**Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Results**

Variables	Model 1 (β)	Model 2 (β)	Model 3 (β)
Perceived Organizational Support	.48***	.29***	.25***
Psychological Wellbeing	—	.43***	.38***
Wellbeing × Job Autonomy	—	—	.16**
R <sup>2</sup>	.34	.51	.55
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.33	.50	.54
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	—	.17	.04
F-value	210.34***	214.76***	198.52***

(\*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001)

The reduction in the direct effect of perceived organizational support after including psychological wellbeing indicates partial mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Furthermore, the statistically significant interaction term confirms that job autonomy strengthens the positive relationship between psychological wellbeing and employee creativity. These findings provide empirical support for all proposed hypotheses.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the present study was to examine how perceived organizational support influences employee creativity through psychological wellbeing and job autonomy. The findings provide empirical support for the proposed theoretical framework and contribute to organizational behaviour literature by integrating support-based and psychological perspectives.

Consistent with organizational support theory, perceived organizational support was found to enhance psychological wellbeing by providing socio-emotional resources and reducing work-related stress (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees who perceive organizational care and recognition experience positive emotional states that enhance cognitive flexibility and creative thinking. This finding aligns with prior research demonstrating that supportive environments enhance employee motivation and discretionary behaviour (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

The results further demonstrate that psychological wellbeing significantly contributes to employee creativity. In line with broaden-and-build theory, positive psychological states expand individuals' cognitive repertoires, enabling exploration and creative problem-solving (Fredrickson, 2001). Employees experiencing higher wellbeing are more resilient and open to experimentation, which facilitates creative performance (Amabile et al., 2005; George & Zhou, 2007). These findings reinforce the growing recognition of wellbeing as a strategic organizational resource that contributes not only to employee health but also to performance and innovation outcomes.

The moderating role of job autonomy highlights the importance of job design in creativity processes. Consistent with self-determination theory, autonomy enhances intrinsic motivation and allows employees to apply creative ideas without excessive constraints (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Employees who experience both psychological wellbeing and high autonomy are more capable of translating positive psychological states into creative outcomes (Zhou & George, 2001). This suggests that organizational support initiatives should be complemented by autonomy-supportive job structures to achieve maximum creative potential.

From a theoretical perspective, the study extends organizational support literature by demonstrating that the relationship between organizational support and creativity operates through psychological mechanisms rather than solely through attitudinal outcomes. The integration of organizational support theory, broaden-and-build theory, and self-determination theory provides a comprehensive explanation of how organizational resources, psychological states, and job characteristics jointly influence creativity.

## 7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations that provide opportunities for future research. First, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to draw causal inferences among study variables. Future studies may adopt longitudinal or time-lagged designs to examine the dynamic relationships between perceived organizational support, psychological wellbeing, and employee creativity over time.

Second, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may introduce common method bias. Although procedural remedies such as anonymity assurance and item randomization were implemented, future research may incorporate multi-source data, including supervisor ratings of creativity, to enhance methodological rigor (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Third, the study focused on employees in education and service-sector organizations, which may limit generalizability to other industries such as manufacturing or technology sectors. Future studies

may examine the proposed model across diverse organizational contexts and cultural settings to enhance external validity.

Future research may also explore additional mediating mechanisms such as intrinsic motivation, psychological safety, or employee engagement. Similarly, other moderating variables including leadership style, team climate, or organizational culture may provide further insights into conditions under which organizational support most effectively promotes creativity.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee creativity by integrating psychological wellbeing as a mediating mechanism and job autonomy as a moderating condition. The findings demonstrate that supportive organizational environments enhance employee creativity primarily by improving psychological wellbeing, while job autonomy strengthens the translation of wellbeing into creative behaviour.

The study contributes to organizational behaviour literature by providing an integrated explanation of how organizational support and job design jointly influence creativity. By highlighting the importance of psychological wellbeing as a mechanism linking organizational support to creative outcomes, the study emphasizes the role of human-centered organizational practices in fostering innovation.

From a practical perspective, organizations aiming to enhance innovation should focus on creating supportive environments that promote employee wellbeing while simultaneously providing autonomy that encourages experimentation and creative expression. Such integrated approaches can help organizations develop sustainable competitive advantage through enhanced employee creativity and innovation capability.

## 9. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The present study contributes to organizational behaviour literature in several important ways. First, the study extends organizational support theory by demonstrating that the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee creativity operates through psychological mechanisms rather than solely through attitudinal outcomes. While prior research has primarily emphasized job satisfaction and organizational commitment as outcomes of organizational support, the present study highlights psychological wellbeing as a critical explanatory mechanism linking organizational resources to creative performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Second, the study integrates organizational support theory with the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions and self-determination theory, thereby providing a multi-theoretical explanation of employee creativity. By demonstrating that psychological wellbeing broadens cognitive processes and enhances creative engagement, the study contributes to emerging research emphasizing wellbeing as a strategic organizational resource rather than merely an employee outcome (Fredrickson, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Third, the study contributes to job design literature by identifying job autonomy as an important boundary condition in the wellbeing-creativity relationship. The findings suggest that psychological resources alone may not be sufficient to enhance creativity unless employees possess sufficient autonomy to implement innovative ideas. This contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how organizational context and job characteristics jointly influence creative behaviour.

## 10. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings provide several practical implications for managers and organizations seeking to enhance creativity and innovation. First, organizations should prioritize supportive practices that signal organizational care and recognition, such as fair policies, developmental opportunities, and supportive supervision. These practices strengthen employees' psychological wellbeing, which in turn enhances creative engagement.

Second, organizations should recognize psychological wellbeing as an important organizational resource that contributes to innovation outcomes. Investments in employee wellbeing initiatives, including stress reduction programs, work-life balance policies, and positive work environments, may indirectly improve creativity and innovation performance.

Third, job design interventions that enhance autonomy can significantly strengthen the effectiveness of wellbeing initiatives. Providing employees with flexibility in task execution, decision-making authority, and opportunities for experimentation enables them to translate creative ideas into practical outcomes. Therefore, supportive organizational climates and autonomy-supportive job structures should be implemented simultaneously to maximize creative potential.

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