

Skills, knowledge, and well-being: Levers for organizational innovation

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Abstract—The primary ambition of every organization in today's globalized and highly competitive environment is to become remarkable, unique, and distinguished in its field. Achieving this ambition cannot be reduced to the accumulation of resources or the implementation of strategies alone; it requires a dynamic combination of past efforts, attained goals, resolved problems, and well-coordinated strategies. More importantly, it depends on the organization's ability to create and nurture teams that are competent, motivated, and innovative. Without such human foundations, even the most sophisticated strategies remain incomplete.

In this context, innovation and competence appear not as isolated or independent concepts, but as deeply interdependent levers of organizational performance. Human capital serves as the central pillar of this interdependence, as it embodies knowledge, skills, and values that sustain innovation while being simultaneously strengthened by it. Competence drives innovation, while innovation creates opportunities for new competencies to emerge. Together, these dynamics not only influence organizational performance but also contribute to reinforcing well-being in professional life, thereby enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction, and creativity.

This study, presented within the framework of a conference dedicated to well-being and its organizational practices, aims to shed light on the links between organizational innovation, competence, and human capital, while emphasizing the mediating role of knowledge and well-being. The central question guiding this research is the following: How can organizations stimulate and develop innovation within teams by leveraging competence, and how can knowledge, human capital, and well-being serve as strategic drivers in this process?

To provide a comprehensive answer, the presentation is divided into two parts. The first part lays the theoretical foundations by analyzing the concepts of organizational innovation, competence, knowledge, human capital, and well-being, and by highlighting their interrelationships. The second part presents an empirical study based on a structured questionnaire designed to capture employees' perceptions and experiences. The collected data are analyzed and interpreted in order to identify patterns, correlations, and practical insights. The findings aim not only to clarify the theoretical framework but also to provide organizations with actionable recommendations for fostering a culture of innovation supported by competence and well-being.

Keywords— organizational innovation – competence – well-being – knowledge – human capital

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, developing competence and fostering innovation in human capital is no longer a luxury or an optional objective; it has become a necessity and a strategic imperative for organizations operating in an increasingly complex, dynamic, and globalized environment. Regardless of their sector of activity, size, vision, or strategic orientations, organizations must ensure that their workforce remains capable of adapting to constant change, generating new ideas, and translating them into concrete organizational practices. In this context, competence and innovation emerge as two inseparable drivers of competitiveness and sustainability.

However, the achievement of this goal is neither spontaneous nor automatic. It requires a thorough understanding of the intricate relationship between competence and innovation, as well as the identification of the underlying factors that reinforce or weaken this relationship. Among these factors, three dimensions stand out as particularly decisive: knowledge, human capital, and well-being. Knowledge represents the intellectual resources upon which organizations rely to create and transform ideas into value. Human capital encompasses the collective skills, experiences, and talents that shape the capacity of teams to innovate. Well-being, finally, ensures the psychological,

emotional, and social conditions that enable individuals to mobilize their full potential in the service of organizational goals.

This paper seeks to clarify how these three dimensions interact to influence the link between competence and organizational innovation. More specifically, it investigates whether knowledge, human capital, and well-being have a direct or indirect impact on strengthening this relationship, and to what extent their combination creates a virtuous cycle of creativity, performance, and satisfaction within organizations.

In order to address these questions, the paper is structured into two main parts. The first part is devoted to the conceptual and theoretical framework: it defines the key concepts of organizational innovation, competence, knowledge, human capital, and well-being, while highlighting their interconnections and theoretical underpinnings. The second part adopts an empirical perspective, presenting the methodology and findings of a practical study conducted through a structured questionnaire. The collected data allow us to examine the validity of the theoretical assumptions and to provide a nuanced interpretation of the factors that either foster or hinder the innovation–competence dynamic in organizational contexts. Finally, the paper concludes with a synthesis of the theoretical and empirical insights, offering recommendations for both researchers and practitioners.

II. THE THEORETICAL PART

A. *Organizational innovation as a basic concept*

Innovation, in its broadest sense, can be divided into two main categories: technological innovation¹, which is focused on products, processes, and technical improvements, and non-technological innovation, commonly referred to as organizational innovation². The latter, also known as managerial innovation or innovation in management, involves the implementation of new practices, methods, and procedures that transform the way organizations operate, interact, and achieve their objectives. Unlike technological innovation, which is often visible in tangible outputs, organizational innovation manifests itself in intangible but equally powerful ways—through improved structures, decision-making processes, communication systems, and work organization³.

Organizational innovation can be defined as the ability to design, adopt, and implement new approaches that leverage available resources to address complex problems and ambiguous challenges that previously had no clear solutions⁴. It is a response to the increasing uncertainty of contemporary business environments and plays a central role in ensuring the progress, sustainability, and competitiveness of organizations⁵. It allows companies to adapt quickly, anticipate changes, and create resilient systems capable of dealing with crises and disruptions⁶.

Furthermore, organizational innovation represents a rational and strategic choice: it is not innovation for the sake of novelty but innovation as a deliberate process of turning organizational ideas and strategies into concrete, efficient, and sustainable realities⁷. It embodies accumulated and enhanced knowledge, restructured and reorganized in order to generate practical tools that improve performance⁸. However, it should be emphasized that organizational innovation requires a solid foundation: advanced knowledge, adequate resources, coherent strategies, and effective methods. Simply seeking innovation is insufficient; organizations must also ensure the performance, viability, and long-term impact of the innovations they introduce.

In essence, organizational innovation is a dynamic, ongoing activity. It evolves progressively and gains strength over time as it is embedded in organizational culture. Its development depends on the ambition, effort, and motivation of individuals and teams to identify gaps, propose improvements, and implement solutions⁹. Decisions

¹ L'innovation en éducation et en formation dans tous ces sens (Françoise Cros) 1999

² L'innovation sociale en économie sociale (Marie J.Bouchard) 2006

³ Concevoir l'innovation sociale dans une perspective de transformation (Marie J.Bouchard – Adalbert Evers – Laurent Fraisse) 2015

⁴ L'innovation managériale : Généalogie, défis et perspectives (Frédéric Le Roy – Marc Robert – Philippe Giuliani) 2013

⁵ L'innovation managériale : rupture ou évolution managériale (David Autissier – Jean-Michel Moutot) 2016

⁶ L'innovation organisationnelle : antécédents et complémentarité : une approche intégrative appliquée au Lean Management (Sandra Dubouloz) 2006

⁷ Les barrières à l'innovation organisationnelle : le cas du Lean Management (Sandra Dubouloz) 2013

⁸ Analyse des déterminants de l'innovation technologique dans un nouveau pays industrialisé : une étude économétrique sur données d'entreprises selon le secteur manufacturier turc (Teoman Pamukçu – Michele Cincera) 2001

⁹ Réflexion autour du concept d'innovation sociale, apprendre historique et comparative (Louise Dandurand) 2005

related to innovation must be taken at the right moment, within an environment prepared to accept and support change. This highlights the importance of timing, context, and organizational readiness in the innovation process. Another key dimension of organizational innovation lies in its strong connection to knowledge management. Innovation does not emerge in isolation; it builds upon existing knowledge, experiences, and practices, which are then reinterpreted and transformed into new organizational capabilities. This transformation process reflects the notion of intellectual capital: the accumulation of intangible assets such as know-how, relationships, and learning that generate a competitive advantage. Companies that succeed in fostering organizational innovation distinguish themselves from their competitors by creating added value, achieving radical change, and becoming benchmarks of success in their industries.

Organizational innovation is closely linked to management, as it directly affects the management of resources, human relations, knowledge flows, skills, and interactions with the external environment. Its effectiveness varies across different areas: while an organization may demonstrate strong innovative practices in one domain, it may still experience weaknesses in others. This uneven distribution emphasizes the need for organizations to adopt a holistic perspective, ensuring innovation permeates all fields of activity.

Beyond improving internal efficiency, organizational innovation also influences the way knowledge is utilized. It enables organizations to repurpose existing knowledge in new contexts, expand its application to other areas, or even transform it radically to meet evolving objectives. Thus, organizational innovation becomes an opportunity for companies to reinforce their distinctiveness, enhance their organizational capacity, and create more collaborative processes of learning and knowledge sharing.

For innovation to succeed, however, organizations must remain open to their environment, continuously scanning external trends, competitors, and societal changes. Human resources, in particular, must cultivate an open mindset, curiosity, and the ability to adopt a global perspective. These qualities allow organizations to recognize opportunities and exploit them effectively, thereby reinforcing their innovative potential.

As highlighted by Dublé (2012), organizational innovation has far-reaching effects on organizational performance. It improves the quality of work, enhances information exchange, strengthens learning capacity, and facilitates the adoption of new knowledge and technologies. It ultimately leads to the implementation of novel methods for structuring routines and executing tasks. In this sense, organizational innovation is not only a driver of efficiency but also a foundation for sustainable growth and long-term competitiveness.

B. the concept of competence in management literature

Since the 1980s, the concept of competence has gradually taken root in the field of management¹⁰, evolving from a notion primarily associated with administrative management to a central element of human resources management. This evolution reflects the growing importance of human capital as a decisive factor in organizational performance. Even though the word “competence” is frequently used in resumes, cover letters, and job interviews, its meaning remains complex and, in many cases, ambiguous. The origins of the concept can be traced back to the field of education and pedagogy, where competence was initially understood as the ability to mobilize knowledge and skills in specific contexts. Over time, the concept expanded, integrating insights from psychology, sociology, and organizational studies, and began to occupy a significant place in professional life¹¹.

In the workplace, competence has become a constant requirement¹². During recruitment, organizations seek candidates who not only possess technical know-how but also demonstrate adaptability, creativity, and interpersonal skills. Once hired, employees are encouraged—or sometimes required—to develop new competences through training programs, workshops, performance evaluations, mentoring, and continuous feedback. Competence is thus both an objective to be achieved and a resource to be cultivated; it is at once a personal attribute and an

¹⁰ Vers une re-problématisation de la notion de la compétence (Jonnaert, Ph – Furtuna, D – Ayotte-Beaudet ? J.-Ph – Sambote, J) 2015

¹¹ Des compétences individuelles à la compétence collective : les apports d’une lecture en termes d’apprentissage dans un service d’urgence hospitalier (Thierry Colin – Benoît Grasser) 2009

¹² La compétence collective dans le contexte de la globalisation du management : retrouver le lien avec la performance (Christian Defélix – Martine Le Boulair – Vanessa Monties – Thierry Picq) 2014

organizational necessity. The success of professional tasks, whether individual or collective, depends largely on the competence of those who execute them, making it a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness¹³.

One of the main challenges in the study of competence is the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition¹⁴. Many definitions tend to be narrow, equating competence with either ability or knowledge. However, competence is broader and more holistic: it encompasses knowledge, technical skills, interpersonal abilities, attitudes, and even values. In other words, competence is not simply what a person knows, but also what they are capable of doing with that knowledge in a given context. It involves not only *savoir* (knowledge), but also *savoir-faire* (know-how), *savoir-être* (interpersonal qualities), and increasingly *savoir-devenir* (the ability to evolve and adapt over time)¹⁵.

This multidimensionality explains why competence is often described as a “dynamic construct”¹⁶. It is not fixed but evolves according to circumstances, experiences, and the environment. For instance, a competence that is highly valued in one context may be less relevant in another. This fluidity is what makes competence a key lever for competitiveness and innovation: organizations that manage to align competences with strategic objectives gain a significant advantage over their competitors¹⁷.

Another important aspect is that competence is closely linked to individual personality traits, behaviors, and values. It is not only about technical mastery but also about the ability to act appropriately in different situations, solve complex problems, and contribute positively to the organizational climate. Competence therefore reflects the intersection between resources (both tangible and intangible), personal performance, and collective expectations. It influences the work atmosphere and, in turn, is influenced by it.

It is also worth emphasizing that everyone is competent in some domain. Competence is not an “all-or-nothing” quality; rather, it is context-dependent and can be more or less developed. Unlike material resources, competences cannot be directly transferred from one person to another. What can be shared are experiences, training opportunities, and feedback mechanisms that help individuals develop their own competences. Developing competence thus requires reliability, practice, and self-reflection. A lack of competence in a specific area does not imply incompetence overall; it simply highlights the potential for growth in that domain.

Measuring competence is another complex task. One way of assessing it is to evaluate how individuals handle tasks of increasing complexity. The ability to generate solutions for difficult problems, to innovate in unexpected situations, and to complete complex assignments successfully is an indication of a high level of competence. Conversely, limited capacity in this regard may indicate competences that require further development.

In light of these considerations, competence can be understood as what an individual masters, in what context they master it, and how effectively they mobilize their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve goals. This interpretation situates competence at the heart of organizational performance and emphasizes its role as both an individual characteristic and a collective asset. It is not merely about possessing knowledge, but about transforming that knowledge into effective action, thereby contributing to innovation, adaptability, and long-term organizational success.

C. Definition of the concept of knowledge

Firstly, knowledge comes from the verb “to know” and is closely linked to notions such as being informed, being knowledgeable, and possessing intellectual capacity. Historically, knowledge has been viewed not only as a cognitive resource but also as a philosophical and sociological construct, reflecting humanity’s continuous search for truth, meaning, and progress. It is simultaneously a personal asset and a collective heritage, a necessity that underpins all spheres of life—scientific, social, cultural, and professional.

Knowledge can be understood as the accumulation of ideas, information, experiences, and logical reasoning acquired over time, either individually or collectively. It arises from the interaction between a person and their environment, integrating observations, past experiences, and interpretations of reality. In other words, it represents a

¹³ Compétences comportementales dans l’entreprise : faire preuve de mesure... (Gilles Alexandre) 2007

¹⁴ Le concept de la compétence dans la formation de l’enseignement primaire au Québec : un cadre d’analyse (Yves LENOIR – François LAROSE – Diane BIRON – Gérard-Raymond ROY – Carlo SPALLANZANI) 1999

¹⁵ L’articulation compétences individuelles/compétences stratégiques : vers une solution de gestion intégrée des compétences (Evelyne Rouby – Catherine Thomas) 2009

¹⁶ Un référentiel pour articuler les compétences stratégiques et individuelles (Evelyne Rouby – Ewan Oiry - Catherine Thomas) 2012

¹⁷ Compétences et méta-compétences liées au développement durable dans le MOOC « Ville Durable : être acteur du changement » (Chrysta Pélissier) 2019

repertoire of answers to questions already asked, as well as a store of potential solutions for problems that may arise in the future. This capacity to mobilize past learnings in new contexts makes knowledge a vital foundation for innovation, since it allows individuals and organizations to go beyond established practices and create novel approaches.

A classical distinction is made between general knowledge and specific knowledge. General knowledge refers to broad, non-specialized culture, encompassing history, literature, philosophy, and social sciences—domains that enrich one's worldview and support critical thinking. Specific knowledge, on the other hand, is linked to a precise domain or discipline, such as engineering, medicine, linguistics, or management. Both are essential: general knowledge develops the capacity to reason, adapt, and connect different areas of thought, while specific knowledge provides the technical depth required for expertise and professional excellence.

Modern research, particularly that of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), further distinguishes between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is formalized, codified, and easily transmitted through documents, manuals, or databases. Tacit knowledge, by contrast, resides in individuals' experiences, intuitions, and know-how; it is more difficult to articulate and share but often more valuable for innovation, as it reflects context-specific insights and creative problem-solving abilities. The dynamic interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge is at the core of organizational learning processes¹⁸.

Knowledge is therefore not static but dynamic. It develops continuously through education, practice, reflection, and interaction. It is shaped by culture, relationships, and personal development, and it evolves as individuals and organizations encounter new challenges. From a managerial perspective, knowledge is seen as both a resource and a capability: it is accumulated, organized, and mobilized to achieve goals, solve problems, and seize opportunities.

Moreover, knowledge plays a decisive role in shaping behaviors and decisions. It guides perception, frames reasoning, and influences the way individuals and organizations act in different contexts. For example, organizations that effectively manage knowledge can anticipate risks, adapt strategies, and innovate more efficiently than those that fail to capture and utilize what they know. Conversely, when knowledge is fragmented or poorly communicated, organizations face duplication of efforts, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities.

Finally, knowledge is a key driver of creativity and innovation. By combining existing information in new ways, individuals and organizations can generate original ideas and create solutions that respond to emerging needs. This is why knowledge is often considered the most strategic resource of the 21st century, forming the intellectual capital that distinguishes competitive organizations. In essence, knowledge is not only about remembering facts or mastering procedures; it is about cultivating the capacity to act, understand, and create in ever-changing environments.

D. Human capital, its definition and typology

In its broadest sense, human capital refers to the knowledge¹⁹, experience, competencies, and skills that each individual accumulates throughout their personal and professional life, and which together shape their capacity to contribute to organizational performance. It constitutes one of the most critical pillars in any field of activity, transcending sectors and industries, because it directly influences not only the organization itself but also its environment and broader ecosystem. In modern economies characterized by digitalization, globalization, and accelerated competition, human capital has become a necessity for ensuring the achievement of strategic objectives, the satisfaction of stakeholders' needs, and the sustainable development of organizations.

From an economic perspective, the concept of human capital has its roots in the works of Theodore Schultz (1961) and Gary Becker (1964), who conceptualized education, training, and health as investments that increase productivity and individual earning potential. Since then, the notion has expanded and gained prominence in organizational sciences, where it is viewed as an intangible asset of companies. Unlike physical or financial capital, human capital is embodied in people; it is intangible yet decisive, as it encompasses mastery of methods, tools, technologies, and problem-solving approaches that are necessary for accomplishing tasks and achieving organizational goals.

¹⁸ Innovation et management des connaissances (Debra M.Amidon) 2001

¹⁹ Distinguer savoir et connaissances (Clémence Dallaire – Ljiljana Jovic) 2021

Human capital can thus be understood as an accumulation of knowledge and competences that are mobilized to create value for the organization. It is simultaneously a factor of production—because it contributes directly to outputs—and a driver of productivity—because it improves the efficiency and creativity of processes. From recruitment onwards, organizations strive to attract individuals with strong potential, then seek to enhance and update their competences through professional development, continuous training, mentoring, and knowledge-sharing practices. This ongoing effort is not only a response to current needs but also a way of anticipating future challenges in order to differentiate themselves from competitors.

Beyond technical skills, human capital also integrates relational and behavioral dimensions. It is built through past and present experiences, decisions taken, and networks of relationships established over time. Professional trajectories, career choices, and even informal exchanges within organizations all contribute to enriching human capital. However, these resources only become valuable when they are given meaning, shared, and embedded in organizational practices. Without effective systems for knowledge management and competence development, much of the potential embedded in human capital risks remaining underutilized. This is why many organizations consider human capital development to be a significant, albeit costly, investment. Nevertheless, the long-term returns—enhanced innovation, improved adaptability, and increased competitiveness—often justify the effort.

A useful distinction can be made between general (or global) human capital and specific human capital. General human capital refers to broad, transferable knowledge and competences—such as communication, problem-solving, digital literacy, and leadership—that are applicable across contexts and industries. Specific human capital, on the other hand, relates to specialized expertise tied to a particular task, profession, or organization—for example, mastery of a proprietary software, technical expertise in a niche domain, or familiarity with a company's internal processes. While specific human capital provides depth, general human capital ensures adaptability, mobility, and the capacity to learn continuously. Both types are essential and complementary, and their balanced development is necessary for sustaining organizational growth.

The performance of organizations is closely tied to the quality of their human capital. Employees who are well-trained, motivated, and competent generate higher levels of performance, which in turn enhance the organization's financial outcomes. This relationship creates a virtuous cycle: investment in human capital improves organizational performance, which strengthens financial capacity, thereby enabling further investment in people. In addition, the strategic management of human capital contributes to improving employees' well-being, engagement, and sense of belonging—factors that are crucial in retaining talent and ensuring continuity.

In sum, human capital is not merely a resource among others; it is the foundation of organizational resilience and innovation²⁰. It represents the intellectual wealth of companies, their ability to adapt to external changes, and their potential to create long-term value. Organizations that recognize human capital as a central strategic asset—and not merely as a cost—are better positioned to thrive in today's knowledge-based economy.

E. Definition of the concept of well-being

Firstly, well-being—sometimes translated as “the will being”²¹—can be understood as a state of satisfaction, fulfillment, and balance that emerges when individuals achieve goals, accomplish missions, succeed in their roles, or overcome obstacles. It is often associated with prosperity, happiness, harmony, and self-esteem. In essence, well-being reflects the satisfaction of personal and professional needs and is accompanied by feelings of stability, courage, serenity, and optimism.

Historically, the notion of well-being has its roots in philosophy, where thinkers such as Aristotle linked it to eudaimonia, or the pursuit of a virtuous and flourishing life. Over time, the concept evolved and extended beyond philosophy to psychology, sociology, and economics, becoming a multidisciplinary construct that now influences all aspects of social and professional life. Its achievement depends on the optimal use of material, human, and social resources, and it plays a central role in enhancing quality of life, strengthening social ties, and fostering a sense of belonging.

²⁰ Le capital humain en gestion des ressources humaines : éclairage sur le succès d'un concept (Roussel, A. G.-J. (2010))

²¹ Effet du bien-être au travail sur la relation entre engagement organisationnel et comportements innovants des salariés du secteur public au Bénin (DJHOSSOU A.J.D, WOROU HOUNDEKON R.D) 2022

Well-being is inherently subjective and relative. It can vary significantly from one individual to another, depending on personality traits, values, cultural norms, and the specific context in which it is experienced. A situation that produces a deep sense of well-being for one person may leave another indifferent. Moreover, well-being can be individual, rooted in personal satisfaction, or collective, arising from shared experiences and common achievements within a community or workplace. This dual nature explains why well-being is increasingly regarded as both a personal psychological experience and a collective social construct that must be cultivated at multiple levels.

Psychological research emphasizes that well-being is not simply the absence of suffering or dissatisfaction but a positive state characterized by optimism, resilience, and emotional intelligence. It results from the ability to build meaningful relationships based on trust²², loyalty, and sincerity, as well as the capacity to act in ways that align with one's values and purpose. In the workplace, this translates into autonomy in decision-making, the opportunity to take initiative, and the freedom to manage professional challenges while maintaining balance and authenticity.

Importantly, well-being is not static but dynamic: it requires constant nurturing and depends on evolving life circumstances and organizational contexts. It can be reinforced by favorable working conditions—such as recognition, participation in decision-making, fair rewards, and opportunities for growth—or undermined by toxic environments marked by stress, lack of communication, and poor leadership. Before individuals can fully develop well-being, they must first have access to basic conditions of comfort, security, and fairness.

Ultimately, well-being is both a driver and a consequence of performance. It enhances self-determination, self-efficacy, and resilience, allowing individuals to contribute more effectively to organizational goals. At the same time, organizations that promote well-being create a virtuous cycle: motivated and satisfied employees are more engaged, innovative, and loyal, which in turn strengthens the organization's competitive position. Beyond its instrumental value, well-being is also an ethical imperative: fostering environments where people can thrive is part of the responsibility of modern organizations committed to sustainability, responsibility, and respect for human dignity.

In short, well-being represents a comprehensive state of balance between individual ambition, professional responsibility, and collective harmony. It is a sign of personal fulfillment and organizational maturity²³, encouraging the development of strong, motivated personalities while reinforcing values such as responsibility, sincerity, and loyalty.

III. THE EMPIRICAL PART

A. Methodology

The aim of this empirical study is to clarify the relationship between organizational innovation and competence, and to specify the mutual influence of each on the other by examining the mediating role of human capital, knowledge, and well-being in this relationship. While the theoretical part of this work presented the conceptual foundations and highlighted the potential links between these variables, the empirical investigation seeks to provide concrete, observable evidence to confirm, refine, or, if necessary, refute these assumptions. In this way, the study aims to bridge theory and practice, transforming abstract concepts into measurable and verifiable data.

To achieve this objective, a case study approach was adopted. Case studies are particularly well suited for analyzing complex relationships in organizational contexts, as they allow the collection of detailed, contextualized data that reflect real experiences and perceptions. In this case, the study takes the form of a structured questionnaire composed of approximately twenty questions of varying formats—closed questions, Likert scale items, and multiple-choice questions. The combination of these question types makes it possible to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information, thereby enriching the depth of the analysis.

The questionnaire is divided into two main sections.

The first section is an information sheet designed to capture the socio-demographic and professional characteristics of the respondents. This includes variables such as age, gender, educational background, years of experience, hierarchical position, and sector of activity. These data are essential for identifying potential patterns and differences in responses across groups and for ensuring the representativeness of the sample.

²² Confiance, coopération et autonomie : pour une école du XXIème siècle (Yann Algan – Elise Huillery – Corinne Prost) 2018

²³ Effet du bien-être au travail sur la relation entre engagement organisationnel et comportements innovants des salariés du secteur public au Bénin (DJOHOSSOU A.J.D, W. H. (2022))

The second section focuses directly on the research subject. It includes questions that seek to identify the main factors influencing the relationship between organizational innovation and competence, with a particular emphasis on the role of human capital, knowledge management, and well-being at work. For instance, some items assess employees' perceptions of the level of support provided by their organization for skills development, the extent to which knowledge is shared and valued, and the degree of well-being experienced in the workplace. Others explore how these variables contribute, directly or indirectly, to fostering innovation and sustaining organizational performance.

The design of the questionnaire was informed by the theoretical framework developed in the first part of this study and by existing instruments in the literature, in order to ensure coherence, relevance, and scientific validity. The questions were carefully formulated to remain clear, unbiased, and aligned with the objectives of the research, while respecting academic standards of data collection.

The sample selected for this study is composed of a heterogeneous group of respondents, representing different genders, age categories, educational levels, professional positions, and organizational contexts. This diversity was intentionally sought to broaden the range of perspectives and capture the complexity of real organizational environments. By including employees from different backgrounds and hierarchical levels, the study is able to account for varied ways of perceiving competence, knowledge, well-being, and innovation, which are often influenced by personal experiences, professional trajectories, and organizational cultures.

Once collected, the responses to the questionnaire are systematically analyzed and interpreted. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while comparative analyses highlight variations between groups. Reliability tests, such as Cronbach's alpha, can be employed to ensure the internal consistency of the scales used. Beyond numerical results, attention is also paid to the qualitative insights provided by respondents, which allow for a richer understanding of the phenomena under study.

The ultimate purpose of this analysis is to arrive at a comprehensive synthesis that represents the added value of this research. By combining empirical findings with theoretical perspectives, the study provides a nuanced and integrative view of how competence and organizational innovation interact, and of the crucial roles played by human capital, knowledge, and well-being in shaping this interaction. This methodological approach ensures that the subject is addressed in a holistic way, balancing conceptual rigor with practical relevance.

B. Analysis of results

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire responses, a clear and somewhat paradoxical picture of the organizational landscape emerges. The respondent profile is predominantly composed of highly educated women, many of whom hold positions of responsibility across various sectors. This is largely a cohort of young professionals with more than two years in their current roles, indicating a workforce with significant experience and in-depth knowledge of their respective companies. However, this experienced workforce reports a critical gap between their inherent capabilities and the support they receive. In terms of skills, while respondents feel personally competent, they overwhelmingly report that their organizations fail to invest in further development. This is attributed to a severe lack of resources dedicated to professional growth, such as formal training, knowledge-sharing meetings, and other developmental tools. This institutional neglect leads to an acknowledged insufficiency of knowledge and forces employees to seek out alternative methods for their skill development.

This lack of investment directly influences the perception of human capital. Respondents generally consider their organization's human capital to be at the same level or lower than that of competitors, citing insufficient effort and importance placed on this area by management. Unsurprisingly, this context contributes to only an average level of satisfaction regarding professional needs and a moderate sense of well-being at work. When it comes to innovation, a notable disconnect appears. Respondents believe their organizations are structurally adequate and possess the capacity to make decisions to innovate and create. They also recognize organizational innovation as a strategic necessity, not an underestimated effort. Yet, despite this awareness, organizations are perceived as not actively developing or fostering innovation, particularly at the organizational level. Ultimately, the responses confirm a powerful interconnection: the development of skills within human capital is seen as a fundamental driver that directly influences the enhancement of well-being, the expansion of knowledge, and, most critically, the achievement of organizational innovation.

C. Summary

Organizational innovation can be defined as the successful implementation of new and useful ideas within an organization. This broad concept encompasses a spectrum of novelties, ranging from incremental improvements to radical changes, and can manifest as a new service concept, a transformative vision, a revised business strategy, an optimized internal process, or a novel administrative method. The catalyst for this innovation is invariably the organization's human resources—its internal and external human capital. This vital capital is not a monolithic entity but a diverse collective of individuals, each bringing a unique combination of formal education, practical experience, specialized tasks, and distinct areas of expertise. Essentially, the knowledge base of human capital is a rich tapestry woven from threads of academic learning, professional training, pre- and post-employment experiences, and the valuable insights gained from personal and professional networks.

The true value of this knowledge is realized only through its application. When an employee effectively leverages their unique combination of skills and understanding to solve a complex problem, achieve a strategic goal, satisfy a client need, or make a critical decision in a timely manner, they demonstrate competence. This quality of competence is the fundamental differentiator—it distinguishes one employee from another and, by extension, one organization from its competitors. It is a dynamic attribute, reflecting an individual's ability to translate knowledge into action. The possession and recognition of competence play a pivotal psychological role within the workplace. It directly fuels an employee's self-confidence, intrinsic motivation, and sense of belonging. Furthermore, it fosters a profound sense of existence and value within the company, strengthening cohesion and satisfying deep-seated personal and professional needs. The continuous strengthening and development of these positive feelings in competent employees culminate in a broader and more significant sense of professional fulfillment, which is the very bedrock of individual well-being at work.

In essence, when an organization successfully cultivates this sense of fulfillment among its members, it reaps significant collective benefits. It guarantees the formation of cohesive and consistent teams, characterized by trusting relationships, open communication, proactive knowledge exchange, mutual assistance, and effective teamwork. Such a positive environment, in turn, naturally elevates the overall level of employee involvement and commitment. This heightened engagement directly and indirectly enhances the organization's performance, sharpening its competitive edge and solidifying its market position. Therefore, it becomes clear that organizational innovation, collective knowledge, and the competence of human capital are not isolated factors but are deeply interconnected. They form a virtuous cycle that actively contributes to and sustains a culture of well-being within the organization, ultimately driving its long-term success and resilience.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In the contemporary professional landscape, the pursuit of high-performing, motivated, and responsible human capital remains a paramount objective for organizations. Among these qualities, competence has emerged as a particularly critical and sought-after attribute. Recruiters increasingly prioritize competence—encompassing technical expertise, behavioral skills, and interpersonal intelligence—due to its direct relevance in navigating the complexities of the modern world of work. This essential criterion is not an innate trait but is constructed through a dynamic interplay of personal characteristics and a synthesis of professional achievements, a synthesis collectively termed "knowledge." Fundamentally, competence is born from the acquisition of knowledge and is subsequently refined and expanded through the continuous development of that knowledge base.

However, the true value of competence is latent until it is applied in practice. It is through tangible application that competence is manifested and measured. Among the most significant manifestations of applied competence is innovation—the capacity to create, modify, and improve products, services, and processes. This ability allows an organization to distinguish itself from competitors while simultaneously reinforcing among its employees a profound sense of need satisfaction, belonging, and well-being. A key type of innovation that signals a high level of collective competence is organizational innovation, which involves innovating in structures, management practices, and workflows.

Therefore, the logical chain is clear and compelling. The knowledge embedded within an organization's human capital serves as the foundational bedrock for developing competence. This competence, in turn, is the primary engine for organizational innovation. Finally, this innovation acts as a powerful catalyst, creating an environment that fosters the highest levels of professional fulfillment and well-being. In conclusion, investing in the knowledge development of human capital is not merely a strategic choice for enhancing performance; it is the essential pathway to building a competent, innovative, and ultimately thriving organization where well-being is a tangible outcome.

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