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Creativity development and Mode 2 theory development: Event system and experiential learning perspectives

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Abstract

Literature on academic-stakeholder collaboration in the context of HRM is scarce and highlights the challenges linking theory to practice. Drawing on Mode 2 research, we theorise how a structured intervention enables the generation of theoretical insights concerning the development of employee creativity knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs). Utilising event system theory, we reveal how the novelty, criticality, and disruption of a structured intervention fuel an experiential learning process. This process facilitates the development of important individual and team-based creativity KSAs and is sustained through a learning mindset. We develop insights about theories-in-use, HRM theory development, and the micro processes involved in an academic-stakeholder collaboration including areas of potential tension. From a practice perspective, we highlight the value of structured interventions for creativity KSA development and a strategy to facilitate academic-stakeholder collaboration.

KEYWORDS
academic-stakeholder collaboration, creative problem-solving, event system theory, experiential learning process, structured intervention, theory development, theory-practice divide

Abbreviations: CPS, creative problem-solving; HR, Human resource; HRM, Human resource management; KSA, Knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

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Practitioner notes

What is currently known about the subject matter?

- Research highlights models and processes to undertake academic-stakeholder collaboration, yet few studies report the outcomes of these collaborations for theory development.
- Research highlights that organisation can use different types of interventions to develop creativity knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs).
- Action research has emerged as a popular form of academic-stakeholder collaboration; however, few studies have focused on a structured intervention to develop theory.
- Research on the outcomes of academic-stakeholder collaboration in HRM is embryonic.

What the paper adds to this?

- The paper utilises event system theory to conceptualise the contribution of a structured intervention to the development of theory about creativity KSAs in organisations.
- The paper provides important insights concerning the micro processes of academic-stakeholder collaboration including areas of potential tension.
- We develop important insights about the role of learning mindset, individual and team-based concrete experiences, and the centrality of creativity artefacts and creative problem-solving techniques for the development of creativity KSAs.
- We develop insights about the role of theories-in-use in developing theory in HRM.

What are the implications for practitioners?

- Our findings highlight the value of structured interventions as events to activate cycles of experiential learning that lead to the development of creativity KSAs.
- Learning mindset emerges as an important individual characteristic that helps to sustain individual and team-based experiential learning processes, and which leads to creativity KSA outcomes.
- The development of creativity KSAs involves multiple individual and team-based experiential learning cycles in the workplace supported by a positive work environment.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Scholars highlight the benefits of Mode 2 research (Guerci et al., 2019), defined as research which is non-linear, transdisciplinary, and which involves co-production by stakeholders and academics (Swan et al., 2010), in the context of the HRM discipline. Yet, efforts to undertake this type of research in HRM are modest (Bleijenbergh et al., 2020; Chang & Chen, 2011) with various reasons suggested for the lack of progress. These reasons include that both HRM academics and stakeholders have different priorities (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021), with scholars being less interested in practical knowledge (Leppäaho et al., 2021), and the notion that HR stakeholders are less willing to engage with researchers because they view the collaboration as a potential threat (Gill, 2018). Bartunek and Rynes (2014) suggest that another possible reason for the lack of progress is that too much emphasis has been given to the 'gap' and 'bridging the gap' rather than viewing the gap as being of fundamental importance to research and theorising. Such an approach, they argue, has as its central notion the idea that academic-stakeholder collaborations are essentially tensional and subject to paradox. Therefore, academic-stakeholder research should prioritise the surfacing of these tensions to advance theory building and the use of theories-in-use to generate important theoretical insights that are of value to stakeholders. Potential tensions that emerge include differences in logics, time dimensions, the communication of research findings, the motivations and priorities of academics and stakeholders, and what constitutes rigor

and relevance. This suggests that both academics and stakeholders should choose collaboration mechanisms that enable them to work, understanding these tensions (Bresnen & Burrell, 2013; Wickert et al., 2021).

HRM scholars have proposed different approaches that potentially can be used as a framework to explore these tensions. These approaches include action research as a strategy for collaboration (Bleijenbergh et al., 2020), phase-based frameworks (Guerci et al., 2019), and networks (Coughlan et al., 2021). Many of these suggestions have the potential to operate at the micro level and therefore illuminate these tensions, yet they are criticised for focusing too much on the gap (Bleijenbergh et al., 2020), and the generation of solutions. These approaches also potentially place the emphasis on the priorities of the organisation rather than the development of theory and focus on the elites in organisations ignoring powerless actors (Bresnen & Burrell, 2013; Swan et al., 2010). In this paper, we propose that structured interventions defined as a small-scale academic-led process, comprising pre-assessment of learning needs to address a specific organisational problem, the use of structured classroom-based activities, and the initiation of experiential learning processes, have the potential to anchor Mode 2 research in the day-to-day reality of organisational practice and facilitate the generation of theories-in-use which can contribute to the development of HRM theory. Structured interventions are narrower in scope than action learning projects and 'can target individuals, groups, or whole organisations, and aim to improve individual, group, and/or organisational outcomes… by promoting positive outcomes' (Thiele Schwarz et al., 2021: 415) while at the same time providing the potential to explore tensions in the context of academic-stakeholder collaborations.

We first investigate the use of a structured intervention focused on the development of employee creativity (Hirudayaraj & Matić, 2021) as a basis to develop HRM theory from stakeholders' theories-in-use about the experiential learning process that underpins the development of creativity knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs), and second, we develop insights about the complexities of academic-stakeholder collaborations using a structured intervention approach. Employee creativity, which we define as the individual process of developing novel and useful ideas concerning processes, services, and procedures (Wang et al., 2018), is critical for organisations to foster innovation (Shipton et al., 2017) and can be developed under favourable organisational conditions (Han & Stieha, 2020), however, it is still not clear how the process of creativity development can be operationalised. To develop insights on both creativity and theory development, we utilise an event system perspective (Morgeson et al., 2015). This is a good fit theory in the case of our structured intervention because it captures context in theorising (Johns, 2018) and provides insights into the impact of interventions as events (Chen et al., 2021; Valgeirsdottir & Onarheim, 2017) on both the development of creativity KSAs and the generation of theory on academic-stakeholder collaborations. We theorise those structured interventions can be conceptualised as events because of their novelty, criticality, and disruption within an organisation. Structured interventions are novel because for employees they are unexpected and unusual in organisations (Morgeson et al., 2015); they are critical in that they focus on the development of creativity KSAs, something considered essential for day-to-day performance and a major strategic priority in organisations; and they are disruptive in that they require employees who participate in these interventions to change their approach to creativity and do things differently (Birdi, 2016). The notion of disruption is central to the idea of interventions and was emphasised by Argyris (1970) in his original conceptualisation of an intervention where he articulated its purpose as disrupting the status quo.

We rely on this theorising within the Mode 2 research perspective and conducted a structured intervention in four hospitality organisations. As part of this structured intervention, we utilised multiple types of data collection methods, such as structured pre- and post-workshop surveys, observations during the workshop, and post-workshop semi-structured interviews to ensure both method and source triangulation. The evidence generated allowed us to explore two research questions: (1) *What is the impact of structured interventions on the development of employee creativity KSAs and the nature of the experiential learning process?* (2) *What are the micro processes in structured interventions that contribute to both stakeholders' theories-in-use and HRM theory development?*

We make three important contributions to the literature. First, we contribute to the literature on employee creativity KSA development (Wang et al., 2018). Creativity is a critical part of job functions for employees in service organisations and there is significant scope to expand our knowledge concerning the types of interventions that

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can accelerate the development of necessary KSAs. We specifically develop insights into the experiential learning processes involved in the development of creativity KSAs (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020). Second, we make an important contribution to understanding the dynamic micro processes inherent in a structured intervention for Mode 2 purposes. We do so by unpacking five complexities identified in our academic-stakeholder collaboration. Third, we illuminate how these micro processes aid to develop stakeholders' theories-in-use and subsequent HRM theory, and how this plays out in an organisational setting involving academics and stakeholders. In doing so, we advance insights on the interplay of stakeholders and academics in the context of structured interventions, the importance of considering different theoretical lenses, and the balancing of both academic and stakeholder perspectives.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Event system theory and academic-led structured interventions

Event system theory presents an important theoretical suggestion that structured interventions can be understood as events and the characteristics of these events impact employees' behaviour (Jiang et al., 2019; McFarland et al., 2020). The theory proposes key event strength characteristics, *novelty*, *criticality*, and *disruption*, impacting the way in which employees behave in an organisation (Morgeson et al., 2015). Event novelty emphasises the extent to which an event is different or departs from current or past ways of doing things. Novelty helps the event to stand out and elevates its potential to trigger change or processes of learning (Morgeson et al., 2015). For example, novelty may be concerned with something that is new to the organisation such as a process, practice, or system. Criticality as a characteristic of events is concerned with the extent or degree that the event is important to the organisation and that it is a strategic priority. For example, the survival of the organisation depends on doing something different or taking a different strategic path. Where an event is viewed as critical it will be perceived by an employee as both salient and requiring their attention. Disruption captures or reflects a discontinuity in the organisation and where something has changed. It essentially characterises a situation where things will have to be done differently and requires the abandonment or transformation of organisational routines to adjust and adapt (Morgeson et al., 2015). Disruption is typically conceptualised as a major disturbance in the environment such as COVID-19 or significant change in an organisation's customer base. We propose that the structured intervention that is the focus of this paper can be described using these three characteristics.

(1) *Novelty*. We conceptualise a structured intervention as novel to the extent that it is a high-profile way for an organisation to have employees engage with creativity as part of the routines of the organisation and make it a key component of their role. The very act of bringing in academics to the workplace and publicising the event and their involvement introduces novelty in that it is a departure from what was done previously. (2) *Criticality*. A structured intervention can be considered critical in the sense that the development of creativity is of strategic relevance for the competitiveness of an organisation (DeRue et al., 2012). Given the criticality of employee creativity KSAs to the development and delivery of novel customer solutions in the service sector, the intervention can have the effect of gaining the attention of employees through each organisation. (3) *Disruption*. The structured intervention can be considered disruptive in the sense that it requires employees to develop new KSA outcomes. These outcomes can be developed using learning methods such as brainstorming, synectics, morphological analysis, lateral thinking, theory of inventive problem solving, and creative problem-solving (CPS; for a review, see Birdi, 2016). They have the effect of taking employees out of their comfort zones, presenting them with a new reality and emphasizing that things will be different. The multiple cycles of experiential learning activated by structured interventions can fundamentally change creativity KSAs and 'develop an individual's capability to generate novel and potentially useful solutions to (often complex and ill-defined) problems' (Birdi, 2016: 298).

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2.2 | Structured interventions as Mode 2 research

We argue that academic-led structured interventions meet the requirements of Mode 2 knowledge production. Gibbons et al. (1994) articulated that Mode 2 allows new knowledge production as a socially distributed system-based process and they highlighted five characteristics which are applicable to academic-led structured interventions. First, Mode 2 knowledge is generated through action and there is no division between the production of knowledge and its application. Second, Mode 2 knowledge is transdisciplinary and therefore it mobilises a variety of theories, models, and practical methodologies to address an organisational problem (Gibbons et al., 1994). Third, Mode 2 knowledge is viewed as reflexive where the researcher shows a particular sensitivity to the process of research and the dynamics of CPS in organisations (Gibbons et al., 1994). Fourth, Mode 2 research is heterogeneous and works with organisational diversity, involving different organisations, participants, and researchers (Guerci et al., 2019). Mode 2 researchers are accountable to the organisations participating in the intervention and their academic communities. Finally, Mode 2 research utilises a diverse range of controls to facilitate the implementation of the academic-stakeholder collaboration.

Applying these characteristics to structured interventions, Thiele Schwarz et al. (2021) first highlight that these interventions are centrally concerned with changing the way things are done in organisations, and to be effective, they require collaboration between stakeholders and researchers. Kristensen (2005) highlights that they produce new practices, surface theories-in-use, and illuminate differences. In terms of the second characteristic, structured interventions have drawn on acquisitive theories of development (Garavan et al., 2015), experiential learning theories (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2011), and theories of creativity, in particular creative behaviours including divergent thinking (originality, fluency, elaboration, flexibility) and convergent thinking (Berg, 2016). They also incorporate practical techniques such as brainstorming and working through the stages of CPS: idea collection, idea generation, idea consolidation, idea evaluation and choice, and idea elaboration (Birdi, 2016). Third, they are sufficiently flexible and dynamic to engage with the unique context of each organisation, and fourth, they engage with different types of creativity problems and participants. For example, in our study, we worked with hotels that had different business goals, target markets, and participants who had varying levels of work experience and experience of CPS. Finally, structured interventions allow for a range of controls including engagement with real-life creativity issues, the use of collaborative processes to address tensions and challenges, the use of reflection, and the generation of workable KSA outcomes for organisations (Franco et al., 2020). We were also conscious of the time that it takes for the outcomes of the interventions to generate creativity KSAs.

3 | CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLABORATORS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 | The background and organisations

Prior to designing and implementing the structured intervention, the collaboration involved working with the largest creativity society (*APA Division 10: Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*) to inquire into the content and setup for creativity structured interventions. The process of engagement with the four organisations led to the identification of a specific organisational problem around the development of creativity KSAs. The structured intervention was implemented within four hotels located in Northern Ireland: one being part of a large multinational chain and three being part of local hotel groups. Operating in an extremely volatile economy which frequently reports high turnover rates and skills shortages across firms and countries (Baum, 2019), hospitality businesses are often considered to be somewhat a laggard when it comes to innovative approaches (Martin-Rios & Ciobanu, 2019), and thus employee creativity presents an opportunity for industry innovation (Hon & Lui, 2016). The first organisation was part of a major international hotel chain that operated in a highly competitive market and presented both strategic and operational issues. The strategic issue concerned the need to develop greater competitiveness within their

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market segment and the operational issue focused on the need to solve everyday challenges effectively and to bring fresh thinking to increase customer follow from the non-residential market segment. The second organisation experienced several operational problems that needed CPS. They had a particular issue with the use of hotel vouchers by employees and the need to manage revenue more effectively. The third hotel experienced business issues around competing successfully in the hospitality segment in which they operated. They sought to capitalise on trends in the hospitality marketplace including the flow of tourists from the Chinese market and the requirement to offer new services to existing market segments. The fourth organisation also experienced competitive issues and needed to diversify existing offerings and develop new campaigns. They also experienced operational problems around interacting with customers and ensuring high rates of customer retention.

3.2 | Design of the intervention process

In line with the procedure of creative interventions in organisations (Brem, 2019), the first stage of the intervention focused on personal and professional entry to each organisation. This stage centred on utilising the HR and general managers in identifying the relevant organisational problems that the intervention would solve. The collaboration involved a series of meetings with each hotel to discuss the relevance and value of creativity and their commitment to participate in the structured intervention. Together, they were planning the content and procedure of structured interventions, identifying those who would participate and discussing expected outcomes. This involved explaining proposed intervention layout and creative techniques to be used to stimulate creative thinking. Several minor recommendations were made by organisations and considered by the researcher in the intervention procedure, namely the use of technological equipment, physical space, and event time arrangements. Consistent with Gill's (2018) recommendations, we reinforced the role of employee creativity within the workplace and the competitive advantage to be gained through employee involvement in creative training.

The second stage involved the administration of several diagnostic tools to access the creativity environment within each hotel and creativity related characteristics of employees participating in the intervention. The third stage involved the delivery of the workshop component of the intervention where participants worked through the CPS process to address their unique creativity problem. The fourth stage of the process involved the collection of post-workshop data on both individual and organisational characteristics. The fifth stage of the process involved periods of engagement with the four organisations to collect data on how they experienced the creativity training, the experiential learning process that they engaged in, the way in which they solved creativity problems, and the outcomes they achieved. A summary of the core stages of the structured intervention is presented in Figure 1.

3.3 | Data collection

We made use of multiple types of data collection which enabled the accumulation of varied and rich sources of information from the 50 participants within the four organisations. The study participants consisted of 47 front-line managers who worked in key divisions such as sales, marketing, rooms division, and food and beverages plus three gatekeepers (HR and general managers) who did not participate in the workshop component of the structured intervention. We included the latter to ensure that we had source triangulation which is important in HRM research (Christensen et al., 2019). In the sample, 60% of participants were female; 51% were aged between 21 and 30; 38% had more than six years of experience; and all participants had not previously participated in creativity training.

We generated primary data using structured pre- and post-workshop surveys, structured observations during the workshop (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011), and post-workshop semi-structured interviews (Burgoyne & James, 2006). The surveys enabled us to collect quantitative data on individual characteristics. We collected data on (a) openness to experience, (b) conscientiousness, (c) extraversion, and (d) neuroticism (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Costa &

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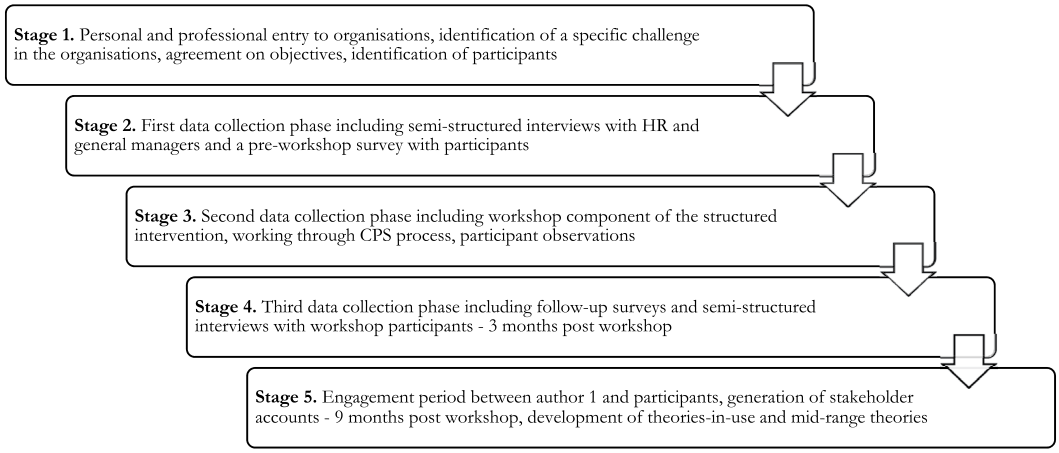


FIGURE 1 Core stages of the structured intervention

McCrae, 1992; Shalley et al., 2004), (e) creative self-efficacy, and (f) creative process engagement (Tierney & Farmer, 2002; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). We also collected data on four dimensions of the work environment (Amabile et al., 1996; Dul et al., 2011): (a) organisational encouragement for creativity, (b) managerial encouragement for creativity, (c) challenging work, and (d) work group supports. During the observation process, we collected qualitative data on creative thinking and creative behaviours, engagement with the artefacts, and communication and interaction among and with team members. The 23 semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data on developmental processes around creativity, experiential learning processes, and KSA outcomes.

3.4 | Data processing and analysis

To analyse the data collected, we relied on an abductive approach that 'gives primacy to the empirical world' (Nenonen et al., 2017: 1132). During the conduct of the study, numerous anomalies in the data set were apparent. The implication of this for our analysis required the use of abduction defined as a 'cyclical process of identifying and confirming anomalies and generating and evaluating hunches' (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021: 686). The process of data analysis consisted of four discernible stages that largely reflect the stages proposed by Sætre and Van de Ven (2021).

3.4.1 | Observation of anomalies

This stage involved first a careful reading of the transcripts and the development of four case histories. These helped us to understand the key phases of the experiential learning process and the role of the structured intervention in activating that process (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020). We then engaged in a process of thematic analysis involving continuous iteration between experiential learning theory and data which allowed us to identify inconsistencies or anomalies in the form of unexpected findings that were not in line with current understanding or theories. As opposed to the literature on experiential learning theory (Corbett, 2005; Kolb & Kolb, 2011), our data revealed the important role of team-based experiential learning processes. Moreover, our data revealed that the experiential learning process activated by the structured intervention was messy, unstructured, and at times iterative and regressive. These findings encouraged us to give more prominence to the occurrence of team-based creativity KSA outcomes derived from a structured intervention that was individual focused in terms of its content.

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3.4.2 | Confirming the existence of anomalies

The second stage of the data analysis process focused on the confirmation of anomalies. This process involved us going back and forth between the theory and data and a process of reiteration (Locke et al., 2022). Sætre and Van de Ven (2021) were particularly helpful in this context, and we used their *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *how* type questions. To confirm these anomalies, we further grounded the unexpected insights developed within our data set, using both the context of the study and literature on experiential learning. We explored in more detail the experiential learning processes experienced within the four organisations and identified how they were similar or different.

3.4.3 | Developing hunches about the findings

We drew on relevant literature within the learning and development and experiential learning fields (Kolb, 1984) to develop further insights into the key phases of the experiential leaning process, the types of activities that learners utilised during each phase, the role of key antecedents that might explain the process, and a categorisation of KSA outcomes. We depicted this process in a diagram to identify the distinct phases (see Figure 2).

3.4.4 | Finding explanations for the hunches

The final stage of the data analysis process involved finding explanations for the phases of the experiential learning processes that we identified. During this stage of the analysis, we used abductive reasoning to link these findings

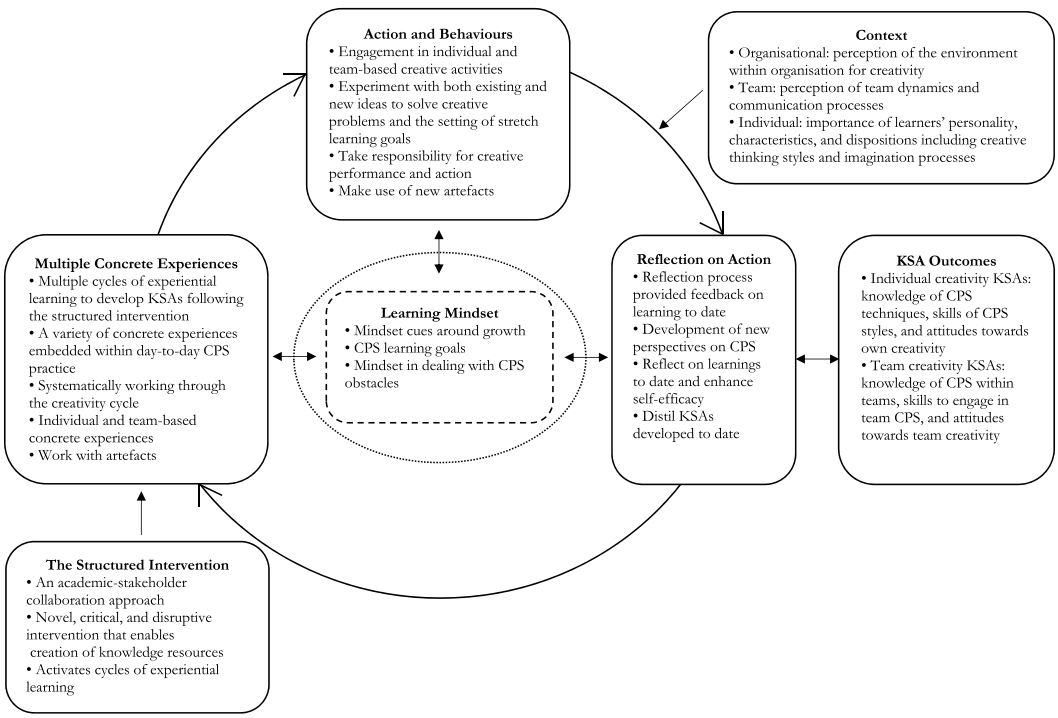


FIGURE 2 Intervention-activated creative problem-solving experiential learning process: Theory generated from theories-in-use

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to theoretical concepts and research findings. We continually moved between the data and the relevant literature in experiential learning and creativity development acknowledging both its strengths and limitations. Our process of iteration led us to the important concept of learning mindset (Heslin & Keating, 2017) to explain the key underlying individual characteristic that helped the continued activation of the experiential learning process initially prompted by the structured intervention. We grounded this concept in and refined the phases of our experiential learning process.

We took steps to enhance the methodological trustworthiness of the data we collected. We made use of creativity and experiential learning theory to develop out interview themes; we utilised data triangulation through structured observation to ensure that we had holistically captured the phenomenon under investigation; and we paid careful attention to data collection survey and case study protocols. In addition, we documented our methodological approach in terms of being rigorous, reflective, and relevant (Coghlan & Shani, 2014). Specifically, we adopted the framework proposed by Pasmore et al. (2008) which is summarised in Table 1. To develop this paper, Author 1 brought her experience of working with the creativity literature and her experience of working with the four organisations. Author 2 brought his experience as a researcher in the HRM field and his knowledge of academic-stakeholder collaborations. Author 3 brought his extensive experience as an academic in HRM and HR development and of working collaboratively with organisations. Both Authors 2 and 3 played an important role in challenging Author 1 on her analysis and they particularly helped her to detach from her primary knowledge domain—creativity. They also complemented her existing knowledge and, to use the words of Van de Ven and Johnson (2006: 807), to 'relinquish [her] personal standpoint'. We implemented this process to bring to the data analysis a form of triangulation and objectivity.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Organising the structured intervention

The first substantive stage of the structured intervention involved the negotiation of conditions around its implementation. The aim of this stage was to ensure clarity concerning the type of outcomes that would be developed. During this stage, the focus was on agreeing on the nature and extent of the collaboration, clarity around the purpose of the structured intervention, the problems to be addressed, the requirements around data collection, planning and timing considerations, and issues around confidentiality. Given these constraints, the process then moved on to agreeing on two areas of focus: (1) to unpack KSA development through structured interventions, and (2) to understand the micro processes that are inherent in academic-stakeholder collaborations.

Following agreement on these focus areas, negotiation took place with the HR and general managers in the four organisations. This involved agreement around the design and delivery of the intervention, its key stages, agreement on the specific methods of data collection, and the analysis of the data. Each organisation took responsibility for the identification of the employees who would participate in the intervention and the logistical arrangements for the workshop component of the structured intervention.

4.2 | Getting the lie of the land

This stage involved gathering data prior to the workshop component of the intervention. This included surveys and interviews to identify characteristics of individuals and the organisations in terms of the environment for creativity. This helped to understand the context in which the intervention was undertaken and it revealed that the participants had a number of desirable creativity characteristics which pointed to a potential success of the academic-stakeholder

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TABLE 1 Ensuring quality in the research process

The essence	Rigour	Reflective	Relevant
Purpose and rationale for action and inquiry • Case for action and research • Intended contribution	• Rationale for action is provided by stakeholders: The development of creativity KSAs	• Rationale is linked to past research and literature on Mode 2, events system theory, interventions, experiential learning, and individual creativity	• Stakeholders referred to limited training opportunities to enhance creativity for their staff
	• Rationale is underpinned by the scarcity of evidence on academic-stakeholder collaboration in the context of creativity development and HRM	• Rationale for structured intervention is supported by organisational issues, namely the need to accelerate creativity, business innovation, and performance	• Stakeholders required immediate structured interventions and actions to resolve strategic and operational issues around customer sevice
Context	• This research is undertaken in the context of four hotel organisations	• The research builds on past and current research on Mode 2 collaboration, creativity, experiential learning, and interventions	• The integration of Mode 2 research, structured intervention, event system theory, experiential learning, and creativity provides a unique analytical framework and theoretical and practical contributions
	• The research involves stakeholder reflection on the context and the competitive environment of the organsiation	• The research incorporates concepts from the event system theory perspective and characteristics of novelty, criticality, and disruption of such events to facilitate learning and creativity KSAs	
	• The research involves academic engagement, including review and synthesis of the relevant literature on hotel organisations		
Methodology and method of inquiry • The role of the action researcher • Ethical issues • Learning mechanisms	• This research incorporates the methods typically used as part of academic- stakeholder collaborations	• The methdology as well as the action and research cycles are described in the methodology section of the paper and illustrated in Figures 1–3	• In advance of the structured intervention, the stakeholders and the first author agreed on the extent of engagement and the method of action to be used
	• The research involves collaboration between stakeholders and the first author in the selection of methods of action and throughout the entire research process	• In advance of the structured intervention, stakeholders were provided with information about the research process and a consent form (see methodological notes)	• The stakeholders provided a problem specific to their organisation to be addressed during the structured intervetion
	• The method of action is informed by the CPS process	• Consent forms were signed by stakeholders who were the study participants (see methodological notes)	• The structured intervention followed the requirements of Mode 2 knowledge production

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

The essence	Rigour	Reflective	Relevant
Design	• Data were collected and analysed using the abductive research approach	• This research was designed and implemented in collaboration between stakeholders and the first author	• The first author clarified and explained the research questions them to each organisation
	• The research design was informed by multiple methods of data collection during the structured intervention including structured pre- and post-workshop surveys, structured observations during the workshop, and post-workshop semi-structured interviews	• The first author took on the key role of an academic facilitator	• Stakeholders within the four organisations identified study participants to participate in the workshop component of the structured intervention
	• Data were generated, collected, and explored in collaboration between stakeholders and the first author	• In advance of the intervention, the first author negotiated conditions with each organisation	• Inclusion criteria were requested by the first author: Interest in creativity by study participants, middle- and senior management hierarchy, involvement in key organisational functions
	• Data were further explored in collaboration between the three co-authors	• Confidentiality and anonymity of data was ensured by the first author • Study participants had an option to opt out from this research at any stage • Over the duration of this research, the first author maintained the relationship with stakeholders via correspondence and visits	• The first author clarified the roles of stakeholders and study participants as well as issues around their involvement in the structured intervention

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

The essence	Rigour	Reflective	Relevant
Narrative and outcomes	• The three authors used the abductive approach to data analysis: Empirical data in combination with existing theory to develop and refine existing concepts and develop new theory	• The story being told is interpreted in collaboration with stakeholders and study participants who helped the researchers to clarify their meaning and intentions	• Learning mindset emerged as playing a central role in sustaining the experiential learning process that led to the development of creativity KSAs
	• Cycles of action and reflection were presented in a systematic way	• The story being told is interpreted in collaboration with stakeholders and study participants who helped the researchers to clarify their meaning and intentions	• Learning mindset influenced interest and motivation of participants to engage in multiple learning cycles
	• The story was told in a neutral and factual manner and narratives were separated from interpretations	• The post-workshop survey and post-workshop semi-structured intereviews with stakeholders and study participants facilitated their voices and perspectives	• Learning mindset influenced interest and motivation of participants to engage in multiple learning cycles
	• The story was told using insights from the creativity literature (Author 1), the experiential learnig literature, and lirerature on academic-stakeholder collaborations (Authors 2 and 3)	• The story was further interpreted using methods of data triangulation and collaboration between the three co-authors	• Completion of the structured intervention led to both individual and team creativity KSAs • Experiential learning can be conceptualised as a team learning process in addition to an individual learning process • Completion of the academic-led structured intervention gives rise to both theories-in-use and academic theories
Reflection on the story and outcomes	• Findings of study participants are reported using the abductive research approach	• Nine months following completion of the structured intervention, the first author spoke with study participants and discussed possible actions around creativity and development	• The participating organisations acknowledged a difference in creativity of employees

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

The essence	Rigour	Reflective	Relevant
	• Feelings are reported in the language and manner that is relevant to both academics and stakeholders	• The study's co-authors completed rounds of paper iterations to ensure a shared meaning of the story	• The participating organisations acknowledged that completion of the structured intervention contributed to their needs addressing operational and strategic issues around creativity
	• Perceptions address the components of the intervention including the context, learning mindset, multiple concrete experiences, action and behaviours, reflection on action, and creativity KSAs		• Findings highlight the value of collaboration between stakeholders and academics in the context of creativity development • Findings generated new theoretical insights on the development of creativity KSAs in organisations via the experiential learning process
Discussion	• Academic-stakeholder collaborations are effective in research projects that seek to achieve both theory and practice contributions	• Academic- stakeholder collaboration requires a close partnership with stakeholders across the full collaboration process	• KSA outcomes: The results of academic-stakeholder collaboration can lead to a permanent change in KSAs such as individual and team creativity KSAs
	• Such collaborations can bridge scholarly-based knowledge with practice, whilst at the same time addressing organisational issues	• Dialogue and trust are imperative to academic-stakeholder collaboration and lead to more open and complete stories and perspectives	
	• The results of these collaborations help surface stakeholders' theories-in-use and strategies (such as those around CPS) ready to be applied in day-to-day work	• It is imperative to build a common knowledge and understanding with stakeholders when working in an academic-stakeholder collaboration	
	• The results of collaboration help the emergence of theories and knowledge that can be replicated in other settings and contexts		

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collaboration. For example, individuals were effective on desirable creativity personality traits such as conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness to experience.

The data revealed mixed findings when it came to the environment for creativity including culture of creativity, freedom to carry out projects, and managerial encouragement for creativity. The data also revealed important impediments to creativity including the lack of recognition that creativity was important, resistance to new ideas, the lack of rewards for creativity, and fear amongst managers to take risks. These impediments are consistent with Argyris (1970) and Schein (2008) who argued that impediments are located or grounded in stakeholders' theories-in-use. In addition, these theories-in-use may vary considerably from what is espoused by organisational decision makers. This data helped to shape expectations concerning the potential effectiveness of the structured intervention to enhance CPS and address important organisational challenges.

4.3 | Developing insights on the role of the workshop in activating experiential learning

This stage focused on the delivery of a series of structured classroom-based workshops with middle and senior management and HR staff within the four organisations. Several important insights emerged from the data collected through observation during the workshop including the importance of teamwork, the role of the facilitator in helping employees to generate ideas, the quick generation of ideas, the development of multiple ideas, the exploration of connections between ideas, the recording of ideas, the discussion of ideas with the academic, the solicitation of feedback on ideas, the selection of the best ideas, the presentation of ideas with other teams, and engagement in follow-up activities. These insights were generated utilising the observation protocol described in the methodological notes. The workshops were transformative in terms of activating an experiential learning process. The academic facilitator also played an important role in keeping employees focused on the creativity development tasks and working through the CPS process.

4.4 | Developing insights around the context, process, and outcomes of experiential learning

Having completed the workshop component of the structured intervention, the next stage focused on employees' use of CPS to address creativity problems within their respective organisations. Post-workshop survey and interview data allowed us to develop several important insights from this stage of the process. First, the learning mindset of employees emerged as central to their engagement in CPS and the development of their KSAs. Dimensions of the learning mindset that emerged as important included the belief by employees to develop CPS, openness to new learning situations, the opportunity to focus on learning, and the capacity to see the bigger picture. We found that employees were committed to using CPS techniques and taking responsibility for creative performance. Our data also revealed changes related to the individual and organisational contexts. At an individual level, we found an increase in achievement striving, excitement seeking around creativity, risk taking to solve creative problems, and assertiveness to address creativity problems. In terms of the organisational context, the data highlighted a decrease in the organisational impediments around CPS and some small changes in terms of resources for creativity.

Employees showed a strong commitment to using team CPS situations as opportunities to learn and to engage in dialogue with both self and others. The dimensions of action, in the context of the experiential learning process, included experimenting with CPS techniques, taking on a leadership role for a team, the use of team facilitation activities, and the implementation of brainstorming activities. Reflection emerged as a vital component of the experiential learning process. This included both self- and other-focused reflection. Dimensions of self-reflection included the use of artefacts at work to develop creativity KSAs, identification of what worked well and what did not, and reflection on the ideas created by others. Other-focused reflection activities included team reflection processes,

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ideas exchange and questioning of others, and gaining insights into how other employees and teams addressed CPS activities.

As the experiential learning process evolved, we found several important KSAs in the context of CPS, emerging in an incremental and additive way. Knowledge outcomes included awareness of different styles of CPS, knowledge of CPS techniques, and increased understanding of the key stages of the CPS process. Key skill outcomes included the application of CPS techniques and the skills to engage in team CPS. Important attitude outcomes that emerged included increased openness to CPS situations, belief in capabilities to address CPS situations, and the importance of proactivity.

Table 2 summarises some of the high-level findings from the study and Figure 2 presents our conceptualisation of the CPS experiential learning process, and we also report here some other important findings to emerge from the academic-stakeholder collaboration. In terms of the generation of theoretical insights about the process of developing creativity KSAs, we found that it is an iterative and recursive process that involves both individual and team-based experiential learning processes (Figure 2). This process leads to important learning outcomes that focus on learning about creativity, learning to do CPS, learning to become confident in CPS, and learning to engage in CPS with others. The centrality of stakeholders' theories-in-use emerged as important to the learning process. When it came to insights about the academic-stakeholder collaboration (Figure 3), our finding reveal tensions concerning the time scales involved, the potential to agree on a practice problem that met the requirements of both stakeholders and academics, and the role of time in building a relationship and a sense of identity.

5 | DEVELOPING THEORIES-IN-USE ABOUT CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING

We define theories-in-use as those that can be inferred from action (Argyris et al., 1985). According to Argyris and Schön (1978), this includes the mental maps that employees have about their actions in the context of creativity. These mental maps are instrumental in guiding the creativity actions of employees. Employees within the four organisations began to use artefacts and techniques to engage in CPS. We describe some of these components in the methodological notes. The use of CPS artefacts began to evolve over time reflecting employees' increased confidence and improvements within each organisation in terms of climate for CPS. Before the intervention, these organisations did not practice CPS in a structured way and had few insights concerning the artefacts that they could use in this context. Employees provided descriptions of elements of practice including drawing mini circles of opportunities in their diaries, selecting ideas from the circle, and exploring connections between them. The use of diaries assumed greater importance and centrality to the CPS process as did the use of flipcharts and team brainstorming. Interactions during the collaboration reinforced understanding of these techniques and artefacts and participants were able to point to successes from using these approaches. The learnings from the workshop component of the structured intervention directly informed participants' approaches to CPS and provided them with the confidence and motivation to interpret what they were doing. The participating organisations gained insights into how the CPS process can be systemically linked to day-to-day work routines and activities.

6 | BUILDING THEORY ABOUT CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT FROM THEORIES-IN-USE

In parallel with stakeholders' theories-in-use, we capitalised on various knowledge resources developed through links with the four organisations. The analyses of data collected throughout the structured intervention helped the development of insights about the role of experiential learning processes and the centrality of learning mindset in the context of CPS and creativity development. As the collaboration evolved, there was more engagement with theoretical insights around experiential learning theory and the contribution of HR practices to creativity development in organisations. Together, they combined complementary perspectives leading to engagement with research domains

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TABLE 2 Key findings emerging from the study

Dimensions	Findings	Illustrative examples
Context	Organisational context: Less positive perceptions of support for creativity, including lower organisational encouragements to participate in creative work; limited managerial encouragement to take risks and develop creativity; some access to materials/equipment for creative work	*We have a communication problem… If someone at the top comes up with a new idea, it is not always filtered down correctly; the same as the other way… this does not encourage people to want to be more creative* (Trainee Manager, HoCo2)
	Team context: Evidence of moderate work group supports when it comes to creativity, including willingness to help each other and willingness to work together on complex problems	*We do not have a strong team culture when it comes to complex problem-solving* (Operations Manager, HoCo3)
	Individual context: Less favourable attitudes towards own creativity, including openness to new ideas/training; however, a strong preference to work with others on complex tasks, and creative self-efficacy	*Being creative would not be one of my strongest attributes* (Digital Marketing Manager, HoCo4)
Learning mindset	Mindset cues around growth: Strong beliefs concerning the importance of creativity in own job; openness to participate in new learning experiences around creativity; positive attitudes to the structured intervention as a valuable development opportunity	*Creativity is important in my profession, but I do not think that I am creative, I do not like being creative; I want to change this* (Training Manager, HoCo2)
	CPS learning goals: Strong commitment to learn about how to be more skilled in the area of creativity; strong interest to learn about how to approach difficult and unfamiliar problems	*I often find it challenging to think creatively and my go to response is to rely on previous experience; I want to learn how I can get more creative in my job role* (Duty Manager, HoCo1)
	Mindset in dealing with CPS obstacles: Evidence of willingness to take responsibility for own creative behaviours and performance; strong commitment to continual learning about creativity	*I know that I have to work beyond my normal work understanding and learn a lot to fully embrace creativity* (Operations Manager, HoCo4)
Multiple concrete experiences	Multiple cycles of experiential learning: Completion of CPS stages during the structured intervention; evidence of commitment to resolve problems creatively; willingness to apply CPS to own problems at work	*Participants complete stages of creative problem-solving; they come up with a variety of different and novel ideas to their problem* (extract from participant observations)
	Individual and team-based concrete experiences: Evidence of creativity-related cognitive processes and behaviours including divergent (novelty, a variety of ideas, fluency) and convergent thinking	*Inspires less engaged team members to work together on CPS and involves these peoplee in discussion by asking: 'what do you think? Does it make sense?'* (Food and Beverage Manager, HoCo2)
	Work with artefacts: Evidence of effective application of the artefacts to own work; evidence of reflection on the role of artefacts for CPS	*I liked to work with the artefacts, for me it was a sort of a game, and everyone including myself wanted to play it* (Operations Manager, HoCo3)

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TABLE 2 (Continued)

Dimensions	Findings	Illustrative examples
	Concrete experiences embedded within day-to-day CPS practice: Evidence of completion of CPS; development of own ideas; exchange of ideas; evidence of the development of final solutions with others	*It takes less than 5 minutes for some participants to generate ideas and complete stages of CPS; the participant asks, 'what should we do next?'* (Duty Manager, HoCo1)
	Working through the creativity cycle: Evidence of interest; practice CPS to own work; evidence of developing CPS instructions in own time	*I revise the CPS techniques that we did during the workshop… I am planning to do similar workshop with my own team* (Events Coordinator, HoCo2)
Action and behaviours	Engage in individual and team-based creative activities: Evidence of embedding CPS techniques in daily work; spreading the word about creativity and encouragement of own team to learn about creativity	*I developed an idea with my team; I trained my team in creativity and explored that idea together with them* (Marketing Manager, HoCo3)
	Experiment with new approaches and set stretch learning goals: Evidence of commitment to team-based CPS as an opportunity to learn more about creativity; use of team facilitation activities such as team training in creativity; getting feedback on own creativity	*Everyone in the hotel seems to have tried to use what we learnt in the workshop to change how we think about problems; I tried to use outside-the-box thinking to explore potential solutions to the work engagement problem* (Duty Manager, HoCo1)
	Take responsibility for creative performance in action: Evidence of delivery of team CPS sessions at work; taking initiative to explore problems with own team; encouragement of own team to practice CPS; exchanging ideas; participation in idea evaluation activities	*I have a range of problems at work… now I am trying to take responsibility and identify a creative way of dealing with those problems with my team or figure out a way to approach things* (Reservations Manager, HoCo1)
	Make use of new artefacts: Evidence of the use of brainstorming exercises with own team; use of a range of CPS artefacts in own work to facilitate CPS	*I organise group meetings with the team and we all brainstorm creative ideas; I use the same artefacts when I have a discussion with the staff* (Assistant General Manager, HoCo2)
Reflection on action	Process provided feedback on learning to date: evidence of recognition for creative work by a professional body; gaining trust from line manager and support from own team and others	*This hotel nominated me for the Hotel Hero Award through the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation and part of the reason was the creative approach that I took to increase health and wellbeing for staff* (HR Manager, HoCo1)
	Develop new perspectives on CPS: Evidence of the use of diaries to practice creativity; involvement in learning from colleagues who achieved success in CPS; getting inspired by colleagues' experiences	*I use my own diary to practice the CPS technique in my work; this is kind of a mind map helping me identify more than one solution and see which one works better* (Digital Marketing, HoCo4)

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TABLE 2 (Continued)

Dimensions	Findings	Illustrative examples
	Reflect on learning to date: evidence of evaluation of own learning experiences in terms of what worked well and what did not; development of confidence in the use of CPS in a work setting	*After the workshop, I understood that it is not just me who has all ideas; it is using other people's ideas as well to develop mine and also come up with better solutions* (Trainee Manager, HoCo2)
	Distil KSAs developed to date: evidence of positive feelings (confidence/motivation) to participate in creative work and interpret outcomes; exploration of remedial actions to support KSA development	*I got some confidence in my creativity but more learning is needed; there should be more opportunities to learn about how to work as a team, how to solve problems together* (Accountant Manager, HoCo1)
KSA outcomes	Individual outcomes: Evidence of new knowledge of CPS techniques and key stages; new skills to employ CPS in own work and work with others; new attitudes to own creativity	*The workshop changed my knowledge about creativity and way of thinking and how I could develop in becoming more creative to benefit not only the business but my team as well* (Marketing Manager, HoCo4)
	Team outcomes: Evidence of new knowledge of how to apply CPS techniques with teams; new skills to engage in team CPS; new attitudes to team CPS and own role in team creativity	*The workshop helped to develop my ability as a team leader, so that I can train my team in creativity and work together on business and departmental problems* (Events Coordinator, HoCo2)

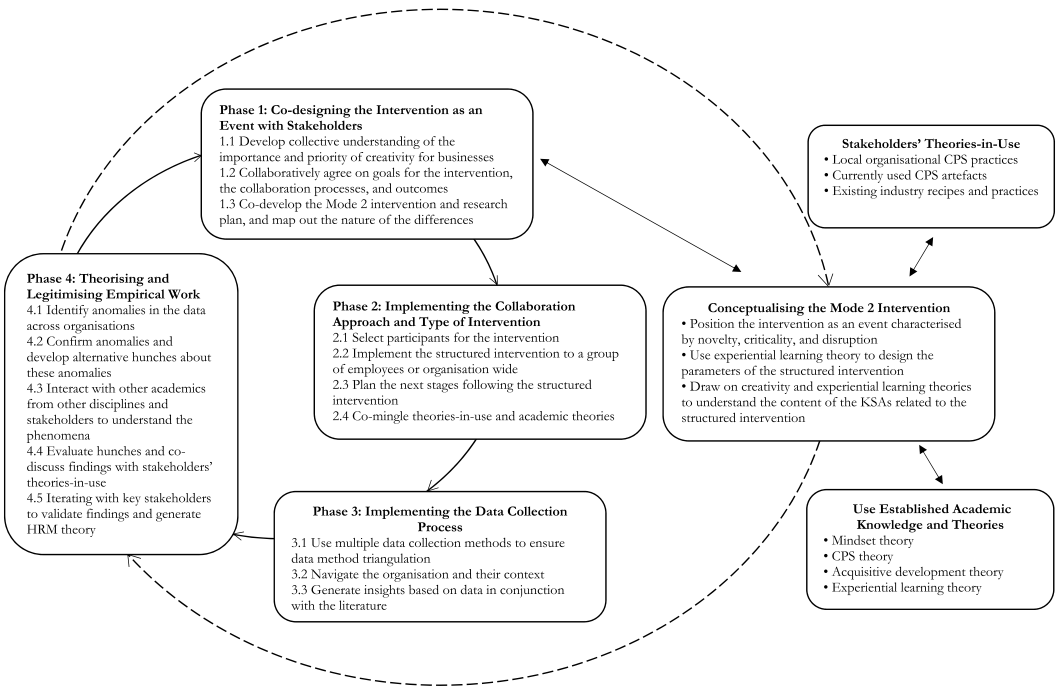


FIGURE 3 Academic-stakeholder collaboration process for Mode 2 knowledge production

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such as acquisitive development (Garavan et al., 2015), self-directed learning (Merriam, 2018), self-regulated learning (Sitzmann & Ely, 2011), mindsets (Dweck, 2017), learning mindsets (Heslin et al., 2020), and experiential leadership development (Ashford & DeRue, 2012). Following further refinement of the data analysis, including the development of second order codes and aggregated dimensions, allowed the exploitation of the data for academic purposes. This led to the production of what Nenonen et al. (2017) call context-specific academic knowledge which is considered essential to Mode 2 theorisation. Specifically, we developed HRM theory to explain the phenomenon under investigation. This HRM theory was derived through the integration of theory with empirical research (Merton, 1968). We started with an empirical phenomenon as opposed to a broad abstract idea which is the focus in grand theorising. Figure 3 presents our conceptualisation of the academic-stakeholder collaboration process.

7 | DISCUSSION

In this section, we highlight our contributions and impact of the academic-stakeholder collaboration. We make three important contributions to the literature around (1) the development of theoretical insights concerning the process of experiential learning that underpins the development of creativity KSAs, (2) the dynamic micro processes of the academic-stakeholder collaboration, and (3) the role of theories-in-use in generating theory within HRM.

Our first contribution stems from the generation of theoretical insights about experiential learning process that is activated through the workshop component of the structured intervention, sustained through the operation of the learning mindset of employees during day-to-day work activities, and reflected in stakeholders' theories-in-use. We theorised a structured intervention as a workplace event that had novelty, criticality, and disruption, and thus activated employees to engage in the development of their creativity KSAs (Morgeson et al., 2015). The key components of the experiential learning process model are depicted in Figure 2. Starting at the bottom-left side of the model, we give focal attention to the *structured intervention* which provides the arena for the collaboration of both academics and stakeholders. The intervention enabled both parties to delimit their roles and manage the evolving relationship (Coughlan et al., 2021). In terms of an academic-stakeholder collaboration, it aligns with the recommendations put forward by Van de Ven and Johnson (2006) in that it addressed a real-world problem but also allowed for framing of two research questions that address shortcomings in the literature. The intervention additionally set boundaries around the role of both parties and the resources they could contribute, and it allowed a process to evolve that resulted in the development of data and theoretical insights (Crespin-Mazet et al., 2017).

We now move to the *context* component which we depict at the top-right side of the model. We conceptualise context in terms of organisational (Amabile & Pratt, 2016), team, and individual (Anderson et al., 2014) dimensions. At an organisational level, we refer to perceptions of the work environment (Amabile et al., 1996; Dul et al., 2011); at a team level, we considered perceptions of team dynamics and communication processes; at an individual level, we included aspects such as creative thinking styles and imagination processes (Tierney & Farmer, 2002; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). These characteristics are represented as proximal contextual conditions that impact the experiential learning process of employees as they develop their creativity KSAs.

Central to our model and sustainment of experiential learning is *learning mindset* (Heslin & Keating, 2017: 370) which is conceptualised as 'a mental framework that guides how people think, feel and act in challenging achievement situations'. This conceptualisation also points to the potential of employees to develop creativity KSAs. The development of these KSAs is a complex task that requires employees to set challenging learning goals (Burnette et al., 2013), to identify learning strategies to achieve these goals, and to show persistence until these goals are achieved (Blackwell et al., 2007). We propose that a strong learning mindset helps employees to navigate the experiential learning journey involved in developing creativity KSAs. It also shapes the ways in which they engage with this learning process.

We now turn to the key components of the experiential learning cycle and illuminate how this cycle emerged in the context of the development of creativity KSAs. We first propose that employees will, consistent with an acquisitive

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development concept, work through *multiple concrete experiences* (Kolb & Kolb, 2011). These concrete experiences are embedded within day-to-day CPS practice, provide employees with the opportunity to work through the creative cycle, consist of both individual and team-based elements, and involve the use of various creativity artefacts, or, what we conceptualise as their theories-in-use. Individuals can react to identified creativity problems in two ways: taking a narrow focus and using existing solutions or taking a broader focus and generating novel ideas. This occurs as individuals gain confidence through successive cycles of experiential learning. The strength of individuals' learning mindsets will prompt them to engage with a greater range of concrete experiences and a broader range of artefacts to develop their creativity KSAs (Cury et al., 2008).

The next phase of the experiential learning process focuses on *actions and behaviours*. Here, a strong learning mindset helps employees to engage in experimentation that is conducive to the development of creativity. It will also help them to set stretch learning goals which contribute to the development of specific KSAs. Learner experimentation is also co-active to opportunities to receive feedback, which is considered imperative for creativity, learning, enhanced effectiveness in CPS, and KSA development (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011). During this phase, individuals with a learning mindset will seek out more information from feedback and view it in a positive way. They are also more likely to seek feedback when they are faced with difficult and challenging CPS situations (Heslin & VandeWalle, 2005). We also envisage that employees with a learning mindset will make greater use of creativity artefacts and experiment more with their use and effectiveness.

The next phase of our model envisages that the process of action and behaviours leads to *reflection on action*. This involves looking at what happened in specific problem situations, making sense of what happened, abstracting what can be learnt from experience, and exploring what remedial action can further enhance KSA development. This process is also infused with employees' learning mindset, arguing that where it is strong, they are more likely to engage with reflection on action processes. Employees are also likely to explore alternative approaches and learn from colleagues who have achieved success in CPS (Nussbaum & Dweck, 2008). We found that an important component of reflection in action in the context of creativity concerned the distillation of learning from experience and what might be done differently to achieve more effective KSA development.

The final component of our model focuses on *KSA outcomes*. We envisage a bi-directional relationship between KSA outcomes and the reflection on action component of the experiential learning process. Our data points to both the impact of reflection on action in leading to KSA outcomes and the influence of these KSA outcomes on future cycles of experiential learning (Garavan et al., 2015). We conceptualise knowledge outcomes in terms of awareness, belief in understanding of CPS, and understanding the value of the structured intervention. Skill outcomes refer to the application of CPS techniques in own work, taking initiative to solve problems, and improving business performance. Finally, attitude outcomes consider employees' feelings and self-belief towards creativity, and openness to creativity development. These KSA outcomes feed into a virtuous cycle of continuous refinement as employees work through multiple cycles of experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2011). Ultimately, the range of individual and team-based creativity KSA outcomes achieved by participants demonstrates the broader impact of our collaboration (Wickert et al., 2021), beyond elite-focused approaches (Bresnen & Burrell, 2013).

Through the illumination of this process, several important insights emerge concerning the nature of the experiential learning process. In the context of the development of creativity KSAs, we highlight the central role of a learning mindset within the experiential learning process in that it infuses all stages of the process. In contrast to employees with a fixed mindset, individuals with a learning mindset demonstrate a desire to learn and persevere despite potential obstacles. Our experiential learning process which encompasses concrete experiences, action and behaviours, and reflection on action highlights that it can be conceptualised as a team process which contrasts with the extant literature (Becker & Bish, 2017) which emphasises experiential learning as a solo process. We also reveal the important role of artefacts for creativity KSA development which give effect to stakeholders' theories-in-use and are fundamental to the experiential learning process. In addition, we highlight the importance of a contextualised model of experiential learning when it comes to the development of KSA outcomes. KSA development as an experiential learning process begins with the perception of a situation by the learner who assesses the perceived complexity

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of the creativity task. This, in turn, impacts how the challenge is addressed and can include a narrower perspective where an employee using an existing approach to solve the creativity task; alternatively, the employee may take a broader approach that comes from experience and enhanced self-efficacy, resulting in new ideas and engagement in a continuous process of experiential learning. These insights represent important additions to our understanding of experiential learning theory in the context of a specific domain of KSA development—creativity.

Our second contribution focuses on unpacking the dynamic nature of academic-stakeholder collaborations in the context of a structured intervention. Figure 3 illustrates the key phases of this collaboration and in doing so depicts this process as somewhat linear and one characterised by little tension and paradox; however, in reality it was something more complex. We particularly note the following five complexities. First, we were able to develop insights about a practice problem that met the needs of the participating organisations and allowed the academics to develop insights concerning the nature of the gap and the manifest tensions inherent in it. We were therefore able to accommodate a variety of interests and priorities (Kelemen & Bansal, 2002). Second, what became particularly evident throughout the collaboration and the implementation of the structured intervention was the issue of time orientations (Bansal et al., 2012; Bartunek & Rynes, 2014). The four hotels were essentially looking for a quick and rapid response to a creativity problem whereas the researchers were more interested in having a longer period of observation, reflection, and synthesis to theorise the gap. Third, the collaboration process also revealed differences in terms of how problems were defined and addressed. The stakeholders, for example, took the messy reality of the problems in practice as taken for granted, whereas we researchers were more focused on neat and precise definitions of the research problems and the need to map out the research and intervention processes. Fourth, we also developed insights about the scope and length of an academic-stakeholder collaboration. Scholars such as Wenger (1998) highlighted the importance of developing a sense of shared identity that only comes through a long period of collaboration. The academic-stakeholder collaboration reported in this study was of limited duration (less than a year) and could be viewed as a data collection opportunity rather than something more profound (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006). Fifth, our study reveals the importance of contextual expertise in developing HRM theory from academic-stakeholder collaborations (Gümüsay & Amis, 2020). The use of a structured intervention helped to generate in-depth insights into the settings in which managers engaged in CPS while also maintaining important critical distance from these settings. This contextual expertise related to the generation of a depth and breadth of understanding of the four empirical sites and the scope to engage, capture, comprehend, convey, and confirm the characteristics of the research settings.

Our third contribution concerns insights about the links between theories-in-use and the development of HRM theory that have potential application in multiple contexts. A theory-in-use approach capitalises on the mental models of stakeholders and builds them into theories that advance HRM practice (Argyris & Schön, 1978). We suggest that such an approach helps us to better communicate with stakeholders in a language they understand. Additionally, such an approach takes away the necessity to borrow theories form other disciplines and force-fit them to provide a foundation for our research, consequently losing touch with HRM practice. Other scholars have suggested that the process of borrowing frameworks and theories restricts researchers to what they already know, rather than coming up with something novel (Zeithaml et al., 2020). We acknowledge that in the context of generating new insights in this study we were shaped by the knowledge and experience of study participants. We do however suggest that structured interventions provide researchers with the potential to surface interesting and novel theories that can provide the basis to enhance HRM practice and scholarship. We also acknowledge that there will be debate concerning the type of theory that is generated. For example, Banks et al. (2021) characterises the theory developed as 'intermediate' in that it is based on direct evidence from multiple sources with the potential for alternate explanations. Others suggest that it is 'mid-range' theory, appropriate to a particular context rather than the development of a 'grand' theory (Nenonen et al., 2017). The argument goes that to produce grand theories, it is necessary to apply these mid-range theories in other contexts and scrutinise the results in the academic domain.

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8 | CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have reported on a structured intervention as a form of Mode 2 knowledge production with two purposes in mind; first, to gain insights on the role of structured interventions to develop theory about creativity KSAs; and second, to understand the micro processes involved in an academic-stakeholder collaboration. We conceptualised the structured intervention using an event system perspective which was driven by the organisations' needs to address a specific and relevant creativity problem. This allowed us to produce new theoretical insights on the development of creativity KSAs in organisations, illuminating the experiential learning process and providing insights on the micro processes involved in developing HRM theory. We therefore provide evidence that knowledge production and new theoretical HRM insights can be generated by stakeholders and academics in the context of application and practice in organisations.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We do not have any competing interests to disclose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request. The data are not publicly available due to containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants.

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