THE INCONGRUENT INFLUENCE OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive environment, businesses must rely on innovative ideas to build their core competencies and gain a competitive advantage, or suffer great market share losses. It is for this reason that many studies have explored employee creativity and empowering leadership. Previous studies have focused on empowering leadership as a managerial behavior that fosters employee creativity. However, since such studies implicitly assumed that work environments are congruent with employee creativity, they overlooked contextual factors that are not necessarily ideal for employee creativity. This study theoretically examines how contextual factors, specifically those that potentially hinder employee creativity, affect the relationship between empowering leadership and creative process engagement, with the help of the interactionist perspective and the social information processing theory. Following the theoretical review, we provide a theoretical model that implies that beyond well-meaning empowering efforts by leaders, there are other factors, such as social effects and mismatches between management's messages and their behaviors, that impede employee creativity. This, in effect, implies that managers should not only look to empowering leadership as a sure way to improve employee creativity within the organization, but that they must also evaluate employee perceptions about the contextual factors toward the efforts of their supervisors.

INTRODUCTION

To accommodate rapidly changing markets, many firms now need to continually develop new products or services. In such a business climate, many firms regard employee creativity as one of the most critical managerial resources (Anderson, Potočnik, & Zhou, 2014). Employee creativity refers to "the production of novel and useful ideas by an individual or small group of individuals working together" (Amabile, 1988, p.126). Therefore, the demand for employee creativity is no longer limited to businesses or workplaces that are typically innovation-intensive, such as product development departments or corporate planning offices; there is a growing need for management strategies that foster employee creativity in areas that did not require it before.

Reflecting these practical demands, employee creativity has also attracted attention among academic studies (Mumford, Hester, & Robledo, 2012). In particular, employee creativity has been portrayed as the first step to innovation (Amabile, 1988) and many studies have continuously explored mechanisms through which employee creativity is encouraged and factors that influence employee creativity (Anderson et al., 2014). For instance, some of these factors include individual personalities, job characteristics, and supervisory styles (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Among them, the influence of leadership on employee creativity has been the

focus in recent years (Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Wu, McMullen, Neubert, & Yi, 2008; Zhou & Shalley, 2003). While prior studies have presented the impact of various leadership behaviors (Zhou & Pan, 2015), above all, empowering leadership (cf. Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Li, Chiaburu, & Kirkman, 2014) has been underscored as a vital managerial behavior for encouraging employee creativity (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Zhang & Zhou, 2014).

The concept of empowering leadership considers employee autonomy as one of the key aspects of leadership1. Employees that are empowered in this manner are thought to be motivated to produce novel and useful ideas; thus, many efforts have been undertaken to comprehend the connection between empowering leadership and employee creativity in detail (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Zhang & Zhou, 2014). More specifically, studies have been conducted to review processes that explain the relationship between the two, including the inherent intervening variables, as well as to examine the contextual factors (e.g., perceived organizational support; cf. Harris, Li, Boswell, Zhang, & Xie, 2014) that influence such processes (Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993).

However, the studies mentioned above were based on one implicit assumption: that the workplace environment either already promotes employee creativity or has a culture of encouraging new ideas. This implicit assumption has resulted in research that discuss creativity management only in the context of creativity-friendly environments. Consequently, this underlying assumption has caused a lack of research (Zhou & Pan, 2015) that investigates the impact of implementing creativity management in workplaces where either idea generation has not been celebrated or employees hesitate to propose new ideas (cf. Staw, 1995). In other words, analysis based on that implicit assumption remains unable to adequately explain corporate efforts that adopt creativity management as a competitive strategy in the current business climate.

To address this issue, this research examines the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity in cases where the managers' intent to promote employee creativity among the subordinates is incongruent with the workplace environment, including the level of acceptance or understanding of employee creativity. More specifically, this study will employ the concepts of interactionist perspective (cf. Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989; Woodman et al., 1993) and social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) to examine the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity.

This research is structured as follows: In the first section, we review prior studies and describe this study's focus on creative process engagement to comprehend employee creativity. Then, we organize existing studies according to the relationship between empowering leadership and creative process engagement. Through this process, we point out the overlooked issue that contextual factors could potentially hinder employee creativity. In the next section, we discuss how these contextual factors affect the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment, as well as the relationship between psychological empowerment and creative process engagement. The last section describes the implications and limitations of this study and discusses future outlooks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In creativity studies, employee creativity is defined as "the production of novel and useful ideas by an individual or small group of individuals working together" (Amabile, 1988, p.126) and is treated as one of the most critical factors for a company's survival (Anderson et al., 2014). Especially in recent years, creative process engagement (cf. Henker, Sonnentag, & Unger, 2015;

Zhang & Bartol, 2010), which has been gaining attention, comprises three behaviors, namely: problem identification, information searching and encoding, and idea generation. Existing studies focused on employee behaviors that are specifically relevant to the development of novel and useful ideas and examined the factors that foster such behaviors. In terms of managerial behavior, the research mainly involved identifying leadership styles that significantly contribute to promoting creative process engagement. Based on this, the following section will highlight empowering leadership as a managerial behavior that inspires employee creativity and closely examine its relationship with employee creativity.

The Influence Process of Empowering Leadership on Employee Creativity

This section describes the mechanism through which empowering leadership influences employee creativity. This study defines empowering leadership as "the process through which leaders share power with employees by providing additional responsibility and decision-making authority over work and resources, as well as the support needed to handle the additional responsibility effectively" (Martin, Liao, & Campbell, 2013, p. 1375). Since existing papers focus on an individual's psychological state to analyze the mechanism behind the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity (Amabile, 1988; Zhang & Bartol, 2010), we will review an individual's psychological process in relation to empowering leadership and employee creativity.

The study by Zhang and Bartol (2010) is one of the most seminal work that identified the process through which empowering leadership influences employee creativity, specifically highlighting individual motivation and creative process engagement2. According to the authors' model, employee motivation plays a key role in how empowering leadership influences employee creativity (Amabile, 1988; Anderson et al., 2014; Rosso, 2014; Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). Thus, the next section will focus on employee motivation, to examine the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment.

Regarding empowerment by leaders, psychological empowerment (cf. Conger &Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) has been notably spotlighted among other motivations (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Li et al., 2014). Psychological empowerment is defined as "a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members" (Conger & Kanungo, 1988, p. 474). In other words, psychological empowerment is a factor relevant to an individual's cognitive motivation and is thought to have a strong connection to personal intrinsic motivation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Existing research on empowering leadership indicated that empowering leadership promotes the subordinates' psychological empowerment (Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh, 2011; Cheong, Spain, Yammarino, & Yun, 2016; Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011). This is because empowering leadership encourages employees' initiative in decision-making or delegation (Lorinkova, Pearsall, & Sims, 2013) while also enhancing job autonomy (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). As a result of boosted autonomy and self-determination, subordinates are enabled to engage in creative processes and demonstrate employee creativity (Amabile, 1988; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Based on the aforementioned mechanism presented by Zhang and Bartol (2010), existing studies that focused on personal motivation have refined the process through which empowering leadership affects employee creativity (Harris et al., 2014; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015). Several studies involved in this refinement indicated that not only personal factors but also contextual

factors affect the mechanism, and showed the need to incorporate contextual factors in research (Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989; Woodman et al., 1993; Zhou & Hoever, 2014). In other words, existing studies have examined how contextual factors interact with the processes through which employee creativity is influenced, as well as how they interact with empowering leadership, which is mediated by personal factors (i.e., motivation) as indicated by Zhang and Bartol (2010).

Still, these studies that examined the interaction between the contextual factors and empowering leadership's influence process on employee creativity were based on one implicit assumption: they presumed that contextual factors promoted employee creativity. In other words, the existing studies tended to illustrate the contextual factors as situations congruent with employee creativity. However, it has been pointed out by studies on employee creativity that contextual factors sometimes have a hindering effect, alongside an enhancing effect (e.g., Baer & Oldham, 2006; Gilson, Mathieu, Shalley, & Ruddy, 2005; Roskes, 2015; Rosso, 2014; Sagiv, Arieli, Goldenberg, & Goldschmidt, 2010; Zhang & Zhou, 2014).

Since contextual factors may either enhance or hinder employee creativity, it is essential to discuss the influence process in cases where contextual factors impede employee creativity (cf. Staw, 1995) and examine the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity (Zhou & Pan, 2015). This study employs the concepts of interactionist perspective (cf. Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989; Woodman et al., 1993) and social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) to discuss the influence process exerted by contextual factors. Then, this study examines how these contextual factors may interact with the influence process of empowering leadership and employee creativity.

The Contextual Influences: Interactionist Perspective and Social Information Processing Theory

This section employs the interactionist perspective and the social information processing theory to explore the contextual influences on the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity. These theories are similar in the way that they examine how the context influences an individual; still, they differ in the scope of the contextual influences in question. Thus, we will first review the claims of both theories and then explore the possible effects that context may have on the process of influencing employee creativity.

The interactionist perspective views employee creativity as a product of complex interactions between contextual factors (e.g., perceived organizational support; cf. Harris et al., 2014) and personal factors such as cognitive style (Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989; Woodman et al., 1993). More specifically, the interactionist perspective does not regard employee creativity as solely characterized by either personal ability, leadership, organizational culture, or other individual factors. Instead, it considers the interaction between said factors as prompting the individual to demonstrate employee creativity. With the rise of the interactionist perspective, which emphasizes the interaction between personal and contextual factors, it has become possible to adopt a more integrated approach to analyze the effects of both factors (Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989).

Some existing studies discussed ways to promote employee creativity (e.g., Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Harris et al., 2014) and team creativity (e.g., Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013) based on the interactionist perspective. Those studies are similar in the way that they assume that contextual factors promote employee creativity, thus basing their interactionist perspective

application only on specific aspects of interaction. However, as mentioned above, contextual factors do not always work in favor of employee creativity (cf. Rosso, 2014).

In contrast, this study highlights the social information processing theory to illustrate how contextual factors can be counterproductive for employee creativity. Before doing so, we will clarify the differences between the social information processing theory and the interactionist perspective. While the two share a common focus on the relationship between employee creativity and the contextual factors, the context that they presume is not the same. The context assumed in the interactionist perspective includes interactions among factors such as personal traits, relationships with managers, and organizational culture; the perspective is characterized by its focus on the interaction itself. On the other hand, the context of the social information processing theory is not made of interactions between factors but is rather socially constructed based on an individual's relationships with others. In consideration of these differences, the following part will further discuss the social information processing theory.

The social information processing theory introduced by Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) is a concept based on the premise that social effects exist in an individual's perception of reality within an organization (Pfeffer, 1981). According to Pfeffer (1981), social effects are defined as "the processes by which individual attitudes and perceptions are impacted by others in the environment" (p. 9). In other words, the reality which an individual perceives within an organization is influenced by others and is socially constructed.

Based on the concepts above, Salancik and Pfeffer (1978; also see Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977) argue that the dimensions of jobs and perception of content are also impacted by social effects, namely the influence of others. More specifically, Pfeffer (1981) notes the four kinds of such influences (also see Thomas & Griffin, 1983):

> First, the individual's social environment may provide cues as to which dimensions might be used to characterize the work environment…Second, the social environment may provide information concerning how the individual should weight the various dimensions…Third, the social context provides cues concerning how others have come to evaluate the work environment on each of the selected dimensions...And fourth, it is possible that the social context provides direct evaluation of the work setting along positive or negative dimensions, leaving it to the individual to construct a rational to make sense of the generally shared affective reaction. (p. 10)

Those four social effects suggest that an individual's psychological mechanism cannot be fully detached from their social environment and that it is closely intertwined with social cues (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). As examples of social cues, Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) mentioned social norms or expectations, actions, jobs, and task environments. Social cues, such as social norms or expectations, are thought to influence an individual's attitude and needs. However, the significance here is that such influence as a determinant of job attitudes may include "… the individuals' past behaviors and how these behaviors come to be attributed to the environment" (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978, p. 230). In other words, an individual's perception of reality within an organization (i.e., work environment) is subject to social effects, and an individual's perception could be affected by not only the current situation but also their past behaviors or environments.

The discussion above suggests that there could be cases where behaviors or environments from the past are incongruent with those of the present. For example, Staw (1995) remarked that

"most people do not follow a life pattern similar to that of the creative" (p. 163) and pointed out that organizations often do not welcome creativity or innovation. What Staw (1995) and Slancik and Pfeffer (1978) suggest is that when originally uncreative firms try to be creative, employees remain hesitant to be creative, or worse, they may even reject the organizations' efforts.

These examples imply two things: First, as inherent in the social information processing theory, social effects could impact employee attitudes (Zhou & Pan, 2015); Second, in regard to employee creativity, social cues (e.g., group norms) and other social cues in a firm (i.e., a focal organization) do not always promote employee creativity. This relates to the fact that in some cases, social cues may negatively affect individuals, even those who try to be creative (Staw, 1995).

So far, we have overviewed the arguments of the two theories: the interactionist perspective and social information processing theory. These theories argue that, in addition to personal factors, employee creativity may be affected by contextual factors, as well as the interactions between the two. Hence, this study will build on both an interactionist perspective and social information processing theory to explore how the contextual factors, which could potentially impede employee creativity, may affect the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we examine how contextual factors, as discussed in the previous section, could influence the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity. We first discuss how contextual factors that hinder employee creativity affect the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment. Then, we will argue how those contextual factors could impact the relationship between psychological empowerment and creative process engagement. Following these discussions, we will examine the processes by which contextual factors influence the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity, with examples of factors that discourage employee creativity.

The Impact of Contextual Factors on the Relationship Between Empowering Leadership and Psychological Empowerment

First, we review the influence that empowering leadership has on employee creativity. Studies have shown that managers' empowering leadership practices encourage creative process engagement through subordinates' psychological empowerment (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Zhang & Zhou, 2014). This is because empowering leadership focuses on the employees' initiative in decision-making, and subordinates are thus empowered with higher senses of self-determination and competence, and driven to engage more in creative behaviors such as idea generation.

The question now arises: How do contextual factors affect the mechanisms through which leadership promotes employee creativity? To examine the question, we begin by focusing on and theoretically examining the impact of the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment. We will then discuss how contextual factors could influence the process between employees' motivational state (i.e., psychological empowerment) and their creativity.

As discussed above, previous studies implicitly assumed contextual factors that promote employee creativity; such factors can be exemplified by organizational cultures that expect

members to be creative or management practices that enhance subordinates' intrinsic motivation. However, in real-world operations, there are organizational cultures that allow little self-determination or employ monetary rewards to motivate extrinsically, and such contextual factors that hinder employee creativity could also coexist. Furthermore, the transformation of such management practices is not instantly achievable, but instead, takes time (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Negative factors that discourage employee creativity and the impact that such factors have over time, could impede the leadership mechanism. To clarify this, we employ the two perspectives mentioned in the previous section (interactionist perspective and social information processing theory) to discuss how the contextual factors that hinder employee creativity could affect the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment.

What the interactionist perspective suggests is that managers' empowering leadership practices do not always promote subordinates' creative process engagement through psychological empowerment. According to the interactionist perspective, employee creativity is not solely influenced by leadership, but rather is impacted by the interaction between various factors. In other words, it is essential to include interaction with contextual factors in our theoretical scope in order to accurately comprehend the effect empowering leadership has on psychological empowerment. To address this, the study will focus on contextual factors that impede employee creativity, to examine the impacts that emerged from the interactions.

Now, how do contextual factors that hinder employee creativity affect managers' leadership? According to the social information processing theory, the reality perceived by the subordinate is socially constructed under the influence of others (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). While managers are one of the significant factors in the formation of reality perception, peers similarly have an impact on the formation of social realities that cannot be ignored (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975). Thus, the managers' empowering leadership may not always be received as intended; instead, the subordinate may not even recognize the managers' empowering leadership as something that encourages their initiative. For instance, Zhou and Pan (2015) argue that subordinates use managers' behaviors as cues to decode what type of behaviors are expected from them. This indicates that superficial empowerment, in which words and actions are inconsistent, may not change subordinates' behaviors, as they do not see it as a cue for the intended behaviors.

In addition, the misalignment between the managers' behaviors (i.e., empowering leadership behaviors) and group norms should not be overlooked. More specifically, when managers' behaviors transform from something of a very different nature (e.g., directive leadership style) into a style more oriented to the subordinates' initiatives (i.e., empowering leadership style), the managers' behaviors may not be able to change the subordinates' norms, and will likely be affected by the negative effects of the group norms established before. Even in workplaces where employee creativity is encouraged, it is difficult for the empowering leadership to have sufficient impact on the subordinates if the manager is not influential enough (Hollander, 1958). The reason for this is that if the manager lacks influential power, the subordinates will not be empowered by the manager, even if the manager shares authority or support with them. In this sense, if empowerment has not been commonplace in the workplace, superficially altering the management approach in an attempt to encourage employee creativity will not work; this approach will not be able to successfully change conventional behavioral norms and be free of influence from the negative effects (i.e., hampering employee creativity) exerted by the preceding traditional management practices.

As seen above, this section took the premises of interactionist perspective and social information processing theory to examine how contextual factors that impede employee creativity could affect the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment. As a result, it has been indicated that empowering leadership does not solely impact psychological empowerment (i.e., the interactionist perspective) and its influence may vary due to contextual factors that hinder employee creativity (i.e., social information processing theory).

The Impact Contextual Factors Have on the Influence Processes of Psychological Empowerment and Creative Process Engagement

Continuing from the last section, we now examine the influences that contextual factors have on the relationship between psychological empowerment and creative process engagement. Prior studies have highlighted intrinsic motivation as a key concept to encouraging employee creativity, and have continuously indicated its significance (Amabile, 1988; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). In fact, studies on empowering leadership have long stated that psychological empowerment promotes creative process engagement. However, as has been discussed, since such prior works implicitly assumed that the relevant contextual factors were all creativity-affirming, this section discusses how the contextual factors impeditive to employee creativity could affect the relationship between psychological empowerment and creative process engagement, using the interactionist perspective and social information processing theories.

The interactionist perspective argues that subordinates' engagement in the creative process is not solely induced by their motivation, but is rather driven by the interaction between various contextual factors. This indicates that even boosted psychological empowerment may not directly result in the subordinates' engagement in the creative process. Therefore, depending on the context, even if the subordinate's intrinsic motivation (i.e., psychological empowerment) is enhanced by management's empowering leadership, it may still not induce creative behaviors.

How, then, do the contextual factors that hinder employee creativity affect psychological empowerment and employee creativity? According to the social information processing theory, the context the subordinates are situated in provides cues regarding appropriate behaviors that are expected of them. It can thus be expected that, even in a situation where employees are intrinsically motivated, they are likely to avoid demonstrating employee creativity if the context sends messages, in the form of social cues, that creative behaviors are not welcomed.

For instance, if an organizational culture does not necessarily promote new challenges, or its reward system does not acknowledge risk-taking actions, the subordinates' autonomy will shrink, and intrinsic motivation will be weakened (Deci, 1975; Gagné & Deci, 2005). In addition, it has been indicated that if a corporate culture does not support employee creativity, the impact of intrinsic motivation itself declines (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Furthermore, studies have shown that in cases where the subordinates' tasks were not interesting or challenging, their intrinsic motivation would not be as influential as anticipated, even if the managers encouraged subordinates' initiatives (Mossholder, 1980; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). In other words, these existing studies implied that if contextual factors that impede employee creativity are in place, creative process engagement may still decrease, even with enhanced psychological empowerment. The significance here is that such contextual factors have an undermining effect on intrinsic motivation, which plays a vital role in creative process engagement (Deci, 1975, 1980).

As seen above, this section examined how the contextual factors that hinder employee creativity could affect the relationship between psychological empowerment and creative process engagement. As a result, we have indicated that psychological empowerment is not the sole factor in creative process engagement (i.e., the interactionist perspective) and that its influence may vary due to creativity-impeding contextual factors (i.e., social information processing theory).

Proposed Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 shows a thematic framework that conceptually illustrates the points made in this section thus far. The conceptual factors listed in Figure 1 are factors that could weaken the impact of empowering leadership and psychological empowerment (i.e., intrinsic motivation) grounded in concepts from the interactionist perspective and social information processing theory. However, this does not mean that the creativity-impeding contextual factors listed in Figure 1 are exhaustive. Needless to say, factors not covered in this study may also exert a negative impact on the influence process. For this reason, the contextual factors listed in Figure 1 are limited to those we anticipated based on this study's foundational concepts, the interactionist perspective, and the social information processing theories.

Figure 1 Thematic Framework about Incongruent Influences
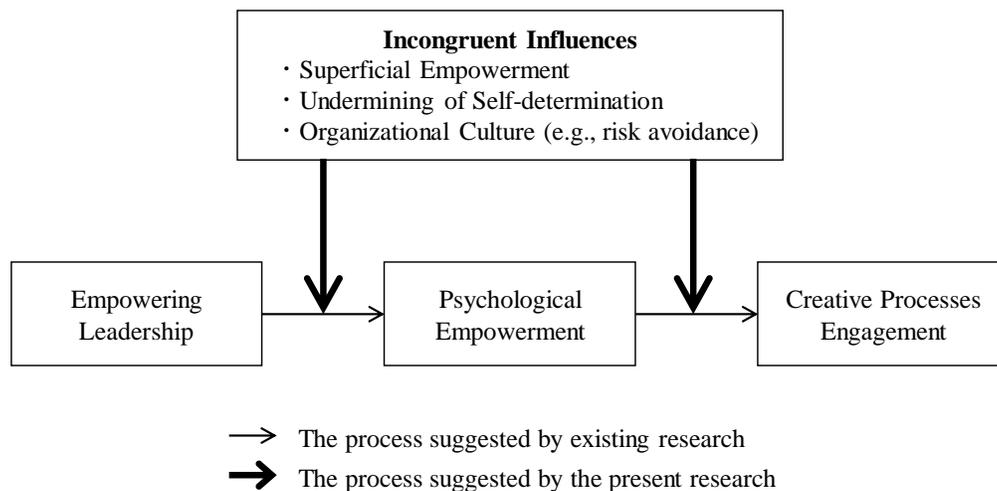
A significant implication of Figure 1 is that there are some cases where contextual factors are incongruent with the influence process of empowering leadership, in contrast to the conditions assumed by existing studies. Existing studies have repeatedly examined contextual factors (e.g., psychological climate; cf. Zhou & Pan, 2015), which are congruent with the subordinates' creative process engagement. However, in a real-life organization, there are cases where the influence of contextual factors is incongruent, and empowering leadership does not always enhance the employee's engagement in the creative process as anticipated. To address this, this study examined contextual factors that could be incongruent, and the impact they exert as a result of incongruency.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This study theoretically examined how contextual factors could affect the relationship between empowering leadership and employee creativity. More specifically, we critically reviewed existing studies that implicitly assumed contextual factors that have a positive influence on employee creativity. Conversely, this study indicated that negative contextual factors also exist in real-life management practices. The study employed two perspectives: the interactionist perspective and the social information processing theory to identify how contextual factors impeditive to employee creativity could exert negative effects on 1. the influence which the empowering leadership has on psychological empowerment, and 2. the influence which the psychological empowerment has on creative process engagement.

Furthermore, this study identified the need for further study of managers' influence (i.e., leadership) over creative behaviors. Existing studies in the area of empowering leadership concluded that empowering leadership enhances psychological empowerment and thus promotes subordinates' creative behaviors. However, as indicated in this study, subordinates' creative behaviors are not solely determined by managers' behaviors. For this reason, the leaders' impact on employee creativity should be reviewed in light of both parties' contextual factors. This suggestion is also applicable to creativity studies. For instance, existing studies have positioned intrinsic motivation as a key factor in encouraging employee creativity. However, the implications of this study show that contextual factors may weaken the relationship between intrinsic motivation (e.g., psychological empowerment) and employee creativity (e.g., creative process engagement). Thus, the psychological factors on employee creativity should also be revisited, considering their interaction with contextual factors.

In addition to the theoretical implications mentioned above, two limitations of this study can be noted: first, the creativity examined in this study is limited to an individual level. Recent studies have shown that creativity may arise not only at an individual level but also at a team or organizational level (Anderson et al., 2014; Leonard & Swap, 1999). However, the scope of this study is limited to the creative behaviors of an individual. Thus, future research should analyze the impact of contextual factors on the creativity of a team or an organization. Another limitation is that only empowering leadership was highlighted in the discussion about the types of leadership that affect employee creativity. This study focused on empowering leadership as a leadership style that impacts employees' creative process engagement. However, it has been indicated by existing studies that transformational leadership and other leadership styles could also influence employee creativity (Zhou & Pan, 2015). Therefore, other leadership styles and their relationship with contextual factors should be discussed in future research.

ENDNOTES

1   Some studies position empowering leadership as one of the leadership styles that contribute to employee development (e.g., Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Pearce & Sims, 2002). For the sake of a clearer discussion, this study presumed empowering leadership to be a leadership style based on a micro approach (cf. Lorinkova, Pearsall, & Sims, 2013).
2   In discussions about the process of influencing creativity, some moderating factors (e.g., employee empowerment, role identity, leader's encouragement on creativity) have also been pointed out.

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