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## Architecting Creative Capacity: An HR Framework for Translating Team Motivation into Innovation through Emotional Intelligence and Knowledge Sharing

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### ABSTRACT

In an era where innovation is essential for an organization's survival and growth, understanding what drives team creativity is vital for strategic human resource management. While motivation among team members is recognized as a key factor in fostering innovation, its specific impact on team creativity from a human resource (HR) perspective remains unclear. This study proposes a parallel mediation model, indicating that team motivation affects creativity both directly and through two separate routes: a socio-emotional pathway via team emotional intelligence (TEI) and a cognitive pathway through team knowledge sharing (TKS). A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 352 employees from 286 teams in 22 knowledge-based companies in Ghana. Participants rated motivation, TEI, and TKS, while team creativity was measured using combined scores from members and leaders to minimize common method bias. The model was tested using structural equation modeling with 5,000 bootstrap samples. Results showed a significant positive direct relationship between team motivation and team creativity ( $\beta = 0.20, p < 0.001$ ). Both TEI (indirect effect = 0.062) and TKS (indirect effect = 0.477) served as significant mediators. The cognitive pathway via TKS was notably stronger, accounting for 88.5% of the total mediated effect. Overall, the model explained 76.2% of the variability in team creativity. While motivation is crucial for creativity, its primary influence is exerted through knowledge sharing. TEI also enhances this process by creating a

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safe environment that encourages sharing. This research provides an evidence-based framework for HR professionals aiming to increase creativity through targeted strategies such as competency-based recruitment for emotional intelligence, quarterly team emotional intelligence workshops, and setting performance key performance indicators (KPIs) for knowledge contributions.

**Keywords:** Team Creativity; Team Member Motivation; Team Emotional Intelligence; Team Knowledge Sharing; Strategic Human Resource Management

## 1. Introduction

Today's global landscape, characterized by rapid technological progress, market fluctuations, and societal complexities, has made innovation an essential requirement for organizational survival and success, rather than just a competitive edge<sup>[1]</sup>. Organizations across sectors increasingly rely on their ability to develop innovative solutions that remain relevant amid ongoing change<sup>[2]</sup>. The focus of this innovative effort has shifted from individual geniuses to collaborative team efforts, now the main drivers of creativity within organizations<sup>[3]</sup>. Team creativity, defined as the group's ability to generate ideas, products, or processes that are both new and useful, is the heart of organizational innovation<sup>[4]</sup>. It enables teams to address complex challenges, seize new opportunities, and merge diverse perspectives into groundbreaking solutions<sup>[1]</sup>. The growing demand for advanced thinking skills in the 21st century, particularly with the integration of technologies such as Generative AI, underscores the importance of understanding and fostering team creativity in both organizational and educational settings<sup>[5]</sup>.

From a strategic human resource management (SHRM) perspective, an organization's ability to innovate is deliberately cultivated rather than accidental<sup>[6]</sup>. HR strategy plays a vital role in building this capacity by shaping systems, processes, and organizational culture that encourage creativity. This includes recruiting and retaining innovative talent, implementing performance-reward systems that stimulate innovation, and engaging in organizational development efforts that promote collaboration and psychological safety<sup>[7]</sup>. As a result, understanding the micro-level team dynamics that drive creativity is essential for designing effective high-level HR strategies. Extensive research has focused on identifying factors that enhance team creativity, examining influences such as leadership styles<sup>[8]</sup>, team diversity in values<sup>[9]</sup>, and organizational factors, including a collaborative culture and psychological safety<sup>[5]</sup>.

Although structural and contextual factors create the

necessary environment for creativity, they do not guarantee it. The actual outcome depends on team members' ongoing cognitive and behavioral engagement, highlighting the importance of motivation, the psychological forces that guide the direction, effort, and persistence of voluntary actions toward a goal<sup>[10]</sup>. Motivation serves as an internal drive that compels individuals to exert effort, pursue new ideas, and withstand the challenges inherent in the creative process<sup>[11]</sup>. While the link between motivation and creativity is well established at the individual level, applying it to teams is more complex<sup>[12]</sup>. A simple, direct connection is likely to oversimplify the social and cognitive complexities within teams. It's more realistic that motivation influences team creativity indirectly by energizing key processes that enable creative teamwork. This research suggests that motivation's impact on creativity is mediated by two key mechanisms: team emotional intelligence and team knowledge sharing<sup>[12]</sup>.

The initial mediator suggested that team emotional intelligence (TEI) embodies the socio-emotional pathway. TEI refers to the team's capacity to establish norms that regulate emotions and foster a positive emotional environment, underscoring its ability to effectively manage collective emotional well-being<sup>[3]</sup>. When team members are motivated, they are more likely to invest effort in understanding their colleagues' emotional states and contribute to a supportive atmosphere<sup>[13]</sup>. This shared emotional competence is crucial for fostering creativity, as it boosts team trust and encourages a collaborative culture essential for innovative work<sup>[3]</sup>.

The second mediator proposed, team knowledge sharing (TKS), reflects the cognitive route. Since team creativity results from combining existing knowledge and perspectives in new ways, motivated team members tend to share their unique insights and expand on others' ideas<sup>[14]</sup>. This lively exchange of intellectual resources directly fosters team creativity by boosting the chances of innovative combinations and energizing the team's creative process<sup>[5]</sup>.

While extensive research examines the factors influencing team creativity, a notable gap remains in understanding

how these elements work together within a comprehensive framework that can guide HR strategies. This study fills that gap by proposing and testing a parallel mediation model that treats TEI and TKS as separate yet interconnected pathways linking team member motivation to team creativity. It is among the first to offer evidence-based guidance on HR practices for developing creative teams through both socio-emotional and cognitive routes. By explaining how individual motivation is leveraged at the team level, this research deepens our understanding of the creative process and offers practical guidance for HR managers and talent developers seeking to boost innovation.

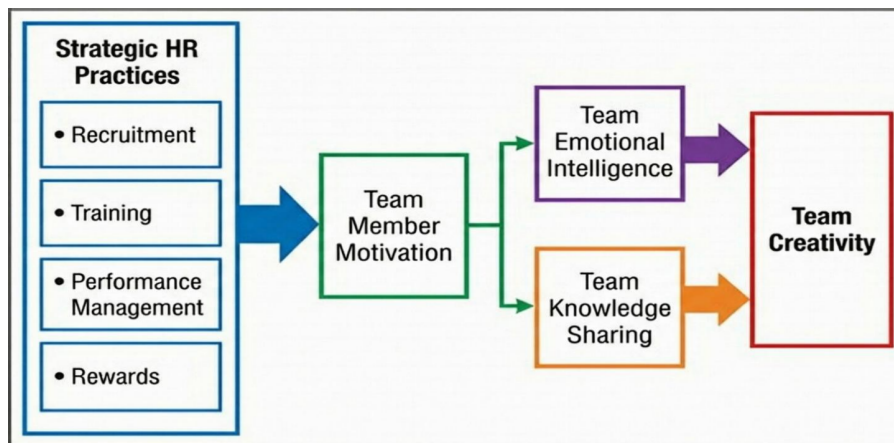
## 2. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. A Strategic HRM Framework for Team Creativity

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) posits that HR practices should be vertically aligned with organizational strategy and horizontally integrated with one another to build unique organizational capabilities that confer a competitive advantage<sup>[15]</sup>. In knowledge-intensive industries, this capability is often innovation, which fundamentally depends on team creativity. The Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, a cornerstone of SHRM theory, suggests that competitive advantage stems from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable<sup>[16, 17]</sup>. A highly creative workforce, fostered by a synergistic HR system,

represents such a resource. The model in this study (Figure 1) is situated within this SHRM framework, proposing that HR practices are the architectural tools organizations use to influence the precursors of team creativity. The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework provides a mechanistic explanation for how this occurs<sup>[18]</sup>. According to the AMO theory, performance is a function of employees' Abilities, their Motivation to perform, and the Opportunity to do so. HR practices can be designed to target each component.

HR enhances team members' creative abilities through practices like competency-based hiring, which uses behavioral interviews and psychometric assessments to identify candidates with high creative potential and emotional intelligence<sup>[19]</sup>. Furthermore, training and development initiatives can focus on strengthening emotional competencies, creative problem-solving techniques, and collaboration skills at the team level<sup>[20]</sup>. Performance management and reward systems can be designed to boost motivation by recognizing and rewarding knowledge-sharing behaviors, creative contributions, and intelligent risk-taking, rather than focusing solely on individual, short-term outputs<sup>[10]</sup>. HR can create opportunities for creative collaboration by championing the development of knowledge-sharing platforms, designing physical workspaces that encourage interaction, and fostering a culture of psychological safety where employees feel empowered to voice novel ideas<sup>[21, 22]</sup>. Consequently, this study explores the key psychological mechanisms (motivation, TEI, TKS) that a strategically designed HR system must target to successfully architect creative capacity within teams.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model Connecting HR Practices to Team Creativity Mediation.

Note: It shows how strategic HR practices, such as recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards, serve as inputs that influence team member motivation. This increased motivation subsequently boosts team creativity through the mediating roles of team emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing.

## 2.2. Team Member Motivation and Team Creativity

Team member motivation is the shared psychological drive that energizes and guides individuals' efforts toward a common goal. Specifically, intrinsic motivation acts as a strong catalyst for creativity by encouraging deep engagement with tasks, persistence, and a willingness to take intellectual risks, all of which are essential to creative work<sup>[10]</sup>. When team members are intrinsically motivated, they find fulfillment in the work itself, leading them to explore unconventional approaches and to devote more cognitive resources to their tasks<sup>[23]</sup>. This intrinsic enjoyment and sense of reward can enhance personal and social growth, further fostering creative output<sup>[10]</sup>. From a multilevel perspective, individual motivational states combine and interact to create a collective motivational climate that supports team-level creative efforts. Consequently, team member motivation is anticipated to have a direct, energizing impact on the team's overall creative performance<sup>[12]</sup>.

**H1.** *Team member motivation will have a positive and direct relationship with team creativity.*

## 2.3. The Mediating Role of Team Emotional Intelligence

Motivation explains the "why" behind creative effort, while team processes focus on "how" that effort is effectively directed. Team emotional intelligence (TEI) is a vital socio-emotional process that helps teams work cohesively<sup>[24]</sup>. It involves the collective ability to perceive and regulate members' emotions, fostering trust and psychological safety<sup>[3]</sup>. Motivated team members are more inclined to invest effort in strengthening positive relationships, which boosts the team's overall emotional intelligence<sup>[18, 25]</sup>. Teams with high TEI are better at managing interpersonal conflicts and anxiety that often accompany the creative process<sup>[26]</sup>. This supportive environment encourages members to share innovative and risky ideas without fear of judgment, promoting greater creativity<sup>[13]</sup>. Effective emotion management is a key skill for leaders and teams, impacting both performance and well-being<sup>[27]</sup>. Therefore, TEI acts as a socio-emotional facilitator, transforming motivational energy into a collaborative space where creativity can thrive.

**H2.** *Team emotional intelligence will mediate the positive relationship between team member motivation and team creativity.*

## 2.4. The Mediating Role of Team Knowledge Sharing

Team knowledge sharing (TKS) is crucial for stimulating creativity. Innovation usually doesn't occur in isolation; rather, it arises from combining and reworking the diverse knowledge, ideas, and perspectives of team members<sup>[21]</sup>. Motivated team members tend to participate more actively in sharing their expertise and are more receptive to others' insights<sup>[28]</sup>. This continuous exchange builds a collective knowledge base that the team can leverage to develop innovative solutions. Consistent research shows that TKS plays a key role in connecting team inputs to creative outcomes. To add to this research by proposing that team member motivation promotes knowledge-sharing behaviors by increasing their willingness to dedicate time and effort. This active exchange of ideas directly enhances team creativity<sup>[29]</sup>. By broadening the diversity of information, TKS encourages new combinations and connections that facilitate the team's creative process.

**H3.** *Team knowledge sharing will mediate the positive relationship between team member motivation and team creativity.*

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Study Setting

The study took place within Ghana's manufacturing sector; a country located on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea coast. Ghana offers a valuable context for exploring team creativity owing to its growing industrial sector and focus on innovation through organizational and human capital development<sup>[30]</sup>. Since independence, Ghana's government has implemented various industrialization policies that have led to diverse manufacturing industries, including food, beverages, tobacco, textiles, clothing, footwear, timber, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and metals like steel (see **Figure 2**). These industries primarily serve local markets. Recent policies aimed at boosting manufacturing capacity and enhancing export competitiveness have increased firms' reliance on team-

based innovation and collaborative problem-solving<sup>[31]</sup>. The sector is expected to experience substantial growth thanks to new policies fostering a conducive environment, especially in manufacturing and exports. The push for exports has led to the development of free zones, attracting companies to establish operations for regional and global exports.

The consumer and industrial sectors are mainly dominated by subsidiaries of multinational corporations and medium-sized local firms, such as Unilever, Coca-Cola, Toyota, and Accra Brewery<sup>[32, 33]</sup>. This institutional setting provides an appropriate context for studying how team-level processes transform motivational resources into creative outcomes.

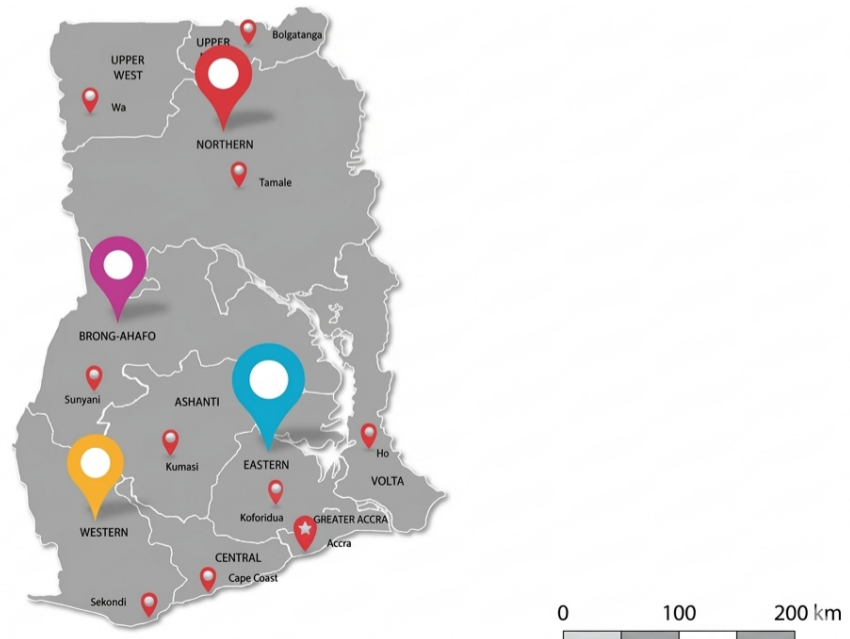


Figure 2. Map of Ghana Showing the Manufacturing Industries<sup>[34]</sup>.

### 3.2. Research Context and Participants

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey to examine the relationships among team member motivation, TEI, TKS, and team creativity. Data were collected from 352 employees across 286 teams within 22 knowledge-intensive firms in Ghana. While these companies mainly operate in manufacturing sectors, they rely on teams for activities like product design, process innovation, marketing strategies, and technology integration, making team creativity vital. Teams were included if they maintained stable membership for at least three months, which allowed norms and interpersonal dynamics to develop. The final sample comprised teams with 3 to 15 members.

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection took place from March to June 2024 through online surveys. The research team reached out to human resource departments of the target organizations to

explain the study's goals, ensure confidentiality, and obtain voluntary participation. After receiving consent, electronic questionnaires were sent to all team members and their leaders. To reduce common-method bias, a multi-source data collection approach was used: team members rated team motivation, TEI, and TKS, while team creativity was evaluated using a combined score based on ratings from both members and leaders. This method separates the sources of the predictor and criterion variables, following best practices in team research. Participants were assured of the anonymity of their responses<sup>[35, 36]</sup>. Of the 384 questionnaires distributed, 352 were completed and returned, a response rate of 91.7%. Teams with an internal response rate below 50% were excluded, resulting in a final sample of 286 teams.

### 3.4. Measures

All measurement scales were administered in English using a Likert-type format. Team-level constructs were created by aggregating individual responses. This approach

was statistically justified through inter-rater reliability and agreement indices. The intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC), ICC (1) = 0.21 and ICC (2) = 0.78, along with the mean within-group agreement index,  $rwg(j) = 0.85$ , met or surpassed standard criteria, supporting the aggregation to the team level. Although originally developed in Western contexts, the measurement scales were carefully adapted and piloted with a small sample of Ghanaian employees to ensure their cultural relevance and validity<sup>[19]</sup>.

Team Member Motivation (TMM) was assessed using an adapted 10-item scale that measured both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation related to the team, such as “I enjoy the challenge of solving creative problems with my team.” Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI) was evaluated with the 12-item Team Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, which covers four aspects: emotional perception, regulation, expression, and utilization, including items like “Our team can calm down tensions during creative debates<sup>[37]</sup>.” Team Knowledge Sharing (TKS) was gauged through an 8-item adapted scale that differentiates between explicit and tacit knowledge sharing, for example, “Members of our team share practical skills or experiences that are not written down.” Team Creativity (TC) was measured using a composite score: team members rated their creativity on a 5-item scale (e.g., “Our team often generates novel and useful ideas for solving work problems”), and team leaders provided a separate 3-item evaluation. The high, positive correlation ( $r = 0.75, p < 0.001$ ) between these ratings justified combining them into a single, more reliable measure.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis involved using SPSS 26.0 for the initial steps and Mplus 8.3 for the main structural equation modeling (SEM). The process started with calculating descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for all variables. Then, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the measurement model and confirm the distinctiveness of the four latent constructs. Finally, the proposed parallel

mediation model was tested through SEM with a robust bootstrapping method (5,000 samples). This approach allowed for the simultaneous estimation of the direct effect of motivation on creativity and the indirect effects via TEI and TKS. The significance of these indirect effects was determined by examining the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals; if the interval does not include zero, it indicates a significant mediating effect.

### 3.6. Cultural Adaptation and Pilot Study

Although originally developed in Western contexts, the measurement scales were carefully adapted to ensure their cultural relevance and validity in the Ghanaian context. The adaptation process involved several steps. First, a panel consisting of two local HR managers and two academics reviewed all items for face validity and contextual appropriateness. Minor wording adjustments were made to enhance clarity and remove potentially ambiguous Western idioms. For example, a phrase like “thinking outside the box” was rephrased to “coming up with unconventional ideas.” Following this review, the revised scales were piloted with a sample of 32 employees from 6 teams across two organizations, not included in the final study. This pilot test served to confirm the clarity of the instructions and items. Internal consistency for each scale was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, with all scales demonstrating acceptable reliability ( $\alpha > 0.75$ ) in the pilot data, confirming their suitability for the main study.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1** provides a detailed demographic profile of the 352 respondents. Most participants were male (58.9%), and over half were in the early-to-mid-career phase (52.6% aged 26–35). Their educational background was strong, with 62.2% holding diplomas or degrees, highlighting the knowledge-intensive nature of their roles.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of Respondents (N = 352).

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	207	58.9
	Female	145	41.1

Table 1. Cont.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)	18–25	94	26.6
	26–35	185	52.6
	36–45	58	16.5
	46+	15	4.3
Education	High School	26	7.3
	Diploma/Degree	219	62.2
	Master’s Degree	107	30.5

### 4.2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations among the study variables at the team level. All variables showed positive and highly significant correlations ( $p < 0.001$ ). Notably, team member motivation strongly correlated with team creativity ( $r = 0.77$ ), TEI ( $r = 0.66$ ), and TKS ( $r = 0.66$ ).

### 4.3. Measurement Model

The CFA results showed that the proposed four-factor measurement model fit the data well, as demonstrated in Table 3. It also fit significantly better than alternative models, confirming the discriminant validity of the constructs.

As shown in Table 4, all constructs exhibited high internal consistency (Composite Reliability over 0.89) and strong convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted above 0.66).

### 4.4. Hypothesis Testing

The results of the SEM analysis are displayed in Figure 3 and summarized in Table 5.

Hypothesis 1, which predicted a direct positive effect of TMM on TC, was confirmed ( $\beta = 0.20, p < 0.001$ ). Hypothesis 2, proposing that TEI mediates the TMM–TC relationship, was also supported. The indirect effect through TEI was significant (Indirect Effect = 0.062, 95% CI = [0.021, 0.108]). Hypothesis 3, indicating that TKS mediates the TMM–TC link, received strong backing. The indirect effect via TKS was highly significant and much larger than the TEI pathway (Indirect Effect = 0.477, 95% CI = [0.389, 0.571]). Overall, the total influence of motivation on creativity was 0.739. The combined indirect effect through both mediators was 0.539, with TKS accounting for approximately 88.5% of this mediated effect. The entire model explained 76.2% of the variance in team creativity ( $R^2 = 0.762$ ). The  $R^2$  value indicates that the model explains 76.2% of the variance in Team Creativity.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations (N = 286 teams).

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Team Member Motivation	4.12	0.58	1			
2. Team Emotional Intelligence	3.70	0.61	0.66**	1		
3. Team Knowledge Sharing	4.05	0.55	0.66**	0.64**	1	
4. Team Creativity	3.98	0.63	0.77**	0.68**	0.84**	1

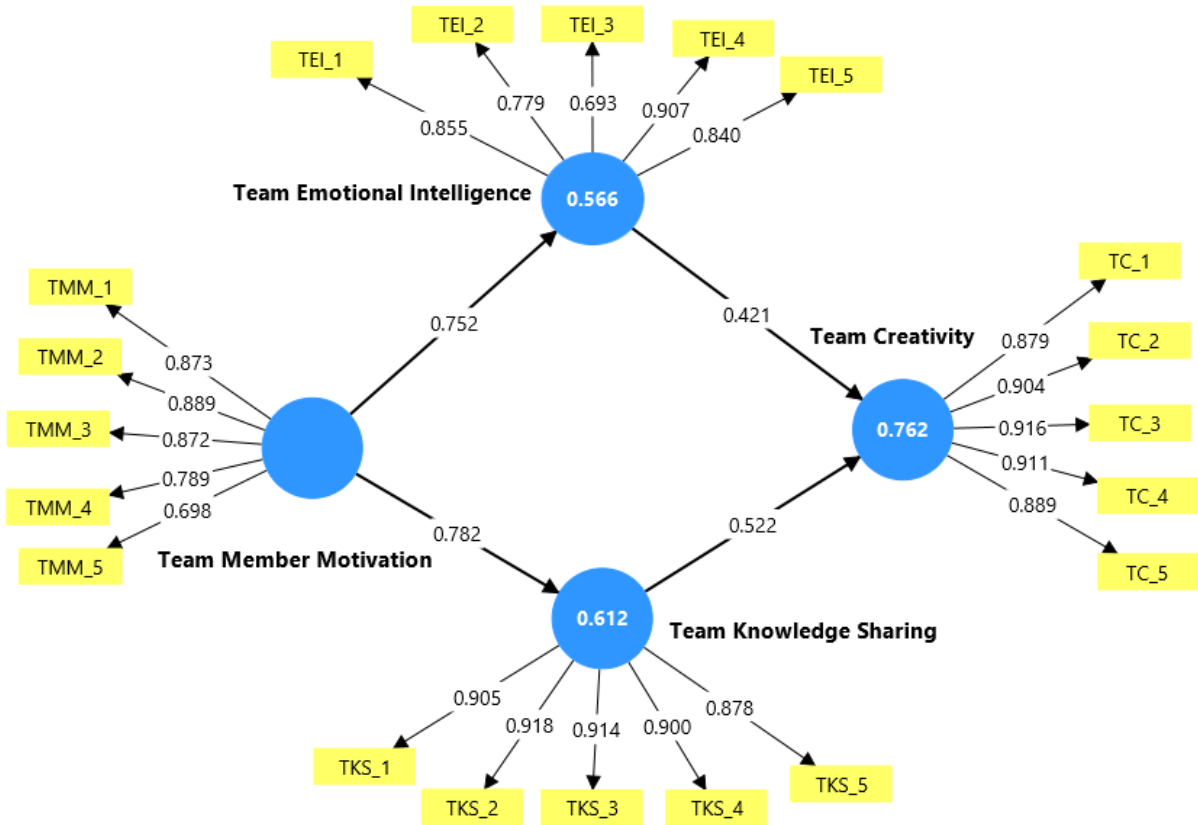
Note: N = 286 represents the number of teams, aggregated from 352 individual responses. \*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Table 3. Measurement Model Fit Indices.

Model	$\chi^2$	df	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)
Four-Factor Model	452.13	246	0.95	0.94	0.05	0.04
Three-Factor Model (TEI+TKS)	641.33	249	0.88	0.86	0.08	0.07
One-Factor Model	1,697.83	252	0.65	0.61	0.15	0.12

**Table 4.** Construct Reliability and Validity.

Construct	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
TMM	0.92	0.68
TEI	0.90	0.66
TKS	0.89	0.67
TC	0.94	0.75



**Figure 3.** Path Coefficients of the Structural Model.

Note: This figure displays the standardized path coefficients for the hypothesized parallel mediation model. All paths shown are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 5.** Results of Hypothesis Testing (Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects).

Path	Estimate ( $\beta$ )	SE	95% Confidence Interval (CI)	Result
Direct Effect TMM -> TC (H1)	0.200	0.045	0.112, 0.288	Supported
Indirect Effects TMM -> TEI -> TC (H2)	0.062	0.022	0.021, 0.108	Supported
TMM -> TKS -> TC (H3)	0.477	0.047	0.389, 0.571	Supported
Total Indirect Effect	0.539	0.051	0.439, 0.641	
Total Effect	0.739	0.039	0.663, 0.815	

## 5. Discussion

This study aimed to understand the complex ways in which team member motivation leads to actual team creativity. It tested a dual mediation model that examines both a

socio-emotional route through team emotional intelligence (TEI) and a cognitive route through team knowledge sharing (TKS). Our results support this comprehensive framework, offering deeper insight into how strategic human resource management (SHRM) can foster an organization’s innovative

ability. The findings show that motivation directly influences creativity strongly, but its greatest effect is through knowledge sharing, which is promoted by a positive emotional environment. This discussion will analyze these findings, discuss their implications for theory and HR practice, recognize the study's limitations, and propose directions for future research.

### 5.1. Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this current research confirm a strong, direct relationship between team member motivation and creativity, supporting theories that suggest motivated individuals show higher persistence and cognitive flexibility, both of which are crucial for creativity. The significant direct effect ( $\beta = 0.20$ ) indicates that motivation naturally enhances creativity, regardless of other team factors. This highlights the value of HR practices that create an intrinsically motivating environment. The key discovery is the dominant mediating role of team knowledge sharing (TKS), whose indirect effect greatly exceeds that of TEI, representing 88.5% of the total mediated effect. This suggests that motivation primarily functions to activate the collective cognitive process. Motivated members are more willing to share tacit knowledge, actively listen, and engage in constructive debates that synthesize diverse ideas into innovative solutions<sup>[38]</sup>. TKS, therefore, is not just a process but the main mechanism through which motivation translates into creative output.

While the cognitive pathway via TKS was predominant, the socio-emotional pathway through team emotional intelligence (TEI) also played an important, though smaller, mediating role. This aligns with recent research emphasizing affect and emotional regulation in organizations<sup>[18]</sup> TEI functions as a crucial “socio-emotional lubricant” for the cognitive process of TKS. Teams with high TEI manage conflicts better, build trust, and foster psychological safety, all essential for open intellectual exchange<sup>[19]</sup>. When team members feel emotionally secure, they are more likely to share unconventional ideas, challenge norms, and engage in productive conflict, leading to breakthroughs in innovation. The strong positive correlation between TEI and TKS ( $r = 0.64$ ) supports this synergistic link, showing that a team's emotional skills directly support its cognitive performance. Therefore, TEI is not merely a “soft skill” but a strategic enabler of the cognitive work necessary for creativity.

### 5.2. Theoretical and Strategic HRM Implications

This research offers several important theoretical insights. It broadens the SHRM literature by presenting a micro-foundational model that clarifies the link between HR systems and firm innovation<sup>[39]</sup>. By incorporating the AMO framework, it shows how HR practices build creative capacity by systematically improving team members' Abilities (through TEI development), Motivation (via rewards and job design), and Opportunities (through TKS platforms). This links high-level HR strategy to the psychological processes at the team level that generate value. It supports the HR value chain idea, where HR practices shape employee attitudes and behaviors (motivation, sharing), which then impact operational results (creativity) and strategic aims<sup>[40]</sup>. The study thus emphasizes HR's role not just as a support function but as a strategic architect of human capital that drives competitive advantage<sup>[8]</sup>.

Second, the study advances the team creativity literature by simultaneously testing and comparing cognitive and socio-emotional pathways. This parallel mediation approach offers a more holistic view than studies focusing on single mediators, revealing the relative importance of each pathway and its interplay. By integrating concepts from motivation theory, emotional intelligence, and knowledge management, we offer an integrative framework that better captures the multifaceted nature of collaborative innovation<sup>[41]</sup>.

The practical implications for HR practitioners are direct and actionable, as outlined in the HR Practice Roadmap (**Table 6**). To boost motivation, HR should champion job designs that enhance autonomy, task significance, and feedback. Recruitment processes should use behavioral interviewing to screen for intrinsic motivation and collaborative orientation, while performance management systems must evolve to reward creative contributions and intelligent failures<sup>[42]</sup>. To facilitate TKS, the primary driver, HR, should lead investments in collaborative technologies (e.g., shared digital workspaces) and physical environments that encourage interaction<sup>[43]</sup>. Crucially, leadership development programs are essential. Leaders act as key multipliers of HR initiatives, and they must be trained to model knowledge-sharing behaviors, foster psychological safety, and create a culture where intellectual curiosity is valued<sup>[3]</sup>

**Table 6.** HR Practice Roadmap for Fostering Team Creativity.

Strategic Goal	HR Intervention	Description	Implementation Challenges
Boost Motivation	Competency-Based Recruitment	Use behavioral interviews and psychometric tests to select for intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and a collaborative mindset.	High cost of validated assessments; requires trained interviewers; potential for cultural bias in tests.
	Job Enrichment & Design	Redesign roles to increase autonomy, task significance, and direct feedback, making work more inherently rewarding.	Resistance from managers accustomed to command-and-control; complexity in redesigning interconnected workflows.
	Innovation-Focused Rewards	Implement recognition programs and bonuses that reward creative contributions, experimentation, and knowledge sharing, not just outputs.	Difficulty in objectively measuring creativity, risk of fostering unhealthy competition if not designed carefully, and budget constraints.
Facilitate Knowledge Sharing (TKS)	Collaborative Platforms	Invest in and train teams on digital tools (e.g., Slack, Teams, Miro) and physical spaces (e.g., project rooms) that enable seamless interaction.	High initial cost of technology; low adoption rates without proper change management; data security concerns.
	Knowledge Sharing Routines	Institutionalize practices like after-action reviews, peer assists, and communities of practice to make knowledge exchange a regular habit.	Requires significant time commitment; may be seen as “extra work” if not integrated into performance goals; facilitator scarcity.
	Leadership Modeling	Train leaders to actively solicit ideas, admit their own knowledge gaps, and publicly credit team members for their contributions.	Requires leaders to be vulnerable, which can be difficult in hierarchical cultures; needs sustained effort to build trust.
Enhance Emotional Intelligence (TEI)	Targeted EI Training	Provide workshops on self-awareness, empathy, conflict resolution, and giving constructive feedback.	Scarcity of qualified facilitators; difficulty in measuring behavioral change and ROI; employee skepticism about “soft skills” training.
	Psychological Safety Initiatives	Train leaders to foster an environment of trust where team members feel safe to take interpersonal risks, such as voicing dissenting opinions.	Deeply rooted in organizational culture, making it slow to change; requires consistent and authentic leadership commitment.
	Team Coaching & Facilitation	Use skilled coaches to help teams navigate emotional conflicts and develop productive norms for communication and collaboration.	High cost of external coaches; requires internal HR to have advanced coaching skills; teams may resist third-party intervention.

To enhance TEI, HR can design and implement targeted training on emotional self-awareness, empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution<sup>[44]</sup>. Leadership training should incorporate modules on emotionally intelligent leadership, equipping managers to build trust and provide support, which is particularly critical in high-stakes environments<sup>[45]</sup>.

The findings also have specific implications for the Ghanaian context. The nation’s collectivist cultural orientation may provide a fertile ground for knowledge sharing, but this can be counteracted by hierarchical organizational structures. HR in Ghanaian firms, particularly local enterprises with resource constraints, can use these findings to focus on

low-cost, high-impact interventions like leadership training and fostering communities of practice, rather than expensive technology platforms. For the multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in Ghana, the challenge is to adapt global HR policies to local cultural norms to effectively foster the psychological safety needed for creativity.

### 5.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations that open avenues for future research. First, the cross-sectional design precludes definitive causal claims. Although our

model is theoretically grounded, longitudinal or experimental studies are needed to establish causality more firmly and to capture the dynamic evolution of these team processes over a project's lifecycle. Second, while we used a multi-source approach for the dependent variable, our reliance on self-reports for predictors and mediators carries a risk of common method bias. Future research could strengthen the findings by incorporating objective creativity metrics (e.g., patent submissions, new product revenue) and observational data on team interactions to provide a more robust, multi-method assessment.

Third, a significant limitation is that we inferred the role of HR practices but did not measure them directly. This measurement gap is a critical area for future inquiry. A more comprehensive SHRM study could adopt a multi-level design where organizational HR systems are measured directly through surveys with HR managers. This organizational-level data on the presence and sophistication of high-performance work systems could then be linked to team-level processes and outcomes to test for moderated mediation. Such a design would allow researchers to examine whether the positive relationships found in our model are stronger in organizations with more developed and strategically aligned HR systems. Finally, the study's context in Ghanaian knowledge-intensive firms may limit generalizability. Future research should replicate this model in different cultural and industrial settings. It would be particularly insightful to investigate these dynamics in fully virtual or hybrid teams, where digital communication tools mediate emotional cues and knowledge exchange, potentially altering the relative importance of TEI and TKS. Exploring how emerging technologies like generative AI can augment or hinder these collaborative processes also presents a fertile ground for future investigation.

## 6. Conclusions

This research demonstrates that team members' motivation significantly boosts team creativity through both direct effects and mediated pathways. While motivation is an inherent fuel for creative work, its impact is powerfully amplified when channeled through critical team processes. Team knowledge sharing emerges as the primary cognitive engine that transforms motivational energy into innovative

output. Concurrently, team emotional intelligence serves as the essential socio-emotional lubricant, creating the trust and psychological safety necessary for that engine to run smoothly. For HR managers and strategic leaders, the message is clear: architecting an organization's creative capacity requires a dual-pronged approach. Fostering individual motivation is the starting point, but it must be systematically supported by interventions that build team-level capabilities in both knowledge sharing and emotional regulation. By strategically investing in these interconnected cognitive and socio-emotional competencies, organizations can unlock the full creative potential of their teams and build a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly complex world.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, N.A.A., C.A.A. and G.S.G.; methodology, N.A.A., G.S.G. and J.D.; software, G.S.G.; validation, C.A.A., N.A.A. and J.K.B.; formal analysis, G.S.G.; investigation, N.A.A. and J.D.; resources, N.A.A.; data curation, G.S.G. and J.K.B.; writing—original draft preparation, N.A.A., C.A.A. and J.D.; writing—review and editing, J.K.B. and N.A.A.; visualization, N.A.A. and G.S.G.; supervision, N.A.A.; project administration, N.A.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Taiyuan University of Technology in China. Before data collection, the research goals were explained to local officials and community leaders. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses and informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty.

## Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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