THE EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT PARTICIPATION IN DIRECTIVE DECISION MAKING AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES CREATIVITY: A CASE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN OMAN

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand how the private higher education sector in Oman is adapting to global trends and industrial partnerships to prepare students for the workforce. Specifically, it aims to explore the relationship between employee involvement in participation, directorial decision-making, and employee innovation in this context, and how these factors contribute to differentiating institutions in a competitive environment.

Method: This study employs quantitative analysis to investigate the relationships between employee involvement, directed decision-making, and innovation within Oman's private higher education sector. Through the use of surveys and statistical methods, the study explores how directorial decision-making moderates the link between employee involvement and creativity.

Results and Conclusion: The findings suggest that directorial decision-making plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between employee involvement and creativity. All proposed hypotheses were supported, indicating a positive correlation between employee participation in decision-making processes and innovation. These results underscore the importance of directorial strategies that encourage employee involvement as a catalyst for creativity within the sector.

Originality/Value: This study contributes uniquely to the body of knowledge on employee creativity in the private higher education industry by highlighting the critical role of leadership decision-making styles in fostering an innovative work environment. It provides empirical evidence supporting the need for policy reforms that encourage participative decision-making processes, thereby enhancing the sector's competitiveness and its ability to meet the demands of the global workforce. Through its insights, the study offers a foundation for further research and policy development aimed at nurturing innovation in higher education.

Keywords: Employee Involvement Participation, Directive Decision Making, Employees Creativity, Higher Education.

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo é compreender como o sector do ensino superior privado em Omã está a adaptar-se às tendências globais e às parcerias industriais para preparar os estudantes para o mercado de trabalho. Especificamente, pretende explorar a relação entre o envolvimento dos funcionários na participação, na tomada de decisões diretivas e seu impacto na criatividade dos funcionários: um estudo de caso de ensino superior em Omã.

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decisões da direção e na inovação dos funcionários neste contexto, e como estes fatores contribuem para diferenciar as instituições num ambiente competitivo.

**Método:** Este estudo emprega análise quantitativa para investigar as relações entre o envolvimento dos funcionários, a tomada de decisões direcionadas e a inovação no setor de ensino superior privado de Omã. Através do uso de pesquisas e métodos estatísticos, o estudo explora como a tomada de decisões da direção modera a ligação entre o envolvimento dos funcionários e a criatividade.

**Resultados e Conclusão:** Os resultados sugerem que a tomada de decisão da direção desempenha um papel moderador significativo na relação entre o envolvimento dos funcionários e a criatividade. Todas as hipóteses propostas foram apoiadas, indicando uma correlação positiva entre a participação dos funcionários nos processos de tomada de decisão e a inovação. Estes resultados sublinham a importância de estratégias de direção que incentivem o envolvimento dos funcionários como catalisadores da criatividade no sector.

**Originalidade/Valor:** Este estudo contribui de forma única para o corpo de conhecimento sobre a criatividade dos funcionários no setor de ensino superior privado, destacando o papel crítico dos estilos de tomada de decisão de liderança na promoção de um ambiente de trabalho inovador. Fornece provas empíricas que apoiam a necessidade de reformas políticas que incentivem processos de tomada de decisão participativos, aumentando assim a competitividade do sector e a sua capacidade de satisfazer as exigências da força de trabalho global. Através dos seus conhecimentos, o estudo oferece uma base para futuras pesquisas e desenvolvimento de políticas destinadas a fomentar a inovação no ensino superior.

**Palavras-chave:** Participação dos Funcionários, Tomada de Decisão Diretiva, Criatividade dos Funcionários, Ensino Superior.

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**EL EFECTO DE LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS EMPLEADOS EN LA TOMA DE DECISIONES DIRECTIVAS Y SU IMPACTO EN LA CREATIVIDAD DE LOS EMPLEADOS: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO DE EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR EN OMÁN**

**RESUMEN**

**Propósito:** El propósito de este estudio es comprender cómo el sector privado de educación superior en Omán se está adaptando a las tendencias globales y las asociaciones industriales para preparar a los estudiantes para la fuerza laboral. Específicamente, su objetivo es explorar la relación entre la participación de los empleados, la toma de decisiones directivas y la innovación de los empleados en este contexto, y cómo estos factores contribuyen a diferenciar a las instituciones en un entorno competitivo.

**Método:** Este estudio emplea un análisis cuantitativo para investigar las relaciones entre la participación de los empleados, la toma de decisiones dirigida y la innovación dentro del sector privado de educación superior de Omán. Mediante el uso de encuestas y métodos estadísticos, el estudio explora cómo la toma de decisiones directivas modera el vínculo entre la participación de los empleados y la creatividad.

**Resultados y conclusión:** Los hallazgos sugieren que la toma de decisiones directivas juega un papel moderador importante en la relación entre la participación de los empleados y la creatividad. Todas las hipótesis propuestas fueron respaldadas, lo que indica una correlación positiva entre la participación de los empleados en los procesos de toma de decisiones y la innovación. Estos resultados subrayan la importancia de las estrategias directivas que fomenten la participación de los empleados como catalizador de la creatividad dentro del sector.

**Originalidad/Valor:** Este estudio contribuye de manera única al conjunto de conocimientos sobre la creatividad de los empleados en la industria de la educación superior privada al resaltar el papel fundamental de los estilos de toma de decisiones de liderazgo en el fomento de un ambiente de trabajo innovador. Proporciona evidencia empírica que respalda la necesidad de reformas políticas que fomenten procesos participativos de toma de decisiones, mejorando así la competitividad del sector y su capacidad para satisfacer las demandas de la fuerza laboral global. A través de sus conocimientos, el estudio ofrece una base para futuras investigaciones y desarrollo de políticas destinadas a fomentar la innovación en la educación superior.

**Palabras clave:** Participación de los Empleados, Toma de Decisiones Directivas, Creatividad de los Empleados, Educación Superior.
1 INTRODUCTION

Oman has experienced rapid growth in its higher education system, particularly in the private sector (Al-Abri, 2015). The government invests heavily to create a sustainable environment for private education, including regulatory frameworks, quality improvements, and financial support (Al-Harthy, 2016). They are also attracting foreign universities and promoting collaboration between the public and private sectors. Efforts are being made to improve the quality of education and research, including the development of research centers and investment in educational technology. Financial support is provided to private institutions, and incentives are given to students to pursue higher education in Oman (Al-Abri, 2015). Collaboration between the public and private sectors is encouraged through joint research centers and academic partnerships. Oman is investing in private higher education to achieve a knowledge-based economy. The government provides support through regulations and finances, leading to the growth of private universities and colleges. The Omani Higher Education Council plays a key role in promoting and supporting these institutions (Al-Harthy, 2016).

One of the main challenges in the private higher education sector in Oman is the lack of qualified teaching staff. The rapid growth of the sector has led to a shortage of lecturers and professors, resulting in the need to hire foreign staff at a higher cost and causing discontinuity in teaching and learning. Despite these challenges, there is still potential for future growth. It is important to address these challenges by focusing on employee creativity. Creativity is essential for organizational success and is driven by employee involvement and participation (Bonau, 2018). Employees bring unique ideas and actively contribute to the organization's goals (Carmeli et al., 2017). This involvement and participation go beyond just following protocols and require each employee to be devoted to their job and contribute to the growth and advancement of the organization (Zeb et al., 2018). Managers should seek and value the opinions of their employees (Obembe & Lasisi, 2019).

Employee involvement participation in organizational duties inspires them and enable them to contribute more rapidly (Demir & Budur, 2021). It reflects their attitude towards work and their level of identification with their employment (Ike et al., 2017). Employees with high
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involvement are more likely to strive for organizational goals and less likely to contribute to turnover (Abubakar et al., 2019). Involvement involves the decision-making process facilitated by an involvement mechanism that includes employees and supervisors. It necessitates the participation of individuals in organizational and workplace decision-making, also known as participative decision-making (Bhatt et al., 2020).

Higher education institutions are concerned about a lack of innovative thinkers (Hamid et al., 2020). Creativity in academic staff is important for problem-solving (Jahnke & Liebscher, 2020). Involvement in decision-making is crucial for creative outcomes (Pan et al., 2018). Private higher education establishments in Oman face obstacles in improving staff creativity. The mechanisms behind creative behavior in academic staff are not well understood. Addressing uncertainties in the literature can help institutions stimulate creativity (Liu et al., 2017). Private higher education institutions in Oman need to increase innovation to be successful in a competitive environment.

This absence of employee involvement participation in directive decision-making has resulted in a great deal of turbulence, laxity, excessive absenteeism, and firing rates (Sung & Choi, 2018). Employee involvement participation in directive decision-making is critical to the organization's longevity and so requires careful attention to overcome this mindset and preserve coherence in the employee relationship (Groen et al., 2017). The fundamental motivation for this study is to have a thorough understanding of the various aspects that influence employees' creativity in higher education in a new context. The purpose of this study is to look at the impact of employee involvement participation on employee creativity. Finally, this research examines whether directive decision-making influences the relationship between employee involvement participation and employee creativity.

2 EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

Creativity is crucial for organizational performance, effectiveness, improvement, transformation, and growth (Chen et al., 2021). In universities, creativity enhances the value and usability of services, aligns with organizational goals, and responds to societal changes (Kim, 2019). It is essential for generating new knowledge, businesses, and ideas (Cai et al., 2020; Nelwan et al., 2024). Universities play a crucial role in shaping the country's future capital, and students expect innovative services and advancements in technology (Yasir & Majid, 2020). Creativity is vital for universities to remain relevant and productive (Bierbaum et al., 2022). Employee creativity is crucial for fostering innovation and business success (Guo
et al., 2021). Investing in employees and their knowledge, skills, and creativity leads to innovation (Chen et al., 2021). Employee creativity involves actions or activities that result in the creation of something new or an idea that is utilized in the organization (Nasifoglu et al., 2020). The creative process can be unpredictable and may face unexpected delays, setbacks, and costs (Ahmad et al., 2022). When given management, employees need more power and freedom to encourage creative behavior (Yu et al., 2019).

Organizational support can also enhance employee creativity. Creativity is a complex system that requires consideration of all its interacting parts (Liu et al., 2020). Cultural and social contexts are significant factors influencing creativity. Sharing information and learning from others can foster creativity (Kremer et al., 2019).

3 EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT PARTICIPATION

Involvement reflects a person's active and concerned mindset about their work (Parent-Thirion et al., 2020). It can indicate how employees value their work and can contribute to personal growth. While involvement has become more important due to factors like recession and globalization, there is no consensus on its definition or application (Demir, 2018). It is seen as an attitude towards work, indicating the psychological identification and importance a person places on their job (Ćulibrk et al., 2018).

Employee involvement participation is a management initiative that allows employees to participate in work-related decisions and discussions, giving them some control over their work and conditions (García et al., 2018). It involves sharing power among people with different positions in the hierarchy. The level of participation depends on factors such as experience and the nature of the task. Employee participation in an organization aims to increase productivity, enhance understanding of roles, and meet the need for self-expression (Yuspahruddin et al., 2020). This leads to better relationships, effectiveness, and efficiency. Involving employees in decision-making empowers them, improves harmony, motivates them, and boosts self-esteem (Obiekwe, 2018). Signs of participation include joint consultations, board representation, committee membership, and setting goals together (van Assen, 2021).

4 DIRECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

Decision-making is the process of choosing the best option from multiple choices to achieve a desired goal. It is crucial for effective management and organizational efficiency.
(Habanik et al., 2020). Making a decision involves finding and choosing a solution to a problem (Nelwan et al., 2024; Zgrzepski IV, 2022). It is a process that involves considering both economic and social values. Leaders should strive to find a balance between these two sets of values (Wingard, 2019). Neglecting either can lead to negative consequences, such as layoffs or inconsistent actions (Saługa et al., 2020). This study focused on directive decision-making.

In directive decision-making, employees will formulate any problems by using data that is based on fact. Its form is structured. There are some characteristics possessed by employees in this style, which are: (1) employees tend to work based on task-oriented, (2) employees tend to own power or quality to decide a problem, (3) employees work quickly, and (4) employees work in an organised manner without wasting time, money, or energy (Hafni & Nurlaelah, 2018).

5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between personal characteristics, behaviors, and the environment, while also recognizing the active role of individuals (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy, as explained by Bandura, is the confidence of a person to generate unconventional and productive ideas necessary for the organization (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). It is an essential aspect of creativity and requires individuals to be highly confident in creative tasks. Using social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) as the overarching theory, this study explores the linkages among different factors. Social cognitive theory is widely used to connect factors and creativity (Bandura, 1986), and is especially relevant to this examination for several reasons. It emphasizes that belief in one's ability to successfully engage in creative processes is crucial for maintaining involvement (Bandura, 1986, 2001). It also highlights that human functioning is influenced by individuals' judgments of their capabilities to achieve desired performance outcomes (Bandura, 1986).

Employee creativity is crucial for organizational success and is influenced by individual characteristics and environmental factors. Social Cognitive Theory suggests that creativity is shaped by the interaction between individuals and their environment. A supportive and collaborative workplace can foster creative behavior. Understanding the role of the environment can help organizations create an environment that encourages creativity and innovation (Hamid et al., 2020; Lee, 2018). With that, the Social Cognitive Theory was adapted as the underpinning theory to explore innovative work behaviour in the current study. On this basis, social cognitive theory and literature, this study proposed a conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1, where
employee involvement participation is the independent variable, directive decision-making is the mediating variable and employee creativity is the dependent variable.

**Figure 1**

*Proposed Conceptual Framework*

Based on the proposed conceptual framework, this study draws four research hypotheses below:

**Hypothesis 1:** Employee involvement participation has a significant positive effect on employee creativity.

**Hypothesis 2:** Employee involvement participation has a significant positive effect on directive decision-making.

**Hypothesis 3:** Directive decision-making has a significant positive effect on employee creativity.

**Hypothesis 4:** Directive decision-making mediates the relationship between employee involvement participation and employee creativity.

**6 ETHODOLOGY**

The methodology presents a comprehensive analysis of the data and the resulting conclusions that were used to assess the proposed hypothesis in this study. This study investigates the influence of employee engagement in authoritative decision-making on the creative abilities of employees at higher education institutions in Oman. A survey was done among 1897 academic staff members from 7 private universities in Oman. The survey sample size was found to be 322, using the guidelines provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). A total of 317 questionnaires were collected out of the 400 that were distributed. After excluding 9 incomplete surveys, a total of 308 questionnaires were utilized for the final analysis.

The frequency analysis by SPSS is used to analyze the demographic profile of survey respondents. This involves collecting data on characteristics such as age, gender, and education. It helps researchers understand their target audience and identify trends and relationships.
between different demographic groups. In this study, data was collected from 308 respondents, with 82% being male and 18% female. The majority of respondents (48%) were aged 41-50 and had a Master's degree (43%).

7 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ANALYSIS AND CONSTRUCTS RELIABILITY

Descriptive analysis aims to convey the meaning of quantitative data by providing summary statistics. These statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, characterize the behavior of variables in the data set. In Table 1, the mean values of the variables range from 2.9686 to 3.9812, while the standard deviation ranges from 0.61196 to 1.03414. Overall, the study has found satisfactory levels of acceptance for each variable. Table 1 summarizes the mean and standard deviation for each variable.

Reliability refers to the consistency and predictability of a product, service, or system in terms of quality, accuracy, and speed. It is crucial for customer satisfaction and the trustworthiness of a system. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability is a measure used to assess the internal consistency of a survey or questionnaire. A higher Cronbach's Alpha value indicates stronger item correlation and higher reliability. In the study mentioned, the reliability of all variables is high, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. This indicates that the questionnaire used is trustworthy and the measurements are reliable and valid. The results in Table 1 of the reliability analysis confirm that the survey items accurately measure the intended constructs.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Involvement</td>
<td>2.9686</td>
<td>.70946</td>
<td>0.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive Decision Making</td>
<td>3.4042</td>
<td>.82322</td>
<td>0.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Creativity</td>
<td>3.3039</td>
<td>.81188</td>
<td>0.962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Processed Data (2023)

8 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The primary goal of the structural model is to evaluate hypotheses and provide answers to research questions. The model is examined in detail, and empirical evidence supports the underlying hypotheses. Smart PLS is used to reduce error and maximize the variation explained...
in dependent variables. Bootstrapping is necessary to evaluate the model in PLS-SEM. Table 2 presents the researched hypotheses analyzed in the structural model.

**Table 2**

*Hypothesis Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>T-Statistics</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>EIP → EC</td>
<td>6.360</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>EIP → DDM</td>
<td>8.279</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>DDM → EC</td>
<td>8.174</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4</td>
<td>EIP → EC</td>
<td>2.435</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EIP → DDM</td>
<td>9.440</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DDM → EC</td>
<td>5.351</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P-Value < 0.001, P-Value < 0.01, P-Value < 0.05
Source: Processed Data (2023)

**Hypothesis 1:** Employee involvement participation has a significant positive effect on employee creativity. The hypothesis is supported by statistically significant results (P<0.001, T=6.360). Overall, the statement suggests that when employees are actively involved and participate in decision-making processes and problem-solving activities, it positively influences their creativity. This finding is based on statistical analysis and provides strong support for the hypothesis. Recent studies further corroborate these findings. Anderson et al. (2014) provide a thorough overview of the determinants of organizational innovation and creativity. The findings argue that participatory practices and employee involvement in organizational decision-making have robust links to enhanced creativity levels among employees, aligning with the hypothesis presented (Anderson et al., 2014). While focusing on Self-Determination Theory, Deci et al. (2017) shed light on the intrinsic motivational aspects that drive employee creativity. Their analysis points to the importance of involving employees in meaningful ways within their work environments, which significantly boosts their creative potential (Deci et al., 2017).

Overall, it is important to note that the success of employee involvement participation in enhancing creativity is contingent on various factors. When employees are given the autonomy and responsibility to make decisions about their work, they feel more motivated and engaged, which enhances their willingness to think outside the box and come up with innovative ideas. By involving employees in the decision-making process, organizations can tap into their diverse perspectives and expertise, leading to a wider range of creative ideas and solutions. Furthermore, employee involvement participation fosters a sense of psychological ownership and commitment towards the organization. When employees feel that their opinions matter and their ideas are valued, they develop a stronger attachment to the organization and its goals. This
sense of ownership and commitment creates a conducive environment for creativity as employees are more invested in their work and willing to go the extra mile to generate and implement innovative ideas. Moreover, employee involvement participation promotes a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing within the organization. When employees are actively involved in decision-making and have the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues, they can exchange ideas and insights, leading to the generation of new and creative solutions. This collaborative culture also encourages employees to challenge existing practices and seek novel approaches to problem-solving, further enhancing creativity.

**Hypothesis 2:** Employee involvement participation has a significant positive effect on directive decision-making. The hypothesis is supported by statistically significant results (P<0.001, T=8.279). These statistical measures suggest that the relationship between employee involvement participation and directive decision-making is unlikely to be due to chance and lends support to the hypothesis that employee involvement positively influences decision-making in a directive manner. Supporting the understanding that employee involvement in decision-making processes positively influences directive decision-making can be found across several literature. Knezović and Smajić (2022) investigate the relationship between employee participation in decision-making and organizational citizenship behavior, with a focus on the mediating role of affective commitment.

The study finds that affective commitment plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between employee participation in decision-making and organizational citizenship behavior (Knezović & Smajić, 2022). Aslam and Haroon (2021) examine the influence of participative management on the organizational commitment of employees in Pakistan, with a focus on the mediating role of employee involvement. The study suggests that employee involvement plays a key role in strengthening the relationship between participative management and organizational commitment (Aslam & Haroon, 2021).

Overall, involving employees in decision-making brings a wider range of perspectives and expertise to the table. Employees possess unique insights and knowledge about their specific roles and work processes, which can greatly contribute to the quality of decision-making. By tapping into this collective intelligence, organizations can make more informed and effective decisions. Employee involvement in decision-making also fosters a culture of trust and open communication within the organization. When employees are given the opportunity to share their opinions and provide input, they feel valued and included. This creates a positive work environment where employees feel comfortable raising concerns or suggesting alternative
solutions. As a result, decision-making becomes a collaborative process that promotes innovation and creativity.

**Hypothesis 3:** Directive decision-making has a significant positive effect on employee creativity. The hypothesis is supported by statistically significant results ($P<0.001$, $T=8.174$). Therefore, it can be concluded that directive decision-making plays a crucial role in fostering and enhancing employee creativity within the workplace. Similarly, Mumford et al. (2002) explore how leadership practices, including directive and visionary leadership, influence the management and orchestration of creative teams. The study emphasizes that directive decision-making when balanced with flexibility and support for autonomy, can enhance the creativity of teams by providing a clear framework within which innovation can flourish (Mumford et al., 2002). Zhou (2003) investigates the conditions under which creative coworkers influence an individual’s creativity, highlighting the role of leadership practices including close monitoring (a component of directive leadership) and feedback. The findings suggest that when combined with developmental feedback and when employees possess creative personalities, directive decision-making can indeed foster a creative work environment by providing the necessary structure and guidance (Zhou, 2003).

One of the key aspects that determine the impact of directive decision-making on employee creativity is the nature of the task. In routine or well-defined tasks, where creativity is not necessarily required, a directive decision-making style may not hinder employees’ creative thinking. It can provide clear guidelines and structure, allowing employees to focus more on execution rather than idea generation.

However, for tasks that require creative problem-solving, innovation, or exploration of new ideas, a directive decision-making style may have a detrimental impact on employee creativity. This is because such tasks necessitate a high level of autonomy, freedom to experiment, and the ability to think outside the box. In such situations, employees may feel limited by the strict guidelines and lack of involvement in decision-making, resulting in reduced motivation and decreased creativity. Furthermore, the relationship between directive decision-making and employee creativity can also be influenced by individual and contextual factors. For instance, employees with a high need for autonomy and independence may find directive decision-making more restrictive and may struggle to unleash their creative potential. Conversely, individuals who prefer structure and direction may thrive in such an environment.

**Hypothesis 4:** Directive decision-making mediates the relationship between employee involvement participation and employee creativity. The hypothesis is supported by statistically significant results ($P<0.001$, $T=2.435$, 9.440, 5.351). The statistical findings corroborate this
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theory, demonstrating that the association is statistically significant. This study proposes that the connection between employee engagement in decision-making processes and employee creativity is influenced by the presence of authoritative decision-making. The level of employee involvement in decision-making processes has a direct impact on their creativity, as it is influenced by the leadership style of their superiors. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2018) empirically investigated the impact of differing leadership styles on employee creativity in the context of Chinese firms. They found that leadership styles that promoted employee participation and minimized authoritative directive approaches were positively correlated with increased creativity (Zhang et al., 2018).

When employees are given the opportunity to be involved in decision-making, it can enhance their sense of autonomy, ownership, and commitment towards their work. This, in turn, can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation, encouraging creativity. However, the impact of employee involvement participation on creativity can be influenced by the leadership style in place. High levels of directive decision-making may undermine the positive effects of employee involvement participation on creativity. If leaders adopt a more controlling approach, it can limit employees' freedom to explore new ideas, make independent decisions, and take risks. This restriction can stifle creativity and hinder the development of innovative solutions. In conclusion, directive decision-making plays a mediating role in the relationship between employee involvement participation and employee creativity.

9 CONCLUSION

Higher education institutions are focusing on competitiveness and customer orientation to demonstrate efficiency and success (Hussein et al., 2021). Continuous success and recognition of individual creativity are critical for survival. Employee involvement participation in directive decision-making is important for creativity and productivity. Resistance to reform by managers is a key issue. The lack of high-level creative thinkers is a concern in higher education institutes. The output of higher education institutes in Oman faces challenges in improving creative work behavior. Employee creativity is influenced by individual and contextual factors. The relationship between employee involvement participation and directive decision-making in higher education institutes needs further exploration. Higher education institutions in Oman need to enhance creativity to excel in performance and compete effectively.
This study utilizes social cognitive theory as a framework to explain the linkages among factors relevant to creativity. Social cognitive theory emphasizes the belief in one's ability to successfully engage in creative processes, and it suggests that human functioning is influenced by judgments of one's capabilities. Based on social cognitive theory and existing literature, this study proposed a conceptual framework with employee involvement participation as the independent variable, directive decision-making as the mediating variable, and employee creativity as the dependent variable. A theoretical framework and assumptions were presented, and quantitative research methods were used to confirm hypotheses through empirical testing. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect and analyze quantitative data.

The research has both theoretical and practical contributions. The theoretical contributions include extending the componential theory of creativity and examining the effects of employee involvement and decision-making on employee creativity in the higher education sector in Oman. The research also serves as a foundational study for future researchers in this field in Oman. In terms of practical implications, the research informs practitioners and decision-makers in the higher education sector about the factors that enhance employee creativity.

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