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When Intrinsic Rewards Foster Creativity: The Roles of Job Satisfaction, Creative Self-Efficacy, and Affective Commitment

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Abstract: Despite limited research on how intrinsic rewards for creativity translate into creative outcomes in developing-country contexts, this study presents a moderated mediation model to examine their effects on academic staff creativity. Using matched data from 400 faculties and their direct supervisors across four public universities in Kabul, Afghanistan, and employing Amos 28 for analysis, we found that job satisfaction mediated the positive relationship between intrinsic rewards for creativity and faculty creativity. Drawing on social cognitive theory and the interactionist perspective, creative self-efficacy served as a boundary condition, strengthening the relationship between intrinsic rewards for creativity and job satisfaction at higher levels. Integrating social exchange theory and the interactionist perspective, affective commitment similarly moderated the link between job satisfaction and faculty creativity, with higher levels amplifying this relationship. These findings contribute to creativity literature by revealing conditional mechanisms through which intrinsic rewards foster faculty creativity. Practical implications for human resource management, limitations, and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: *Intrinsic Rewards for Creativity; Job Satisfaction; Affective Commitment; Creative Self-Efficacy; Faculty Creativity.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, scholars agree that employee creativity functions as a vital factor that determines organizational success within competitive markets and a dynamic business environment (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Coelho et al., 2011; Farooq et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2018; Zhou & George, 2001). Employee creativity produces innovative solutions that guide enhancements throughout organizational areas like products, services, and procedures while helping organizations embrace market transformations and customer needs along with emerging business prospects (Alikaj et al., 2021). Organizations make employee creativity improvement their key priority to maintain their competitive edge and relevance in market competition (Bhatti et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2015; Ren & Shen, 2024; Richter et al., 2012). However, research is still being done to determine the parameters and strategies for fostering employee creativity. Although it has been demonstrated that intrinsic rewards like fulfillment and recognition affect creative behaviors, effective strategies require an understanding of how (through what mediators)

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and when (under what conditions) these rewards interact with other organizational and personal factors.

This research evaluates the varied relationships between intrinsic rewards and job satisfaction, together with employee creativity and the key mediating and moderating variables under the theories of social cognitive theory and social exchange theory. Research examines two effects in this study by investigating how job satisfaction functions as both a mediator between intrinsic rewards and employee creativity and how creative self-efficacy operates as a moderator between intrinsic rewards and job satisfaction. The study investigates the way affective commitment moderates the link between job satisfaction and employee creativity. The research uses a dataset from four public universities in Kabul, Afghanistan, to advance comprehension of these influencing factors within the context of a developing country.

Research has demonstrated that intrinsic rewards create employee creativity (Amabile, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2000), but fails to explain either the interconnecting mechanisms or the limitations that drive intrinsic rewards' effect on employee creativity. Creative self-efficacy plays an important function in understanding how intrinsic rewards influence job satisfaction and creativity, according to Tierney and Farmer (2002). Job satisfaction produces stronger positive effects on creativity because affective commitment creates emotional loyalty toward the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). This study intends to clarify how intrinsic rewards finally support employee creativity through job satisfaction, creative self-efficacy, and affective commitment by integrating these variables into a moderated mediation model.

The research contributes important insights to employee creativity theory through its complete model, which describes mediation and moderation effects and boundary condition factors. This research expands recent theories by examining these connections in Afghanistan's higher education system, which brings useful intelligence to academic scholars and practical professionals who wish to boost organizational and academic staff creativity, specifically within developing nations. The research findings will guide policy development for creativity support systems, which should lead to enhanced organizational performance and educational innovations within higher education institutions.

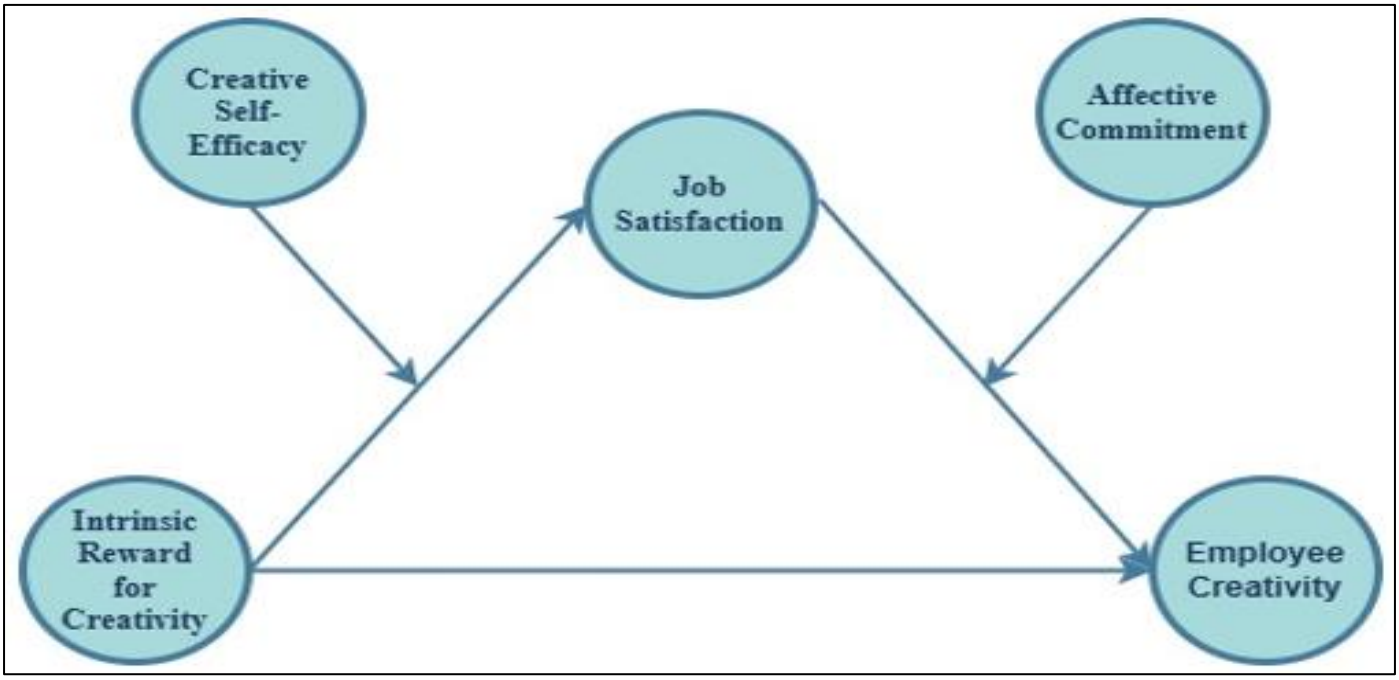

Fig 1 Conceptual Model

II. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

➢ *Intrinsic Rewards and Employee Creativity*

Intrinsic rewards specifically designed for creativity serve to boost intrinsic motivation within specific professions because they indicate positive creative talent (Gu & Liu, 2023; Obicci, 2015; Pollak & Sirven, 2016; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). Employees receive these intrinsic incentives through their job activities, which generate both personal and professional advancement as well as feelings of accomplishment, joy, and perseverance (Yoon et al., 2015; Yoon & Choi, 2010). A person's intrinsic incentives, which stem from their job motivation, drive their creativity (Hwang & Jung, 2018). Research by Niguse and Getachew (2019) shows that workers who receive intrinsic rewards demonstrate superior job dedication and experience that their essential psychological requirements are adequately met. The impact of intrinsic rewards on individual job motivation remains substantial since it influences how motivated people become to dedicate effort to their tasks (Aletraris, 2010). According to Bidee et al. (2013) and Saether (2020), intrinsic rewards boost both performance persistence and task engagement, while providing internal rewards encourages workers to demonstrate enhanced ability and deliver creative performance with dedicated work. Therefore, we propose that:

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- *H_1*. Employee creativity is influenced by intrinsic rewards for creativity.

➢ *Role Job Satisfaction as a Mediator*

Job satisfaction is described as the positive emotions resulting from one's job experiences and evaluations (Akgunduz et al., 2018). According to Spanjol et al. (2015), employees who have an intrinsic drive to be creative are more likely to be satisfied with their professions. Multiple studies demonstrate that engaging in creative activities increases job satisfaction, helping employees in addressing several types of problems (Burić & Kim, 2021; Miao et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019). The combination of intrinsic rewards with intrinsic task motivation allows employees to understand their work better and release their emotions freely to achieve higher job satisfaction (Linz & Semykina, 2012; Mark, 2016).

According to Madigan and Kim (2021), employees experience improved creativity through internal incentives, which create a direct link to enhanced job satisfaction. The positive role of intrinsic rewards as motivation for job satisfaction arises when workers develop confidence through these rewards, which focuses on the significance of work-related outcomes (Akgunduz et al., 2018; Alice & Michael, 2009; Anggarwati & Eliyana, 2015; Kim & Lee, 2010; Spanjol et al., 2015). Hence, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

- *H_2*. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between intrinsic rewards for creativity and employee creativity.

➢ *Creative Self-Efficacy as a Moderator*

Creative self-efficacy describes the self-assurance people exhibit in their capacity to create novel and beneficial ideas at work (Bandura, 1998). Arthur et al. (2025), together with Karimi et al. (2022), agree that such self-belief manifests as a strong internal conviction in one's ability to handle creative challenges. Studies show that persons with strong self-efficacy develop constructive answers to problems that arise throughout creative work (Kruskopf et al., 2024; Korzynski and Olga, 2025; Vieira et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2024).

Research suggests that individuals with high levels of creative self-efficacy are more likely to engage in different tasks and contribute to supportive creative initiatives (Burić & Kim, 2021; Murat, 2025; Özdemir et al., 2024). As per social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1982), we argue that individual creative self-efficacy acts as a key factor to shape how intrinsic creative rewards affect job satisfaction among employees. The positive effects of creative self-efficacy on employee creativity arise from its establishment as a personal moderating factor according to these people studies (Gelaidan et al. 2024, Özdemir et al. 2024, and Zhang et al. 2024).

Previous studies have demonstrated that people with high creative self-efficacy embrace numerous job responsibilities and increase their commitment to developing creative performance (Burić & Kim, 2021; Murat, 2025; Özdemir et al., 2024). We use social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1982) to explain how creative self-efficacy acts as a fundamental individual variable that controls the connection between intrinsic creativity rewards and workforce job satisfaction. Creative self-efficacy operates as a personal intervening factor (Gelaidan et al., 2024; Özdemir et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024) that strengthens employee creativity (Ren & Shen, 2024; Wardana et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2024) because of its role as a personal moderator.

Three key ways perceived intrinsic rewards affect creative self-efficacy follow social cognitive theory (Liu et al., 2016; Muzafary et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2013; Vieira et al., 2024; Zeb et al., 2024). First, strong social motivators in intrinsic rewards increase employee self-confidence (Wang et al., 2013; Vieira et al., 2024; Zeb et al., 2024) and generate their "can-do" spirit (Dave et al., 2011). Second, people develop successful skills to surpass challenges when they obtain intrinsic incentives (Muzafary et al., 2019). Employee self-efficacy derives mainly from these mastery experiences (Liu et al., 2016). Finally, Strong emotional support from perceived intrinsic rewards helps employees handle their physical responses to new and challenging work assignments, thus strengthening their creative ability assessments and creative self-efficacy (Blain & Sharot, 2021; Park & Yang, 2019; Tzur et al., 2017).

According to Fayaz and Gulzar (2024), creative self-efficacy fosters employee creativity, despite Jasmine (2025) reporting its parallel effect on job satisfaction. Employees who demonstrate high creative self-efficacy display job satisfaction while creating innovative ideas that help organizations advance their creative output (Gelaidan et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2024). Employees with creative self-efficacy gain the capability to decide independently, which significantly impacts their employment situation (Tierney & Farmer, 2002; Li et al., 2022) and enables them to take full control of their work approach. Workers who demonstrate high creative self-efficacy achieve greater fulfilment and autonomy and develop stronger confidence when responding to intrinsic rewards. People who demonstrate strong creative self-efficacy experience increased job satisfaction while developing unique solutions to accomplish their work assignments (Gelaidan et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023). Leaders need to develop creative self-efficacy as a dispositional resource within employees because this capability lets people escape typical routines to identify groundbreaking solutions for their work challenges (Jiang & Gu, 2017; Wardana et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2024). Therefore, we propose that:

- *H_3*. The effect of intrinsic rewards for creativity on employee job satisfaction is moderated by creative self-efficacy, with relationships being strengthened when creative self-efficacy is high rather than low.

➢ *Affective Commitment as a Moderator*

Meyer and Allen (1991) established that affective commitment defines workplace emotional attachment, organizational affiliation, and active engagement between employees and their companies. Individuals with high affective commitment maintain strong emotional bonds with their work environment and organization, leading to

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organizationally beneficial behaviours based on Allen and Meyer (1990), Kuo (2015), and Liu et al. (2019). Studies establish that affective commitment produces several beneficial results, including increased job satisfaction (Kaur et al., 2020; Saha & Kumar, 2018; Yew, 2008) and increased creativity (Alfaris & Zakiy, 2021; Javed et al., 2021; Pratama & Prayogi, 2024). When employees develop emotional ties with their organization they become more active in innovative behaviors, which leads to improved creative performance of their team (Asif et al., 2019; Khaola, 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2020).

The existing literature demonstrates a connection between job satisfaction and employee creativity, so we present affective commitment as an essential moderating mechanism. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) supports this claim because satisfied employees develop organizational devotion that fosters creativity. Employees who demonstrate strong affective commitment actively extend their roles to generate innovative ideas together with beneficial solutions for both colleagues and the organization (Asif et al., 2019; Astuty & Udin, 2020; Malik et al., 2019; Safari et al., 2020). The lack of emotional dedication toward organizational success reduces the creative motivation of employees who demonstrate low affective commitment (Liu et al., 2019).

Affective commitment deepens employee emotional dedication, which further strengthens employee creativity alongside job satisfaction. According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) employees who feel strongly committed to their organization perceive their workplace environment as supportive for creative pursuits. The positive emotional bond builds stronger connections between creative workplace conduct and employee satisfaction (Asif et al., 2019; Kaur et al., 2020; Martinaityte et al., 2019). Employees who demonstrate pride in their organizations and belong to them tend toward creative performance, particularly when they are satisfied with their roles (Fidan & Oztürk, 2015; Miao & Cao, 2019).

Affective commitment increases intrinsic motivation to be creative within employees (Ajmal et al., 2024; Luturlean et al., 2020; Muchtadin & Sundary, 2023). The workplace engagement of employees results in substantial job satisfaction effects on their creative work performance (Abimbola et al., 2020; Aletaiby et al., 2021; Mo & Borbon, 2022; Ngwama & Ogaga-Oghene, 2022) .Positive devotion creates this linkage by enabling employees to see their roles with increased significance, which inspires them to allocate time for innovative work (Ocampo et al., 2024; Sarita, 2023). Job satisfaction becomes more powerful for creativity enhancement because affective commitment serves to develop job satisfaction levels. Organizations gain new ideas and solutions from employees who demonstrate higher affective commitment because of their emotional involvement with their organization and work. We recommend the following conclusions based on our research findings.

- *H_4*. The relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity is moderated by affective commitment, with the connection being stronger when affective commitment is high rather than low

III. METHOD

➢ *Sample and Procedure*

The research took place between May and April 2024 at four public universities in Kabul City through executive programs involving the Academic Staff and their supervising managers. The data collection involved multiple sources to minimize common method bias. Faculties evaluated the intrinsic rewards for creativity as the independent variable, while they assessed job satisfaction as the mediating variable, together with creative self-efficacy and affective commitment as the moderating variables, and their direct supervisors evaluated employee creativity as the outcome variable.

The researcher showed each participant personnel and managers how the study worked while clarifying the objectives and procedures. All study participation was entirely voluntary, and participants received guarantees about their identity confidentiality. Surveys underwent coding beforehand to confirm supervisor-employee rating alignment and work team validation purposes. Each survey respondent received a private envelope to place their finished questionnaire, and the researchers collected the surveys independently from the participants.

The survey tools underwent translation from English into Persian through the translation-back-translation method (Brislin, 1980) to achieve precise language terms while maintaining cultural sensitivity for the target participants. The survey team approached 460 Academic Staff and their direct supervisors who worked in the four Public Universities. The study retained 400 valid employee-supervisor matches by removing 60 responses from self-reported questionnaires, which amounted to an 87 percent response rate from invited participants.

Kabul Medical University comprised 10% of respondents, while they made up 52% at Kabul University, alongside 18% of Kabul Polytechnic University and 20% from Kabul Education University. Most respondents (90.3%) were men who fell within a 25 to 65 age range. A substantial number of 23.8% participants maintained six years or more of work experience within their careers. The study participants held different degrees, among which 49% had bachelor's degrees, 33% earned master's degrees, while 18% possessed doctorates.

➢ *Control Variables*

Past research has spotlighted demographic variables that affect employee creativity, such as age, gender, education, and work duration (Ocampo et al., 2024; Yoon et al., 2015). The research integrated these variables as control elements because they could shape the principal study relationships.

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➢ *Measures*

The seven-item scale developed by Baer et al., (2003) evaluated intrinsic rewards for creativity, showing reliability (α) of.88. The job satisfaction measurement scale by Hackman and Oldham, (1975) contains five items with an observed reliability (α) of .91. The evaluation of affective commitment in this study adopted Meyer and Allen (1997) three-factor model. To measure the construct, we adopted the scale created by Meyer and Allen (1991) with eight validated items (α = .92). The five-item creative self-efficacy scale developed by Schwarzer et al. (1999) received (α =.92) in initial tests, and Malik et al. (2015) made modifications to it. Zhou and George's (2001) nine-item scale achieved excellent reliability with a value of .91 while measuring employee creativity. The five-point Likert scale served to measure all study items, whereby respondents used 1 for "strongly disagree" and 5 for "strongly agree."

IV. RESULTS

➢ *Measures*

A complete report of study variable means and standard deviations, along with their correlations and reliability scores, appears in Table 3. We employed Amos 28 for a Confirmatory Factor Analysis to test the core components' (intrinsic rewards for creativity, creative self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and employee creativity) convergent and discriminant validity. Analysis results in Table 1 reveal that the data fit well with the initial four-factor model, which produced $\chi^2 = 289.77$ ($p < 0.001$), RMSEA = 0.05, IFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.93, and CFI = 0.98. Multiple goodness-of-fit indices (CFI, TLI, RMSEA) along with chi-square difference tests demonstrated the enhanced superiority of the four-factor model above other models, including three-factor, two-factor, and one-factor configurations (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

The validity and reliability assessment established the validity of the measuring model. Table 2 provides specific results. The research evaluated the reliability of individual items by analyzing how much each item loaded onto its intended construct. High dependability values were observed in independent items across all dimensions of the constructs according to the obtained results. The used scales showed high internal consistency and dependability since all Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged between .88 and .91, exceeding the accepted threshold of .70.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) provided the measurements for the convergent validity assessment of each construct. Acceptable convergent validity emerged because the AVE values ranged from.55 to .57, and all values surpassed the minimum requirement of .50. The obtained CR values fell between .98 and .99, which exceeded .70, thus validating the convergence criteria for the measurement model.

The discriminant validity assessment followed a process where construct-squared correlations were compared to individual construct AVE values (Barclay et al., 1995). Discriminant validity evidence is strong because Fornell and Larcker's (1981) recommendation implies that construct squares should be lower than AVE values (Table 2).

➢ *Common Method Bias*

The single-factor test from Harman serves as recommended by Podsakoff et al., (2003) to handle common method bias. A series of exploratory factor analysis evaluated all survey items. The initial component only accounted for 28% of the total variance in the data and factor analysis supported multiple factors. The investigation reveals that common method bias does not present a severe risk due to these findings thus demonstrating the validity of collected data.

Table 1 The Following Table Presents Model Comparison Outcomes which Include Goodness-of-Fit Metrics from Different Specifications.

Models	Factors	$\chi 2$	$\Delta\chi 2^{/df}$	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
1. Baseline five-factor model	IRC, CSE, JS, AC, ECR	289.77^{***}	2.246	0.96	0.93	0.98	0.05
2. Four-factor	IRC, CSE, JS, AC+CR	1421.33^{***}	10.760	0.88	0.80	0.89	0.14
3. Three-factor	IRC, CSE, JS+AC, ECR	2912.34^{***}	21.734	0.85	0.79	0.80	0.16
4. Two-factor model	IRC+CSE+JS+AC, ECR	3664.68^{***}	28.627	0.78	0.77	0.79	0.20
5. One-factor model	IRC+CSE+JS+AC+ECR	4102.21^{***}	30.561	0.72	0.71	0.71	0.23

These values show that χ^2 represents the Chi-square value and $\Delta\chi^2$ stands for Chi-square difference together with d.f. indicating degrees of freedom and IFI representing Incremental Fit Index alongside TLI standing for Tucker-Lewis Index while CFI means Comparative Fit Index and RMSEA represents Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. *** stands for a p-value lower than 0.001.

The baseline four-factor model demonstrated the optimal fit with the data which was confirmed through its superior fit indices ($\chi^2 = 289.77$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.05, IFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.93, and CFI = 0.98). This surpasses all alternative models considered. The fit quality declined across three alternating models beginning with the three-factor then moving to the two-factor before ending with the one-factor model based on χ^2 values and fit indices results.

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Table 2 The Following Table Displays the Factor Loadings and Reliability Statistics as well as Validity Measures Determined for this Study's Constructs.

Constructs	Item	Loadings	α	KMO	AVE	CR
Intrinsic Rewards	IR1	0.782				
	IR2	0.834				
	IR3	0.923				
	IR4	0.837				
	IR5	0.897				
	IR6	0.911				
	IR7	0.881	0.88	0.867	0.56	0.98
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.874				
	JS2	0.847				
	JS3	0.976				
	JS4	0.799				
	JS5	0.865	0.91	0.904	0.57	0.98
Creative Self-Efficacy	CSE1	0.987				
	CSE2	0.876				
	CSE3	0.911				
	CSE4	0.895				
	CSE5	0.912	0.92	0.804	0.56	0.99
Affective Commitment	AC1	0.888				
	AC2	0.879				
	AC3	0.882				
	AC4	0.887				
	AC5	0.884				
	AC6	0.892				
	AC7	0.881				
	AC8	0,879	0.90	0.834	0.55	0.96
Employee Creativity	ECR1	0.914				
	ECR2	0.925				
	ECR3	0.984				
	ECR4	0.971				
	ECR5	0.799				
	ECR6	0.888				
	ECR7	0.901				
	ECR8	0.915				
	ECR9	0.891	0.91	0.897	0.55	0.97

The statistical indicators include Cronbach's alpha as α while the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy appears as KMO and Average variance extracted appears as AVE. Composite reliability is abbreviated as CR. CR = Composite reliability. IR, intrinsic rewards; JS, job satisfaction; CSE, creative self-efficacy; AC, affective commitment; ECR, employee creativity.

Table 3 Means, SD, Correlations, Average Variances Extracted Values, and Tests of Discriminant Validity for the Variables.

	Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Gender	4.72	0.78	-								
2.	Age	5.71	0.87	.30*	-							
3.	Work Tenure	5.57	0.86	.11	.55**	-						
4.	Education	4.59	0.45	.12	.33**	.44***	-					
5.	IRC	4.67	0.68	.13	.10	.34***	.11	-				
6.	JS	5.67	0.79	.12	.11	.32***	.12	.45***	-			
7.	CSE	5.34	0.87	.10	.10	.15*	.10	.14*	.44***	-		
8.	AC	5.33	0.86	.10	.10	.15*	.10	.14*	.44***	39***	-	
9.	ECR	5.55	0.88	.11	.12	.11	.09	.37***	.46***	.42***	46***	-

Note: N = 400. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. *IR, intrinsic rewards; JS, job satisfaction; CSE, creative self-efficacy; AC, affective commitment; ECR, employee creativity.*

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Table 4 Results of Hierarchical Regression.

Independent	**Employee Creativity**		**Job Satisfaction**					
	Model1	*Model2*	*Model3*	*Model4*	*Model5*	*Model6*	*Model7*	
Control Variable								
	Gender	.19	.17	.12	.13	.15	.13	.16
	Age	.15	.14	.18	.19	.17	.16	18
	Work Tenure	.18	.16	.14	.17	.18	.14	.12
	Education	.17	.18	.17	.19	.15	.15	.11
Main Effects								
	IR		.33***	.40***		.42***	.26***	.31***
Mediator Effects								
	JS			.44***				
Moderator Effects								
	CSE						.27***	.30***
	AC			.33***				
Interaction-Effects								
	JS × AC			.20***				
	IR × CSE							.21***
	F	0.782	89.039	103.433	190.642	36.311	37.234	40.780
	R^2	.005	.396	.478	.663	.685	.721	.736
	Adjusted R^2	.001	.391	473	.660	.675	.677	.788
	Change R^2	.005	.391	.082	.186	.194	.189	.198

N= 400; IR, intrinsic rewards; JS, job satisfaction; CSE, creative self-efficacy; AC, affective commitment; ECR, employee creativity.

➢ *Hypothesis Testing*

To test the proposed hypotheses, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted using a phased approach. This method allowed for a systematic examination of the direct, mediating, and moderating effects while controlling for relevant demographic variables. Specifically, gender, age, work experience, and educational level were entered as control variables in the first step of all regression models.

➢ *Direct and Mediation Effects*

In the second step, intrinsic rewards for creativity were entered as the independent variable to examine their direct effect on employee creativity. The results indicated a significant and positive relationship between intrinsic rewards for creativity and employee creativity (β = .33, p < .001), providing support for Hypothesis 1.

To test the mediating role of job satisfaction (Hypothesis 2), the mediation procedure recommended by Mathieu and Taylor (2006) was applied. The findings revealed that intrinsic rewards for creativity were positively associated with job satisfaction (β = .42, p < .001). Moreover, job satisfaction demonstrated a significant positive effect on employee creativity (β = .44, p < .001). When job satisfaction was included in the regression model, the direct relationship between intrinsic rewards for creativity and employee creativity remained significant but was reduced in magnitude (β = .40, p < .001). This reduction indicates the presence of a partial mediation effect, thereby offering partial support for Hypothesis 2.

➢ *Moderation Effects*

To examine the proposed moderating effects (Hypotheses 3 and 4), moderation analyses were conducted following the guidelines of Aiken and West (1991). Creative self-efficacy was tested as a moderator in the relationship between intrinsic rewards for creativity and job satisfaction, while affective commitment was examined as a moderator in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity.

To minimize potential multicollinearity issues, only the focal predictors, moderators, and their interaction terms were included in the moderation models. The interaction between intrinsic rewards for creativity and creative self-efficacy was found to be significant in predicting job satisfaction (β = .21, p < .001). Similarly, the interaction between job satisfaction and affective commitment significantly predicted employee creativity (β = .20, p < .001).

➢ *Simple Slope Analysis*

To further interpret the interaction effects, simple slope analyses were conducted, and interaction plots were generated at one standard deviation above and below the mean of the moderator variables, as recommended by Aiken and West (1991). As illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, intrinsic rewards for creativity were positively and significantly related to job satisfaction among employees with high creative self-efficacy (β = .55, p < .001). However, this relationship was not statistically significant among employees with low creative self-efficacy (β = .10, ns).

Likewise, job satisfaction exhibited a strong positive relationship with employee creativity among individuals with high affective commitment (β = .70, p < .001), whereas this relationship was nonsignificant for those with low affective commitment (β = .06, ns). These findings provide full support for Hypotheses 3 and 4.

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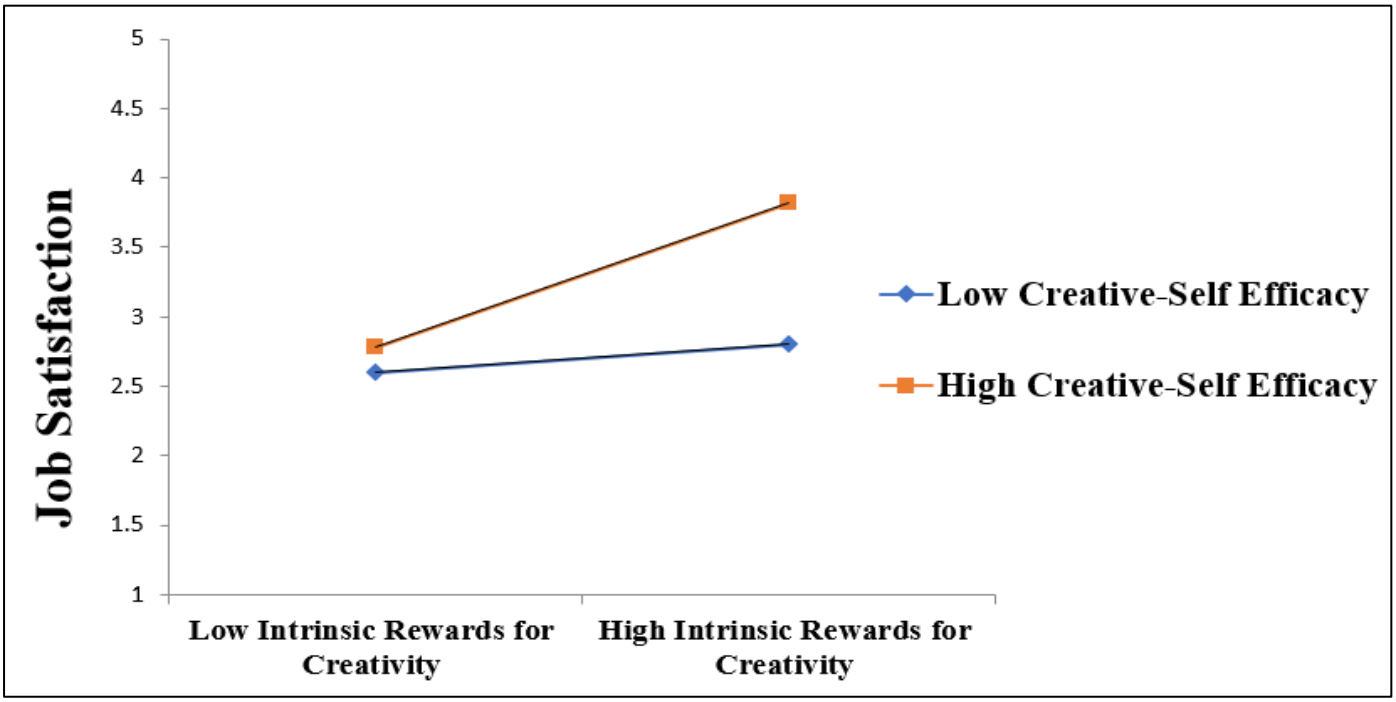

Fig 2 The Moderating Effect of Creative Self-Efficacy on the Relationship Between Intrinsic Rewards for Creativity and Job Satisfaction.

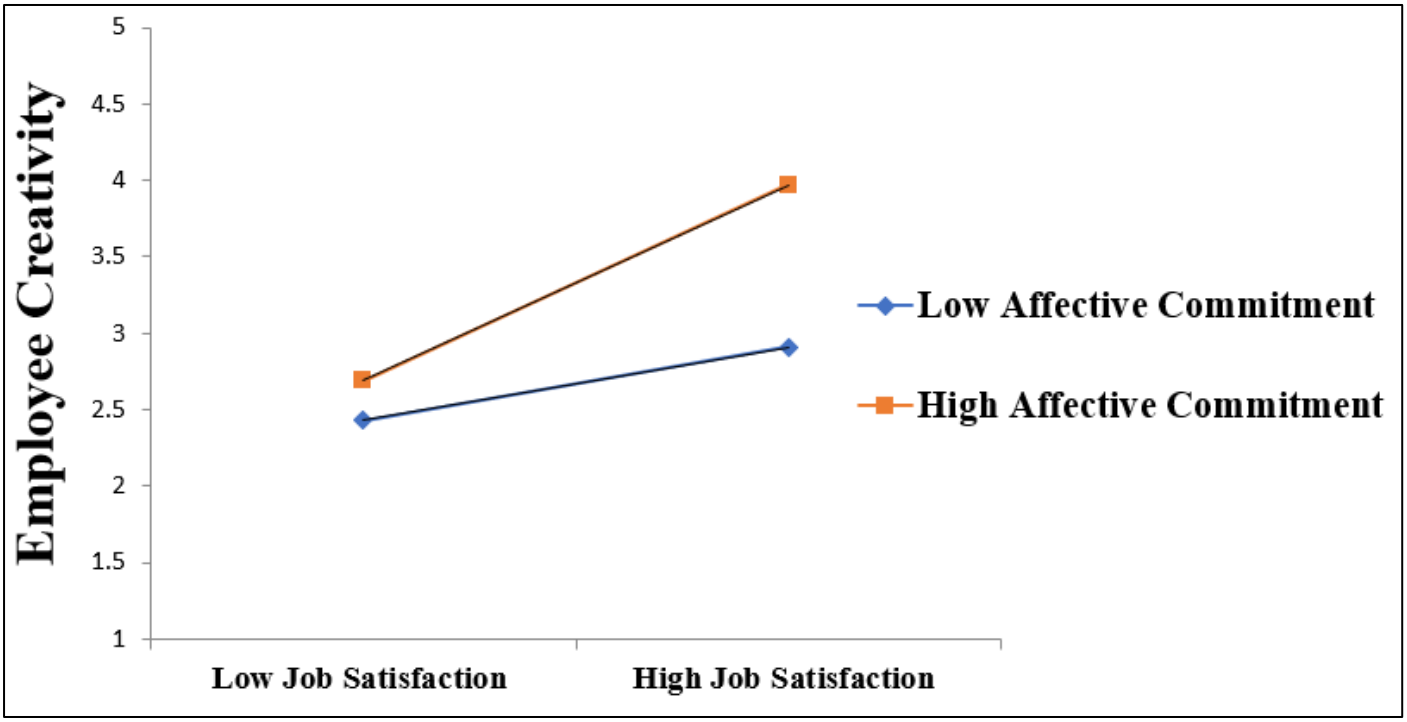

Fig 3 The Moderating Effect of Affective Commitment in the Relationship of Job Satisfaction and Employee Creativity.

V. DISCUSSION

The research goal focused on studying how intrinsic creativity rewards influence employee creativity while job satisfaction acts as an intervening factor. Employed workers' job satisfaction acts as the key intermediary that strengthens the connection between intrinsic creativity rewards and staff creativity enhancement. Using social cognitive theory, the research shows that creative self-efficacy functions as a moderating variable which strengthens the relationship between intrinsic rewards for creativity and job satisfaction. The study demonstrates that affective commitment functions as a moderating factor which affects how job satisfaction influences employee creativity using social exchange theory and interactionist perspective. The research implications provide important knowledge to researchers together with organizational leaders who wish to utilize intrinsic rewards for driving creativity in their workplace.

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Research highlights why organizations must evaluate how organizational strategies particularly intrinsic rewards combine with individual psychological elements of creative self-efficacy and affective commitment to boost employee creativity. The assessment of workplace motivational approaches leads to enhanced employee performance because creative self-efficacy strengthens intrinsic reward effects on job satisfaction which results in improved creativity. Organizational success requires a focus on building intense emotional ties between management and staff through creation of work environments which promote support and inclusion. Employee commitment levels increase through acknowledgement programs and career progression chances and alignment between personal goals and organizational targets that increases job satisfaction strength which boosts creativity. The information provides essential direction to managers and leaders who want to develop workplaces that stimulate employee creativity alongside self-assurance in their creative capabilities. The phenomenon confirms that creating affective commitment requires leaders to develop emotional bonds between employees and their workplace through fostering organizational identity attachments.

- *Theoretical Implications*

Our research supports the significance of exploring workplace drivers of individual creativity when studying intrinsic reward systems in professional environments. Employees who receive intrinsic rewards become more motivated to create constructive and creative ideas. Employees experience happiness and obtain work flexibility and self-direction through intrinsic rewards that recognize their valuable contributions. Employees develop better intellectual capability when they get intrinsic rewards since these motivate task ownership that produces more creative work. To understand intrinsic rewards better as creativity promoters' researchers must study each element individually and their combination effects simultaneously.

Research findings demonstrate the essential position job satisfaction holds as a mediator between intrinsic rewards and their effects on employee creativity. Job satisfaction emerges as the vital mediating connection in our study yet most past research examined commitment to creativity before intrinsic incentives affect employee creativity (Yoon et al., 2015). The work environment that intrinsic rewards create supports creative tasks because they enable employees to feel both pleased and satisfied during creativity work. Our research provides detailed empirical backing showing an intrinsic incentives system increases job satisfaction which leads to employee creativity when creative self-efficacy is strong (Kim & Lee, 2011).

The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1982) expands our comprehension of how intrinsic rewards affect creativity outcomes in employees. This study extends social cognitive theory applications into intrinsic reward and employee creativity research because preceding research primarily used it for extrinsic reward interpretations (Zhang et al., 2015).. The research contributes value to existing knowledge by creating new possibilities to explain how workplace intrinsic rewards develop creativity.

Social exchange theory effectively explains how affective commitment acts as a moderator between job satisfaction and employee innovation based on the research findings. The theoretical framework from this research uses social exchange theory to explain why affective commitment strengthens the relationship between job satisfaction and creativity although previous studies usually studied job satisfaction's direct effects on creativity (Amabile, 1996). The findings of this research provide a novel perspective for studying employee emotional connections to the organization in relation to creative workplace behavior which advances current knowledge about job satisfaction and affective commitment and employee creativity processes.

- *Practical Implications*

Based on the study findings managers should use practical approaches to encourage creativity at work. First and foremost, managers need to identify the components which generate creativity in their workforce before effective implementation. Managers should use intrinsic rewards to develop harmonious workplaces because this strategy generates internal employee engagement along with enthusiasm which increases job satisfaction. A workplace with positive conditions inspires employees and simultaneously bolsters their ability to perform creative work and their internal drive for creative work. Employees engage in more creative behavior and increase their inside awareness through creative output because supportive work environments generate positive feelings (Asif et al., 2019).

Second, managers need to develop an atmosphere which helps employees find job satisfaction according to Pawel, Korzynski and Olga (2025). The core objective of intrinsic reward methods exists to drive performance enhancement and genuine emotion expression in addition to securing better work fulfillment for employees. Employees must grasp what management expects from them along with feeling capable of achieving targets (Mo & Borbon, 2022). Work approach flexibility needs to be allowed to workers because it holds significant importance. Employee intrinsic motivation can be enhanced through managerial practice which creates opportunities for personnel to determine their workflows and establish performance limits and complete work assessment independently. Employees develop creative self-confidence through management-provided freedom and the chance to find novel solutions to organizational challenges. When employees develop confidence their personal interest in their work rises simultaneously and leads to higher job satisfaction.

Third, managers need to guarantee employees experience meaning and efficiency in their work activities. Employees may achieve higher satisfaction along with better self-efficacy through two essential strategies which include constructive task analysis and developmental opportunities. The implementation of these methods encourages workers to demonstrate advanced creative performance at work. Individuals who demonstrate strong creative self-efficacy demonstrate superior performance by combining varied responsibilities while fostering creative development projects (Wardana et al., 2025). Self-efficiency in employees leads them to create innovative practical solutions that advance

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both organizational innovation and competitive strength (Hu & Zhao, 2016).

Finally, managers should understand the affective commitment's effect on linking employee job satisfaction to workplace creativity according to the study's outcomes. Organizations must develop workspaces which establish loyal relations with their employees through fisted emotional ties. Managers should implement regular appreciation and motivate staff members through building organizational trust and ensuring their visions and targets coincide with company principles. The implemented initiatives boost affective commitment levels within employees thus enabling them to deliver more creative outputs. When organizations create meaningful work opportunities and provide professional development programs, they improve both job satisfaction and employee emotional bond to the organization. Staff members who experience feelings of value and connection within the organization tend to develop innovative ideas that boost organizational creativity while delivering competitive advantage. Investment in affective commitment leads organizations to develop teams where employees find both satisfactions together with creative involvement.

VI. LIMITATIONS

The major research outcomes require us to address various essential limitations. Our research has restricted external application because we limited the study to only 400 subordinate-supervisor pairs. Future research must use an expanded and broader sample to allow better testing of these theories. Future research on employee creativity should employ tenure and hierarchical level as control variables alongside individual demographics such as age, gender, education, and work experience (Saha & Kumar, 2018). Employee creativity and intrinsic rewards for creativity showed a partial indirect relationship through job satisfaction based on our study results. The decrease in the strength of the coefficient indicates multiple hidden influencing variables might exist between these two variables. Future research should investigate the relationship between employee creativity and intrinsic rewards for creativity by adding additional variables into the study model. Our sample collection from four educational institutions in a local region might have restricted the overall applicability of results because it produced findings that depended on geographical and cultural influences. Research should use a wider range of samples across different geographical areas and organizational sectors to boost the study's general application.

This study serves as the first to investigate multiple organizational levels using social cognitive theory to verify how creative self-efficacy changes the link between intrinsic creativity rewards and job satisfaction. Social Exchange Theory demonstrates that affective commitment functions to moderate the connection between employee satisfaction and employee creativity while job satisfaction operates as a mediator between intrinsic reward for creativity and employee creativity. Furthermore, the findings of this study hold significant implications for both theory and practice. Theoretical improvement of social exchange and social cognitive theory models presents opportunities for expanded research to support understanding between job satisfaction and employee creativity through affective commitment and intrinsic rewards with creative self-efficacy. This research demonstrates how affective commitment together with self-efficacy influences organizational strategic effectiveness toward creative improvement. The obtained understanding helps managers develop reward systems which promote creative workplaces that increase employee satisfaction. Organizations can maximize employee creativity and innovation level and improve competitive advantages through understanding how job satisfaction intersects with affective commitment to enhance creativity. Future investigation into how these dynamics play out across organizations and different business sectors and cultural environments will help expand research knowledge and provide useful guidance for managers.

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