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## Article

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Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)

## Provided in Cooperation with:

Johar Education Society, Pakistan (JESPK)

*Suggested Citation:* Nwanzu, Chiyem Lucky; Babalola, Sunday Samson (2022) : The influence of psychological ownership and creative self-efficacy on employee creative performance, Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS), ISSN 2309-8619, Johar Education Society, Pakistan (JESPK), Lahore, Vol. 16, Iss. 1, pp. 34-49

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/261303>

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# **The Influence of Psychological Ownership and Creative Self-Efficacy on Employee Creative Performance**

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## **Article History**

Received: 12 Feb 2022    Revised: 20 Mar 2022    Accepted: 27 Mar 2022    Published: 31 Mar 2022

## **Abstract**

This study examined the influence of employee psychological ownership (PO) and creative self-efficacy (CSE) on employees' creative performance (ECP) and whether CSE moderates the impact of PO on ECP. The study design was cross-sectional and quantitative, while data were collected from 148 public and private organizations. The participants comprised 54.7% women and 45.3% men, with a mean age of 39.75 (SD = 8.45). The statistical tests applied to the data were regression analysis (complemented with the PROCESS tool) and executed SPSS version 27. The hypotheses tested were confirmed as predicted. PO and CSE independently positively affected ECP, and the interaction of CSE and PO on ECP was significant. Simple slope analysis revealed that the positive influence of PO on ECP was more potent when CSE was high than when it was low.

**Keywords:** psychological ownership, creative self-efficacy, creative performance, social identity theory, Nigeria.

## **1. Introduction**

The world of contemporary organizations is sufficiently turbulent and uncertain. It is characterized by intense competition for input (human and material) to produce and market the products. The unstable and hostile environment facing organizations is heightened by technological advancement and the resultant globalization (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016; Pentang, 2021). Such an environment demands a competitive advantage for the sustainability and success of the organization (Teguh et al., 2021; Utarayana & Sudiarta, 2021). Sustainable competitive advantage is a concept that relates to a firm maintaining a lasting edge over rivals in a particular industry (Teguh et al., 2021). It is primarily directly or otherwise through employees' creative performance (Amoah & Mdletshe, 2021; Choi et al., 2021; Kuo et al., 2021; Tahat, 2021). ECP refers to the ability of the worker to create

novel ideas and rules that relate to the procedures and processes of the organization (El-Aty & Deraz, 2021). The empirical literature includes several studies that confirmed the value of creative employee performance in organizational success (Ahmed & Sigamony, 2020; Lee et al., 2019). Since ECP has many desirable effects on effective organizational functioning, it is necessary to identify plausible precursors. Knowing the antecedents of ECP is crucial, as it would guide their manipulation to teach and enhance creativity in the employees. The search for antecedents has extended widely to include personal characteristics and organizational factors (El-Aty & Deraz, 2021). However, while the search for precursors from the domains of personality and attitudes is encouraging, PO and CSE representing the two domains, respectively, have not been substantially examined despite their inherent potential to trigger ECP (Ucar et al., 2021). PO and CSE's potential to influence ECP is expressed in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), several characteristics, and nomological networks of PO, CSE, and ECP. Social identity theory proposes that members of a group are driven to protect and advance the positivity of their group to protect and bolster their self-esteem (Martiny & Rubin, 2016; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In social identity theory, organizational ownership will induce creativity to maintain unity between the individual and the organization. Furthermore, several elements of PO, such as organizational pride and identification, have positive implications for ECP (Durrah et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2016). Nomologically, the few existing studies on the influence of PO and CSE on ECP produced results that largely tilt in a positive direction (El-Aty & Deraz, 2021; Ucar et al., 2021).

This study examined the direct influence of PO and CSE on ECP and the moderating role of CSE in the effect of PO on ECP. This study provides information on the relationship between these variables. Specifically, this study responded to the need for research on the direct connection and the mechanism behind the relationship. The study has also established the relevance of social identity theory to account for the relationship between PO and ECP. The anticipated insights from this study will have practical value for human resource professionals in the search for individual and organizational performance.

## **2. Theoretical Background and Development of Hypotheses**

### *2.1 Employee PO and Creative Performance*

The need to belong to human survival is well recognized. PO comprises cognitive and affective elements, satisfying social and genetic human motivations and needs such as belonging, efficacy, and self-identity. PO is the state of mind in which individuals feel ownership of or a piece of that target is theirs. It is an attitudinal state based on possession and a psychological connection to a target (Asim et al., 2021; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Therefore, in a work setting, PO implies the extent to which employees see the organization for which they work as their own. Such ownership feelings, emotions, and cognition may motivate employees to behave positively, develop self-efficacy, and strengthen their sense of obligation and commitment toward the organization (Jakada et al., 2021).

Creativity is the generation of valuable and novel ideas about products, practices, services, procedures, and processes by an individual or a group of individuals (Amoah & Mdletshe,

2021; Speckbacher, 2021). Creativity is crucial for organizational innovation, effectiveness, and survival in a global market characterized by intense competition (Jiang & Gu, 2017). ECP, a unique phenomenon, is the worker's ability to create novel and advantage-given ideas and rules related to the organization's procedures and processes (El-Aty & Deraz, 2021; Han & Roh, 2020). Generate and introduce novel and valuable ideas and solutions to the organization (Kim, 2019). Innovation and creativity are intrinsically linked. While creativity is the emergence of new ideas, innovation is the successful implementation of creative ideas. By implication, creativity forms the starting point for innovation (Speckbacher, 2021).

Based on associated elements, the existing empirical literature, and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it was proposed in this study that PO will have a positive influence on ECP. PO embodied several elements, such as organizational pride, identification, and commitment, which positively affect ECP (Durrah et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2016). Additionally, the few existing studies on the effect of PO on ECP produced results that tilt in a positive direction. For example, PO positively predicts creativity performance (Ucar et al., 2021; El-Aty & Deraz, 2021), role identity, and creative self-efficacy (elements of PO) significantly impact employee creativity (Kim, 2019). Social identity refers to a person's knowledge of belongingness to a specific social group and the emotions and values vital to them as a group member (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Consequently, when employees identify with the organization, they are likely to engage in beneficial behaviors. It is plausible since employees also evaluate their success concerning their organization members. Consequently, the argument here is that employees with the feelings and cognition that the organization for which they work is theirs will exhibit positive work behavior, such as the ECP. Therefore, it was proposed that:

- H<sub>1</sub>: PO positively predicts an employee's creative performance

## 2.2 *Employee's Creative Self-efficacy as a Moderator*

CSE as a personality trait is symbolic of an individual's perceived ability to accomplish a given task. It implies an individual's subjective judgment of their ability to engage in creative activities. It is about an individual's belief about their ability or potential within a domain. CSE is a person's self-judgment of competence to suggest new and appropriate ideas, find creative solutions, and perform creative behavior (Hu et al., 2018; Shaw et al., 2021). It is a driver of adventurousness and a foundation for creative performance.

Based on inherent characteristics and the existing empirical literature, it is proposed that CSE positively predicts ECP and moderates the effect of PO on ECP. Characteristically, CSE entails one's belief and feeling of competence for creativity. Such energy has the potential for expression in creative performance. Moreover, existing studies have noted various relationships between CSE and ECP. CSE significantly impacts creative performance (Yulianti et al., 2022) innovative work behavior (Karadeniz et al., 2021). And as a mechanism, CSE moderated the relationship between job satisfaction (Amoah & Mdletshe, 2021; Kim, 2019), transformational leaders (Asada et al., 2021), proactive personality (Choi et al., 2021), and knowledge sharing (Islam & Asad, 2021) on employee's creative performance. CSE mediated the relationship between socioeconomic status and

creative ideation (Yang et al., 2020), empowering leadership and employee creativity (Malik, 2021). The proposal here is that although PO has the inherent potential to enhance ECP, that would be strengthened by a high level of belief and feeling of creative ability. Consequently, it was proposed that:

- H<sub>2</sub>: CSE positively predicts employee's creative performance
- H<sub>3</sub>: CSE moderates the positive effect of PO on employee creative performance so that the effect is more potent when CSE is high than when it is low.

Figure 1 (below) presents the research model that shows the relationship between PO, CSE, and ECP. In the model, PO and CSE are assumed to have a recursive relationship with ECP. It implies that PO and CSE impact the ECP, not the other way around. Furthermore, CSE was considered a moderating variable in the link between PO and ECP.

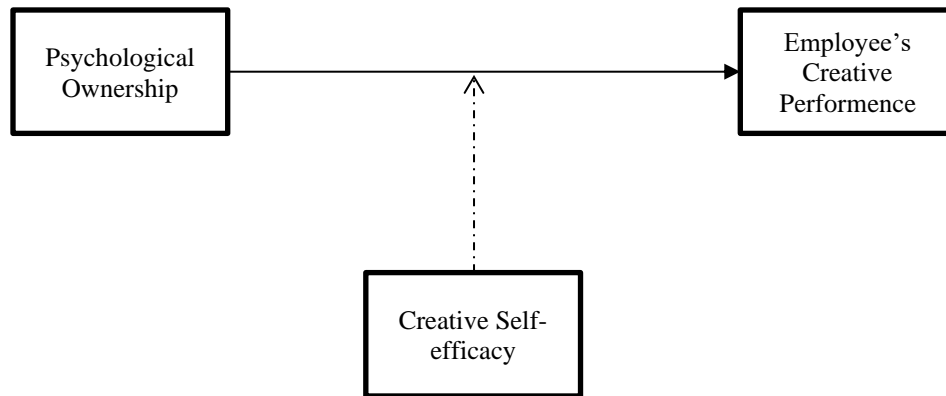


Figure 1: Research Framework

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Participants and Design

Participants were 148 public and private organizations in Delta State, Nigeria. Nigerian organizations are primarily associated with poor performance. A plausible explanation for this could be the low creativity among the employees. This situation calls for studies that identify the precursors of creative performance among Nigerian workers. Public and private organizations were sampled as creative employees, and behavior is necessary for every organization, regardless of the sector (Speckbacher, 2021). This inclusiveness in the sample is imperative as the employee creativity literature favors private organizations (Houtgraaf et al., 2021; Oguebe et al., 2021). The average age of the participants was 39.75 years (SD = 8.45), and the average work experience in years was 8.19 (SD 4.75). Most were women (54.7%), holders of certificates less than the first degree (33.5%), the first degree and equivalent (44.60%), and post-graduate (20.9%). All respondents were in permanent employment. Having diversified samples from various organizations improves

the generalizability of our results (Asim et al., 2021). The study design was quantitatively appropriate. The investigation focused on relationships between latent constructs (Zaman et al., 2021) and cross-sectional, as the data were collected at a particular time (Anderson et al., 2020). The nonprobability sampling technique was adopted in the distribution of the questionnaires. It produced a convenience sample, as the respondents were based on availability. Nonprobability samples are common in organizational behavior literature, mainly in this research setting, where sampling frames are often non-existent or almost impossible to access (Babalola & Nwanzu, 2022). With three variables, a sample size of 148 met the recommended sample-to-variable ratio of 20 to 1 (see Memon et al., 2020). The sample size was adjudged to be satisfactory. It meets Dewberry's (2004) recommendation that the sample size required for a medium effect size should be adopted when the expected effect size is unknown. With three variables, a sample size of 148 met the recommended sample-to-variable ratio of 20 to 1 (see Memon et al., 2020). The sample size of 148 has more than 80% power detection a relationship at a significance level of 0.05 if such an association exists in this study. Regression analysis (complemented with the PROCESS tool for SPSS) was used to test the hypotheses. The micro process is suitable for this study, as the research model is simple with three variables that were analyzed as composites.

Furthermore, the Micro PROCESS for SPSS is widely applied in organizational behavior literature and adjudged "the best way to tackle moderation and mediation" (Babalola & Nwanzu, 2022; Field, 2018). Since regression is a parametric statistical tool, the basic assumptions (e.g., independent data, interval scaling, and linearity) that accompany its adoption were incorporated into the design and preliminary data analysis. One hundred and eighty-five surveys were distributed to participants at their workplaces; Within one month, 148 valid questionnaires were received, representing an 80% useable rate.

### 3.2 *Measures*

#### 3.2.1 Employee Psychological Ownership

Van Dyne and Pierce's (2004) 7-item, one-dimensional PO scale was adopted. It was measured on a five-point Likert scale format that ranged from (strongly agree 5 to strongly disagree 1). The scale's authors and other users (for example, Asim et al., 2021; Jakada et al., 2021; Karabay, 2021; Mustafa et al., 2022). reported satisfactory psychometric properties. Some sample items are "This is my organization"; and "I feel a high degree of personal ownership for this organization."

#### 3.2.2 Employee Creative Self-efficacy

Tierney and Farmer's (2002) 3-item scale was used to measure CSE. It was measured on a five-point Likert scale format that ranged from (strongly agree 5 to strongly disagree 1). The score range was 3 to 21, and higher scores indicated a stronger CSE. The sample items are "I have confidence in my ability to solve a problem creatively" and "I feel that I am good at generating novel ideas." The author and other scale users (Choi et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2022); Ohly et al., 2017; Rauniyar et al., 2017) reported satisfactory psychometric properties.

### 3.2.3 Employee Creative Behavior

Rice's (2006) 9-item employee creative behavior scale was adopted. The instrument was designed to measure the production of new and valuable ideas in the workplace. It was measured on a five-point Likert scale format that ranged from (strongly agree 5 to strongly disagree 1). The author and other scale users (Kusumaputri et al., 2021; Oguebe et al., 2021) reported satisfactory psychometric properties. The items for each adopted scale are few but sufficient for valid results.

### 3.3 Common-Method Variance

Some procedural techniques to control the common-method bias were implemented in the study's design. For example, the variables studied were presented to the participants on different sheets of paper. The participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality through the covering letter. A common-method variance diagnostic statistical procedure (the Harman single-factor test) was applied to the data sets. Factors with an eigenvalue equal to 1 explained above 84% of the total variance for the test. However, the first factor explained 38% of the entire variation. Since the first factor accounted for less than 50% of the variation, the validity and interpretations of the findings are not weakened by common-method bias (Amoah & Mdletshe, 2021; Martínez-Córcoles & Zhu, 2020; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2020).

### 3.4 Control variables

Covariate analysis is crucial as it reduces the bias of omitted variables in the model (Cooper et al., 2020). Two demographic variables, sex (male = 0, female = 1) and work experience (in years), were treated as a covariate in this study. These demographics were treated as control variables since they have been identified as antecedents of ECP and have been equally treated as a covariate in some related studies (see Amoah & Mdletshe, 2021; Choi et al., 2021; Maria et al., 2022). Furthermore, some theories have implicated these demographics in the influence of ECP. In particular, social role theory (Eagly, 1987) explained gender differences, and human capital theory (Marginson, 2019) explained work experience.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Reliability and Validity of the Measures

Although this study adopted existing scales, some reliability and validity tests were also performed. The reliability of the internal consistency of the measures was tested with the Cronbach alpha procedure. The coefficient alphas obtained are presented in Table 1. The alpha statistic between 0.74 and 0.88 was satisfactory (Hair et al., 2020). The measures adopted have been used in some existing studies, indicating their acceptance and validity (El-Aty & Deraz, 2021; Karimi et al., 2020). Construct validity was tested through convergent and discriminant validity, the two aspects of validity. The magnitude of Cronbach's alphas obtained offered support for the convergent validity of the measures (Chikazhe et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2021). Factor structure statistics (cross-loading)

showed that the item loadings for every construct were higher than cross-loadings. This pattern of item loading supported the discriminant validity of the measure, as it indicates that the items belonged more to their factors (Chikazhe et al., 2021). The obtained Durbin-Watson test statistics were 1.64 and 2.11. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, coefficient alphas, and zero-order correlation coefficients of the study variables. All focal variables were measured on a five-point Likert summated rating scale, and the detected mean scores were 3.22, 3.25, and 3.31. The variables have 0.35, 0.49, and 0.63 positive and statistically significant zero-order coefficients. Both the mean scores and the correlation statistics were considered moderate. The Durbin-Watson test statistics and the moderate correlation coefficients indicate that the data sets were free from collinearity.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Alpha and Correlations**

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	No of Item	Alpha	1	2
1	Psychological ownership	3.22	0.82	7	0.88	1	
2	Creative self-efficacy	3.31	0.66	3	0.74	0.35**	1
3	Creative performance	3.25	0.67	9	0.78	0.49**	0.63**

#### 4.2 Main Effect Test

Table 2 shows a simple regression analysis that predicts ECP from PO and CSE. The statistics in the table support Hypotheses 1 and 2. For Hypothesis 1, (Table 2; third, fourth, and fifth rows), PO significantly predicted ECP ( $b = 0.34$ , 95% CI [0.22 -0.46],  $t = 5.82$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The observed  $b$ -value indicates that a one-unit increase in PO brings a 0.34-unit increase in ECP.  $R^2$  indicates that PO explains the 0.17% variance in creative performance of the employees, a small effect size. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicates that the regression was statistically significant, meaning creative performance can be predicted from PO. The small difference between  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  indicates good cross-validation; this model applies to other samples generated from the same population. For Hypothesis 2 (Table 2; sixth, seventh, and eighth rows), CSE significantly predicted the creative performance of the employee ( $b = 0.65$ , 95% CI [0.52 -0.78],  $t = 9.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The observed  $b$ -value indicates that a one-unit increase in CSE brings about a 0.65-unit increase in ECP.  $R^2$  also indicates that CSE account for a 40% variance in ECP, and the  $R^2$  statistics indicate a large effect. The ANOVA test indicates that the regression was statistically significant, indicating that ECP can be predicted from the CSE. The small difference between  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  indicates good cross-validation; this model applies to other samples generated from the same population.



**Table 2: Simple Regression Predicting Employee Creative Performance from Psychological Ownership and Creative Self-Efficacy**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
						LB	UB
Constant	2.15	0.20		10.59	0.001.	1.75	2.56
Psychological Ownership	0.34	0.06	0.41	5.82	0.001.	0.22	0.46
	$R^2$ 0.176, <i>Adj. R</i> <sup>2</sup> 0.17; DW, 1.64 $F(1; 146) = 31.16, p < 0.001$						
Constant	1.09	0.22		4.94	0.001	0.66	1.50
Creative Self-efficacy	0.65	0.06,	0.63	9.87	0.001	0.52	0.78
	$R^2$ 0.404, <i>Adjusted. R</i> <sup>2</sup> 0.40; DW, 2.11, $F(1, 144) = 97.50, p < 0.001$						

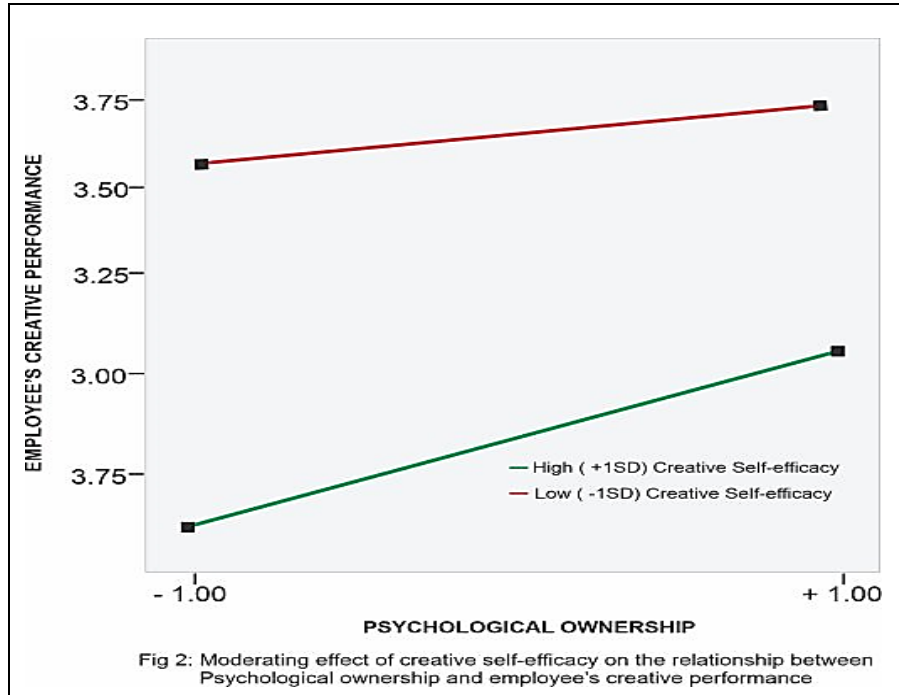
#### 4.3 Test of the Moderation Effect

Table 3 shows the statistics on the test of Hypothesis 3. The results show that it is with the simple effect as with the main effects. A simple impact showed ECP when PO or CSE was kept constant with each other. The relationship between PO and ECP when CSE was kept constant was ( $b = 0.14, p < 0.01$ ), and that between CSE and ECP when PO was kept constant was ( $b = 0.57, p < 0.001$ ). The interaction of PO and CSE on ECP was statistically significant, although with a negative sign coefficient. However, since the moderation analysis was significant, a simple slope analysis was performed according to Frost's (2019) recommendation, and the result is presented in Figure 2. A simple slope was performed to locate the creative performance in PO within high and low CSE.

**Table 3: Moderation of Creative Self-Efficacy Between Psychological Ownership and Employee Creative Performance**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
					<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Constant	3.32	0.16	20.54	0.001.	3.00	3.64
Psychol. Own	0.14	0.06,	2.47	0.01	0.039	0.26
Creative Self-efficacy	0.57	0.07%	7.83	0.001.	0.47	0.71
PO * CSE	-0.13	0.07%	-1.96	0.05	-0.27	-0.00
Gender	0.02	0.09	0.22	0.79	-0.20	0.15
Work Experie	0.00	0.01	-0.26	0.80	-0.02	0.02
	$R = 0.67, R^2 = 0.45, F(5;134) = 21.53 p < 0.01$					

The interaction was obtained by plotting the estimates plus and minus one standard deviation of the means of CSE to represent high versus low CSE in PO, respectively. The comparison of the regression lines in Figure 2 indicates that when the CSE was high, PO had a more significant impact on the creative performance of the employee than when the CSE was low. In other words, the positive effect of PO on employee creative performance was more potent when the CSE was high than when it was low.



## 5. Discussion

Creativity is necessary for any organization in the current world of information technology advancement and globalization. Since the aggregate of employee creative behavior essentially represents the organization's creativity, there has been a surge in empirical studies to identify the precursors and mechanisms that stimulate creativity among employees. This study examined the direct and interaction process of PO and CSE in ECP. Consequently, three related hypotheses were generated and tested. Hypotheses 1 and 2 proposed a positive effect of PO and CSE on ECP, while Hypothesis 3 proposed a moderation effect. Data analysis produced consistent expectations for Hypothesis 1. The result obtained matches that of El-Aty and Deraz (2021), Kim (2019), and Ucar et al. (2021). In these studies, PO was found to have positive implications for ECP. PO is likely to lead to ECP as it is characterized by belongingness, pride, and identification that positively relates to creative behavior (Durrah et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2016).

CSE positively impacts the ECP. This finding was also expected and consistent with the studies by Amoah and Mdletshe (2021), Choi et al. (2021), Kim (2019), and Jaiswal and Dhar (2015). These studies reported a positive association between CSE and ECP. CSE predicts employees' creativity because it embodies elements innately associated with creativity, such as a creative mindset. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed.

Hypothesis 3, which proposed a moderating role, was supported, as the interaction was statistically significant, and simple slope analysis produced a result aligned with the predicted direction. The effect of PO on ECP was more potent when CSE was high than when it was low. This finding confirmed some related studies within the issue of "significance" (e.g., Amoah & Mdletshe, 2021; Asada et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2021). The difference between the squared multiple correlations of the "main effect only" model and the squared multiple correlations of the interaction model produced a squared semi-partial correlation of 0.27, indicating the interaction effect's strength. The interaction effect accounts for 27% of the variance in creative performance. CSE moderating the impact of PO on ECP is expected, as self-efficacy is a component of PO (El-Aty & Deraz, 2021). Additionally, CSE has some confidence elements that could accumulate in the feeling of pride and possessiveness that PO represents.

### *5.1 Theoretical Implications*

This study has implications for both theory and practice. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study pioneered the investigation of the effect of PO on ECP and the interaction of attitude (PO) and personality trait (CSE) on behavior (ECP). This study quickly responded to the need for research in these areas and has opened a possible research direction. Although there are studies on creative performance in the workplace, they were limited to public or private organizations, particularly the latter type. This study addressed the lack of ECP in public organizations and investigated both public and private organizations. The combined approach and the findings confirmed existing studies; this study had improved the generalizability of studies conducted in public or private organizations. In addition to the empirical literature, hypothesis 1 in this study was anchored in social identity theory. Since the data supported the hypothesis, it implies that the related elements of the theory on which the hypothesis was anchored were equally confirmed. In this sense, this study contributes to the empirical literature on a theory test. In this research setting, scales adopted to assess employee PO, CSE, and creative performance were undeveloped. The reliability and validity of the scales add to their psychometric properties and suitability in this study's environment.

### *5.2 Practical Implication*

The findings of this study are of some value for management practice. First, direct effect tests revealed that PO and CSE independently and positively impact ECP. That is, PO or CSE can trigger the creative performance of employees. The literature clearly shows that ECP is organizationally desirable (Ahmed & Sigamony, 2020; Amoah & Mdletshe, 2021; Choi et al., 2021). When considering the creative performance values of employees, their presence in the organization should be initiated, maximized, and sustained. This study has

implicated PO and CSE in achieving this. Therefore, managers and administrators are responsible for creating an organizational PO climate in their organizations, which can be achieved through organizational justice, support, employee recognition, and participation in decision-making.

The lesson here for human resource practitioners is that efforts to improve ECP through PO should consider CSE. Similarly, organizational professionals should include the CSE assessment in their recruitment and selection processes. There are several psychometrically sound instruments available to achieve the processes. Independently, PO has a significant effect on the creative performance of employees. However, moderation analysis revealed that the high impact of CSE on ECP strengthened the positive influence of PO on ECP.

### 5.3 Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations that need to be acknowledged for further research. This study is cross-sectional and correlational, which means that a causal interpretation cannot be deduced from its findings. Therefore, other studies should adopt longitudinal designs or field experiments to facilitate this interpretation. Similarly, the sole usage of self-reported data also provides a potential weakness for this study. Even with the procedural control measures implemented in the study design, the possibility of common-method bias cannot be ruled out. Therefore, adopting a multisource (self and "other") approach to data collection is suggested for future studies. The conceptual framework for this study is a predictor (PO), and a moderator (CSE) investigated together with a criterion variable (ECP). It can be deemed as a simple model with implications for under-specification.

Consequently, models with more variables should dominate future research. Although several design procedures were implemented to address common-method bias associated with self-administered questionnaires as a single source of data collection, the absence of this bias in the data sets may not be fully ensured. Therefore, further studies should complement the procedural control with the multisource data collection.

### Research Funding

Researchers received no research grant or funds for this research project.

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