



## **Work Resilience, Core Self-Evaluation and Organizational Creativity as Predictors of Thriving at Work among Bank Employees in Owerri Municipal**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined work resilience, core self-evaluation and organizational creativity as predictors of thriving at work among bank employees in Owerri Municipal, Imo State. The participants for this study were 307 bank employees (Female=190, Male=117) from Owerri Municipal City in Imo State. The ages of the participants ranged from 26 years to 53 years with a mean age of 32.50 years and standard deviation of 3.20. The participants were selected using multi-stage sampling procedure which made use of; purposive, cluster and simple random sampling technique. The study made use of four research instruments for data collection; they are: Employee resilience scale (EmpRes), Core self-evaluations scale (CSES), Organizational creativity scale; and thriving at work scale. The design of the study was correlation and stepwise regression analysis was used as the appropriate statistical tool to analyze the data. The result confirmed that positive and significant predictive effects were confirmed for the three models at  $\beta = .55, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .47, p < .05$  and  $\beta = .13, p < .05$  respectively. From the result, all three hypotheses of the study as depicted in model 3 were confirmed. The finding implies that by enhancing organizational creativity, work resilience and core self-evaluation, thriving at work will be enhanced since the result indicated a positive and significant predictive influence on thriving at work. It is then recommended that organizations engender good social exchange between employees and the organization so that employees can freely express their personal attributes which will help the organization to excel.

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**Key Words:** Bank employees, core self-evaluation, organizational creativity, thriving at work, work resilience.

## **Introduction**

The survival rate of private sector organizations has significantly reduced with cost of doing business going up higher geometrically (Oluwasoye & Ugonna, 2015). Necessarily, the scenario has become both sources and causes of stressors and in no small measures have affected private sector employees. As much as the impacts may be said to reduce employee potentials for efficiency and effectiveness, it has also affected their ability to thrive on the job with apparent negative consequences (McDonald et al., 2016).

However, despite the high unemployment rate in Nigeria plagued by poor infrastructural development (Onwuka et al., 2020) and institutional corruption (Eze & Etodike, 2016) organizations in the private sector strive to actualize their objectives. With the competitiveness to survive, employees may not be able to keep their jobs in such organizations except they thrive with creativity.

Thriving at work is marked by increase in experience, growth in momentum, and a generalized feeling of being energized, alive (vitality) and improvement in relation to employee's contributions towards continually improving oneself (in terms of skill sets), one's career potential and one's relevance to industry (Koçak, 2016). Thriving at work is also a total psychological experience on the job that an employee does in the organization in relation to the vitality, learning and relevance of the employee to the completion of tasks and actualization of organizational goals; in thriving, employees experience both learning and vitality. Hence it is seen as a positive psychological state (Nawaz et al., 2020). According to Kleine et al. (2019),

Thriving is an important aspect of employee relationship with work since it opens windows for the employee to develop and become something better. It is more important in the private sector as a result of abundance of labour and increasing unemployment which has increased competition in the available jobs in any industry (Etodike et al., 2020).

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Unlike performance, thriving at work helps employees to remain afloat their jobs amidst varying degrees of job threatening hazards (Joe-Akunne et al., 2019). According to Boyd (2015), thriving at work in an organization involves active intentional engagement in the process of personal growth. Hence, it is necessary conditions which can enable employees appreciate their work and feel satisfied with the tasks of their duty. Employees will struggle to thrive if they do not persevere or show resilience as per the challenges of daily routine of work.

Work resilience refers to as employees' personal coping abilities with stressors at work (Naswall et al., 2015). It is also referred to as employee resilience which is the defining characteristics of employees who can cope and deal well with the stressors and strains of the modern workplace which may be characterized in principle by organizational politics, members' bullying and transactional type of interaction among members (Britt, Shen, Sinclair, Grossman & Klieger, 2016). Without work resilience, employees may lack the ability to 'bounce back' especially after task setbacks orchestrated by uncertainties which may affect work, the workers and workplace. According to Trifoglio (2018), work resilience may be conceptualized as a positive psychological framework which increases workers' capability to cope with adversities of work. McFadden et al. (2014) contended work resilience as employee trait which buffer and support coping ideals especially against burnout and unfavorable job outcomes. In the views of the author, work resilience is something employees need to sustain their motivation and resolve to accomplish job tasks amidst unsatisfactory work conditions. It necessarily sustains the probability for an employee to remain focused on job tasks and withstand adverse conditions for an assured outcome. Work or employee resilience may also be viewed as an inert ability for an employee to survive hardships in the workplace to actualize the goals of the organization and that of the employee.

Without resilience, employees may not be composed enough to withstand organizational and job-related shocks and uncertainties (Naswall et al., 2015). This could also affect the psyche of the employees if the employee did not develop thick skin for absorbing work stress. Despite the importance of work resilience, without internal motivation, employees may not maximize their resilience traits neither can they thrive at work. Hence, the

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researcher has also deemed it necessary to consider if employees' core self-evaluation will also predict thriving at work among employees in the private sector organizations.

Core self-evaluation is internalized consciousness regarding awareness of one's strengths and weakness and having a sense of their management (Judge et al., 1997). It is an individual's subconscious and fundamental traits of self-evaluations on one's own ability and control (Tims, & Akkermans, 2017). It helps to develop positive or negative attributes about the self especially in respect to inert abilities and being confidence about the self. The importance and impact of core self-evaluation is that it helps an employee subjectively become aware of the self in his or her interaction with his/her work demands which may likely keep the employee focused, believing in his/her ability to perform effectively and having positive feelings regarding the job and the organization. This level of awareness may, in the views of the researcher, enhance employees' thriving at work.

In the views of the author, positives intrinsic factors create mirroring effects through which surrounding events can be seen and interpreted in the work setting. In the instance of organizational setting, they may become critical variable antecedents that orchestrate several employee outcomes including how they thrive and progress in their careers in their organizations. To thrive, employees may equally need to be creative in dealing with the daily activities in the organization.

Organizational creativity are employee behaviours which consist of employee's goal directed behaviour towards new methods of executing and accomplishing job tasks to increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness (European Union Creativity Project, 2011). Thus, organizational creativity is regarded as all employee behaviour aimed at the generation, introduction and/or application (within a role, group or organization) of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new dimensions intended to benefit the relevant unit of adoption or the organization in whole (Afsar & Badir, 2015). According to Chatchawan et al. (2017), organizational creativity is an intentional behavior of an employee to introduce or apply new ideas to their assigned work role. It is a behaviour that may be exhibited in the areas of work processes, personnel hiring, product and service changes, supply chains, quality improvement, production cost reduction, reduction of production time,

introduction of ancillary products and services to support existing products and services and even changes in production equipment, chain and location. Organizational creativity may arise as a result of the realities of the market forces being witnessed by workers or as a result of the ingenuity of the workers in an attempt to provide comparative advantage. There is a belief by the researcher that when employees withstand the pressures of their work and find an internal motivation and conviction on their capability they may likely create innovative ways which will improve their thriving at work.

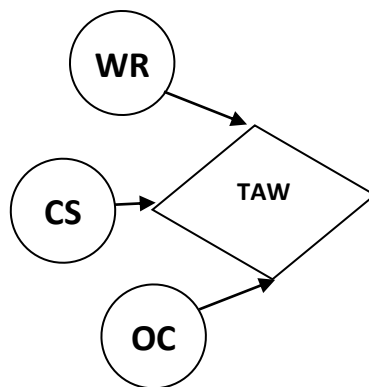
In view of the importance of thriving at work and how self-evaluation, resilience and organizational creativity may impact it; the following research questions arise:

- a. Will work resilience significantly predict thriving at work among bank employees in Owerri Municipal in Imo State?
- b. Will core self-evaluation significantly predict thriving at work among bank employees in Owerri Municipal in Imo State?
- c. Will organizational creativity significantly predict thriving at work among bank employees in Owerri Municipal in Imo State?

### Conceptual Model

Conceptual model for the current study contends that work resilience, core self-evaluation and organizational creativity will predict employees' thriving at work. The model is depicted by the figure below.

Figure 1: Thriving in Resilience-Self-Creative Model



**Key:** WR = Work Resilience, CS = Core Self-evaluation and OC = Organizational Creativity

The above model provides pivotal points which will accelerate thriving of employees in the workplace. The pivoted points are enabled by the work resilience, core self-evaluation and organizational creativity. The pivots depict the sharp impacts and predictability of the predictors in propelling thriving of employees.

## **Framework of the Study**

### **Thriving theory**

Propounded by Spreitzer (2005), thriving theory provided an understanding for individual's thriving at their work which hinged on task focus and subjective wellbeing, how free they are allowed to explore options towards accomplishing it and ability to enhance their learning, and the need to relate with others in their work environment. This relates with the assumptions of the theory entailing those individual traits of the employees such as their capacity for resilience, the power of their self-evaluation and their ability to use and deploy their creative instincts and ability is integral for them to excel, find progress and thrive in their respective jobs in spite of adversities and work stressors. The model is thus based on the idea that thriving is socially embedded (Spreitzer, 2005) implying that when individuals are situated in a particular context, they are more or less likely to thrive such as workers that are exposed with more training and those who do not necessarily have the same thriving ability.

Having provided framework for understanding this model, the following hypotheses were raised:

- i. Work resilience will significantly predict thriving at work among bank employees.
- ii. Core self-evaluation will significantly predict thriving at work among bank employees
- iii. Organizational creativity will significantly predict thriving at work among bank employees

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants for this study were 307 bank employees (190 females, 117 males) who were drawn from population bank employees from Owerri Municipal City in Imo State. The ages of the participants ranged from 26 years to 53 years with a mean age of 32.50 years and standard deviation of 3.20. The participants were selected using multi-stage sampling procedure which made use of; purposive and simple random sampling technique.

## **Instruments**

### ***Work resilience scale***

To measure resilience, 9-item Employee resilience scale (EmpRes) by Naswall, Kuntz, and Malinen (2015) was used. The scores in the scale ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The reliability alpha has been reported to be .76 to .91. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study was  $\alpha = .62$ .

### ***Core self-evaluation scale***

This is 12 item core self-evaluations scale (CSES) by Judge, Erez, et al. (2003) rated on a 7-point scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). Half of the items (item 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, & 12) were reverse scored. The scale scores are the sum of the ratings of the items. A high score indicates high core self-evaluation. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient for the CSES was 0.71. Core self-evaluation scale was validated in Nigeria by Onyishi, Enwere, and Uzor, Ituma and Omenma (2015).

### ***Organizational creativity scale (OCS)***

This is a 14-item questionnaire by European Union Creativity Project (2011) which measures creativity of an employee in an organization, using 5-Likert. The response format ranges from 5= Most like me, 4= Like me, 3= Not certain, 3= Unlike me and 1= Most unlike me. The original authors obtained internal consistence of  $\alpha = .82$  and alpha reliability coefficient of .78. For this study the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .70 was obtained.

### ***Thriving at work scale***

Thriving at work scale is a 10-item instrument developed by Spreitzer et al. (2011). It is rated using Likert format of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Some are positively worded while some negatively worded. Some are positively worded while some negatively

worded. Some of the items in the questionnaire include: “At work, I find myself learning often”, “At work, I feel alive and vital”, “At work, I see myself continually improving” and “At work, I am looking forward to each new day”. The original Cronbach's alpha shows internal consistency of .82 while the reliability coefficient of the scale was .64. For the purpose of this study, reliability analysis was carried out and a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .68 was obtained.

### **Procedure**

Having established reliability of the instruments during the pilot study, the researcher advanced to the main study with employees from commercial banks drawn from Owerri Municipal in Imo State. The researcher assisted in the field work by trained research assistants used purposive sampling to select the zone, cluster sampling was used for the bank selection in the zone, and simple random sampling was used to select the participants from banks in the cluster area. The questionnaire was prepared in a booklet and was hand-distributed to the participants for the survey. There were oral and written instructions for participants on how they may fill in the items in the questionnaire. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses as there is no right or wrong answers, since the inquiry is only for an academic purpose. Filling of their responses to the item questions took each of the respondents about 43 minutes for those that filled it that same day. From the data, 330 questionnaire booklets were distributed, 321 were collected back while 307 were valid. After collecting the filled questionnaire, they were sorted and only the valid ones were coded in excel spread sheet for analysis.

### **Design and Statistics**

The design of the study was correlation and regression analysis was used as the appropriate statistical tool to analyze the data obtained. All statistical analyses were managed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS vs 21.00.



## Result

Table 1: Model summary showing independent contribution of the predictor variables on thriving at work

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.674 <sup>a</sup>	.455	.453	2.87843	.455	254.214	1	305	.000
2	.776 <sup>b</sup>	.601	.599	2.46473	.147	111.980	1	304	.000
3	.782 <sup>c</sup>	.612	.608	2.43616	.010	8.174	1	303	.005

The result in Table 1 produced 3 model results. Model 1 indicated that organizational creativity contributed 45.5% in the total explanation of the predictive effect at adjusted  $R^2 = .45$ . When work resilience was added in the second model, it increased to 59.9% with organizational creativity contributing 14.7% at adjusted  $R^2 = .60$ . Furthermore, core self-evaluation added 1% in the explanation of the predictive effects in the third model at adjusted  $R^2 = .61$ . The model contributions were further tested as indicated in the table of beta weight coefficient (Table 2).

Table 2: Regression coefficients showing significant independent contribution of the predictor variables on thriving at work

Model		Unstandardized		Standardize	T	Sig.
		Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.970	1.758		6.240	.000
	Organizational creativity	.580	.036	.674	15.944	.000
2	(Constant)	1.813	1.736		1.044	.297
	Organizational creativity	.434	.034	.504	12.736	.000
	Work resilience	.461	.044	.419	10.582	.000
3	(Constant)	1.559	1.718		.907	.365
	Organizational creativity	.471	.036	.547	13.061	.000
	Work resilience	.516	.047	.469	10.940	.000
	Core self-evaluation	.080	.028	.129	2.859	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Thriving at work

After analysis of the data, the result as shown in Table 2 confirmed that positive and significant predictive effects were confirmed for the three models. In model 1, the predictive effects of organizational creativity on thriving at work was confirmed at  $\beta = .67$ ,  $p < .05$ . In model 2, the predictive effects of organizational creativity and work resilience on thriving at work were confirmed at  $\beta = .50$ ,  $p < .05$  and  $\beta = .42$ ,  $p < .05$  respectively. Furthermore, in model 3, the predictive effects of organizational creativity, work resilience and core self evaluation on thriving at work were confirmed at  $\beta = .55$ ,

$p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .47$ ,  $p < .05$  and  $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .05$  respectively. From the result, the 3 hypotheses of the study as depicted in model 3 were confirmed. This implies that by enhancing organizational creativity, work resilience and core self evaluation, thriving at work will be enhanced since the result indicated a positive and significant predictive influence on thriving at work.

## **Discussion**

After the analysis of data, the result confirmed that there are both theoretical and empirical evidence which support that work resilience increases employees' thriving at work. For instance, the Thriving theory by Spreitzer (2005) emphasized that individual characteristics have a lot of roles to play in thriving of workers in the workplace. Whether an employee thrives or not may be dependent on his or her psychological dispositions and inner self motivation to cope with adverse events in the workplace. This foundation is confirmed by the study carried out by Oluwasoye and Ugonna (2015) on environmental risk which found that organizational resilience and robustness was associated with thriving at work and also had significant impacts on the overall effectiveness of the employees. Considers also, McDonald et al. (2016) studies which discovered that participants attributed their ability to thrive in the workplace to three major influences: support networks, personal characteristics, and ability to organize work for personal resilience.

Also, in hypothesis II core self-evaluation will positively and significantly predicted thriving at work among bank employees. The Self-worth theory propounded by Covington (1984) laid the basis for understanding that self-acceptance and "one's worth often comes to depend on the ability to achieve competitively" (Covington, 1998); there is a tendency to equate accomplishment with value. This is also highlighted by Walumbwa et al. (2018) who found that work context and individual characteristics play significant roles in facilitating thriving at work. Kleine et al (2019) findings which found that thriving at work is associated with individual characteristics, such as core self-evaluation, psychological

capital, proactive personality, and positive affect support this study supports the current study. Equally, Nawaz et al (2020) found similar result with a different sample.

Third hypothesis supports the finding linking the predictive influence of organizational creativity with thriving at work of employees. The works of Riaz et al. (2020) and Yang's et al. (2019) provided an enriching support. The relationship between organizational creativity and thriving at work was also supported by Riaz, Xu and Hussain (2018) findings which indicated that employees' thriving was positively related to organizational support of innovation, which in turn was positively related to innovative behavior. In addition, moderated mediation results of their study demonstrated that employee external contacts strengthened the relationship between organizational support of innovation and innovative behavior and enhanced the positive effects of thriving.

### **Implications of the Study**

Theoretically the findings from the study reemphasized those intrinsic factors and personal characteristics of the employees can energize their disposition and motivation in a given organizational climate. Practically, thriving influence a number of employees, job outcomes and organizational outcomes in any organization be it private or public. This is because thriving is what makes a happy employee who is growing in capacity to execute job tasks, take decisions and supervise others. Without this critical feeling of accomplishment, progress and growth employees may not be hopeful to achieve their personal goals and objectives which in turn affect their overall input in their organization.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Test bias or socially motivated response is the leading factor of erroneous interpretation which the current study strived to reduce through free participation. Socio-cultural views about work may have contributed to bias.

### **Recommendations**

Many studies have proved that employees' psychological dispositions to a great extent influence behavioural attitudes in the workplace which implicates organizational climate. Consequently, it is recommended that there is need for organizational management to promote favourable climate in the workplace which will stimulate varying positive

outcomes from the employees.

### **Suggestion for Further Studies**

There is need for upcoming studies to consider whether there are negative consequences of the predictor variables namely, work resilience, core self-evaluation and organizational creativity in organizations. There is also the need to ascertain the impacts of organizational climate to the formation of personal attributes and disposition of the employees as it affects productivity.

### **Conclusion**

The focus of this study was on personal and individual traits of the employees to job outcomes. The personal factors evaluated were work resilience, core self-evaluation and organizational creativity. The setting for the study was on organized private sector which evaluated the responses of bank employees. The result confirmed that personal traits of the employees as evaluated (work resilience; core self-evaluation and organizational creativity) when increased improve the thriving of employees. The findings therefore strongly emphasize that job and organizational outcomes may be determined by personal traits and individual factors of the employees in relation to the prevailing organizational climate. The study concludes that there is need for constant workshops for employees in order to train them on the use of their personal traits to improve and cope with inherent stressors in the workplace and how to utilize them to actualize their organizational and personal goals.

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