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EFFECTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVE BEHAVIOR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION

Şerafettin Özsoy[1*], Lütfihak Alpkan[2]

[1]Istanbul Technical University, Turkiye, https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1954-8260, ozsoym@itu.edu.tr
[2]Istanbul Technical University, Turkiye, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7925-7102, alpkan@itu.edu.tr

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Corresponding Author: Şerafettin Özsoy (ozsoym@itu.edu.tr)

ABSTRACT

In this study, the mediating role of Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) between the relationships of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) with Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Employee Creative Behavior (ECB) is explored. This quantitative study utilized a research approach by collecting data from 409 employees of Turkish companies via a survey study in 2024. Data analysis techniques utilized in this study include exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis using the PROCESS Model 4 for direct and mediation models in SPSS. Findings: This confirms that the positive effects of EI and POS on IEO and ECB are significant. IEO partially mediation of the relationship between EI & ECB, while it fully mediates the relationship between POS & ECB. There are limitations to this research due to the nature of the study being cross-sectional and only focusing on Turkish companies, which limits the generalizability of the study. Future research would benefit from using a longitudinal approach and conducting studies of the same type using employees from various cultures. These results underscore the significance of organizations' efforts to nurture entrepreneurially-charged thinking and environments for their employees to foster creativity and innovation. This study furthers the literature by shedding some light on the role of individual entrepreneurial elements in influencing creative employee behavior in an organization, with IEO playing a crucial mediation role.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial Intention, Perceived Organizational Support, Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation, Employee Creative Behavior, Mediation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the interplay between individual and organizational factors behind creative employee behavior (ECB) is imperative to cultivate a supportive and innovative work environment. ECB involves generating novel and useful ideas and behaviors that drive organizational innovation (Amabile et al., 1996; Shalley et al., 2004). Factors that encourage these efforts and undertakings of the employees have long been considered as among the essential sources of competitive advantage, in the dynamic business landscape. As organizations strive to remain competitive, they increasingly focus on developing ways to increase creativity and entrepreneurship within their workforce in order to produce innovative solutions and improved processes, which are vital to their organizational success (e.g. Drucker, 1985; Gartner, 1989; Amabile, 1996; Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004; Thatrak, 2021).

Drivers of employee creativity caught the attention of both researchers and managers. Studies on the antecedents of ECB have mostly focused on individual personality traits, cognitive abilities, relevant knowledge, leadership perceptions, contextual drivers, societal norms, etc. (e.g. Anderson, Potočnik, and Zhou (2014), Kurt and Yahyagil, 2015; Zaitouni and Ouakouak, 2018; Alikaj et al, 2021; Ng and Clercq, 2021; Uçar et al 2021a). In this sense, Perceived Organizational Support (POS) represents the degree to which employees believe that their organization values and supports their contributions and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Thence, employees may try to reciprocate with positive behaviors. Recent studies have already showed that POS lead to such employee outcomes as job satisfaction, commitment, and enhanced performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986), making it a critical element in fostering a supportive environment conducive to entrepreneurial actions and creative behaviors.

At the employee level, beside perceptions of being supported, individual entrepreneurial dispositions might also have important effects on ECB. Indeed, neither individual cognitive abilities nor organizational culture or leadership might be sufficient to convince all the employees to try their best to be more creative in the workplace, since some employees still refrain from work-related creative efforts to avoid risk of failure, lack of acceptance, negative judgments, etc. (Ng and Clercq, 2021). In this concern, what differs the employees most may be their entrepreneurial passion, dedication, risk tolerance, etc. - that help them be more creative (Ramos, 2022; Udin, 2022). However, the role of employees' inner entrepreneurial motivation to engage in risky but innovative activities and individual orientation to behave more proactively and creatively in the workplace (Ajzen, 1991; Krueger et al., 2000) have not been empirically studied yet, to our knowledge in the field of ECB. In addressing this gap in the literature, in this study we specifically focus on the employee level Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) and Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO) together with their POS as the drivers of ECB based on the literature on both entrepreneurship and creativity (e.g. Eisenberger et al., 1986; Ajzen, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

IEO -a relatively recently coined term, adapts the well-established organizational level entrepreneurial orientation construct to the employee level in order to analyze employees' individual orientations of innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness within the workplace (e.g. Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Harris & Gibson, 2008; Covin & Lumpkin, 2011 Bolton & Lane, 2012). This orientation can serve also as a bridge for translating individual intentions and perceptions into positive workplace behaviors. Accordingly, in this study, we propose also that IEO mediates the positive effects of IE and POS on ECB.

This study therefore aims to explore the complex relations among EI, POS, IEO, and ECB by trying to provide empirical answers to the following research questions:

1. How are perceptions of being supported related to creative behaviors at the employee level?
2. How are entrepreneurial intentions and orientations related to creative behaviors at the employee level?
3. What is the role of IEO in the relations of EI and POS on ECB?

The paper is divided into 4 sections, where Section 2 proposes Hypothesis 1 that there are complex relationships between IES, POS, IEO and ECB; Section 3 discusses Research Design, including sample size, data collection method used to gather information required to test the hypotheses and research analysis technique (i.e. Data Analysis Techniques). Section 4 presents the results from testing of hypotheses, as well as mediation results, including descriptive statistics and findings. Section 5 discusses the implications of the findings, their contributions to theory and practice, insights for managers and policymakers, limitations of the study, and directions for future research. Finally, Section 6 summarizes the key findings, emphasizing the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial and supportive work environment to enhance employee

creativity and innovation.

2. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

According to the componential theory of creativity, the production of both novel and appropriate ideas, responses, or solutions to some goal or to an open-ended task can be achieved thanks to the existence of necessary drivers namely: individual factors (domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic task motivation) and contextual factors (Amabile, 2013). Likewise, employees' efforts to engage in creative initiatives in their work roles, teams or organizations are indispensable for organizational innovation as they enable the development of new products, processes and services (Amabile, 1988; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Therefore, earlier studies on ECB have already tested the role of various drivers on ECB, including supportive environments, encouragement of risk-taking, empowering and transformational leadership that promote autonomy, psychological empowerment, and engagement in creative processes (Tierney et al., 1999; De Jong & Hartog, 2007Zhang & Bartol, 2010). In general, empirical studies on the key drivers of ECB include such individual factors as intrinsic motivation, cognitive skills, etc. together with supportive contextual factors like work environment and leadership (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). As for the leadership types, in a recent study Uçar et al., (2021a) have found that authentic leadership strengthens the positive impact of servant and transformational leadership on ECB. As for the individual factors, again Uçar et al (2021b) have recently found that employees' person-organization fit and intention to quit affect ECB with the mediation of psychological ownership. Then they suggest for further studies to explore the effects of other possible employee intentions and perceptions on ECB with the mediation of other relevant individual or social factors. Based on these theoretical lenses, recent empirical findings, and propositions, we contribute to the literature by adding employees' entrepreneurial dispositions among other individual drivers.

Accordingly, our study proposes EI, POS, and IEO, as the antecedents of ECB, where IEO has a mediator role, by developing the following hypotheses:

2.1. Effects Of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) And Perceived Organizational Support (POS) On Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO)

The interplay between EI and IEO has been already studied. However, most of the earlier studies have just positioned IEO often as an antecedent to EI, by arguing that innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking- inherent in IEO, predispose individuals toward forming stronger entrepreneurial intentions (Martins & Perez, 2020; Khalil et al., 2024; Naveed et al. 2021; Anwar et al. 2022; Howard & Floyd 2021). However, in our study we propose to reverse the traditional causality by positioning EI as an antecedent to IEO, suggesting that the motivation and intention to start a business may contribute the development of entrepreneurial orientations over time.

EI as a conscious state of mind that drives individuals to start a business, can be formed by such factors as self-efficacy, confidence in one's entrepreneurial capabilities, entrepreneurship education, role models, etc. (Bird, 1988; Ajzen, 1991; Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Zhao et al., 2005; Fayolle & Linan, 2014; Ferreira, 2017). Then this kind of strong self-confidence and dedication for entrepreneurship may lead to the development of such individual orientations as innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, i.e. the dimensions of IEO. Our perspective aligns with findings of Perez et al. (2022) indicating that entrepreneurship education fosters both EI and IEO, yet leaves the directional relationship open for interpretation (Perez et al., 2022). While many studies affirm IEO's mediating role between environmental factors and EI, they often neglect the possibility of EI shaping entrepreneurial traits through experiential learning and sustained efforts (Koe et al., 2023). Similarly, this research makes an important addition to the body of knowledge by changing the normal order in which causal connections between EI and IEO are established.

The authors will show how these two constructs influence each other in a continuing way and their reciprocal effects will allow for increased understanding through empirical validation.

In light of this finding, we hypothesize that:

H1a: EI is positively related to IEO.

POS shows that employees think their company values them, cares about their welfare, and treats them fairly (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Under Organizational Support Theory and Blau's (1964) social exchange framework, POS results in social/emotional fulfilment through reciprocity, leading to loyalty, dedication, and improved work performance (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Wayne et al., 1997). Important components of POS are being treated fairly, receiving support from management, and creating opportunities to develop skills. The

combination of these components helps develop trust, encourages extra-role behaviors such as innovation and citizenship, and encourages employees to reciprocate the favor of their employer (Allen et al., 2003; Alpkan et al., 2010). Recently, Akıncı et al. (2022) found that employees' perceptions of ambidextrous leadership, when combined with a supportive climate for innovation, participated in innovative work behavior.

POS is considered as one of the significant predictors of entrepreneurial behaviors since it provides a supportive atmosphere that enhances employees' intrinsic motivation and willingness to take risks, two of the most important characteristics included in IEO (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Khalil et al., 2024). Through POS, organizations demonstrate commitment to employees and their well-being, thereby supporting and developing the entrepreneurial traits of innovativeness, proactiveness and autonomy (Hassan et al., 2021). A number of recent studies indicate that POS also contributes to the formation of the IEO through promoting psychological safety, thereby allowing employees to take risks and pursue opportunities (Perez et al., 2022). Providing an environment of supportive leadership and fair employment policies adds value to POS in terms of promoting employee's entrepreneurship and risk-taking behavior (Anwar et al., 2022).

Thus, on the basis of the findings discussed above, we propose that:

H1b: POS is positively related to IEO.

2.2. Effects Of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) And Perceived Organizational Support (POS) On Employee Creative Behavior (ECB)

Entrepreneurial goals foster creativity by encouraging innovative problem solving and adaptability to rapidly changing work environments (Caniëls & Motylska-Kuźma, 2023; Zampetakis et al., 2011). People with higher levels of EI have a more proactive approach towards opportunities, are more willing to take risks, and recognize opportunities. This provides the foundation for creating new ideas and new solutions in an organizational environment (Shi et al., 2020; Kumar & Shukla, 2019). The Person-Entrepreneurship Fit perspective suggests that an individual's EI empowers them to find suitable roles where they will be the most creative and make the most significant contribution to the organization (Caniëls & Motylska-Kuźma, 2023).

In Addition, empirical research has also shown the impact of entrepreneurial education on establishing a link between EI and ECB, improving self-efficacy and creative potential (Hu et al., 2018). based on the above, we hypothesize that:

H2a: EI positively affects Employee Creative Behavior (ECB).

Employees' Creative Behavior (ECB) is facilitated by their POS, which meets socio-emotional needs, builds trust, and increases intrinsic motivation. POS, as defined by how employees perceive their organization as supportive and encouraging, allows employees to take risks associated with creativity and contributes to their feeling of being psychologically safe in doing so (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Yu & Frenkel, 2012). Previous research has revealed that employees will be more motivated to reciprocate the POS they receive from their organizations with creative-based efforts as predicted by the social exchange theory (Yu & Frenkel, 2012). Support provided by peers and supervisors enhances this relationship further due to the ability of supportive supervisors to motivate the innovation and collaboration of their associated employees (Tang et al., 2017; Zaitouni, 2017).

Thus, it can be concluded that POS is a vital contributor to ECB and to workplace innovation and flexibility; therefore, we will propose that:

H2b: POS positively affects Employee Creative Behavior (ECB).

2.3. The Mediating Role of Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation

We propose in this study that IEO is expected to have a significant positive effect on ECB and that as an individual orientation it translates both EI and POS to creative behaviors. The need for deeper insights into how this complex relations influence creativity in organizational contexts has been mentioned (e.g. Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Already, earlier literature on organizational entrepreneurial orientation had related innovativeness, proactiveness, and a willingness to take risks, to creative problem-solving and innovative outcomes (Covin & Slevin, 1989; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Similarly, the recent literature on individual level innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness, argue that IEO links individual factors like intentions, motivations, etc. and organizational support factors into creative actions in the workplace (Bolton & Lane, 2012; Martins & Perez, 2020).

This research demonstrates the crucial importance of IEO as a link between intentions and support systems to generate creativity and therefore foster innovation and the ability to adapt in the workplace.

Based on this, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3: IEO positively affects Employee Creative Behavior (ECB).

H4: IEO mediates the relationship between EI and Employee Creative Behavior (ECB).

H5: IEO mediates the relationship between POS and Employee Creative Behavior (ECB).

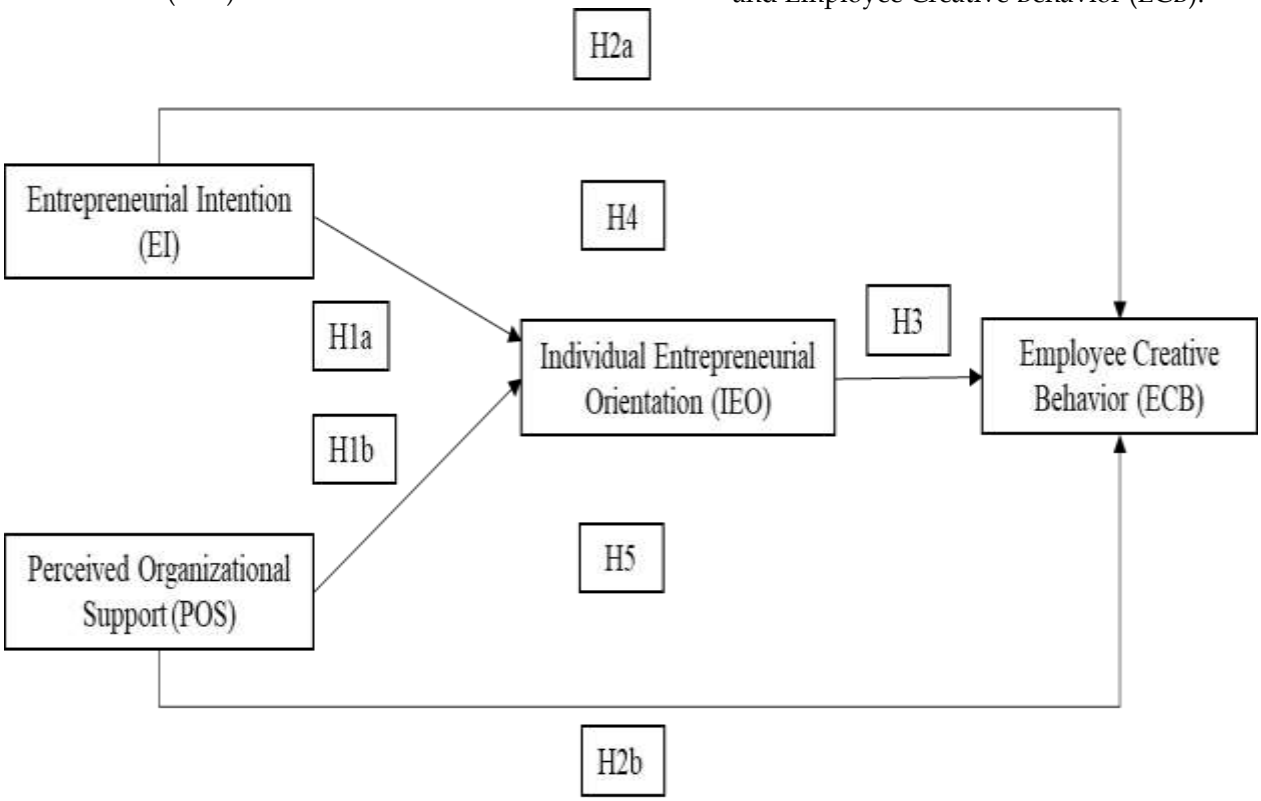

Figure 1: Theoretical Model.

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed theoretical model based on our hypotheses.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes a quantitative methodology to assess the relationships between EI, POS, IEO, and Employee Creative Behavior (ECB). This research study also used the cross-sectional survey methodology to obtain data from employees working within different organizations as a means of statistically testing our hypotheses and gaining insights about how EI and POS impact an employee's IEO and ECB in an organizational context (Creswell, 2014).

3.1. Research Design and Data Collection

This research involves using a quantitative research method to enable statistical investigation of the interrelations and impacts between primary study variables (Creswell & Creswell 2018). This pattern of study falls under what is known as the positivist paradigm (defining objective measurement and employing statistical analysis) to measure hypotheses and formulate valid conclusions (Creswell 2013). Exploratory factor analysis, correlation and regression analyses and mediation analyses was conducted on the direct and indirect effects of EI and POS on IEO and ECB; these types of analyses were selected because they offer the ability to analyses multiple relationships and mediated relationships simultaneously (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson 2010). The SPSS Process macro (Hayes 2013) was also used to augment the analyses by providing additional powerful mediation testing tools. Data was collected from study participants using convenience sampling (non-probability), allowing researchers to access those responding to their requests and who were willing and available participants employed within a variety of Turkish company industries, with data collection occurring in 2024. -The 580 total survey invitations produced a response count of 416, which equates to a response rate of 72%. Following data cleaning of invalid responses, which resulted in a total of 409 valid responses, the sample size fulfilled the suggested Kline (2015) criteria of at least 200 cases for accurate estimation. An online questionnaire was the medium through which data were collected and distributed

via electronic mail and LinkedIn, being regarded as one of the most popular online social networks focusing on business communication. The questionnaire included demographic data, validated scales of EI, POS, IEO, and ECB. As a means of promoting the honesty in the respondent, the questionnaire was conducted in a manner that ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents.

3.2. Measures And Instruments

In order to ascertain that the data was valid and reliable, psychological scale with reliable measurements to capture the key constructs. each respondent was given an item of the psychological scale to select a number between 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree) on a five-point Likert scale.

EI: EI was assessed through the use of a six-item scale designed by Liñán and Chen (2009). The six-item scale measures an individual's intention to become an entrepreneur, or engage in entrepreneurial activities. sample of response items included: "I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur" and "I have very seriously thought about starting a firm."

POS: The customary *POS* scale from Kuratko et al. (1990; 1992) and Hornsby et al. (2002) will be used to measure employees' perceptions about how much an organization appreciates the employee's contributions, and supports the employee's wellbeing. Sample items included: "Employees with innovative and successful projects will be highly rewarded." and "Our employees have enough time to spend for developing new ideas."

IEO: It will be measured using an adapted version of the Bolton & Lane (2012) scale. The IEO scale will assess employees' propensity for taking risks, being innovative, and being proactive. Sample items include, "I like to take bold action by venturing into the unknown," "I tend to act "boldly" in situations where risk is involved," and "I usually act in anticipation of future problems, needs or changes"

Employee Creative Behavior (ECB): will be measured by a valid and reliable scale based on the studies of George and Zhou (2001) and Tierney et al. (1999), The ECB scale will measure how much employees report participating in generating an innovative and/or meaningful idea related to their work. Sample items include, "Comes up with new and practical ideas to improve performance" and "Generated ideas revolutionary to our field."

3.3. Data Analysis

SPSS was employed for the statistical analysis of the data, as well as for the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2017). Analysis consisted of several phases, by which all four proposed hypotheses will be tested, along with the examination of IEO's mediating role:

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): To identify the latent factor structure of the measurement scales; this was performed to validate the measurement items for each of the constructs via factor loadings for each of the measurement items associated with the construct(s).

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis: Computed to summarize data distribution (mean, standard deviation) and examine bivariate relationships.

Regression Analysis: Used to test the direct effects of EI and POS on IEO and ECB, determining the significance of the hypothesized relationships.

Mediation Analysis: The PROCESS macro was employed to test IEO's mediating role in the EI-ECB and POS-ECB relationships using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2017). Bootstrapping with 5,000 samples was used to assess the significance of indirect effects, with mediation deemed significant if the confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Diagnostic and bias checks: For the multiple regression/intervention models established for the ECB, VIF and tolerance statistics were reported to test for potential biases that could lead to multicollinearity and inflated effect sizes (accepted: VIF < 3.3; tolerance > .20). Outliers were examined using Cook's Distance, leverage, and studentised residuals, and the robustness of the results was checked by removing outliers in sensitivity analyses. The possibility of common method bias was assessed using the Harman one-factor test and additional sensitivity analyses (e.g., sign variable approach/ULMC). On account of the conceptual proximity between IEO and ECB, discriminant validity was additionally confirmed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and (where possible) HTMT.

3.4. Research Validity and Reliability

To confirm the reliability of the measures, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each scale, with all scales demonstrating good internal consistency (alpha > 0.70) (Nunnally, 1978). Construct validity was assessed using convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was evaluated via average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct, with AVE values above 0.50

indicating adequate convergence (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of AVE values with inter-construct correlations to ensure distinctness among constructs.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 409 respondents participated in the study from multiple industries, enabling researchers to capture an array of different organizational contexts. The demographic information for the respondents is detailed in **Table 1**. A large proportion of males were represented in the sample (61.4%) compared with females (38.6%). Respondents' education levels included that the majority had a Bachelor's degree (56.3%), the second largest number reported having a Master's degree (40.3%) and a Doctorate (3.4%).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.

Variables	Sample (n=409)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	251	61,4
Female	158	38,6
Age		
20-30 years	144	35,2
30-40 years	188	46
40 years and above	77	18,8
Education		
Bachelor's Degree	230	56,3
Master's Degree	165	40,3
PhD Degree	14	3,4
Work experience		
0-15 years	305	74,6
15 years and above	104	25,4
Organization Size		
10-100 employees	84	20,5
100-1000 employees	106	26
1000 employees and above	219	53,5

4.2. Measurement Model Assessment and Correlation Analysis

Table 2 provides evidence regarding reliability/validity of scales measured by a variety of metrics. All of the constructs' Cronbach's α value exceeds 0.70; therefore, all constructs met acceptable level for reliability (Nunnally, 1978) and the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds 0.50, supporting convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) because the square root of each construct's AVE reported a greater value than the correlation with any of the other constructs and therefore support discriminant validity. The mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients of the major variables of interest, including EI, POS, IEO and ECB are listed in **Table 3**. The means scores of EI were 3.34 (SD = 1.01), POS 3.31 (SD = 0.70), IEO 3.10 (SD = 0.41), and ECB 4.07 (SD = 0.51). The correlation analysis in **Table 3** shows positive and significant relationships among EI, POS, IEO, and ECB. These correlations support the theoretical linkages among the constructs and provide initial evidence for the hypothesized relationships in the model.

Table 2. Reliability And Validity of Scale.

Construct	Number of Items	AVE	CR	Alpha	KMO
POS	19	0,521	0,953	0,932	0,931
EI	6	0,499	0,967	0,959	0,911
IEO	10	0,546	0,923	0,819	0,85
Employee Creative Behavior (ECB)	15	0,478	0,931	0,933	0,95

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations.

	Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	POS	3,308	0,698	1			
2	EI	3,337	1,011	0,063	1		
3	IEO	3,101	0,412	,140**	,463**	1	
4	ECB	4,069	0,512	,165**	,476**	,673**	1

Notes: *** p<0,001, **p<0,05, *p<0,1

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the SPSS Process macro (Hayes, 2013) to examine the direct effects of EI and POS on IEO and ECB. The results of the regression analyses are summarized in **Table 4.** The regression results indicate that entrepreneurial intentions (EI) positively influence IEO ($\beta = 0.189$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1a. POS also positively affects IEO ($\beta = 0.082$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H1b. Additionally, EI positively impacts creative employee behavior (ECB) ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2a, and POS positively influences ECB ($\beta = 0.121$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H2b. Furthermore, IEO positively affects ECB ($\beta = 0.837$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. To test the mediation effects, the SPSS Process macro was used to conduct bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples, providing bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effects. The results of the mediation analysis are shown in **Table 5**.

Table 4: Results Of Regression Analyses.

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	SE	t	p	Result
H1a	EI - IEO	0.189	0.018	10.552	< 0.001	Supported
H1b	POS - IEO	0.082	0.029	2.846	< 0.05	Supported
H2a	EI - ECB	0.241	0.022	10.934	< 0.001	Supported
H2b	POS - ECB	0.121	0.036	3.366	< 0.01	Supported
H3	IEO - ECB	0.837	0.046	18.352	< 0.001	Supported

Collinearity and robustness checks showed that the entirety of VIF values for EI, POS, and IEO in the ECB equation were below the acceptance level, while tolerance values were above the acceptance level. Cook's Distance values did not exceed critical thresholds in any observation; when a few potentially outlier observations were removed in sensitivity analyses, the IEO→ECB coefficient remained at a comparable level. When EI and POS were simultaneously included in the equation, the contribution of IEO retained its significance and model fit increased significantly. The discriminant validity findings (AVE and correlation patterns) reported in Tables 2–3 support that IEO and ECB are statistically distinguishable structures.

Table 5: Mediation Analysis Results.

Hypothesis	Path	Indirect Effect	SE	95% CI	Result
H4	IEO mediating EI > ECB	0.1351	0.0213	[0.0966, 0.1810]	Partial Mediation
H5	IEO mediating POS > ECB	0.2167	0.0378	[0.1435, 0.2968]	Full Mediation

It has been found that IEO mediates the relationship between EI and ECB. The direct effect of EI on ECB remains significant even after including IEO as a mediator, indicating only a partial mediation effect. On the other hand, IEO mediates the relationship between POS and ECB. The direct effect of POS on ECB is not significant when IEO is included as a mediator, suggesting a full mediation. These findings provide robust support for the proposed model, demonstrating the importance of fostering entrepreneurial intentions and perceived organizational support to enhance individual entrepreneurial orientation and, consequently, creative employee behavior.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Interpretation Of Findings

The results of this research demonstrate the relevance of our hypotheses by illustrating the three primary drivers of ECB, EI, POS, and IEO. The fact that H1a and H1b were confirmed demonstrates that EI and POS have a positive impact on IEO; this result concurs with previous studies which have indicated that the presence of intention and a supportive environment encourage the occurrence of entrepreneurial behaviors (e.g. Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Again, H2a and H2b proposing that EI and POS positively influence ECB has been supported. This is consistent with the general logic that links entrepreneurial intentions to innovation and supportive climates to increased creative output (e.g. Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). Hypothesis H3, which proposed that IEO positively impacts ECB, is also confirmed. This suggests that individuals with a strong entrepreneurial orientation (innovative, proactive and risk-taking) are more likely to demonstrate creative behaviors. This finding enlarges the existing research about the positive effects of organizational entrepreneurial orientation on innovation and creativity (e.g. Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) to the individual level (Bolton & Lane, 2012).

As for the mediating role of IEO in the effects of both EI and POS on ECB, our findings indicate that

IEO partially mediates the EI-ECB relationship and fully mediates the POS-ECB relationship. The former shows that the direct effect of EI still exists under the partial mediation of IEO. The latter means that IEO fully overshadows the effect of POS on ECB. In both cases, an employee's individual inner motivation for entrepreneurial undertakings and his/her perception of being supported by his/her organization orient this individual to be more innovative, proactive, and risk-taking, and this leads to put efforts for creative ideas, solutions, and outcomes. In other words, IEO functions as a bridging mechanism through which EI and POS translate into creative behaviors.

5.2. Theoretical And Practical Implications

This study contributes to the literature on entrepreneurship and organizational behavior by providing a model that integrates EI, POS, IEO, and ECB. While prior studies often focused on these constructs individually, this research offers a comprehensive view of their interrelationships, enhancing the understanding of how entrepreneurial intentions and organizational support foster creativity. In addition, this study's confirmed attempt to position EI as an antecedent of IEO and then ECB, has also showed that reverse causality to some of the earlier findings is possible when EI is treated as an inner motivation of the employee who then engage in entrepreneurial and creative undertakings. The findings highlight IEO's critical role in mediating the effects of EI and POS on ECB, suggesting that IEO serves not only as an outcome of entrepreneurial motivation and organizational support but also as a driver of creative behaviors. This finding adds to the growing literature on entrepreneurial orientation at the individual level (Bolton & Lane, 2012) and emphasizes IEO's significance in driving creativity.

Practically, these findings offer actionable insights for organizations and managers. The positive impacts of EI on IEO and ECB suggest that organizations should cultivate entrepreneurial intentions among employees through selection decisions, training programs, workshops, and initiatives focused on entrepreneurial thinking and skills. Additionally, the influence of POS on both IEO and ECB underscores the importance of a supportive organizational climate. Managers can foster such an environment by recognizing and rewarding innovative efforts, providing resources for professional development, and encouraging open communication and collaboration. Moreover, the mediating role of IEO in translating EI and POS into creative behaviors suggests that organizations should foster first an organization-wide entrepreneurial orientation by encouraging risk-taking, proactiveness, and innovation, then instilling it to their employees.

In practical terms, organizations can implement structured **entrepreneurship training modules** (e.g., design thinking workshops, intrapreneurship bootcamps, lean innovation sprints) to strengthen employees' opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and creative problem-solving skills. **Human resource practices** such as incorporating entrepreneurial competencies into recruitment and promotion criteria, offering rotational assignments across functions, and creating "idea platforms" or "innovation labs" can provide employees with space and resources to test new ideas. Likewise, **managerial interventions** such as allocating discretionary time for experimentation, establishing small-scale innovation funds, and promoting psychological safety within teams can reinforce employees' willingness to engage in creative behaviors. These concrete initiatives illustrate how IEO can be operationalized and embedded in daily organizational practices, thereby transforming the mediating mechanism identified in this study into sustained competitive advantage for firms.

5.3. Limitations And Future Research Directions

A further caveat concerns the magnitude of some standardized coefficients (e.g., the IEO → ECB path). Given the conceptual proximity between IEO facets (innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking) and creative behavior, partial measurement overlap cannot be fully ruled out, which may inflate effects even when collinearity statistics fall within accepted bounds. Although diagnostic checks (VIF/tolerance, influence diagnostics such as Cook's D and leverage) indicated acceptable ranges and discriminant validity evidence was supportive, residual risks of suppression and common-method variance may persist. Future research should therefore (i) incorporate multi-source measurement (e.g., supervisor or peer ratings of ECB), (ii) model a latent method factor or apply an unmeasured marker-variable approach within SEM, (iii) strengthen discriminant validity via CFA (e.g., Fornell–Larcker, HTMT) and test measurement invariance across key subgroups, and (iv) pre-specify robustness checks (influence diagnostics, outlier-robust estimation) and report coefficient stability with and without influential cases.

In addition, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences and the reliance on self-reported

data may increase common method bias. Nonprobability sampling and voluntary participation may also introduce self-selection and nonresponse biases, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the sample size was not sufficient to test more complex moderated-mediation or cross-level (e.g., team/firm-level) models. Future studies should employ larger and stratified samples, focus on specific industries or organizational contexts, and apply longitudinal or time-lagged designs to clarify temporal ordering and reduce shared-method bias. Incorporating multilevel models could further reveal how contextual factors such as industry, firm size, tenure, or leadership style shape the relationships between EI, POS, IEO, and ECB. Finally, complementing quantitative methods with qualitative approaches such as case studies or interviews could yield deeper insights into employees' experiences and perceptions regarding entrepreneurial intentions, organizational support, and creativity.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explored the complex relationships among EI, POS, IEO, and ECB, revealing significant insights into the mechanisms that drive entrepreneurial and creative actions within organizations. The findings confirm that EI and POS positively influence both IEO and ECB, underlining the importance of fostering entrepreneurial intentions and supportive work environments for enhancing employee creativity.

IEO has been identified as a vital conceptual link between EI and ECB, in that IEO partially mediates the relationship between them, while fully mediating POS and ECB. This indicates that both EI and POS lead to ECB, but begin through their effect on IEO, rather than directly influencing ECB. The results of this research provide further clarification of how these variables relate to foster innovation in organizational environments.

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