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The role of creativity and conformity for the appraisal of organizational innovations

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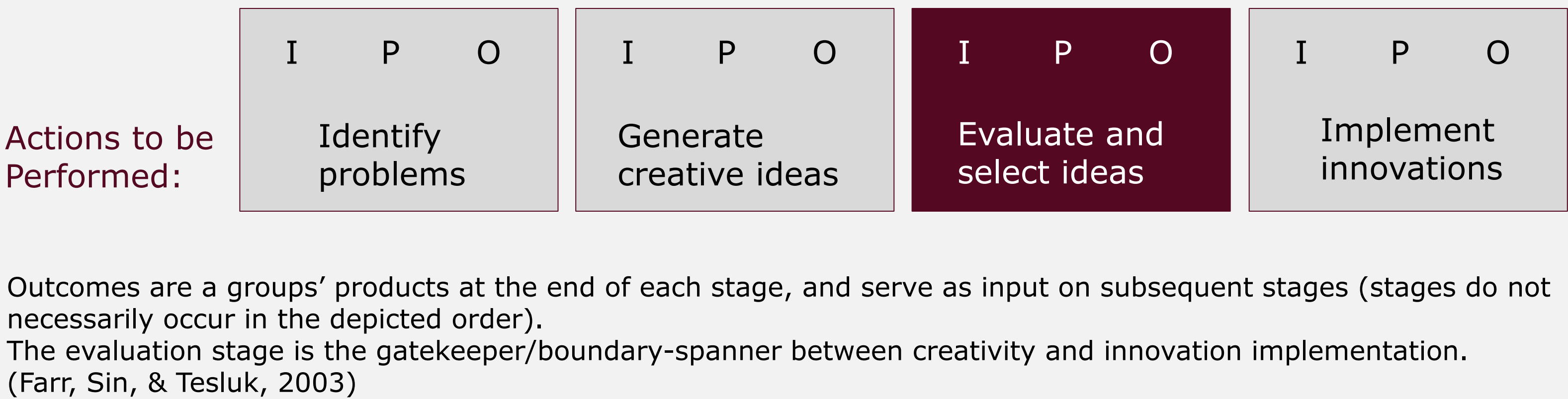
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Introduction

Innovation is an important topic for almost every organization in the world. Research has revealed that both individual and organizational factors promote or inhibit innovation (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). These factors influence innovations on different stages of an innovation process (Farr, Sin, & Tesluk, 2003). In this study, we focus on gatekeepers/boundary spanners who, after to the creative process, make their individual decisions on creative ideas in order to terminate or implement these into an organization (Kijkuit & van den Ende, 2007).

Figure 1: An Input-Process-Output Processes Model of Organizational Innovation

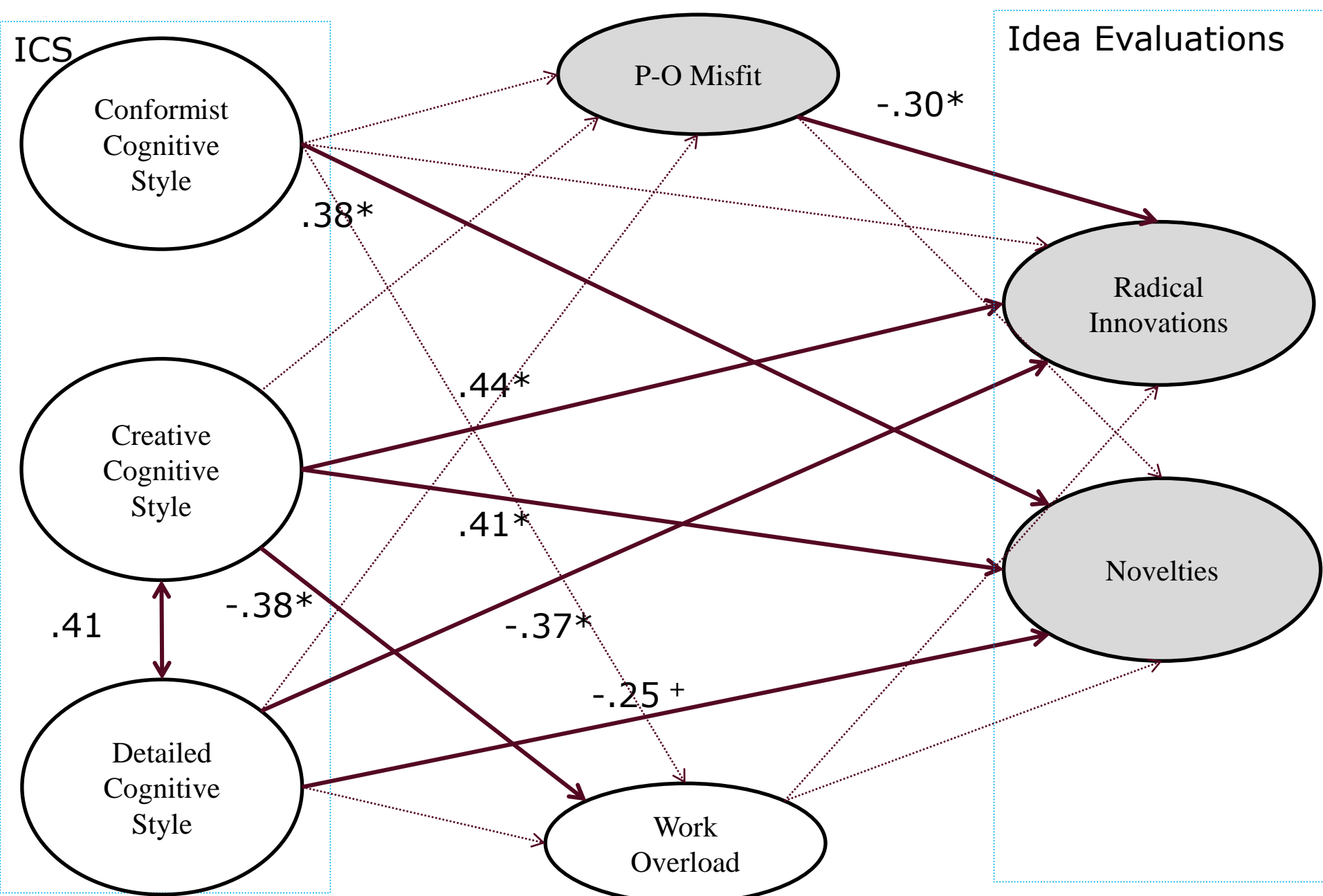


Study 1

In study 1 we use creative and conformist cognitive style (as facets of innovative cognitive style; ICS Jablolkow & Kirton, 2009; Miron, Erez, & Naveh, 2004) to predict evaluations of already implemented innovations. In line with literature on creative deviance, we explore functions of contextual mediators (strain due to work overload and person-organization misfit).

Figure 2: Results of Structural Equation Modeling

Note: N= 112, Relationships of creative cognitive style on evaluations of radical innovations and novelties are significantly mediated by two types of strain (for creative cognitive style: indirect effect of cognitive style on radical innovations: $R^2=.185$; $p=.001$; indirect effect of cognitive style on novelties: $R^2=.119$; $p=.003$; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).



Innovative cognitive style (ICS) is an important individual factor predicting appraisal of innovations. Hypotheses predict that individuals with innovative cognitive style evaluate innovations positively. Individual strain is a mediator in this cognitive-style – innovation appraisal/evaluation relationship, as creative and potentially change oriented actions clash with old routines. New ideas are appreciated as an aim to reduce the discrepancy between individual needs and organizational supplies.

Study 2

We extend these findings, including a more elaborate measure of person-organization (P-O) fit/misfit and an evaluation of potential future innovations.

We use the competing values framework (figure 3; Cameron & Quinn, 2006) as it incorporates four different value systems, which may simultaneously be present within an organization, and which are supportive or destructive to different organizational outcomes.

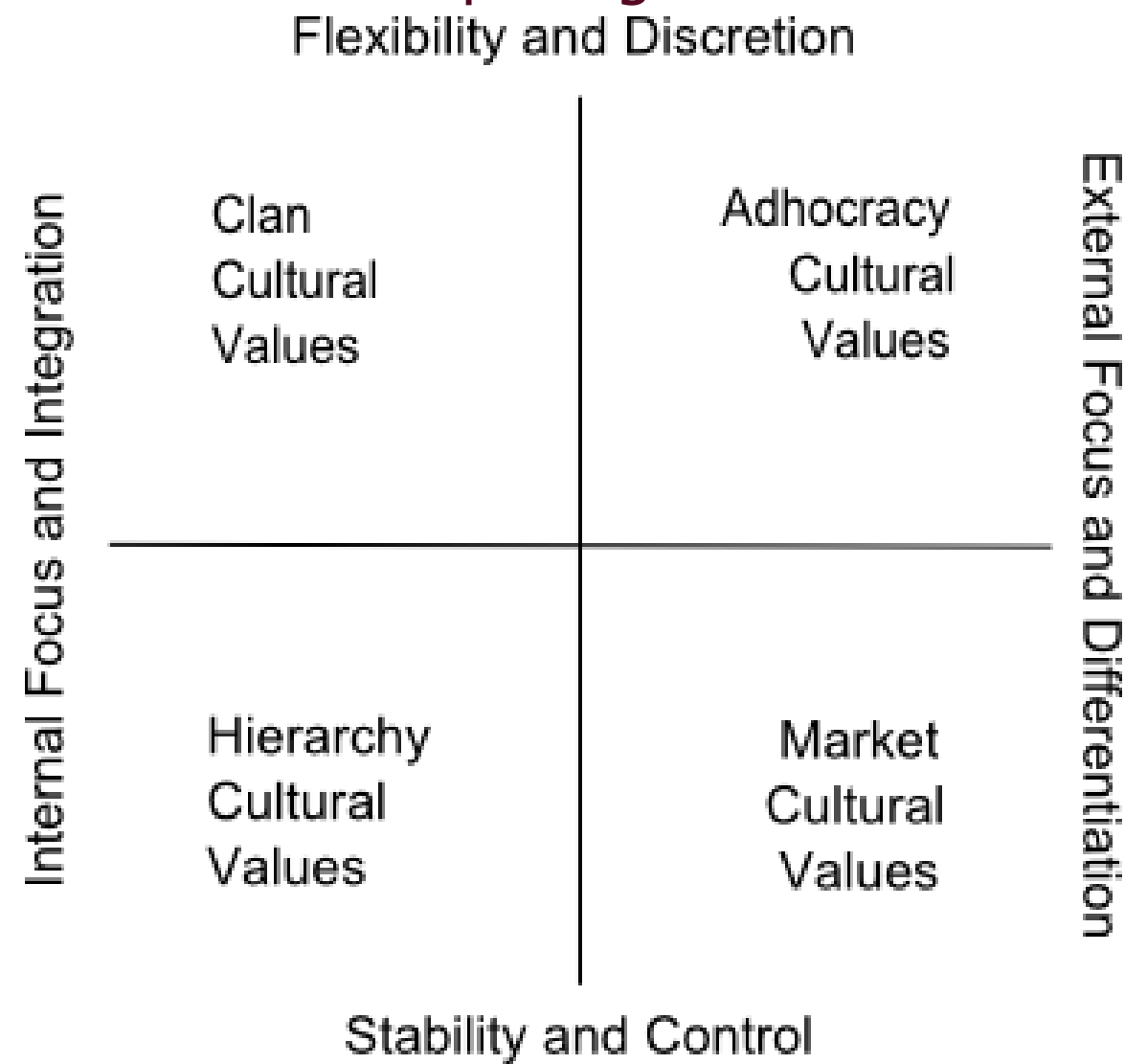
P-O fit paradigms are seldom in innovation research (an exception is Choi, 2004):

- In P-O fit literature, fit is usually associated to positive outcomes as performance, job satisfaction, etc. (Kristof-Brown & Zimmerman, 2005).
- Creativity and innovation literature underscores the value of misfit as a driver for innovation. Misfit may have positive consequences such as learning and development and raises needs for change (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

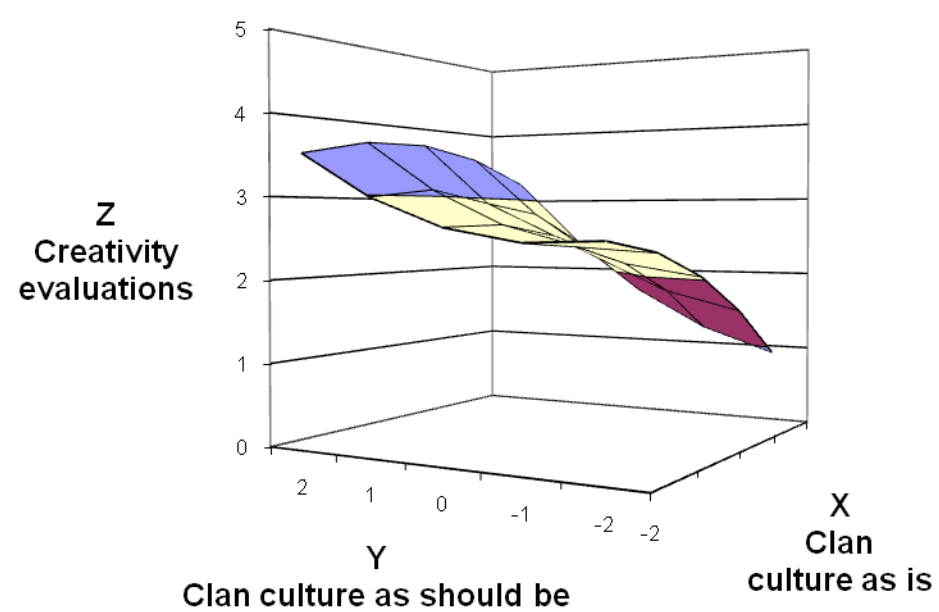
Hypotheses concerning the impact of P-O value fit on creativity evaluations in different cultural value configurations:

- Adhocracy cultural values are associated to creativity evaluations because of the focus on flexibility and the promotion of differentiation. Value fit affects creativity evaluations positively.
- Hierarchical cultural values are associated to passive, reactive behavior because they promote stability and focus on internal processes. Value fit affects creativity evaluations negatively.
- For market and clan cultural values we predict incongruence effects: For both cultural values, incongruence with stronger need for culture values than the organization supplies to a person should increase creativity evaluations, as changes are steps towards P-O fit.

Figure 3: The Competing Values Framework

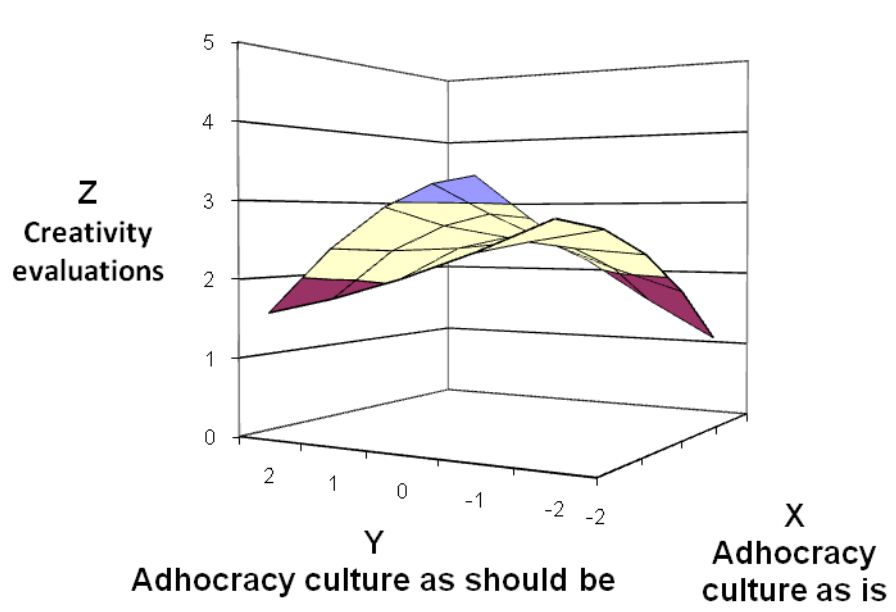


Creativity judgments predicted by congruence of clan cultural values



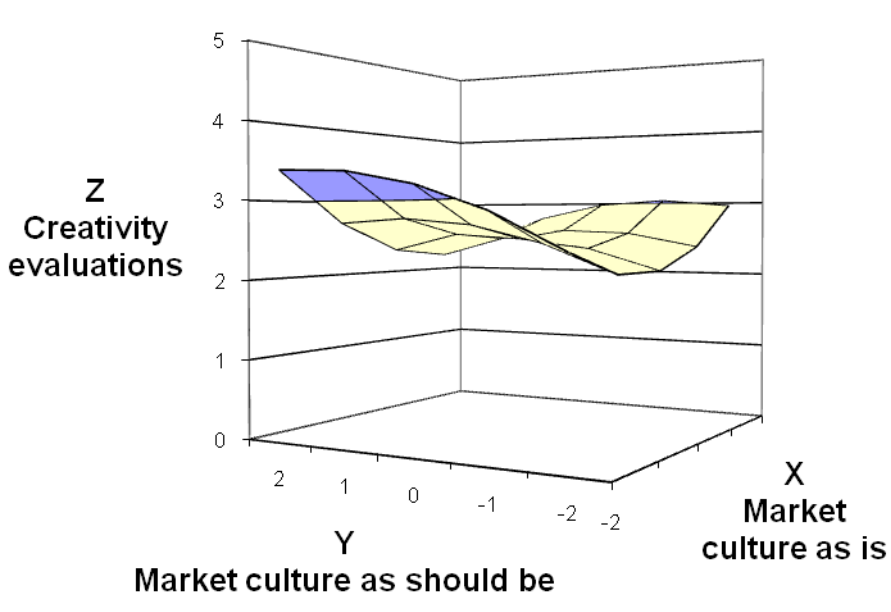
Slope along incongruence line: -.65*

Creativity judgments predicted by congruence of adhocracy cultural values

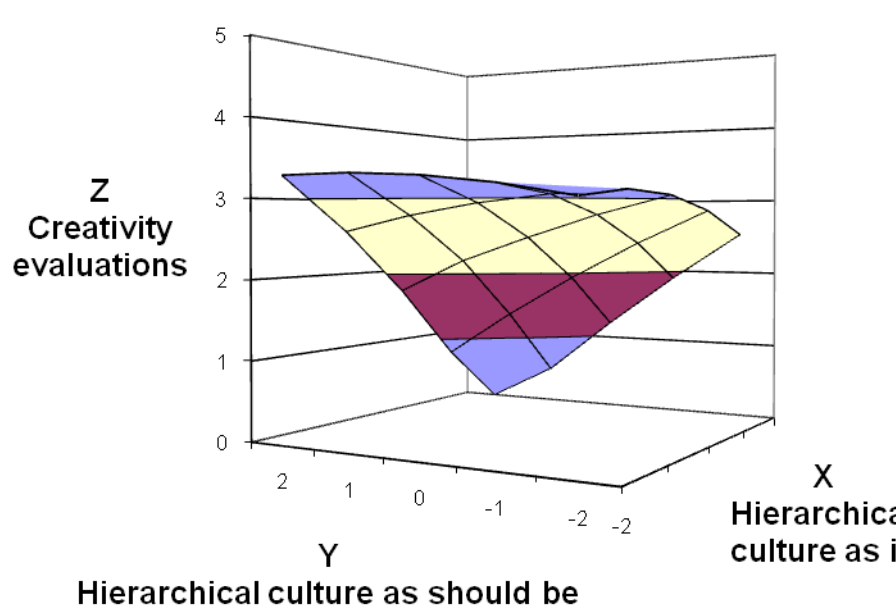


Curvature along incongruence line: -.30**

Creativity judgments on predicted by congruence of market cultural values



Creativity evaluations predicted by congruence of hierarchical cultural values



Slope and curvature along congruence line: slope: -.83***; curvature -.29**

Figures 4-7: Results of Congruence Analyses

Note: N=226, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .10$; Congruence analyses were conducted along the methods outlined in Edwards and Parry (1993).

Discussion

This research recognizes in study 1 that creativity as facets of ICS shows an effect on evaluations of novelties with different degrees of innovativeness. Strain partially mediates this relationship. Furthermore, in study 2 we took a closer look at organizational cultural values and the evaluation of creative ideas. For creative idea evaluations, we found a negative effect along the line of perfect fit on hierarchical cultural values, a positive general effect for fit on adhocracy cultural values, and a positive effect of misfit on clan cultural values. Therefore P-O fit is not unanimously positive for innovation in organizations as gatekeepers' negative creativity evaluations may terminate innovation projects - decisions which are not affected by true innovative potentials of these ideas (see also Kijkuit & van den Ende 2007).

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