CHAPTER 5

5. DISCUSSION

This research attempts to identify the determinants that can stimulate and undermine the innovative behaviour among the public servants in a Malaysian Public Agency. Besides that it also wishes to identify the factors that can influence the relationship between organizational climate and innovative behaviour among the employees in that particular agency.

As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, innovative behaviour among the employees depends on the organizational climate. A strong relationship between innovative behaviour/creativity and organizational climate has been reported in many previous studies (Amabile *et.al* 1996, M. Zain Mohamed and Rickards, 1996, Ekvall *et.al* 1996).

The results obtained from this study support that organizational climate has a strong relationship with innovative behaviour. From the correlation analysis, all the stimulant scales (organizational encouragement, supervisory encouragement, work group support, freedom, challenging work and sufficient resources) show a positive relationship with innovative behaviour at the significant level of $p<0.01$. These results support the findings revealed by Amabile *et.al* (1996)

where they found stimulant scales were rated higher in the high-creative project.

This study has identify that challenging work, organizational encouragement and sufficient resources play a major role in stimulating innovative behaviour among the employees. From these results, we might say that challenging work environments make employees feel challenged and excited to try new ways of doing work so that they can produce faster with better results.

The top management should also realise that organizational encouragement has a strong relationship with innovative behaviour. It implies that when the organizational encouragement is higher the innovative behaviour is also rated higher. This means, that organizational encouragement is able to motivate employees to be resourceful and keen on trying out new approach in doing their work. Employees are also enthused to show their innovative behaviour when their efforts are rewarded and recognised.

Another aspect that the top management needs to pay attention to is the availability of relevant resources. Organizations have to provide sufficient resources so that creative ideas can be realised and implemented. This result is in line with the findings revealed by Amabile *et.al* (1996) and Indra Devi (2007). Resources in this case can

be in the form of financial assistance, data accessibility and facilities to support innovative behaviour.

The study found that supervisor's role is also imperative. The result has shown that correlation between supervisory encouragements and innovative behaviour is positive and significant ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$). The result provides enough evidence to support the findings discovered by the previous researchers (Amabile *et.al,* 1996; Scot and Bruce (1994) and Indra Devi (2007). The role of supervisors includes providing a clear direction for a certain project to the employees and giving constructive feedback to them. Supervisors need to encourage the subordinates to voice the idea openly so that it can enhance their involvement in the project.

As mentioned by Amabile *et.al* (1996), the role of work group support in stimulating creativity and innovation cannot be denied. This study supports this view where correlation analysis between work group support and innovative behaviour has shown a significant result ($r=0.43$ at $p<0.01$). Work group support often provides a range of functions for their members. In this study, it might be useful to view that work group support provides employees with the opportunity to get constructive feedback from other group members and share experience or knowledge among each other. Trust, openess to new ideas and a good blend of skills are the important ingredients in forming a good project team.

The output of the correlation analysis shows that freedom scale has less influence on innovative behaviour compared to other stimulant scales where r=0.27. This result may be due to the fact that the public servants are usually free to decide how they want to accomplish the task assigned to them but they do not have the authority to decide what type of project that needs to be implemented, especially for the supporting group. In the government agency, in many cases employees are bonded by a certain procedures especially when dealing with the government policies and financial regulations.

The study has hypothesized that obstacle scales (organizational impediment and workload pressure) have a negative relationship with innovative behaviour. However surprisingly, the study has found a contradict result. The study has revealed that innovative behaviour has a positive relationship with organizational impediment where r=0.136 at the significant level of $p<0.05$. From the framework proposed by Amabile *et.al* (1996), these two variables suppose to have a negative relationship. This is difficult to explain but a possible reason for this result may be the fact that organizational impediment is an acceptable culture in a government agency. Most of the time the employees are bonded to the policy and procedures; therefore they do not perceive the organizational impediments as a barrier for them to display an innovative behaviour. Another possible explanation may be the organizational impediments have been defused by the stimulant scales

such as organizational support, supervisory support, work group support and sufficient resources. Correlation analysis (Table 4.13, Appendix 1) has shown that organizational impediment has a significant negative relationship with organizational support (r= -0.32), supervisory support (r= -0.45), work group support (r=-0.24) and sufficient resources (r=-0.24). The correlation results indicate that the organizational impediments are perceived lower if the employees perceived the stimulant scales are higher.

Workload pressure was hypothesized to have a significant negative relationship with innovative behaviour. However, contrary to the hypothesis, this study did not find any significant relationship between workload pressure and innovative behaviour. Amabile *et.al* (1996) did expect this phenomenon. They said, sometime pressure may has a tendency to stimulate employees to be more creative and innovative. Another possible explanation for this is may be the ability of respondents to control the pressure; therefore it did not show any negative effect on their innovative behaviour. Based on the findings of the organizational impediments, may be the same explanation could be used for this result. Correlation analysis (Table 4.13 Appendix 1) has shown that workload pressure has a significant negative relationship with organizational encouragement (r=-0.29), supervisory encouragement (r=-0.41), work group support (r=-0.23) and sufficient resources (r=-0.31).

This study produced a result which explains the role of knowledge transfer in the relationship between organizational climate and innovative behaviour. From the analysis, it was found that knowledge transfer has a full mediating effect in the relationship between organizational climate and innovative behaviour. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Cheng and Huang (2009). They discovered that knowledge management capacity plays a mediating role between strategic human resource practices and innovation performance. This result implies that knowledge transfer is one of the key factors that need to be considered when organizations plan to create a climate for innovation. Rationally, knowledge transfer can escalate the learning process and information sharing among the employees and as we know, these two aspects are very important in determining the innovative behaviour.

This study has also demonstrated that age of the employees, length of working experience and levels of education have moderating effects in the relationship between organizational climate and innovative behaviour. The results imply that how employees perceive the organizational climate and innovative behaviour depend on their age, working experience and level of education. These findings have important implications when developing a project team because it shows that demographic factors do matters in the relationship between organizational climate and innovative behaviour. Management should consider diversification in terms of age, working experience and level of education among the team members. For example, the top

management should not underestimate the ability of young people or junior employees in producing creative ideas. Lower education level does not mean that the employees have no intention to display their innovative behaviour. They can also contribute creative ideas for the benefit of the team. So we might conclude that for the best result, a mixture of all these backgrounds may create the best team.