



# Examining the Relationship between Organizational Culture Alignment and Employee Creativity in Knowledge Process Outsourcing

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## ABSTRACT

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Organizational culture plays a crucial role in fostering creativity and innovation in the workplace. This quantitative correlational study examined the relationship between organizational culture alignment and employees' perceived creativity among 42 Knowledge Process Outsourcing employees at a KPO company at Cebu I.T. Park, Philippines. Grounded in the componential theory of creativity, the study explored how cultural alignment influences intrinsic motivation, cognitive processes, and creative output. A 6-Likert scale survey was used to assess employees' perceptions of cultural alignment and their self-reported creativity. Results revealed a weak but statistically significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.33$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ), suggesting



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that greater alignment with the company's advocated culture is associated with a slight increase in employees' creative engagement. While findings indicate a potential connection between culture and creativity, the weak correlation suggests that other factors may also contribute to workplace creativity. Future research is recommended to explore additional variables influencing innovation and problem-solving in Knowledge Process Outsourcing environments.

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping employee behavior, motivation, and performance. Companies establish cultural values aligned with their mission and vision, yet the extent to which employees perceive these values as genuinely practiced within the workplace significantly influences their creativity and innovation (Taha et al., 2016). A strong alignment between advocated cultural values and employees' lived experiences fosters an environment where individuals feel empowered to explore new ideas, take calculated risks, and contribute to continuous improvement. Conversely, a misalignment between these elements can create disengagement, resistance to change, and diminished creative output.

In industries where regulatory compliance imposes stringent constraints, such as the financial sector's Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) industry, fostering employee creativity presents unique challenges. Employees are expected to adhere to rigid operational frameworks that prioritize accuracy, security, and compliance over experimental approaches to problem-solving (Amabile, 1996). Unlike industries that actively promote disruptive innovation, financial KPOs focus on controlled, incremental changes that enhance efficiency while maintaining regulatory adherence (Hassan et al., 2019). Consequently, understanding how cultural alignment influences creativity in this setting is critical to balancing innovation with operational integrity.

Existing literature highlights the essential role of organizational culture in fostering trust, engagement, and creative thinking among employees (Taha et al., 2016). Studies suggest that when employees perceive an alignment between company culture and their work environment, they are more likely to engage in creative problem-solving without jeopardizing operational objectives (Miron-Spektor & Paletz, 2024). In the financial sector, strict regulations made it difficult for employees to express creativity, often limited their ability to offer innovative ideas within a rigid framework (Bawab, 2022).

While it was known that organizational culture played a key role in shaping creativity at work, there was still a noticeable gap in research, especially when it comes to understanding how this played out in highly regulated industries

like financial Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) firms. Most studies so far had focused on more flexible, innovation-driven sectors, leaving industries like financial KPOs underexplored. Despite the growing interest in fostering workplace creativity, limited research had specifically examined how organizationally promoted culture influences employee-perceived creativity within the strict regulatory boundaries of financial KPOs.

This was a significant gap, given that these environments presented unique challenges where even minor errors could lead to serious legal or financial consequences. In such settings, promoting creativity requires a careful balance between encouraging innovation and ensuring compliance. This study aimed to explore how employees perceived the alignment between their organization's cultural values and their everyday work experiences, and how that perception affected their ability to think creatively. By identifying any disconnect between what the organization promoted and what employees actually felt, this research hoped to offer practical insights into how financial KPOs can build a culture that supported innovation—without compromising the structure and stability their work demanded.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study measures the relationship between the alignment of the company's promoted culture and its actual culture practiced, as perceived by the employees, and their perceived level of creativity in their workplace. More specifically, the following areas are covered: (1) To assess the relationship between the alignment of the company's promoted culture and its actual culture practiced as perceived by the employees, and their perceived level of creativity in their workplace; (2) To create and distribute a Performance Rate Survey that test cultural alignment and employees' perceptions of their creativity; (3) To utilize correlation analysis to measure the strength and type of the relationship between cultural alignment and employee creativity; (4) To provide insights into how the alignment of the company's promoted culture and its actual culture practiced as perceived by the employees effects the employees creativity within the workplace; (5) To provide recommendations and strategies for improving the alignment of the company's promoted culture and its actual culture practiced as perceived by the employees effects the employees to foster creativity within the workplace

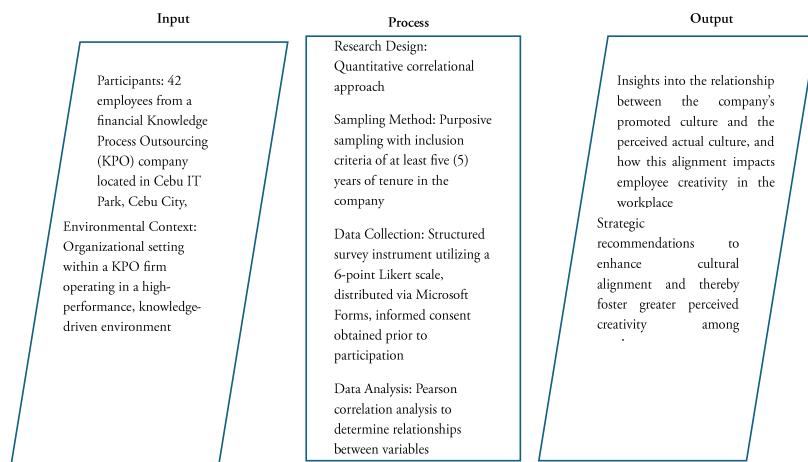
## FRAMEWORK

The relationship between organizational culture and employee creativity in a highly regulated environment, such as Knowledge Process Outsourcing companies within the financial industry, was examined in this research. It showed how the alignment of the perceived culture and the promoted culture within the organization affected the perceived creativity of the employees. Intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant skills, and creativity-relevant process, as stated in Amabile's componential theory, were the factors that have greatly affected creativity. When the culture of a company is supportive, it could enhance creativity; on the other hand, a misaligned culture could stop or slow down creativity (Bawab, 2022). Prior studies showed that alignment to culture drove employee creativity (Taha et al., 2016 and Miron-Spektor & Paletz, 2024).

In highly regulated financial KPO settings, fostering innovation had to be aligned strategically with organizational culture to maintain compliance while at the same time being creative (Hassan et al., 2019). When perceived culture and promoted culture are aligned, employees are more likely to feel empowered to be creative with their work (Miron-Spektor & Paletz, 2024)

**Figure 1**

*Input–Process–Output (IPO) Conceptual Framework of the Study*



The IPO model, as illustrated in Figure 1, served as a structured guide for conducting the study. The Input included 42 employees from a financial KPO

company based in Cebu IT Park. These participants had a minimum of five years of tenure, which allowed them to provide well-informed insights about the company's culture. Their length of service made them suitable respondents in evaluating the alignment between the company's promoted values and the culture they experienced firsthand.

In the Process stage, a quantitative correlational approach was used. Respondents were purposively selected, and data were collected using a structured survey built around a 6-point Likert scale. The instrument was carefully developed and validated, achieving a high internal consistency score (Cronbach's Alpha  $\alpha = 0.83$ ). The entire process was grounded in relevant literature on cultural alignment and creativity, ensuring a strong theoretical foundation. Steps included questionnaire development and validation, online distribution via Microsoft Forms, and data analysis using Pearson Correlation Analysis. The focus of the analysis was to explore how core organizational values—teamwork, integrity, excellence, and spiritedness—might influence employees' perceived creativity.

The Output, as designed, was to generate insights into the relationship between employees' perception of cultural alignment and their perceived creativity in the workplace. The study also aimed to formulate data-driven strategies that organizations can use to enhance cultural alignment and create a more supportive environment for creativity. These expected contributions are intended to serve as inputs for future organizational development initiatives, HR practices, and leadership decisions.

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research design focusing on correlation analysis to examine the relationship between employee-perceived alignment of the company's actual culture and its promoted culture and employee creativity. A total of 42 Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) employees from Cebu I.T. Park, Philippines, participated in the study. Using purposive sampling, only employees with at least five years of work experience were selected to ensure that participants had substantial exposure to the organizational culture and work environment. This criterion aimed to support a well-informed assessment of the perceived alignment between the company's promoted culture and employee creativity. However, purposive sampling may have limited the representativeness of the sample and introduced selection bias, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings. It was acknowledged that employees with shorter tenure might have held different perceptions that were not captured in this study.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed via Microsoft

Forms. The survey included 6-Point Likert scale items designed to measure the correlation between the cultural values promoted by the company and employees' perceived creativity. Specifically, the study examined the cultural traits of Teamwork, Integrity, Excellence, and Spiritedness to determine their individual correlations with employees' self-perceived creativity. The questionnaire was validated through pilot testing before full deployment.

The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83 indicated high internal consistency, demonstrating the reliability of the survey questions in assessing the influence of organizational culture on creative output. This value exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, confirming that the instrument was effective for further data collection. However, despite the good reliability, the use of self-reported measures for cultural alignment and creativity was susceptible to common method bias and social desirability bias, as respondents might unintentionally overstated their creativity and perceived alignment with organizational culture.

This research employed Pearson Correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between organizational culture alignment and employee creativity. Correlation analysis was chosen because it allowed for the identification of patterns in the data and provided insights into whether cultural alignment positively or negatively influenced creative output. Previous studies have demonstrated that when employees perceive their company's culture as supportive of values such as integrity and teamwork, their creative behavior is positively impacted (Taha et al., 2016). By applying correlation analysis, this study aimed to explore how the values of Teamwork, Integrity, Excellence, and Spiritedness influenced creativity within KPO companies in the financial sector.

This research identified several limitations that may impact the findings. Factors such as industry scope, regulatory constraints, geographical boundaries, and the self-assessed nature of employee perception may introduce variability in the results and affect generalizability. Additionally, the use of correlation analysis limits the ability to establish causation, as it only determines the strength and direction of relationships between variables. Lastly, operationalizing constructs are complex and subjective such as creativity and culture into a Likert-scale survey caused oversimplification on the nuanced employee experience.

### **Research Ethics Protocol**

The host company and all participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were assured that their identities and departmental affiliations would remain confidential. Permission to conduct the study was formally requested via email from the host company. The company's name and participant information will only be disclosed to the panelists during

the presentation if deemed necessary; otherwise, such information will remain confidential and will not be included in this paper. To ensure confidentiality, all participants acknowledged and consented to a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) by signing the provided form, in accordance with ethical research standards.

This study complied with ethical guidelines for human subjects research, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality throughout the research process. Additionally, ethical compliance included the use of anonymized data during analysis and secure digital storage of employee information accessible only to the research team. No personally identifiable information was collected via the Microsoft survey. Participants were free from undue influence and were not obligated to complete the survey once initiated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1.**

*Authors computed correlation analysis between employee-perceived alignment of the company's actual culture and its promoted culture and employee creativity in terms of culture, teamwork, integrity, excellence, and spiritedness.*

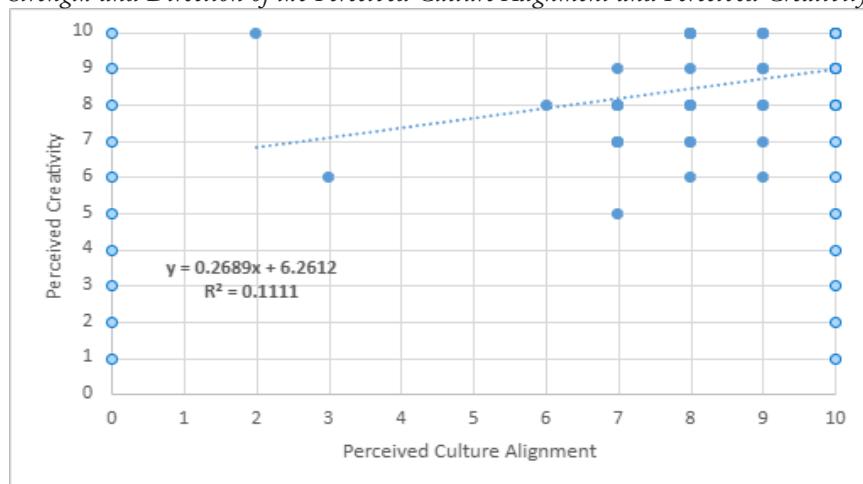
Variable X	Variable Y	Marked correlation is significant at p<0.05				
(Perceived Alignment of the Company's Actual Culture)	(Perceived Promoted Culture and Employee Creativity)	r	R <sup>2</sup>	t	p	N
Culture		0.33	0.11	2.23	0.03	42
Teamwork		0.26	0.068	2.23	0.03	42
Integrity	Employees' Willingness to Produce New Ideas	0.42	0.179	2.95	0.005	42
Excellence		0.24	0.057	1.56	0.127	42
Spiritedness		0.19	0.035	1.21	0.233	42

## ***Culture***

The relationship between organizational culture and creative output in the workplace was well-supported by literature, emphasized key cultural dimensions that influenced employee creativity and performance. Studies highlighted that fostering a workplace culture of innovation, emotional well-being, leadership empowerment, and work-life balance significantly enhanced creative engagement. Research by Khan et al. (2021) underscores the role of workplace innovation and leadership in stimulating employee creativity.

The correlation analysis further supported these findings but suggested that the influence of organizational culture on creative output was limited. The correlation value of 0.33 indicated a weak positive relationship between the perceived alignment of teamwork culture and employees' willingness to generate creative ideas. While employees who perceive alignment between the company's teamwork culture and its actual implementation are slightly more inclined toward creativity (Miron-Spektor et al., 2024), the R-squared value of 11% revealed that organizational culture accounted for only a small portion of the variation in creative behavior. This suggests that other factors—such as leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and external influences—play a significant role in shaping creativity.

The relationship was statistically significant ( $p = 0.031$ ), confirming that the correlation, although weak, was not coincidental (Taha et al., 2016). While organizational culture contributes to creative output, it was only one of multiple influencing factors. To fully leverage employee creativity, organizations must adopt a holistic approach that integrates leadership development, emotional support, and innovation-driven strategies alongside cultural alignment.

**Figure 2***Strength and Direction of the Perceived Culture Alignment and Perceived Creativity*

### **Teamwork**

Teamwork in organizations emphasized that teamwork was a complex and multi-dimensional construct that significantly impacted organizational performance and culture. Key studies highlighted the importance of understanding teamwork structures and their effects on organizational outcomes. Mohr (1998) provided a foundational analysis of team coordination, offering a framework for assessing the costs and competitive advantages of different teamwork configurations. Yeh et al. (2006) further expanded on this with a 3-dimensional model that integrates elements from established teamwork theories, illustrating how teamwork functions as a transformative process within organizations.

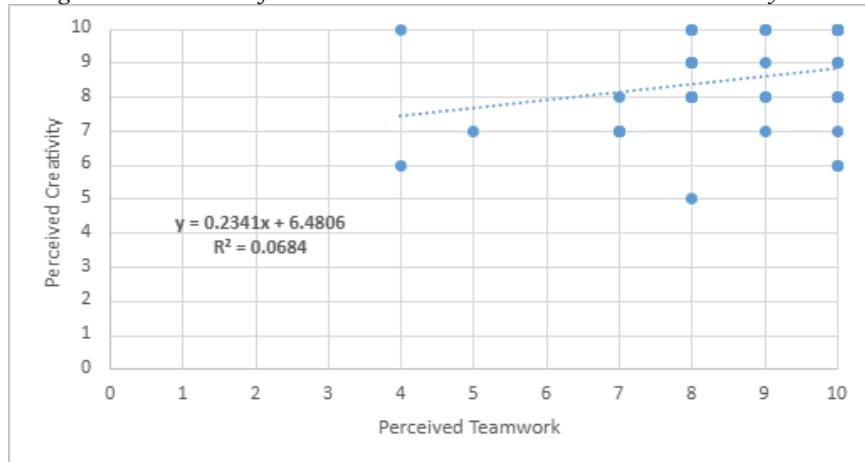
Effective communication is repeatedly cited as crucial to successful teamwork, with Tompkins (2015) emphasizing the need for organizational structures that support communication among team members. The role of teamwork in mitigating burnout and enhancing organizational culture was explored by Ruparell et al. (2019), who suggest that a supportive teamwork environment had helped to reduce stress, particularly in high-stress fields like medical residency programs. Other empirical studies, such as those by Martono et al. (2020) and Afolami (2020), further illustrate the direct benefits of teamwork on organizational performance and commitment. Afolami's case study of First City Monument Bank shows tangible improvements in performance metrics due to effective teamwork, while Martono et al. focus on leadership's role in shaping these outcomes. Additionally, Askari et al. (2020) highlight the importance of

fair compensation in fostering collaboration, emphasizing the need for alignment between organizational practices and teamwork principles.

In sectors like healthcare and transportation, studies by Wijayanti (2021) and Nadtochiy et al. (2022) underscore the importance of interpersonal communication and context-specific strategies in shaping teamwork dynamics. These findings indicated that effective teamwork practices, tailored to industry-specific challenges, contributed significantly to performance and employee satisfaction. Putri (2022) further emphasized the role of management in facilitating communication, cooperation, and coordination within structured teamwork processes, particularly in social work contexts.

The correlation analysis aligns with the literature revealed a weak positive correlation (0.26) between the perceived alignment of company teamwork culture and employees' willingness to generate creative ideas. This suggests that as employees perceive greater alignment between the company's promoted teamwork culture and actual practice, their creativity slightly increased (Miron-Spektor et al., 2024). However, the R-squared value of 6.8% indicated that organizational culture only accounted for a small portion of the variation in creative behavior, pointed to the influence of other factors. The correlation was statistically significant with a p-value of 0.094, suggested that the relationship, although weak, was likely not due to chance (Taha et al., 2016).

**Figure 3**  
*Strength and Direction of the Perceived Teamwork and Perceived Creativity*



## ***Integrity***

Empirical analysis further supported the connection between integrity culture and employee creativity. The correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.42$ ) between employees' perception of integrity alignment within their organization and their willingness to generate creative ideas (Shanker et al., 2017). This suggested that as employees perceive stronger alignment between their company's stated integrity values and actual workplace culture, their willingness to engage in creative problem-solving slightly increased (Miron-Spektor et al., 2024).

However, the R-squared value of 17.88% indicated that integrity alignment accounted for only a portion of the variance in creative behavior, this suggested that other factors also influenced creativity. Despite this, the relationship was statistically significant ( $p = 0.005$ ), this indicated that the observed correlation was unlikely to be coincidental (Taha et al., 2016). These findings reinforce the idea that while integrity culture positively influenced creativity, organizations must consider additional variables—such as leadership style, team dynamics, and workplace resources—to fully optimize creative potential.

Kulakov (2021) highlighted how integrity plays a crucial role in enhancing international investment attractiveness, particularly in Ukraine's integration with Europe. They fostered a culture of openness and integrity awareness among stakeholders, organizations can improve governance perceptions and ethical standards, reinforcing the notion that integrity was not just an ethical obligation but also a key driver of organizational competitiveness.

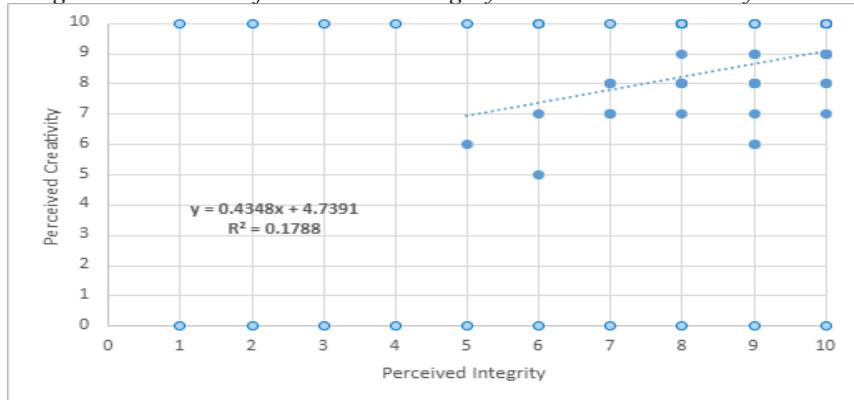
Similarly, Danish et al. (2021) examine the relationship between ethical climate, political mentoring, and behavioral integrity in the workplace. Their findings suggested that a supportive ethical environment, coupled with structured mentoring, significantly influences ethical leadership. This reinforced the idea that integrity was not solely an individual trait but was also shaped by an organization's culture and leadership practices.

From a performance perspective, Kazem et al. (2021) explored how dimensions of organizational integrity—such as leadership supervision and effective communication—impacted employee well-being and organizational success. Their study in the oil industry of Maysan Governorate found that integrity strengthens psychological capital among employees, ultimately improved organizational performance. This aligns with Wook et al. (2023), who emphasized that ethical integrity in the public sector was essential for cultivating a quality work culture. Their research underscored the need for organizations to actively promote integrity to enhance overall effectiveness and employee engagement.

Furthermore, the evolved nature of work, particularly in remote employment, brought new challenges to maintaining integrity in organizational interactions. Minchenkova et al. (2023) discussed employment trends in remote work, highlighted the need for ethical guidelines to sustain trust and accountability in virtual environments. This demonstrated that integrity remained a crucial factor in organizational success, regardless of structural or operational changes.

**Figure 4**

*Strength and Direction of the Perceived Integrity and Perceived Creativity*



### **Excellence**

Organizational excellence was a multifaceted concept encompassed employee performance, operational efficiency, leadership development, and innovation management. The literature highlighted the critical role of performance measurement frameworks, such as those proposed by Zakaria et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in assessing job performance and driving organizational accountability.

Sustainable business practices also contributed to excellence, as evidenced by Prosen et al. (2021), who advocated for the EFQM Business Excellence Model, integrating environmental, social, and economic factors to ensure long-term success. A strong organizational culture that fostered employee engagement was vital for achieving excellence. Sharma et al. (2021) stressed the importance of cultural integration in sustaining service excellence, particularly in industries such as tourism.

Similarly, operational excellence remained a key driver of competitiveness, Saeed et al. (2021) developed a multi-item scale to assess operational efficiency across sectors. Fajsi et al. (2022) furtherly highlighted how project management

maturity levels influenced business excellence, particularly within the evolving landscape of Industry 4.0.

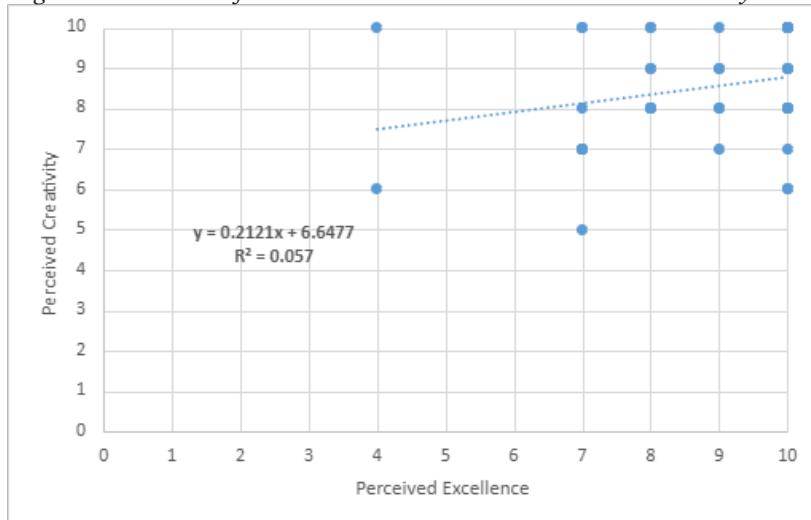
The role of technology in achieving excellence was evident in recent studies, which underscored the need for organizations to adapt their strategies using IT-driven innovations. Živanović et al. (2023) focused on practical software solutions that enhance innovation management, this demonstrated how technological advancements had improved organizational performance.

Leadership development was also crucial for sustaining excellence, as Yarangga et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of succession planning and leadership training programs to ensure long-term resilience. The correlation analysis provided empirical insights into the relationship between organizational excellence culture and creativity.

The correlation value of 0.24 indicated a weak positive relationship between employees' perceived alignment with the company's excellence culture and their willingness to generate creative ideas (Shanker et al., 2017; Miron-Spektor et al., 2024). However, the R-squared value of 5.57% suggested that organizational culture accounted for only a small portion of the variation in creativity, this indicated that other factors also played a significant role. The p-value of 0.127 suggested that the correlation was statistically insignificant, meaning the relationship was likely coincidental (Taha et al., 2016).

**Figure 5**

*Strength and Direction of the Perceived Excellence and Perceived Creativity*



### ***Spiritedness***

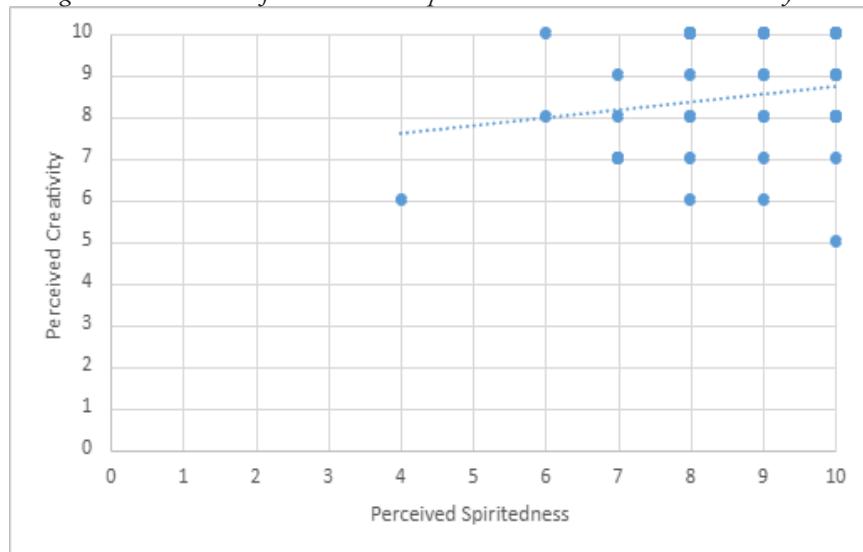
Spiritedness in organizations was a multidimensional concept that encompassed team dynamics, community engagement, and the promotion of a positive organizational culture. The literature highlighted its significance across various settings, including esports, professional sports, education, and corporate environments.

In e-sports, organizations like Team Spirit demonstrate how spiritedness fosters performance and engagement, as seen in their competitive achievements and strong team camaraderie. Similarly, in professional sports, teams such as the Washington Spirit embody spiritedness not only through competition but also through community involvement and advocacy for inclusivity in sports.

Educational institutions further illustrated spiritedness through student organizations and school spirit teams, which enhanced collaboration and belonging among students. Likewise, corporate settings emphasized team spirit through recognition programs and collaborative initiatives that contributed to workplace morale and productivity. Awards such as the Team Spirit Award reinforce the value of spiritedness by acknowledging outstanding teamwork and inspiring a culture of collaboration.

However, empirical analysis of the relationship between spiritedness culture and employee creativity presents mixed results. The correlation value of 0.19 indicated a weak positive relationship, suggesting that employees who perceived a stronger alignment between the company's spiritedness culture and its practices tend to exhibit slightly greater creativity (Shanker et al., 2017; Miron-Spektor et al., 2024).

However, the R-squared value of 3.53% reveals that only a small portion of the variation in creativity can be attributed to cultural alignment, implying that other factors play a more significant role. Additionally, the p-value of 0.233 indicates that the correlation is statistically insignificant, suggesting that the observed relationship may be coincidental (Taha et al., 2016).

**Figure 6***Strength and Direction of the Perceived Spiritedness and Perceived Creativity*

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between organizational culture dimensions—culture, teamwork, integrity, excellence, and spiritedness—and creative output in the workplace. The findings indicate that while organizational culture plays a role in shaping employee creativity, its overall influence is limited.

Correlation analyses revealed weak to moderate positive relationships across different cultural factors, with integrity demonstrating the strongest correlation ( $r = 0.42$ ) and spiritedness the weakest ( $r = 0.19$ ). However, the low R-squared values across all variables suggest that organizational culture accounts for only a small proportion of the variation in creative behavior, highlighting the presence of other influential factors such as leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and external environmental influences.

Despite the statistical limitations, the significance of cultural alignment should not be overlooked. Employees who perceive consistency between an organization's stated values and actual practices tend to exhibit higher creative engagement, albeit to a limited extent. The strongest association was found with integrity culture, reinforcing the idea that trust, ethical leadership, and accountability create an environment where employees feel secure in expressing novel ideas.

Teamwork and excellence, while positively correlated with creativity, exhibited weak statistical significance, suggesting that their influence on creative output is marginal compared to other organizational dynamics. These findings underscore the need for organizations to adopt a more holistic approach to fostering workplace creativity.

While cultivating a strong cultural foundation is essential, it must be complemented by leadership development, emotional support, and strategic innovation initiatives. Future research could explore additional mediating variables, such as leadership behavior, employee motivation, and industry-specific dynamics, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving creative performance in the workplace.

## **TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH**

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of ensuring that a company's promoted culture genuinely aligns with how employees experience it, especially in highly regulated environments like Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) firms. When values such as teamwork, integrity, and excellence are consistently practiced, employees are more likely to feel supported, motivated, and empowered to think creatively. To make these insights more actionable, organizations particularly in the Philippine context, can implement practical steps such as regular culture audits, open feedback mechanisms, and leadership that models company values. Widely available tools like Google Forms, Officevibe, and CultureAmp can support this process by providing accessible ways to collect and track feedback. To extend the reach of these findings, organizations may also consider creating short videos or infographics for internal platforms or LinkedIn articles to raise awareness about the link between culture and creativity in structured industries. By combining internal practices with public tools and media, companies can foster a culture that nurtures innovation without compromising compliance—ultimately enhancing both employee satisfaction and productivity.

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