

Self-Efficacy and Organizational Culture as Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Global South Work Communities

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ABSTRACT

Organizations in the Global South are not merely sites of economic activity but living communities where collective values, relational practices, and locally grounded knowledge are continuously produced and sustained. This paper reconceptualizes self-efficacy and organizational culture through the lenses of community psychology and indigenous psychology, aligning empirical organizational research with the seminar theme “*Wisdom of the Ancestors, Health of the Planet.*” Drawing on quantitative findings from a correlational study involving employees of a hospitality organization in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, the study demonstrates a strong and significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and organizational culture ($r = 0.836$, $p < .01$). Rather than treating self-efficacy as an individual trait and organizational culture as a managerial instrument, the findings suggest that both operate as relational and collective processes embedded within community-based value systems. Organizational culture is interpreted as a form of contemporary local wisdom that is collectively produced, transmitted, and sustained within work communities. From this perspective, self-efficacy emerges as an expression of collective empowerment rather than solely personal belief. The paper highlights implications for sustainable organizational practices that emphasize relational well-being, community-based governance, and culturally grounded pathways toward social and planetary sustainability.

Keywords: *community psychology, global south organizations, indigenous knowledge systems, organizational culture, self-efficacy*

Introduction

Contemporary organizational psychology has increasingly recognized that individual psychological functioning cannot be separated from its social and cultural context. Within this framework, self-efficacy and organizational culture emerge as two interrelated constructs that reflect the dynamic relationship between individuals and the communities in which they work. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capacity to organize and execute actions required to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997), while organizational culture encompasses the shared values, norms, and practices that guide collective behavior within an organization (Schein, 2010; Denison & Mishra, 1995).

Recent developments in indigenous and decolonial psychology emphasize that psychological constructs cannot be meaningfully understood outside the cultural, historical, and relational contexts in which they are embedded. Chakkarath (2020) argues that indigenous psychologies challenge the universalization of Western psychological models by foregrounding culturally grounded epistemologies, relational self-construals, and community-based modes of knowledge production. From this perspective, psychological phenomena such as self-efficacy are

not merely internal cognitive appraisals but are co-constructed through social participation, shared meanings, and culturally transmitted practices. Indigenous psychology thus calls for a shift from individual-centered explanations toward contextualized and relational understandings of human functioning.

Similarly, decolonial scholars contend that much of mainstream psychology has been shaped by Global North assumptions that marginalize knowledge systems originating from the Global South. Malherbe & Ratele (2022) emphasize that decolonizing psychology involves recognizing organizations, institutions, and everyday social spaces as sites where power, culture, and subjectivity are continuously negotiated. In Global South contexts, work organizations function not only as economic entities but also as moral and relational communities where collective values, histories, and indigenous forms of knowledge are enacted. Integrating these perspectives allows organizational culture to be conceptualized as a living system of indigenous wisdom that sustains both individual agency and communal well-being.

From a community psychology perspective, individuals are not isolated actors but members of interdependent systems in which meaning, identity, and agency are co-constructed (Rappaport, 1987). This perspective resonates strongly with indigenous psychology, which emphasizes relationality, collectivity, and the embeddedness of human functioning within cultural and ecological systems (Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006). In many indigenous knowledge systems, well-being is understood not as an individual achievement but as the harmony between persons, community, and environment.

Aligned with the seminar theme “*Wisdom of the Ancestors, Health of the Planet*,” this paper conceptualizes organizational culture as a form of modern indigenous or local wisdom. Although situated in contemporary work settings, organizational culture represents collectively inherited knowledge that governs how communities sustain social relations, distribute roles, and maintain psychological balance. Within such systems, self-efficacy develops not only from personal mastery but also through participation, shared meaning, and collective affirmation.

Self-Efficacy as a Community-Based Process

Bandura (1997) conceptualized self-efficacy as comprising three dimensions: magnitude, generality, and strength. While traditionally framed as an individual cognitive belief, community psychology expands this understanding by situating self-efficacy within processes of empowerment and participation. Rappaport (1987) and Zimmerman (1995) argue that psychological empowerment involves both individual competencies and access to social structures that enable agency.

Cross-cultural research further suggests that self-efficacy is context-sensitive and shaped by cultural norms, relational expectations, and communal support systems (Luszczynska et al., 2005). In collectivist and indigenous contexts, confidence in one’s abilities often emerges through relational validation and shared responsibility rather than individual assertion. Thus, self-efficacy may be more accurately understood as *relational efficacy*—a capacity cultivated within community life.

Organizational Culture as Modern Local Wisdom

Denison and Mishra (1995) describe organizational culture through four dimensions: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. These dimensions parallel key elements of indigenous knowledge systems, which emphasize participation, continuity, adaptability to environmental change, and shared purpose. Schein (2010) further conceptualizes culture as a pattern of basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration.

From an indigenous psychology standpoint, culture is not merely a background variable but a living system of knowledge transmitted across generations (Kim et al., 2006). Organizational culture, in this sense, functions as modern local wisdom—encoding collective memory, ethical principles, and relational norms that guide community survival and sustainability within contemporary economic systems.

Sense of Community and Sustainability

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define sense of community as comprising membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. These elements are foundational not only for psychological well-being but also for sustainable communal life. Pretty and McCarthy (1991) highlight that strong community bonds contribute to resilience, commitment, and long-term collective well-being.

When organizations function as communities rather than purely instrumental systems, they foster conditions that support both human flourishing and sustainable practice. Such organizations reflect indigenous principles of balance, reciprocity, and collective responsibility—values essential for planetary well-being.

Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and organizational culture among employees. Participants consisted of 50 employees from a hospitality organization in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, selected through saturated sampling to include the entire population.

Data were collected using two self-report instruments: a Self-Efficacy Scale based on Bandura's (1997) theoretical framework (magnitude, generality, strength), and an Organizational Culture Scale grounded in the model proposed by Denison and Mishra (1995) (involvement, consistency, adaptability, mission). Instrument content validity was evaluated through expert judgment involving five professionals, with Aiken's V used to assess item validity.

Results

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong and highly significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and organizational culture ($r = 0.836$, $p < 0.01$). Descriptive analyses indicated that most participants reported high to very high levels of self-efficacy (84%) and high to very high internalization of organizational cultural values (90%). These findings suggest a close interdependence between individual efficacy beliefs and the cultural environment of the organization.

Discussion

The findings underscore the importance of understanding self-efficacy and organizational culture as mutually reinforcing processes within a community context. From a community psychology perspective, self-efficacy reflects not only personal belief but also the extent to which individuals experience empowerment through participation and shared meaning (Zimmerman, 1995).

Organizational culture, functioning as a system of collective knowledge, provides the symbolic and relational environment in which self-efficacy can flourish. Consistent with indigenous psychology, this culture embodies shared wisdom that regulates social interaction, reinforces

belonging, and sustains psychological well-being. The strong correlation observed in this study highlights the inseparability of individual agency and collective structure.

In relation to sustainability, organizations grounded in communal values and indigenous wisdom are better positioned to foster long-term well-being. Such organizations prioritize relational harmony, adaptive learning, and shared purpose—principles that mirror ancestral knowledge systems oriented toward balance between human activity and environmental limits.

Mainstream psychological science often reflects colonial legacies, perpetuating power imbalances and excluding voices from the Global South. From an indigenous and community psychology perspective, the strong association between self-efficacy and organizational culture reflects a reciprocal process between individual agency and collective meaning-making. In this context, self-efficacy should not be understood solely as an internal psychological attribute, but rather as a relational capacity that emerges through participation, recognition, and shared responsibility within a work community. This interpretation aligns with indigenous psychological frameworks that emphasize a relational ontology, in which the self is constituted through social, cultural, and historical relationships rather than isolated individualism (Adams et al., 2015).

Organizational culture, viewed through a Global South lens, functions as a form of contemporary local wisdom that sustains communal values such as mutual care, collective responsibility, and social harmony. These values resonate with indigenous conceptions of sustainability, where the continuity of relationships is central to collective well-being. Rather than serving exclusively instrumental or performance-oriented goals, organizational culture operates as a living knowledge system that supports empowerment, fosters psychological resilience, and maintains community coherence over time.

The present findings resonate with Chakkarath's (2020) assertion that indigenous psychologies emphasize relationality and contextual meaning as central elements of psychological functioning. The strong association between self-efficacy and organizational culture observed in this study suggests that individual confidence and agency are inseparable from the collective value systems in which they are embedded. In this sense, self-efficacy reflects not only personal belief but also the extent to which individuals experience recognition, belonging, and moral alignment within their work community.

From a decolonial perspective, Malherbe & Ratele (2022) argue that reclaiming indigenous and Global South knowledge systems requires reinterpreting psychological constructs as socially situated processes rather than abstract, decontextualized variables. The findings of this study support this view by demonstrating that organizational culture operates as a shared epistemic framework through which meaning, responsibility, and empowerment are collectively negotiated. Such a framework challenges dominant managerialist approaches and repositions organizations as culturally embedded communities capable of fostering sustainable psychological and social development. This perspective challenges dominant Global North organizational models that prioritize efficiency, competition, and individual achievement. Instead, it offers an alternative epistemological framework grounded in community sustainability and relational well-being. By reframing organizational culture as indigenous wisdom-in-practice, this study contributes to culturally responsive and ecologically grounded approaches to organizational psychology.

Implications for Community and Sustainability Practice

Viewing organizational culture as modern indigenous wisdom has important implications for policy and practice. Organizations can promote sustainability by strengthening participatory governance, collective decision-making, and culturally grounded leadership. Community-based organizational practices not only enhance employee well-being but also support sustainable social systems by reinforcing reciprocity, shared responsibility, and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Conclusion

Self-efficacy and organizational culture within work settings should not be conceptualized merely as individual attributes or formal organizational structures. Rather, they represent dynamic psychological processes that develop through ongoing interactions within work communities. The empirical findings presented in this study illustrate that self-efficacy gains stronger psychological meaning when situated within a supportive organizational culture, while organizational culture functions as a collective value system that facilitates individual empowerment. From a community psychology perspective, these constructs reflect a reciprocal relationship between individuals and their social environments, with empowerment and sense of community serving as foundational elements for sustained psychological well-being.

In alignment with the seminar theme, organizational culture can be understood as a form of contemporary local wisdom that is actively lived and transmitted within work communities. The values, norms, and practices embedded in organizational life play a crucial role in sustaining social relationships and creating spaces in which self-efficacy can flourish as an individual capacity. Consequently, a community-based psychological approach offers a relevant framework for understanding organizations as sustainable social systems and for advancing organizational practices that prioritize not only performance but also long-term psychological and communal well-being.

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