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## An Attempt to Measure the Involvement of Employees Representing Creative Life Orientations in Creative Work

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Submitted 08/10/24, 1st revision 15/11/24, 2nd revision 01/12/24, accepted 15/12/24

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### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The study aims to identify factors determining engagement in creative activities performed at work and beyond by employees with creative life orientations (CrLO). The research explores how employee creativity contributes to organisational development and competitive advantage. Specifically, it tests the hypothesis that recognizing determinants of high engagement can effectively stimulate creative behaviours, increasing the likelihood of generating innovative outcomes.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The research was conducted in two stages. The first focused on identifying creative life orientations among employees, while the second focused on exploring the factors that promote creativity and engagement in creative tasks. The study used survey data collected from 392 employees in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship, employing descriptive and quantitative analysis methods. A tailored questionnaire, based on existing tools (e.g., Cudowska's CrLO scale), was applied to assess creative life orientations and engagement levels.

**Findings:** The analysis revealed that factors such as organisational support, intrinsic motivation, and individual creative orientations significantly influence engagement in creative work. Employees with higher engagement levels are more likely to exhibit creative behaviours, which enhance organizational adaptability and innovation capacity. Furthermore, continuous learning was identified as a key element connecting knowledge acquisition with creative outcomes.

**Practical Implications:** To boost creativity, organizations should focus on creating an environment that nurtures employee engagement and acknowledges individual creative potential. Strategies include promoting a culture of autonomy, providing opportunities for skill development, and integrating creativity-focused initiatives into broader organisational practices. These measures are pivotal for long-term competitiveness and innovation.

**Originality/value:** This study offers a detailed insight into the relationship between employee engagement and creativity in organizational contexts. Focusing on individuals with creative life orientations offers a novel perspective on leveraging human capital for sustained innovation and competitive advantage. The research contributes to the broader discourse on creativity by emphasizing its dependence on interdisciplinary and context-specific factors.

**Keywords:** Creative life orientation, organisation, creativity, workers' engagement.

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**JEL classification:** M11.

**Paper Type:** A research study.

**Acknowledgement:** This research was co-financed by the Minister of Science under the “Regional Excellence Initiative”.



## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, material factors, experience, intuition or knowledge are no longer sufficient to manage an organisation. Currently, there is a need for a new, creative use of the potential possessed by actors and its transformation into new values. In this way, the productivity of resources is, as it were, still being discovered, resulting in their allocation, improvement, and continuity.

Creativity as a resource is not generated in a void but is shaped by specific factors as well as the ability to use it in a way that is specific only to a particular organisation. It is considered one of an organisation's most important competitive advantages, and its use involves a process that requires a broad interdisciplinary approach. It is widely accepted that an organisation's creativity is in its employees, who possess creative potential. It is from them that new ideas that enhance the ability to grow and compete usually originate.

Therefore, investing in human capital is certainly one of the many keys to success. For harnessing creativity does not only mean developing and improving the creativity of employees, but their creative behaviour also plays an undeniable role. Thus, in the long term, an organisation can build up its creative potential. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the involvement of creative employees is one of the key factors responsible for the effectiveness of the organisation.

Given the above, the research aimed to reveal the determinants of engagement in creative activities performed at work and outside work by employees of organisations representing creative life orientations. The research assigned to this objective was conducted in two stages.

The first stage concerned the identification of creative life orientations of creative employees. The second stage covered the determinants of creativity development, including the involvement of organisational employees in creative activities. The

following research hypothesis (H) was assigned to the objective of the study:

Distinguishing the determinants of high levels of employee involvement is an effective determinant for stimulating creative activity - the expected probability of generating creative attitudes is higher if respondents have a sense of involvement in creative work. At the same time, (H) is general - the effect is expected to be positive for all respondents.

The theoretical part was written based on the available domestic and foreign source literature, while the research part was based on a survey conducted on a group of 392 employees working in organisations in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship. Descriptive methods and quantitative analysis were used in this study, which used structure and intensity indicators.

## **2. The Conception of Workers' Engagement**

The concept of employee engagement has emerged relatively recently. Initially, it was mainly used by consultants, who based their articles and reports addressed to experienced people on the practice of the activity. Only in the last few years have researchers systematised the concept of 'employee engagement' and placed it among other concepts in the field of organisational behaviour and human resource management. (Rudawska, 2011; Saks, 2019).

It is worth noting that, based on empirical research, work engagement has been recognised as a mediating mechanism between the conditions of the work environment and organisational behaviour (Salanova, Lorens, Cifre, Martinez, and Schaufeli, 2003; Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičiene, 2019; Sypniewska, Baran, and Kłos 2023).

In recent years, the concept presented has gained importance because: people are becoming the main source of competitive advantage; people have specific, sometimes very specific, and limited talents that enable the creative development of organisations - there is a struggle for them in entities and for the possibility of their remaining in the organisation; there is an unquestionable influence of human capital on many processes taking place in modern organisations.

The origins of attempts to define the concept of work engagement can be found in two schools of thought. The first, the R.E. Walton school assumes 'from control to engagement', while the second so-called Japanese school refers to work culture and human resource management. Walton contrasts the employee engagement strategy with the traditional form of human resource management, which is based on control of employees' work.

According to the author of this concept, other factors, such as increasing job freedom, and encouraging employees to make more effort than controlling work, are

much more important and influential on the employee's work. In contrast, representatives of the Japanese school believe that employee engagement comes from implementing an organisational culture based on 'heart and mind'. Based on these two schools, attempts have begun to define the concept of employee engagement.

However, it should be noted that this definition has evolved and the understanding of the concept has changed over time. Initially, in the 1970s and 1980s, it was identified with the state of the employee and his or her efforts for the company. Then, at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, these definitions were expanded to include a multi-faceted combination of emotional and rational elements (Gajdzik, 2012).

Thus, it can now be said that engagement is a multidimensional category and refers to many relevant employee behaviours, e.g. turnover, job satisfaction, and citizenship behaviour (Johnson, Groff, Taing, 2009; Lewicka, 2019; Xu, Zhang, Yang, Wu, 2020). For example, in the source literature, employee engagement is defined as, among other things:

- a positive work-related state of mind that provides a sense of fulfillment, captured in three dimensions: vigour, dedication and commitment (Schaufeli, Bakker, 2004),
- the effort put into work, which, combined with dedication, is an expression of intellectual and emotional 'commitment' to the organisation (Saks or Erickson after: Juchnowicz, 2010),
- a psychological state that enables employees to express themselves physically, emotionally and cognitively during their work. It is a certain moment or state that can change frequently in a person (Kahn, 1990),
- enthusiasm and dedication to the work being done, and the involvement of the employee's hands, mind and heart while doing the job (Roberts and Davenport, 2002),
- satisfaction of the employer's needs, which can be divided into: need for remuneration, job satisfaction and employability (Woodruffe, 2006),
- as the degree to which individuals join in to help the organisation by working better than necessary to maintain their position (Smythe, 2009),
- the enthusiasm with which a committed employee performs his or her duties and which reflects his or her positive perception of the job, working conditions, the organisation and other employees (Baldev and Anupam, 2010).

**Table 1.** *The basis of selected conceptions of the workers' engagement*

<b>Concept</b>
Commitment – cognitive, affective, behavioural
Commitment – rational & emotional
Discretionary effort – going above and beyond

Drive innovation
Drive business success
Energy, involvement, efficacy
Passion and profound connection
Positive attitude toward the company
Psychological presence – attention and absorption
Shared meaning, understanding- active participation
Stay, say, strive
Think, feel, and act, during the performance
Translate employee potential into performance

*Source: Dicke, Holwerda, and Kontakos, 2007.*

As can be seen above, numerous authors highlight the different varieties of engagement. As a consequence of the problems presented above in understanding and interpreting the category of commitment, there are studies in the source literature in which authors focus on clarifying the essence of the concept, formulating a definition of it, and describing its dimensions and nature, or aim to develop a model ordering the causes, relations and benefits of organisational commitment and its empirical verification.

Work engagement thus encompasses a personal commitment to work as an intrinsic value, the meaning of work engagement, and commitment concerning a position, occupation or career. At the same time, it should be noted that some theorists consider these concepts to be almost identical (Miles, 2001; Harter *et al.*, 2002; Falcone, 2006), while others consider them to be completely different (Kahn, 1990).

Kahn also distinguishes employee engagement from the concept of intrinsic work motivation. It is important to emphasise that all three approaches to engagement presented above are to some extent interrelated and can interact with each other. An employee with a high engagement conceptualised as commitment (especially in relation to affective commitment) will be characterised by a high engagement conceptualised as commitment.

On the other hand, a person with a positive attitude towards his or her work and the organisation is likely to be more strongly committed to it. Furthermore, involving employees in the organisation's affairs by informing, consulting, or making decisions increases their ability to influence the internal organisational environment, improving, among other things, their job satisfaction, which may be reflected in higher levels of commitment both in the sense of involvement and commitment.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

#### **3.1 The Structure of the Studied Entities**

The topics covered in this article required a review of the source literature. Articles

were identified on the opportunities for employee engagement in creative work, the extent to which they function, and the creative life orientations of employees working in the studied organisations. This part of the study was dedicated to establishing a theoretical framework and gaining a broader understanding of the relationships between the components selected for the study.

The verification procedure adopted in this article consisted of exploring certain interdependencies between observable phenomena or facts, without any interference from the researcher. The research was of a diagnostic and exploratory nature. The research aimed to gain knowledge of the phenomena in question and to analyse them to verify the theory, namely to confirm or refute it. In addition, the analysis carried out made it possible to structure knowledge and definitions related to the issue in question.

The main research problem, which is also the subject of the study, is to present the determinants of engagement in creative activities performed at work and outside work by employees of organisations representing creative life orientations. Furthermore, the discussion and conclusions will focus on the impact of the above relationships on the creative development of these organisations. The aim was to conduct an in-depth analysis of the identified research problem; due to the broad research area, a hypothesis was formulated regarding the following selected issues.

The following was formulated:

*Hypothesis 1 (H1). Distinguishing factors determining a high level of employee involvement is an effective determinant of stimulating creative activity - the expected probability of generating creative attitudes is higher if respondents have a sense of involvement in creative work.*

The research was conducted in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship in Poland - spring 2022. The selection of the research sample was purposive. For verification, a self-report survey was applied using the author's questionnaire that was used in the article (the survey consisted of two parts - the first part was Cudowska's (2014) questionnaire and the second author's questionnaire, in which the determinants of the further environment that could influence the development of creativity were selected.

Then, after defining the sampling frame, i.e., the set of items in the statistical population used to verify the formulated objective, the research sample was drawn. A total of 643 respondents were selected, from which a group of 392 knowledge workers-students representing Creative Life Orientations (CrLOs) was then identified, and the opinions of these individuals are presented in the empirical part.

The selection of individuals representing creative life orientations was possible because Cudowska's (2014) verification questionnaire on life orientations was used.

A set of 48 questions by Cudowska (2014) was used to calculate the CrLO (creative life orientations) index with answers in versions: Y - yes, N - no, DK - don't know or A - fits me, a - fits me a little, b - doesn't fit me a little, B - doesn't fit me. Points were allocated for each answer given, respectively 1, 2, 3 (in the Y N DK version) or 0, 1, 2, 3 (in the A a b B version).

The sum of the points obtained in each category (as shown in the table below), then the sum of the points for the categories (+) gave the CrLO value and the sum of the points for the categories (-) gave the Conservative Life Orientations (CoLO) value. The CrLO-CoLO value was used in the statistical analysis. A difference value greater than or equal to zero ( $\geq 0$ ) indicated a person with a CrLO advantage, while a value less than zero ( $< 0$ ) indicated a person with a CoLO advantage (Table 2).

**Table 2.** CrLO-CoLO (Cudowska, 2014)

CrLO*		CoLO**	
Category	Numbers of questions	Category	Numbers of questions
(Ns+)**	1, 6, 15, 16, 32, 35	(Ns-)	5, 11, 18, 26, 37, 42
(Nc+)**	4, 12, 24, 33, 34, 41	(Nc-)	8, 13, 23, 28, 39, 47
(F+)**	7, 9, 19, 21, 27, 30	(F-)	3, 14, 25, 38, 45, 46
(Cv+)**	2, 10, 22, 36, 44, 48	(Cv-)	17, 20, 29, 31, 40, 43

**Note:** \*Creative life orientations – CrLO, \*\*Conservative life orientations – CoLO, \*\*\*New situations – Ns, \*\*\*\*New creations – Nc, \*\*\*\*\*Flexibility and originality of thinking – F, \*\*\*\*\*Creativity as the value – Cv

**Source:** Own study.

The selected group also includes people employed in organisations that carry out creative activities. A further criterion for classification in the study group was the continuous acquisition of knowledge. This decision was based on the fact that studies allow the continuous acquisition of new knowledge and the development of creativity.

Knowledge and creativity are reciprocal stimulators and complementary components (this claim was based on the literature on people with high knowledge absorption abilities, as it is this ability that allows new creative ideas to be generated - Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Choi and Thompson, 2005; Creative Activities..., 2014). Due to accessibility, the respondents were a group of people from the West Pomeranian region studying at the same university. This fact did not affect their responses but facilitated the control and evaluation of the study population.

This size met the minimum sample size criterion and allowed for a lower error rate. Respondents aged up to 25 years accounted for 77% of the study group and those aged between 26 and 40 years accounted for almost 23%. The majority of respondents had between 1 and 5 years of work experience (209 people), 56 people indicated between 6 and 10 years of work activity and the remaining group of

participants had worked for more than 10 years. Respondents worked in organisations of varying employment sizes. 37% of respondents worked in organisations with up to 50 employees 14% of survey participants were professionally affiliated with organisations with 51 to 250 employees and the remaining participants were employed in businesses with more than 250 employees or did not answer this question. Women made up nearly 40% of the survey participants. 75% of respondents were from urban areas, the rest from rural areas.

### **3.2 Measuring the Involvement of Employees Representing Life Orientations in Creative Work**

The activity of entities performing creative work is undoubtedly a major stimulator of regional development and promotes the growth of competitiveness and innovation in the economy, but this is not the only function it performs. Moreover, this scope of activity implies many social dilemmas that deserve consideration for many reasons.

One of them is the issue of recognizing and assessing which factors affecting the studied sector multiply its development trends and which are neutral or only inhibit them. Theoretical considerations have given rise to studies verifying the theory. Research was also conducted into the determinants of employee involvement in creative work.

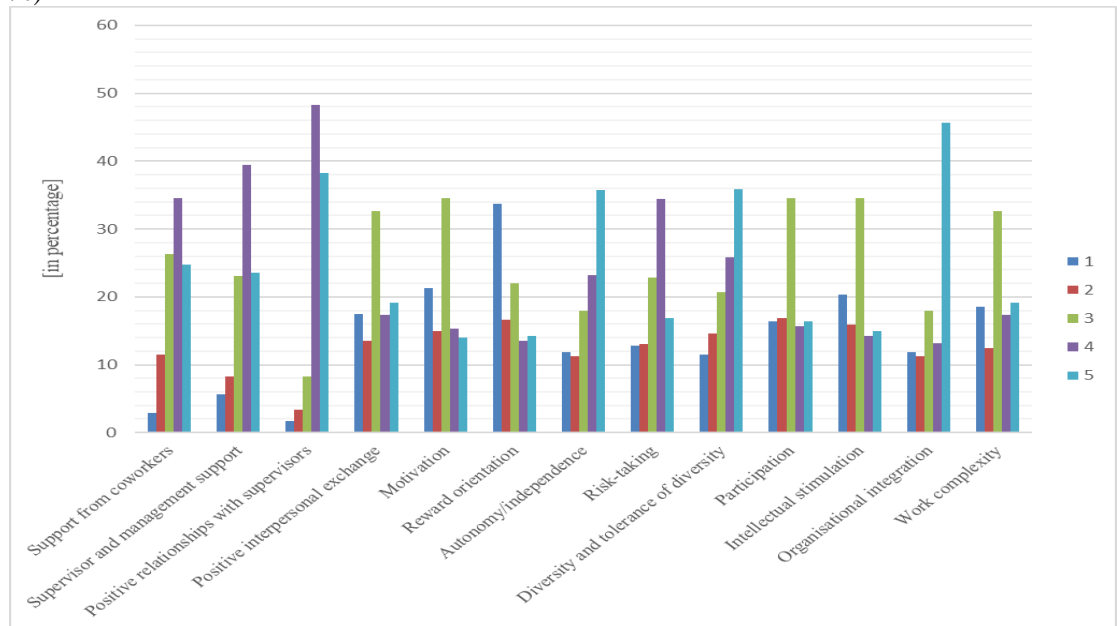
A survey questionnaire was used to measure the level of engagement in creative work. These variables formed the core of the essential questions in the author's research tool. For this research, a questionnaire covering organisational aspects was chosen. It refers to the respondent's work evaluated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 - rather no, 5 - rather yes). The results of the study are presented in Figure 1.

Co-worker support - this is the first factor that should be understood as the willingness of employees to cooperate and help each other to create the right climate for employee involvement in creative work in the organisation. The respondents indicated it in the 4th position, indicating that this determinant contributes to the involvement of employees who represent creative life orientations (34.6% of respondents).

An even higher result of 34.9% was that employee cooperation, mutual motivation, and the exchange of information are a favourable determinant for strengthening employee commitment. Another very important determinant of employee involvement in creative work is the relationship of subordinates with their superiors (48.3% of respondents indicated this).

Direct superiors should support new and innovative ideas of employees. Relationships should be based on trust, openness, and a sense of security. The employee must not feel threatened by superiors or co-workers when proposing new ideas.

**Figure 1.** Determinants of high levels of employee engagement in creative work (in %)



*Source: Own study.*

Motivation reflects the emotional commitment of an organisation's members to its activities and the opportunity to achieve its goals. Used appropriately, it occurs when people experience joy and perceive their usefulness at work. They invest a lot of energy so that they can perform their tasks to the best of their ability. An environment devoid of motivation introduces a sense of alienation and indifference, moods and attitudes of apathy and low commitment to work may be common.

Related to intrinsic motivation, there is also another contextual factor, which is referred to as reward orientation for creative work or achievement in the indicated field. In both cases of the aforementioned determinants, the respondents did not have an opinion on their impact on employees' commitment to creative work. Autonomy, on the other hand, received the highest possible response rate as 35.7% of respondents confirmed that this factor influences employee commitment.

Autonomy in this article is understood as maintaining autonomy within the organisation in terms of contacts, sending and receiving information, discussing problems and alternative solutions, taking initiative in one's own hands, and making decisions. Arguably, an environment where there is freedom and autonomy is more in tune with employees' intrinsic motivation, which is an important determinant of their commitment.

Dynamism and risk-taking are other important attributes characterising employees'

involvement in creative work (the response Yes was indicated by 34.4 % of respondents). Creativity requires quick decisions and balancing of risks. In addition, there is a certain level of uncertainty associated with creative projects and activities that an organisation should not avoid but manage. While not all creative projects will succeed, this is not a reason to avoid creative experimentation, as possible failures will be compensated by other successful projects.

It is worth noting that employee engagement in creativity is a result of so-called diversity. This factor was also mentioned by respondents as a leading one. It can be interpreted in different ways - one can talk about diversity of opinion, of employees, and space, and each of these elements has an impact on the level of creativity. The creative activity of employees is increased when there is diversity when people from different groups can exchange ideas - then the organisation can integrate creative personalities to derive the greatest benefit.

According to the employees surveyed, organisational integration plays an important role in their involvement in creative work (the answer rather Yes was indicated by 45.7% of the respondents). This is a multidimensional concept, although in its basic scope, it includes such a level of cohesion and unification that ensures its smooth and effective functioning. In contrast, co-participation, intellectual stimulation, and the complexity of the work were not significant determinants of creative work engagement for the respondents.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In the dynamic environment of modern business, material, and traditional resources are insufficient. Creativity, supported by adapted organisational strategies and a favourable organisational climate, is becoming a determinant of innovation and competitiveness. The research presented in this article confirms that fostering employee engagement, especially among employees with creative life orientations, is crucial for using creativity as a key organisational resource.

Relevant factors highlight the importance of factors such as positive relationships with superiors, autonomy, diversity, and organisational integration in enhancing engagement in creative work. The aforementioned determinants not only drive individual performance but also contribute to the long-term success of the organisation. The research also emphasizes that creative potential is most effectively used when employees feel supported and appreciated in their workplace.

Therefore, organizations can achieve sustainable growth and adaptability by investing in human capital and integrating mechanisms to encourage engagement in creative work. This study provides practical insights for organisations looking to increase their creative potential, highlighting the crucial role of engaged and motivated employees.

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