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경영학 석사학위논문

# Managers' Work Experiences and Team Creativity

– Focusing on Manager Commitment Patterns and Team  
Knowledge Management –

중간관리자의 업무 경험과 팀 창의성 간의 관계:  
몰입 형태와 지식 활용을 중심으로

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서울대학교 대학원  
경영학과 인사조직전공  
노 승 현

# Managers' Work Experiences and Team Creativity

– Focusing on Manager Commitment Patterns and Team Knowledge Management –

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이 논문을 경영학석사 학위논문으로 제출함

2020년 12월

서울대학교 대학원

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## Abstract

# Managers' Work Experiences and Team Creativity

– Focusing on Manager Commitment Patterns and Team  
Knowledge Management –

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Previous studies about organizational creativity and innovation have rarely considered middle-level managers and their team/unit relationships. This paper studies the relationship between the work experience of managers and team creativity, which is mediated by the managers' commitment and team knowledge management patterns. The time managers spend in their organization is, unexpectedly, not statistically relevant to team creativity. Rather, their functional and professional assets have significant effects on the teams' exploration of new knowledge and radical creativity. The current findings imply the necessity of further research focusing on the detailed process through which managers' functional tenure and professional commitment promote creativity and innovation of work teams.

Keywords : practicing managers, work experiences, professional commitment, radical team creativity, incremental team creativity, knowledge management, organizational innovation

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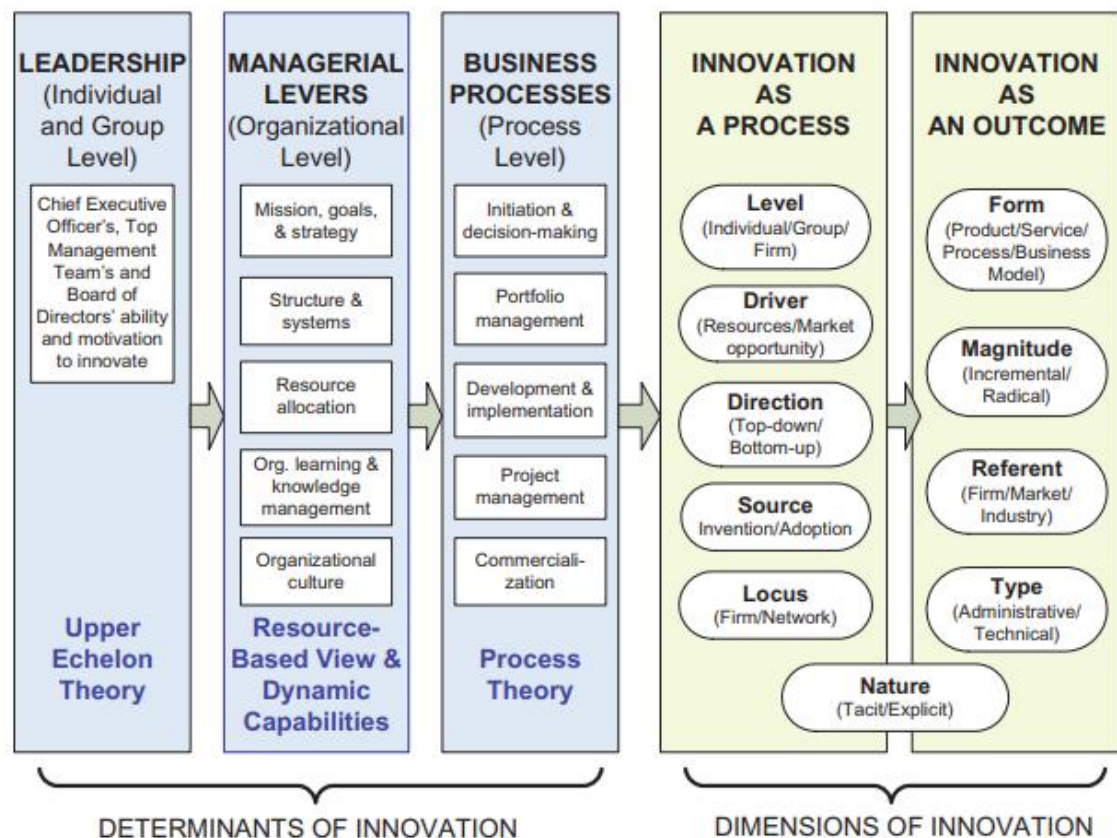
## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Nothing can remain unchanged forever. To improve ourselves, retain our potential, achieve our goals and eventually survive, we sweep away what we feel is comfortable and ordinary. Instead, we fill up the gap by devising a novelty that we have barely experienced before. This phenomenon occurs when we recognize that our previous way of doing things is not as effective as it used to be and that something “all-new-all-different” is required for us to move on to the next level. When it comes to the level of a group of people who constitute a team or an organization, this usually occurs in terms of innovation.

To survive in a business environment represented by harsh competition as well as the unforeseeable change of technology and market demand, adaptation and innovation are of importance (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Tushman, Tushman, & O'Reilly, 2002). While its form, orientation, or speed may vary, when successfully takes effect in reality, innovation generally grants an advantage and positive influence that significantly boost the performance of teams and organizations. According to Chung et al. (2017), “innovations offer various performance benefits, such as customer satisfaction, efficient internal operations, increased market share, and improved financial outcomes to organizations” (p. 1130). Many scholars have examined innovation given its importance. Initial studies on this topic consist of questions such as (1) “What is the pattern of diffusion of an innovation through a population of potential adopter organizations?” (explaining the diffusion of innovation over time and/or space); (2) “What determines organizational innovativeness?” (considering the determinants of the innovativeness of organization); and (3) “What are the processes organizations go through in implementing innovations?” (illustrating the process of innovation within organizations) (Wolfe, 1994). With the findings of these studies, innovation now “is a broad term with multiple

meanings; it draws on theories from a variety of disciplines and has been studied using a wide range of research methodologies” (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010).

Innovation nowadays can be analyzed through a multi-dimensional framework that consists of two different themes, namely, determinants and dimensions. The determinants of innovation include (1) leadership (e.g., the ability and motivation of CEOs, top management teams, and board of directors to innovate) at the individual and group levels; (2) managerial levers (e.g., mission, goals, strategy, structure and systems, resource allocation, organization learning and knowledge management, and organizational culture) at the organizational level; and (3) business processes (e.g., initiation and decision making, portfolio management, development and implementation, project management, and commercialization) at the process level (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010, p. 1167). Meanwhile, the dimensions of innovation include (1) innovation as a process that includes level, driver, direction, source, and locus; and (2) innovation as an outcome that covers form, magnitude, referent, and type (p.1167).



**Figure 1. Multi-Dimensional Framework of Organizational Innovation (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010, p. 1167)**

However, some scholars such as Crossan and Apaydin (2010) highlighted a gap between theories and research based on theory of practice proposed by Whittington (2006). Innovation comprises three factors, namely, practice, praxis, and practitioners. *Practice* refers to the “espoused theories” that lead an activity, such as behavior routines, norms, and procedures that are subject to change under the circumstance in which they are applied (Orlikowski, 1996; Seidl, 2007). *Praxis* represents actual activities or “theories-in-use” (Argyris & Schon, 1974) that comprise innovation, and *Practitioners* refer to those people who perform praxis and actually affect the innovation of a company, including leaders, middle

managers, consultants, or customers. Previous studies seem to overlook the difference in the theoretical level of these elements, which may lead to a gap between research and reality.

“The realm of espoused theories is usually referred to as a ‘macro level’ of theorizing. Only rarely have observation methodologies been employed which would enable researchers to access the activity level theories-in-use enacted in the workplace. Yet, it is at this ‘micro level’ that the managerial reality enfolds every day, therefore a theory of innovation needs to connect the action (*praxis*) with the managerial and academic theories (*practice*) by understanding the role of agents (*practitioners*)” (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010, p. 1178-1179).

The above quotation highlights the relative importance of a micro-level investigation on the specific role of organizational members over macro-level theories. This issue will be discussed in this paper, which contends that instead of engaging in theoretical innovation, individuals, especially middle-level leaders in an organization, engage in different forms of innovation.

Since the research of Burns and Stalker (1961), on management and innovation, many studies have perceived leaders as an important source of organizational innovation (Denti & Hemlin, 2012; Hemlin, 2006a; Hülshager et al., 2009; Mumford et al., 2002;). According to Denti and Hemlin (2012), “we have now come to the point where more and more research is being directed into understanding *when* leadership is effective, i.e., under which circumstances at the individual, team and organizational levels, and *how* leaders influence innovative outcomes, i.e., the various processes and mechanisms of influence” (p. 2). Generally, studies

on leaders and their organizations have focused on the leader–follower relationship (Chaturvedi, Rizvi, & Pasipanodya, 2019; Einola & Alvesson, 2019; Khan & Khan, 2019), personal characteristic and personalities of leaders (Hu & Judge, 2017; Kahya & Şahin, 2018; Ishaq, Bashir, & Khan, 2019), expertise and competence of leaders (Miller, 2017), or entrepreneurship (Steffens, Haslam, Ryan, & Kessler, 2013).

These research orientations imply that most studies on organizations tend to start from “top-level” leaders, including CEOs, and then expand to individuals, teams, and organizations. This top-down approach is among the most prevalent and general methods applied by organizations in their communication or decision making, given its speed and effectiveness. Conversely, some scholars have focused on the bottom-up approach that seems to offer a better representation of the values and goals of employees and lead to improvements in an organization (Park, Kim, & Krishna, 2014). A common feature of these opposing research orientations is the extremity of their starting point, that is, from the very top or the very bottom, instead of in between.

Previous studies have rarely considered other organizational factors, especially middle-level managers and their team/unit relationships. Managers of an organization are employees themselves and, at the same time, serve as leaders of their teams. This overlapping position may create some blind spot that previous methods cannot completely cover, because managers have to consider both the upper and lower sides unlike top leaders who can concentrate only on their subordinates from a top-down perspective and general employees who solely focus on their superiors and prefer the bottom-up perspective. Given that clues of innovation can be triggered by anyone in an organization, the personal backgrounds of managers can affect organizational innovation differently. Similar to leaders and employees

who have their own contributions in improving the performance of their organizations and achieving their goals, the role of middle managers should also be addressed in consideration of their individual resources.

In this paper, I will study the relationship between the work experience of managers and team-level creativity, which are connected by the concepts of personal commitment and team knowledge management. Work experience has close connections to the personal backgrounds of employees as this concept represents the time and resources that an individual invests in a certain field. In this study, work experience is categorized into (1) organizational tenure or the time spent in an organization, and (2) functional tenure or the time devoted to a certain field or profession. To build their work experience, employees communicate and cooperate with numerous people inside and outside their organizations. These interactions give rise to an exchange of information among individuals, and when these relationships are maintained properly for a sufficiently long time, a highly intimate and systematic commitment pattern is formed. In the case of managers, their commitment formed during their careers would have different influences on the communication and knowledge sharing of their subordinates depending on the specific patterns of such commitment. Through this procedure, managers and their team members tend to contribute differently to team creativity. In order to pursue successful innovation, micro-level variables should also be considered along with the concept of innovation, and the work experience of managers is a promising point of departure to live up to the expectation.

## **II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES**

Selecting good managers who can devote themselves to their organizations and continuously seek achievements and opportunities is important for organizations. An effective use of human capital is one of the most fundamental and important determinants of organizational performance and competitive advantage (Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, & Lepak, 2014; Ployhart, Nyberg, Reilly, & Maltarich, 2014). Given that each person in an organization has a unique set of knowledge and skills, considering the capabilities of organizational members and putting the right man in the right place can significantly affect the whole group. However, due to limited resources such as money and time, an organization must find an optimal way to maximize its benefits and minimize its unnecessary costs. Therefore, the way organizations induce, select, and manage their potential or present members to achieve a certain goal, which can be referred to as “manager staffing,” warrants research attention. Staffing is a critical human resource function that represents the primary means through which organizations attract and acquire human capital (Ployhart, 2006). Through staffing, firms acquire human capital with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes (KSAOs) required to achieve its strategies or performance goals (Subramony, 2009). Staffing involves numerous decisions, including how to recruit potentially qualified applicants, how to assess whether these applicants possess the necessary qualifications, and how to determine which candidates to select (DeOrtentiis et al., 2018). In other words, the manager selection method adopted by a firm can create a relevant competitive advantage that subsequently leads to a certain level of performance enhancement.

### **Firm Specific vs. General Human Capital**

As “middle echelons”, the characteristics and orientations of managers can affect not only their own units and teams but also the entire organization itself. DeOrtentiis et al. (2018) divided human capital resources (HCR) into *organization-specific* and *general HCR* (p. 917–918). Organization-specific HCR refers to the knowledge and skills that are inseparable from an organization and are mostly derived from the social relationships of individuals with their co-workers over time. This type of HCR is manifested in various forms, such as subjective or personal information about employees, special know-how for a certain job, and political dynamics of an organization. Therefore, organization-specific HCR is most effective only under the circumstances and contexts of organizations, and becomes less effective outside of their “home ground.”

By contrast, general HCR refers to KSAOs that are less dependent on an organization. This type of HCR can be a common skill in a specific field or a general knowledge about the overall mechanism or atmosphere. Given its high “transferability”, general HCR can easily maintain its value and effectiveness despite the changes in an organization or an environment. Employees within an organization develop and polish their own organization-specific and general HCR. Knowledge can be formed in various ways and shared among organization members. For managers who are supervising their own subordinates, this shared knowledge tends to affect the whole unit and group and sometimes triggers the need for novelty and changes in the present ways of working. Following this example, when taking an approach to creativity and innovation as dependent variables, the detailed characteristics of manager-related factors and shared knowledge should be covered in advance.

## **Work Experiences of Managers**

The work experiences of managers can be operationalized as their time spent as members of an organization, or their so-called “*organizational tenure*”. The more time managers work for their organizations, the more likely such time spent will influence their KSAOs and the associated learning that are developed for managing certain situations and benefitting the organization (Beier & Ackerman, 2001; McEnrue, 1988). By accumulating work experience, managers can develop certain competence and knowledge for their organization (Datta et al., 2005).

However, the tenure of each manager is hardly identical or unitary, that is, given that managers receive different types of experiences in an organization, their tenure naturally accrues in various ways and forms with diverse stories and content. Therefore, a concept of tenure called “*functional tenure*” that can explain such distinction has been proposed. Organizational experience is distinguished from functional experience because managers with the same organizational tenure can develop qualitatively different work experience due to their individual duties and responsibilities (Sturman, 2003; Tesluk & Jacobs, 1998). Given that quantity and quality should be considered as factors when sharp distinctions need to be made to elaborate a rigorous model, two types of manager tenure that can serve as indicators of work experience should also be examined.

## **Organizational Tenure**

Mom, Fourné, and Jansen (2015) argued that organizational tenure is positively related to three factors. First, as levels of organizational tenure increase, one can develop knowledge that helps

him/her cope with conflicting tasks and find appropriate support in handling such demands (Reagans & McEvily, 2003). When paradoxical tensions arise, managers with enough organizational tenure tend to integrate different competences and resources to address the conflict (A. K. Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006). Second, organizational tenure enhances the control of an individual over a complicated situation and improves the effectiveness of his/her decision making (Bandura & Wood, 1989). If managers develop organizational tenure, then they can be encouraged to become open minded and challenge the existing ways of working (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Through organizational tenure, managers tend to consider various possibilities that others cannot easily come up with and effectively contribute to novelty and innovation. Third, organizational tenure increases the social knowledge, organizational values, and behavioral expectations of managers (Chatman, 1991). They can harmonize many conflicting goals in the context of the very purpose of the organization and “resolve interpersonal challenges related to fulfilling multiple roles” (Denison et al., 1995). Furthermore, “Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1962; Ng & Feldman, 2010) argues that with increasing tenure, employees accumulate more firm-specific task-related knowledge and skills, and therefore they have learnt better what the organization expects of them, causing behaviour to be less dependent on exchange relationships and more on habits and routines” (Bal, De Cooman, & Mol, 2013, p. 111).

Given these characteristics, managers with sufficient organizational tenure tend to act as “buffers” in organizations by sticking to their belongings. Over their careers, managers acquire intrinsic human capital by gaining job-related KSAOs, and such human capital is deemed valuable and respected by their organizations (Steffens et al., 2014) and, in turn, creates and strengthens feelings of membership, thereby making these managers prioritize their

affiliation and actively participate in problem solving. Organizations are generally subjected to multiple types of experiences in their daily lives. To improve their performance and ultimately survive in the market, organizations learn from their past experiences and the associated feedback. Such feedback can induce trivial changes that no different from the present styles of an organization, but not all feedback is merely a “minor revision.” Under certain circumstances, feedback can imply an overall abolition of previous ways of doing things. This rapid, drastic change, which can be referred to as “innovation”, is doomed to face numerous pros and cons. Instead of sticking to one side of an opinion, managers with enough organizational tenure can arbitrate conflicting ideas from each side. Compared with others, these managers tend to admit that the old-fashioned ways of doing things may be less efficient yet are familiar and convenient, whereas the new-fashioned ways are unaccustomed yet likely to positively affect performance. As mediators, managers with organizational tenure can resolve differences among opinions, thereby changing their organizations for the better without producing much “shock” when adapting to novelty because “they have internalized the organizational culture and norms and match the organizational demands to a higher degree” (Steffens et al., 2014, p. 667).

Managers not only synchronize themselves with their organizations but also learn to lead or guide other organizational members (Steffens et al., 2014). Given that they know what their organizations want from them and are willing to accept such demands, these managers tend to have personal networks that are inner centered or non-boundary-spanning, that is, related to other networks within an organization. Instead of focusing on the external environment, managers continuously build relationships inside their organizations. A plausible benefit of these internal networks is knowledge integration (Newell et al., 2004). Under such networks, a sense of bond and trust is formed among group members over time, thereby

facilitating the communication and flow of information and helping organization members reach a consensus about certain agenda (Pappas & Wooldridge, 2007). This “political advantage” of the network is beneficial in many ways. Information itself is crucial in securing competitive advantage and enhancing organizational performance, and the procedure of making use of such information is also critical. When prolonged too much, the decision-making process can result in a considerable loss of time, money, and other valuable resources. Given that the value or usefulness of information is usually negatively related to the time elapsed, a fast and effective yes-or-no can keep such information fresh and green. Furthermore, in terms of integration, a non-boundary-spanning network is probably one of the best conditions an organization can possess. Integration does not occur automatically with various kinds of information on the desk given that most of such information tends to be ambiguous, untrusted, and even contradictory. Even if properly sorted and analyzed, the result may not fundamentally fit the conditions or characteristics of an organization. Therefore, to prevent unnecessary fiasco in the plan, flooding of knowledge should be handled by groups that are familiar with the internal stories of an organization. Compared with boundary-spanning managers who usually tackle external matters, non-boundary-spanning ones who spend much of their time in their organizations are better integrators of information.

### **Functional Tenure**

According to Mom et al. (2015), functional tenure can have an effect that is somewhat against the effect of organizational tenure. First, functional tenure narrows expertise and may negatively affect “individual reflexivity and variety in knowledge development and application” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Moreover, functional tenure can reduce the positive effect of

organizational tenure by diminishing one's way of thinking about both familiar and unaccustomed situations (Ford & Backoff, 1988; Smith & Tushman, 2005). Managers with high-level functional tenure "will be less flexible, and schemata will be limited to a fixed set that is shaped by in-function experiences and expectations" (Sternberg & French, 1992). Second, a higher functional tenure can result in lower adeptness in analyzing and integrating knowledge and ideas (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990) because increasing functional tenure can restrict the personal controllability of complex tasks that come from organizational tenure (Mom et al., 2015). Moreover, as functional tenure increases, managers tend to become obsessed with their functional areas and therefore become less tolerant of different values or points of view that may play important roles in solving interpersonal problems or fulfilling multiple roles (Denison et al., 1995). Third, functional tenure can reduce the open mindedness and spirit of inquiry that managers with organizational tenure generally have (Mom et al., 2015). A high functional tenure forms solid functional beliefs that managers cannot reasonably question by themselves easily (Alvesson & Willmott, 2012; Stanovich, 2002). Therefore, the analytical thinking of managers tend to be overwhelmed by their personal arguments (Mooney, Holahan, & Amason, 2007).

Given these characteristics, managers with high functional tenure may not be suitable for proper intervention or mediation. They thoroughly professionalize themselves in their own fields of work and build an unyielding point of view about the overall aspects of their job. Given such inflexibility, change or innovation does not seem to fit these managers at first glance. However, ironically, such characteristic can provide an important clue regarding the novelty of an organization. A professional in a certain function is assumed to have a unique, original, and brilliant method compared with their colleagues. As mentioned above, managers with high

functional tenure refuse to adjust their codes to accommodate others, thereby maintaining the novelty of these codes and preventing them from being diluted by the prevailing atmosphere in an organization. In other words, although managers with high functional tenure may not change, the surrounding others still have plenty of potential to benchmark those outliers. When the efficiency and effectiveness of such high functional tenure style are clearly recognized, colleagues tend to trust and respect their managers and try to become familiar with them. If follow-up is successful, then its positive influence will spread among teams and groups and affect the entire organization in the long term. In sum, a manager with high functional tenure can serve as a “trigger” of change that can lead to a better organization.

Given that these managers are veterans in their fields, they tend to stay on top of related information, such as other well-informed professionals or the current trends and issues in their area. These traits can encourage the formation of outer-centered, boundary-spanning personal networks. According to Floyd and Wooldridge (1997), managers in boundary-spanning positions have a more strategic influence than managers in non-boundary-spanning positions (Pappas & Wooldridge, 2007) due to the external network of the former that connects the organization with its external environment (Jemison, 1984). Generally, boundary spanners are frequently exposed to external fields and have plenty of opportunities to engage with outsiders in various ways. During their communication, these boundary spanners tend to obtain important information that can affect their organizations. Whether by chance or on purpose, when they fetch some serious “intelligence,” boundary-spanning managers assume a more important position. Given that they consume and reproduce fresh information, these managers can lead the activities of an organization and refine and adopt information to facilitate an important organizational change. In other words, boundary-spanning managers easily access

and control critical external information (Brass, 1984; Floyd and Wooldridge, 1997).

### **Commitment Patterns of Managers**

The concept “commitment” or “organizational commitment” refers to “consistency in people’s behavior towards other people, institutions or organizations” (Saridakis, Lai, Muñoz Torres, & Gourlay, 2020, p. 1743). Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) defined organizational commitment from two perspectives, namely, *attitudinal* and *behavioral*. Attitudinal commitment is “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (p. 27), whereas behavioral commitment focuses on “how behaviors serve to bind the employee to the organization” (Saridakis et al., 2020, p. 1744).

By contrast, Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) identified three components of organizational commitment, namely, *affective*, *continuance*, and *normative commitment*. Affective commitment represents one’s desire to be in an organization and reflects how much an individual sympathizes with its goals and values (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Continuance commitment refers to the perceived costs of breakaway. An employee with high continuance tends to stick with his/her present organization unless s/he finds another organization with better work conditions (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Normative commitment represents a desire to remain a member of an organization because of one’s perceived moral duty (Manion, 2004; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). In other words, employees with high levels of normative commitment remain in their organizations because they feel an obligation to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Research on organizational commitment, including the studies mentioned above,

reveals that organizational commitment can be described and distinguished differently depending on the interests and perspectives of researchers. In this paper, I will follow the theory of Chang and Choi (2007) that distinguishes commitment into two categories, namely, *organizational* and *professional commitment*, given its great similarity with the concepts of organizational tenure and functional tenure that have been covered previously.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment refers to “psychological attachment to and identification with an organization that make separation from the organization difficult for the employee” (Chang et al., 2007, p. 301). Generally, the organizational commitment of an employee follows a U-shaped pattern across different organizational socialization stages (Lee et al., 1992). At first, employees are filled with positive attitudes and emotions, including enthusiasm, confidence, and happiness (Veninga & Spradley, 1981). However, as time goes by, employees face the gloomy side of their organizations that they have not predicted before and start to develop negative feelings and attitudes (Lee, Ashfold, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Fortunately, in the long run, employees tend to recover from their disappointment and regain their loyalty and commitment through enhanced belongingness, social exchange, and communication within the organization (Mowday et al., 1982).

Although the organizational commitment of employees, including managers can temporarily decrease, the rate of change eventually shifts to a positive direction after some time. Along with this procedure, managers will communicate and interact with others within the organization in multiple ways, thereby improving their understanding of the organization per se. Moreover, managers can easily synchronize their goals and values with those of the

organization. In other words, managers with enough organizational tenure tend to develop their commitment to their organizations than to their field of work.

### **Professional Commitment**

Professional commitment is defined as “psychological attachment to and identification with one’s profession” (Chang & Choi, 2007, p. 301). Professionals tend to be more committed to their professions than to their organizations (Wang & Armstrong, 2004). To explain this phenomenon in detail, Chang and Choi (2007) adopted “the compensation model: An individual’s levels of organizational and professional commitment complement each other over time” (p. 304).

According to cognitive congruence theory (Tuma & Grimes, 1981), “people’s positions on one of these work-related dimensions directly influence their positions on the other because certain positions on the two dimensions should be cognitively congruent” (Chang & Choi, 2007, p. 304). Chang and Choi (2007) explained such phenomenon in detail as follows:

“For example, when organizational and professional goals are in conflict, it is cognitively congruent to have low organizational commitment and high professional commitment. In contrast, when the two goals or cultures associated with profession and organization are in harmony, organizational and professional commitment may be positively related (i.e., both high or both low)” (Chang & Choi, 2007, p. 304).

Given the complementing relationship between organizational and professional commitment and the U-shaped change pattern of organizational commitment, Chang and Choi (2007) suggested that professional commitment follows an inverse U-shaped change pattern.

Based on this difference, managers with professional and organizational commitment tend to have opposite ways of contributing to their organizations.

Managers with high professional commitment are not as strongly connected to their organizations as those with high organizational commitment. Given that these managers are more focused on their jobs than their organizations, the above suggestion may be interpreted as a lack of loyalty and belongingness that seems relatively negative. However, this suggestion also implies that the ideation and intuition of these managers are not confined by their organizations. The more someone puts himself/herself in the position of an organization, the less likely brilliant and unprecedented ideas come into his/her mind. Despite its complete newness and irregularity, the approach of professional managers may achieve what the existing members of the organization cannot. Their special and distinctive potentiality and know-how tend to be derived from external sources, such as colleagues or professions outside of their organization. These features largely depend on functional tenure of managers than on their organizational tenure, hence implying that managers with sufficient functional tenure tend to possess a high level of professional commitment.

Moreover, social network theory posits that new ideas are formed by those who properly develop and retain relationships with individuals or groups that are directly or indirectly related to the organization (Burt, 1992). Most social interactions take place among individuals who repeatedly interact in their daily lives (Pappas & Wooldridge, 2007). Therefore, members from the same unit tend to share relatively identical information and intrinsic value (Granovetter, 1985). Meanwhile, some people form multiple social relationships that go beyond the general range of others and are thereby subjected to fresh KSAOs and opportunities (Burt, 1992; Freeman, 1979). A greater diversity in one's social network corresponds to more

possibilities of gaining chances and insights toward newness (Pappas & Wooldridge, 2007). Likewise, the social networks of different types of managers, which are determined by certain types of tenure, will have different characteristics and effects. Therefore, I posit the following hypotheses:

*H1a. A manager's organizational tenure is positively related to his/her organizational commitment.*

*H1b. A manager's organizational tenure is negatively related to his/her professional commitment.*

*H2a. A manager's functional tenure is positively related to his/her professional commitment.*

*H2b. A manager's functional tenure is negatively related to his/her organizational commitment.*

### **Exploitative and Explorative Learning**

The success of an organization in the long term depends on its ability of exploiting its current capabilities and exploring new competencies (Levinthal & March, 1993; March, 1991). The interest and attention of scholars toward such so-called “ambidexterity” has been continuously rising, thereby contributing to the elaboration and development of this concept (Raisch et al., 2009). Although some tension related to the manifestation of ambidexterity exists at the individual or organizational level, Raisch et al. (2009) argued that (1) managers can exhibit personal ambidexterity through both exploitation and exploration, (2) the extent of manager ambidexterity varies within and across contexts, and (3) organizational ambidexterity is

influenced by the personal ambidexterity of organizational members. These points imply that the different extents of ambidexterity of managers based on their personal background and career can also affect the ambidexterity of their team members.

Individuals have unique and distinct types of human resources. When utilized and applied properly, these rare, valuable, and hard-to-imitate resources can result in a limitless form of benefit, which eventually contributes to various aspects of an organization. One of the most fundamental differences between managers with organizational commitment and those with professional commitment is their range of knowledge. Previous studies on non-professional employees show that affective commitment is the best predictor of one's actual behavior of interest for his/her organization (Valéau et al., 2019). In line with this argument, managers with organizational commitment tend to stick to their own field. Their background and working environment are perfectly tuned to their position in the organization, hence ripening their knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics relevant to their organization and granting them profound access to the so-called "existing knowledge" that lies in their organization. Having an improved understanding of existing knowledge will result in a better application and utilization of such knowledge and, in turn, will foster the exploitative learning of team members. According to previous studies, exploitation refers to creating reliability in experience and focusing on use, diffusion, refinement, and reuse of existing knowledge (Kane & Alavi, 2007; Mom, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2007). As time goes by, the organizational commitment of managers is strengthened, and the firm-specific knowledge of managers and their team members accumulate over time, which will be transformed into important existing knowledge for their organization. Moreover, given that the existing knowledge accumulated by managers over time is rare, valuable, and difficult to imitate, these

managers are encouraged to distribute and utilize such knowledge at the team level by using their powerful bonds formed within the organization, hence positively enhancing how their team members exploit existing knowledge.

Unlike managers with organizational commitment, managers focusing on their professional field tend to continuously experience a relatively high degree of difference or gap while working based on these commitments compared with their current background and working environment. Fortunately, research on professional employees shows that they can pursue their profession through different organizations (Gouldner, 1957; Hylan et al., 2013; Jørgensen et al., 2015), hence implying that they can be subjected to and possess unique and unfamiliar “new knowledge” and that they can share and apply such knowledge in various ways by collaborating with their team members. This practice, in turn, will foster the explorative learning of these team members. Previous studies posit that exploration means creating variety in experience, developing new knowledge or replacing existing content within the memory of the organization, and searching for new organizational norms, routines, structure, and systems (Kane & Alavi, 2007; Mom, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2007). As they keep communicating with people outside of the organization, the true advantage of managers with external knowledge will be the new knowledge that they obtain from different organizations or fields of work than the existing knowledge that they accumulate from their own organization. Furthermore, by utilizing their special and unique knowledge and experience, managers with sufficient professional commitment can introduce an unprecedented way of fulfilling various tasks, hence positively affecting how their team members explore new knowledge. Therefore, I posit the following hypotheses:

*H3a. A manager's organizational commitment is positively related to team members'*

*exploitation with exiting knowledge.*

*H3b. A manager's professional commitment is positively related to team members' exploration with new knowledge.*

### **Different Types of Creativity**

Innovation and creativity are vital determinants of organizational success, performance, and survival that can be defined as follows (Anderson et al., 2014).

“Creativity and innovation at work are the process, outcomes, and products of attempts to develop and introduce new and improved ways of doing things. The creativity stage of this process refers to idea generation, and innovation refers to the subsequent stage of implementing ideas toward better procedures, practices, or products. Creativity and innovation can occur at the level of the individual, work team, organization, or at more than one of these levels combined but will invariably result in identifiable benefits at one or more of these levels of analysis” (Anderson et al., p. 1298).

From this perspective, organizational change consists of two steps that are generally considered similar yet are academically considered distinct from each other. Specifically, creativity refers to a series of processes and activities that are related to generating novelty and freshness in various ways. When supported by profound understanding and professional knowledge that are closely related to an organization, the creativity of an individual tends to be

considered brilliant and effective. In other words, the mere creativity held by group members cannot be identified with organizational change itself. A certain process that “actualizes” creativity based on the status quo is also required as an additional condition. Through innovation, the creative idea of team members is properly aligned and materialized throughout an organization. The relationship between creativity and innovation is comparable to that between ore and processing where, without the latter, the former would not be able to fully pay off. Previous studies suggest that knowledge sharing can significantly affect the creativity process (Huang, Hsieh, & He, 2014; Zhang, Tsui, & Wang, 2011). Given that creativity centers on idea generation whereas innovation emphasizes idea implementation, the former is often deemed as the very first step of the latter (Amabile, 1996; Mumford & Gustafson, 1988).

Therefore, I expect that the teams of organization and profession-committed managers will take different roles in team creativity through knowledge sharing. Given that they have a profound, in-depth understanding of their organization and its internal affairs, the team of organization-committed managers can function as a source of incremental creativity. Through their exploitative learning from the manager, team members can assemble and select provided knowledge through the lens of the organization per se and figure out the most appropriate and effective way of implementing an idea for the sake of a better organization. This type of change is likely to be slow and incremental. By contrast, the team members of profession-committed managers have an advantage in fresh, novel thinking that the existing organization members cannot easily conceive. Thanks to the external network of their managers, they can learn how to freely expand their range of ideas and take additional risks in knowledge sharing, which will transform them into sources of radical creativity, which is rare, valuable, and hard to imitate for their organization. These arguments lead to the following hypotheses:

*H4a. Team members' exploitation with existing knowledge is positively related to incremental team creativity.*

*H4b. Team members' exploration with new knowledge is positively related to radical team creativity.*

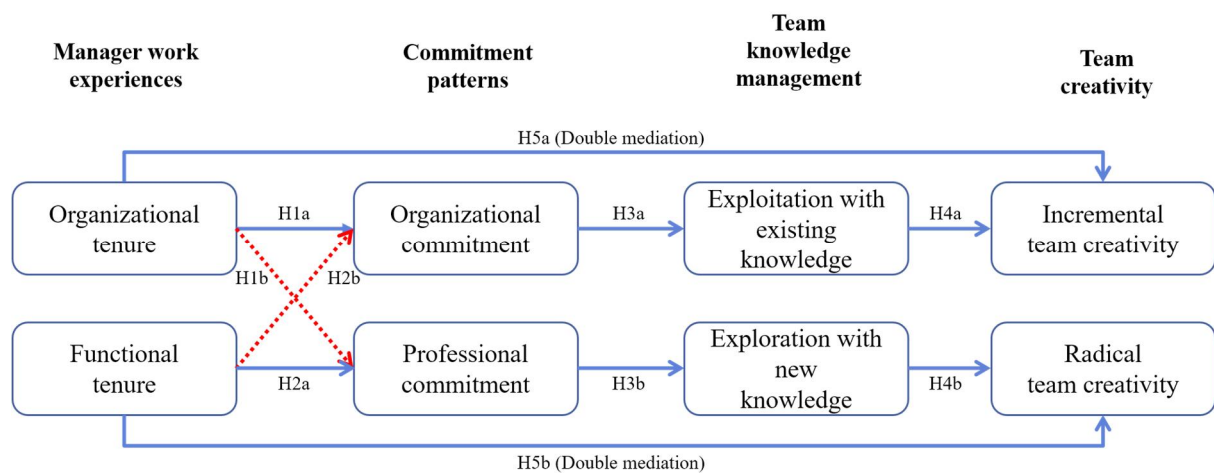
In sum, similar to leaders and general employees, managers are obviously one of the important independent variables that require attention given their contributions to organizational innovation. To thoroughly study the relationship between managers and organizational innovation, the career and background of the former should be taken into account based on their work experience, which is mainly represented by their organizational and functional tenure. The more time these managers spend in their organization, the more likely people in their network have intimate colleagues who are working in the same organization, which will accelerate the formation and accumulation of their organizational commitment. By working together, managers hone their knowledge, information, and experience that they can effectively apply within their organization. When this flow of information reaches team members, they are encouraged to answer the question, "what goes with our organization?" Eventually, managers and their team members participate in trimming brand new ideas into standard and accustomed ones.

By contrast, the more managers hone their KSAOs and serve as professionals in their fields, the more likely people within their network are also working in the same field but are mostly outside of the organization. Enhanced by functional tenure, the commitment of these managers tends to be job oriented than organization oriented. Given that these managers are well-informed about cutting-edge methods of doing things, they usually communicate

unprecedented ideas and groundbreaking agendas with their team members. This exchange of information encourages team members to answer the question, “what is effective to our organization?” Accordingly, managers and their team members participate in brainstorming for fresh and new ideas that are sometimes too novel and may require “adjustments”. Following these arguments, I propose the following double mediation hypotheses:

*H5a. The relationship between a manager’s organization tenure and incremental team creativity is mediated by his/her organizational commitment and team members’ exploitation with existing knowledge.*

*H5b. The relationship between a manager’s functional tenure and radical team creativity is mediated by his/her professional commitment and team member’s exploration with new knowledge.*



**Figure 2. Theoretical Framework**

### III. METHOD

To test the theoretical propositions, I collected field data from multiple sources over two waves that allow the examination of multi-stage predictive relationships as summarized in Figure 2. Specifically, at Time 1, I contacted 87 managers and their 300 team members. Managers of each participating team provided contact information of all members under their supervision. Questionnaires were distributed and returned through the form of an online survey. Among the 387 distributed questionnaires, 72 and 260 responses were obtained from managers and team members, respectively. After matching the manager and member questionnaires, I excluded those team member responses without corresponding managers' responses. The final sample for the Time 1 data included 72 managers (82% response rate) and 229 members (76% response rate). Six weeks after Time 1, I contacted those 72 managers again and collected the outcome variables of team creativity. Of the 72 leaders, I obtained responses from 56 managers (77% response rate). Accordingly, the final analysis sample for the current hypothesis tests included 56 managers and 196 members representing 56 teams performing diverse functions (e.g., general management, finance and accounting, domestic and international sales, marketing, R&D, etc.) and represented various industries (e.g., finance and insurance, manufacturing, mobile communication, service, public enterprise, etc.). The average size of the teams included in this final sample was 3.5 (ranging between 2 and 10).

**Organizational and functional tenure (Time 1, Managers)** were measured following the approach of Mom, Fourné, and Jansen (2015). Specifically, *organizational tenure* was measured by asking the respondents about the year and month the manager started working for the firm, which indicates the length of time spent in the firm. *Functional tenure* was measured by asking the respondents about the year and month the manager started working in

his/her current function, which indicates the length of time spent in the field or profession.

**The commitment patterns of managers (Time 1, Managers)** were measured following the approach of Chang and Choi (2007). Specifically, *organizational commitment* was measured by using a four-item scale ( $\alpha = .85$ ) with sample items including “I feel proud when talking to others about this company,” “I feel a sense of belonging to my company,” “I feel emotionally attached to this company,” and “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this company.” The respondents answered these items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). *Professional commitment* was also measured by a four-item scale ( $\alpha = .88$ ) with sample items including “I feel proud when talking to others about my profession/current work (e.g., marketing, administration, finance, etc.),” “I feel a sense of belonging to my profession/current work,” “I feel emotionally attached to my profession/current work,” and “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in my profession/current work.” The responses were also rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”).

**Exploitative learning with existing knowledge and explorative learning with new knowledge (Time 1, Members)** were measured following the approach of Li, Lin, and Liu (2019). Specifically, *exploitative learning with existing knowledge* was measured by using a five-item scale ( $\alpha = .77$ ) adapted from Kostopoulos and Bozionelos (2011) and Li et al. (2010). Sample items include “Our team prefers to apply information and knowhow gained in prior projects related to the current project” and “In the team, we search for the usual and generally proven methods and solutions to perform our tasks.” This scale obtained ICC1, ICC2, and  $r_{wg}$  values of .40, .76, and .94, respectively, thereby justifying its aggregation to the team level. Meanwhile, *explorative learning with new knowledge* was measured by using a five-item scale

( $\alpha = .82$ ) adapted from Kostopoulos and Bozionelos (2011) and Li et al. (2010). Sample items include “Our team looks for opportunities to employ entirely new skills and knowledge to solve work problems” and “In the team, our aim is to acquire knowledge to accomplish work that leads us to new areas of learning, such as new technological practices.” This scale obtained ICC1, ICC2, and  $r_{wg}$  values of .36, .74, and .88, thereby validating its aggregation to the team level.

**Incremental and radical team creativity (Time 2, Managers)** was measured based on the approach of Madjar, Greenberg, and Chen (2011). Specifically, *incremental team creativity* was assessed by using a three-item scale ( $\alpha = .87$ ) with questions including “Our team uses previously existing ideas or work in an appropriate way,” “Our team easily modifies previously existing work processes to suit our current needs,” and “Our team is very good at adapting already existing ideas.” Meanwhile, *radical team creativity* was measured by using a three-item scale ( $\alpha = .93$ ) with questions including “Our team is a good source of highly creative ideas,” “Our team suggests radically new ways of doing things,” and “Our team demonstrates originality in our work.” The respondents were asked to answer these items on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”).

**Control variables** related to the manager and team levels were included. First, *the gender and educational level of managers* were controlled as demographic factors. According to Papadakis, Lioukas, and Chambers (1998), age and educational level can have positive relationships with personal cognitive abilities to process complex information, which in turn may have a positive relationship with personal performance (Wright, Kacmar, McMahan, & Deleeuw, 1995). Three variables related to team characteristics, namely, team reflexivity, team psychological safety, and task interdependence, were also controlled in the analysis of team

creativity. *Team reflexivity* ( $\alpha = .84$ ) was measured by using a five-item scale adapted from De Jong and Elfring (2010). Sample items include “In this team, we often review the feasibility of our objectives,” “In this team, we regularly discuss whether we are working effectively together,” or “In our team, we often review our approach to getting the job done.” *Team psychological safety* was measured by using a six-item scale ( $\alpha = .82$ ) adapted from van Ginkel and van Knippenberg (2008). Sample items include “I have the impression that the other group members wanted to hear what I had to say,” “I expect the other members to react positively when I disagree with them,” or “I expect this group to appreciate it whenever I mention new information.” *Task interdependence* ( $\alpha = .75$ ) was measured by using a three-item scale with sample items including “My team members have to work closely with one another to do the team’s work properly” and “In order to complete the team’s work, team members have to obtain information and advice from one another.”

#### IV. RESULTS

Prior to hypotheses testing, I examined the distinctiveness of the variables by performing a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). I performed CFA at the individual level before aggregating the member-level data given that the constructs were measured at the individual level before they were aggregated to the team level. The CFA results indicate the discriminant validity of the current leader ( $\chi^2(df = 71) = 135.850, p < .001$ ; comparative fit index (CFI) = .89; SRMR = .08) and member variables ( $\chi^2(df = 179) = 384.566, p < .001$ ; CFI = .89; SRMR = .07). Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, and inter-scale correlations of the variables at the team level.

**Table 1***Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations*

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Organizational tenure	17.58	7.91	1							
2. Functional tenure	13.88	9.51	.46**	1						
3. Organizational commitment	3.91	.62	.21*	.23	1					
4. Professional commitment	3.85	.73	.07	.30*	.56**	1				
5. Exploitation with existing knowledge	3.95	.28	-.04	.02	.02	.03	1			
6. Exploration with new knowledge	3.37	.37	-.30*	.00	.08	.26	-.17	1		
7. Incremental creativity	3.44	.66	-.06	.13	.19	.37**	.08	.15	1	
8. Radical creativity	2.87	.74	.15	.38**	.27*	.41**	.16	.10	.56**	1

*Note:* N = 56. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

### Main Effects

Given the relatively small sample at the group level, which could limit the statistical power of the present analysis, I employed the  $p$  value of .10 as the threshold for statistical significance in the following hypothesis tests. In terms of the main effect among the variables, Hypotheses 1a and 1b posit that the organizational tenure of managers is positively related to their organizational commitment but is negatively related to their functional commitment. Hypotheses 2a and 2b suggest that the functional tenure of managers is positively related to their professional commitment but is negatively related to their organizational commitment. Model 2 in Table 2 supports Hypothesis 1a, that is, the organizational tenure of managers enhances their organizational commitment ( $\beta = .26, p = .07$ ). Model 3 in Table 2 also shows that the functional tenure of managers is positively related to their organizational commitment, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1b ( $\beta = .24, p = .08$ ). Model 2 in Table 3 supports Hypothesis

2a, that is, the functional tenure of managers reinforces their professional commitment ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p = .05$ ). By contrast, Model 3 in Table 3 does not show any relationship between the organizational tenure of managers and their professional commitment, thereby rejecting Hypothesis 2b ( $\beta = .03$ ,  $p = .80$ ).

**Table 2**

*Regression Results for the Relationship between Manager Tenure and Organizational Commitment*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender	-.17	-.08	-.15	-.09
Educational level	.28*	.36*	.30*	.35*
Team size	.03	.01	.02	.01
Task interdependence	-.03	-.01	.01	.01
Team reflexivity	.03	.01	-.03	-.02
Team Psychological safety	-.06	-.02	.00	.01
Organizational tenure		.26 <sup>†</sup>		.18
Functional tenure			.24 <sup>†</sup>	.16
R-squared	.14	.19	.19	.21

*Note:* N = 56. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$

**Table 3**

*Regression Results for the Relationship between Manager Tenure and Professional Commitment*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender	-.16	-.14	-.15	-.17
Educational level	.27*	.29*	.28*	.26 <sup>†</sup>
Team size	.06	.06	.06	.06
Task interdependence	-.17	-.13	-.17	-.13
Team reflexivity	.09	.02	.09	.01
Team Psychological safety	-.18	-.10	-.18	-.11
Functional tenure		.25 <sup>†</sup>		.29*
Organizational tenure			.03	-.10
R-squared	.20	.26	.20	.27

*Note:* N = 56. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$

Hypothesis 3a proposes that the organizational commitment of managers is positively related to the exploitation of existing knowledge by their team members, whereas Hypothesis 3b posits that the professional commitment of managers is positively related to the exploration of new knowledge by their team members. Model 2 in Table 4 shows that the relationship between the organizational commitment of managers and the exploitation of knowledge by their team members is not significant ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $p = .56$ ), thereby rejecting Hypothesis 3a. Meanwhile, Model 2 in Table 5 supports Hypothesis 3b, that is, the professional commitment

of managers promotes the exploration of new knowledge by their team members ( $\beta = .32, p = .02$ ).

**Table 4**

*Regression Results for the Relationship between Commitment Patterns and Exploitation of Existing Knowledge by Team Members*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	.06	.08	.09
Educational level	.03	.01	-.01
Team size	-.20	-.21	-.22
Task interdependence	.07	.07	.10
Team reflexivity	.02	.02	.01
Team psychological safety	.24	.24	.27 <sup>†</sup>
Organizational commitment		.08	.00
Professional commitment			.16
R-squared	.14	.15	.16

*Note:* N = 56. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$

**Table 5**

*Regression Results for the Relationship between Commitment Patterns and Exploration of New Knowledge by Team Members*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	.16	.22 <sup>†</sup>	.21
Educational level	.12	.03	.05
Team size	.17	.15	.15
Task interdependence	.18	.23	.24 <sup>†</sup>
Team reflexivity	.30 <sup>†</sup>	.27 <sup>†</sup>	.27 <sup>†</sup>
Team psychological safety	-.23	-.17	-.16
Professional commitment		.32*	.37*
Organizational commitment			-.09
R-squared	.18	.27	.27

*Note:* N = 56. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$

Hypothesis 4a posits that the exploitation of existing knowledge by team members is positively related to incremental creativity, whereas Hypothesis 4b proposes that the exploration of new knowledge by team members is positively related to radical creativity. Model 2 in Table 6 reports that the relationship between the exploitation of knowledge by team members and incremental creativity is not significant ( $\beta = .12, p = .38$ ), rejecting Hypothesis 4a. Similarly, Model 2 in Table 7 does not support Hypothesis 4b, that is, the exploration of new knowledge by team members is not related to radical creativity ( $\beta = -.00, p = .97$ ).

**Table 6**

*Regression Results for the Relationship between the Knowledge Management of Team Members and Incremental Team Creativity*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	-.00	-.01	-.02
Educational level	.21	.21	.20
Team size	.12	.15	.14
Task interdependence	-.11	-.12	-.14
Team reflexivity	.36*	.36*	.33 <sup>†</sup>
Team Psychological safety	-.15	-.18	-.16
Exploitation with existing knowledge		.12	.14
Exploration with new knowledge			.08
R-squared	.16	.17	.18

*Note:* N = 56. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$

**Table 7**

*Regression Results for the Relationship between Knowledge Management of Team Members and Radical Team Creativity*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	-.08	-.08	-.11
Educational level	.15	.15	.14
Team size	.21	.21	.25 <sup>†</sup>
Task interdependence	.02	.02	-.00
Team reflexivity	.24	.24	.22
Team Psychological safety	-.16	-.16	-.21
Exploration with new knowledge		-.00	.05
Exploitation with existing knowledge			.25 <sup>†</sup>
R-squared	.14	.14	.19

*Note:* N = 56. Standardized regression points reported.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$

### **Mediating Effects**

In terms of the mediating effects among the variables, Hypothesis 5a proposes a positive relationship between the organizational tenure of managers and incremental team creativity as mediated by the organizational commitment of managers and exploitation of existing knowledge by team members. Meanwhile, Hypothesis 5b proposes a positive relationship

between the functional tenure of managers and radical team creativity as mediated by the professional commitment of managers and exploration of new knowledge by team members. I estimated the indirect effects and their 95% confidence intervals (CI) by using the bootstrapping procedure based on PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) to test these hypotheses. As shown in Table 8, the double mediation models are not statistically significant, thereby rejecting both Hypotheses 5a (estimate = .00, 95% CI [-.00, .00]) and 5b (estimate = -.00, 95% CI [-.00, .00]).

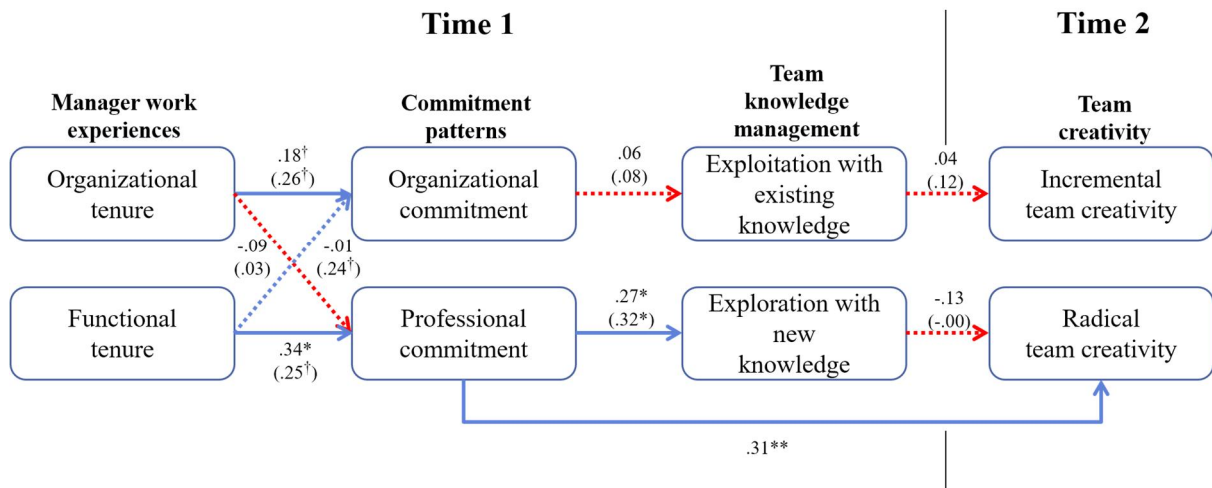
**Table 8**

*Bootstrapped Mediation Analysis of the Indirect Effects*

			Bootstrapped Bias-Corrected 95% CI	
	Indirect effect	SE	Lower	Upper
OT-OC-EEK	.00	.00	-.00	.00
OC-EEK-IC	.01	.03	-.04	.08
FT-PC-ENK	.00	.00	-.00	.01
PC-ENK-RC	-.04	.06	-.18	.07
OT-OC-EEK-IC	.00	.00	-.00	.00
FT-PC-ENK-RC	-.00	.00	-.00	.00

*Note:* OT = Organizational tenure; FT = Functional tenure; OC = Organizational commitment; PC = Professional commitment; EEK = Exploitation with existing knowledge; ENK = Exploration with new knowledge; IC = Incremental team creativity; RC = Radical team creativity.

### Path Analysis Results



Standardized path coefficients are reported. Coefficients in parentheses are standardized regression coefficients obtained from regression equations.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

**Figure 3. Path Analysis Results of the Hypotheses**

The current hypotheses, except Hypothesis 5a and 5b for mediation effects, were examined by path analysis for a simultaneous, omnibus test of the entire research model. As expected, the effect of managers' organizational tenure on their organizational commitment ( $\beta = .18, p = .09$ ) and that of managers' functional tenure on their professional commitment ( $\beta = .34, p = .01$ ) were significantly positive. This supports Hypotheses 1a and 2a. Managers' organizational commitment was irrelevant to team members' exploitation with existing knowledge ( $\beta = .06, p$

= .55) but managers' professional commitment was in a positive relationship with team members' exploration with new knowledge ( $\beta = .27, p = .01$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3a is rejected, whereas Hypothesis 3b is supported. Finally, both the effect of team members' exploitation with existing knowledge on incremental team creativity ( $\beta = .04, p = .70$ ) and that of team members' exploration with new knowledge on radical team creativity ( $\beta = -.13, p = .28$ ) were shown insignificant, rejecting Hypotheses 4a and 4b, accordingly. Unexpectedly, the direct path of the relationship between managers' professional commitment and radical team creativity was shown strongly positive ( $\beta = .31, p = .00$ ).

## **V. DISCUSSION**

Drawing on Crossan and Apaydin's (2010) suggestion about the necessity of micro-level research on specific organization members' characteristics and traits in predicting creativity, I extend the current creativity and innovation studies that mostly focused on the organizational contexts and employee characteristics. By examining why and how managers' personal backgrounds can contribute differently to team creativity, I demonstrate that managers' organizational tenure is positively related to their organizational commitment and that managers' functional tenure is positively related to their professional commitment. In addition, I find that managers' professional commitment promotes their team members' exploration of new knowledge, which in turn is not significantly related to radical team creativity. Contrary to my expectations, managers' organizational commitment is not related to their team members' exploitation of existing knowledge. Moreover, team members' exploitation of existing knowledge is not significantly related to incremental team creativity. I do not find any significant double mediation effects in the model figure. Results provide several important

implications for both research and practice as discussed below.

### **Theoretical Implications**

A positive relationship between managers' organizational tenure and organizational commitment confirms the findings of previous studies on human capital theory. As an important indicator of human capital, organizational tenure refers to personal, educational, and professional experiences that enhance an employee's value and the success of his/her career (Judge et al., 1995; Nafukho et al., 2004). The human capital acquired by employees throughout their tenure is rewarded and valued by their organizations, thereby enhancing the competitiveness and success of these employees (Becker, 1964). With enough organizational tenure, employees (a) become much more familiar with their roles and their organizational goals, values, and culture (Chatman, 1991), (b) gain organization-specific KSAOs (Tesluk & Jacobs, 1998), and (c) acquire social acceptance and self-efficacy (Bauer et al., 2007), thereby increasing their organizational membership such that these employees come "to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member" (Louis, 1980, p. 229–230) and resulting in high levels of organizational commitment. A similar logic can be applied for functional tenure; the more one acquires familiarity and job-specific KSAOs, the more profession and expertise s/he develops in his/her field of work. Interestingly, no significant relationship is observed between organizational tenure and professional commitment. In addition, while the regression results confirm that both the relationship between managers' organizational tenure and professional commitment and that between managers' functional

tenure and organizational commitment are clearly insignificant, path analysis results indicate a slight possibility for a positive relationship to develop between managers' functional tenure and their organizational commitment. Given that the commitment patterns are difficult to distinguish and that different analyses show opposite results for the same hypothesis, these points require further investigation by using larger sample sizes.

The managers' organizational commitment is not significantly related to their team members' exploitation of existing knowledge, whereas managers' professional commitment has a statistically significant and positive relationship with their team members' exploration of new knowledge. Scholars argue that employees' willingness to share knowledge relies on three factors, namely, individual factors (e.g., employee's commitment to the organization), group factors (e.g., trust among coworkers), and organizational factors (e.g., general atmosphere that prevails in an organization) (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002; Mueller, 2014). Generally, commitment enhances employees' willingness to generate and share knowledge (Van Den Hooff & Van Weenen, 2004) and is an important part of a knowledge sharing culture in an organization (Smith & McKeen, 2002). Ouakouak and Ouedraogo (2019) supported this point by examining two types of organizational commitment. Specifically, affective commitment is positively related to knowledge sharing, and the often-hypothesized negative relationship between continuance commitment and knowledge sharing is insignificant. Moreover, professional trust has a significant influence on knowledge sharing. While the results of this study contribute to professional commitment studies, they deviate from the results of the organizational commitment literature.

Both the relationship between team members' exploitation of existing knowledge and incremental team creativity and that between team members' exploration of new knowledge

and radical team creativity have been proven insignificant. While previous studies confirm that knowledge sharing contributes to team creativity (Gong et al., 2013; Men et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2012), classifying team creativity into incremental and radical creativity can cause some discrepancy. Moreover, given that previous studies have set knowledge sharing or management as a mediating variable for team creativity, further research that posits knowledge management as a main variable that interacts with various contextual factors to predict different forms of creativity is required.

Neither the mediation effect of the relationship between organizational tenure and incremental team creativity nor that of the relationship between functional tenure and radical team creativity is significant. The multi-source design of this study seems to dilute such effect, proceeding from managers to members and then to managers again. However, investigating the mediating effect between manager tenure and team creativity is not meaningless. Research on tenure and innovation-related behavior (Ng & Feldman, 2013) and various mediating variables, such as the presence of creative coworkers, resources for creativity, willingness to take risks, or conformity (Madjar et al., 2011), highlights the importance of further examining the relationship between tenure and creativity. Further studies that use variables different from this study can bridge such gap.

### **Practical Implications**

The analysis results confirm several points and provide lessons for practicing managers. First, based on a manager's personal background and career, different patterns of commitment can be formed. Despite the insignificance of crossing effects, similar to leaders and employees as the main independent variables of creativity, managers and their backgrounds are worth

investigating. Bilton and Leary (2002) examined how managers can contribute to creativity in creative industries, whereas Granot (2011) contributed to the creativity literature by investigating “creativity, creativity process, and outcomes in the context of the participants’ life stories” (p. 177). These studies imply that organization leaders should pay attention to middle managers’ personal backgrounds, careers, and characteristics if they are to nourish their creativity and innovation.

Second, I expected that team members can experience different degrees of innovation stimulation depending on their managers’ commitment patterns, but this assumption was only half true. Specifically, if an organization lacks fresh and new ideas from its present members, then recruiting more managers with sufficient professional commitment would be a plausible solution. However, this solution is not likely to take effect when a slow and peaceful change is necessary because managers with high level of organizational commitment may not be as helpful as hypothesized in addressing this issue.

Third, team knowledge does not always enhance team creativity. Previous studies suggest that knowledge sharing is one of the most crucial elements for developing creativity and innovation management (Gressgård et al., 2014; Hon & Lui, 2016). However, knowledge sharing is not the one and only key to creativity; if a manager is professionally committed enough to his/her own job, then creativity can be developed without stopping over team knowledge management. Results show that managers’ personal bond and loyalty toward their organizations are not helpful in developing their creativity and innovation as one would predict. Instead, managers’ passion and pride toward their own field or profession have a more significant linkage to creativity. Therefore, when an organization requires some changes, help and advice should not be sought from managers who are considered “the grand old men” of the

company but from those with sufficient professional experience in their job or function.

## **VI. LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

Despite its potential contribution to theory and practice, this two-wave study has several limitations. First, the shrinkage of the sample caused by participants dropping out may negatively affect the validity of my findings. Second, the data collected through convenience sampling do not address the randomization of various industry and organizational characteristics and may affect the generalizability of my findings. Different organizations have various creativity and innovation requirements, thereby reducing the generalizability of my findings. Third, I cannot draw any conclusions about causal relationships due to the cross-sectional research design of this study. Finally, the diversity in organization, industry, manager background and career should be reflected in the sampling to enhance external validity.

Given its positive influence on individual and organizational performance, creativity is one of the most emphasized performance indicators in organizations today. However, to make use of creativity, its source and characteristics should be understood. As both members of the organization and leaders of their teams, managers are considered important variables in terms of creativity. Whether their career is focused on the organization or their own field of work can affect the orientation of commitment of these managers, which in turn may have varying effects on their team members' knowledge management. The point of my research is that the time managers spend in their organization is, unexpectedly, not statistically relevant to creativity. One can easily expect that the more time managers devote to their organizations, the more likely they can build up their knowledge and information that would contribute to

creativity and innovation. Instead of loyalty, expertise is relatively more triumphant; the managers' functional and professional assets have significant linkages to their creativity. Further research can focus on the detailed process through which one's functional tenure and professional commitment promote organizational creativity and innovation.

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## 초 록

조직 창의성 및 혁신에 관한 기존의 연구는 중간관리자와 그들의 팀 간의 관계에 대한 조명이 상대적으로 부족하였다. 본 논문은 중간관리자의 직무 경험과 팀 수준 창의성 사이의 관계를 직무 몰입 및 팀의 지식 관리의 매개효과를 통하여 연구하였다. 분석 결과 중간관리자가 자신의 조직에 속해 있던 시간은 창의성과 통계적인 관련이 없었으며, 오히려 그들이 담당하는 업무와 직결된 전문적 차원의 요소가 창의성과 유의미한 상관관계를 나타냈다. 이러한 결과는 개인의 직무 경력 및 몰입이 팀 수준의 창의성과 혁신에 기여하는 구체적인 과정에 대한 향후 연구의 필요성을 시사한다.

주요어 : 중간관리자, 업무 경험, 직무 몰입, 혁신적 창의성, 개량적 창의성, 지식 관리, 조직 혁신

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