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THE INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIETAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURAL
TIGHTNESS ON EMPLOYEE WORK RELATED OUTCOMES

BY

NA ZHAO

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

2023

The Interactive Effects of Societal and Organizational Cultural Tightness on Employee Work

Related Outcomes

By

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Submitted to Lee Kong Chian School of Business

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business

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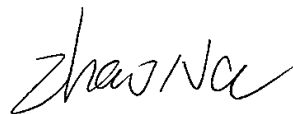
Singapore Management University 2023

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I hereby declare that this PhD dissertation is my original work
and it has been written by me in its entirety.

I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information
which have been used in this dissertation.

This PhD dissertation has also not been submitted for any degree
in any university previously.



Na Zhao

30 May 2023

ABSTRACT

Individuals are shaped by both their organizational and societal cultures, yet existing research often approaches these cultural dimensions in isolation, ignoring their combined impact on individual behaviors. In response to this research gap, I developed a novel theoretical framework by combining cultural tightness literature with social information processing theory. This framework highlights the interactive impacts of societal and organizational cultures on employees' outcomes, including job performance, work attitudes, and mental health. Moreover, I proposed several mechanisms, including motivational, cognitive, and emotional mechanisms, through which these forms of cultural tightness could shape these specified work-related outcomes. To validate this framework, I have conducted two empirical investigations within the sociocultural context of China, providing a partial examination of the proposed theoretical model.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My heartfelt appreciation extends to all those who have contributed to the completion of my Ph.D. journey. The triumphs associated with this journey would not have been possible without your undying support, profound love, and unwavering encouragement.

Foremost, I owe a debt of gratitude to my advisor, Roy Chua, who steadfastly offered guidance, imparted insightful wisdom, and supported me throughout this demanding journey. Your mentorship significantly enriched my research experience, making it both challenging and exhilarating.

I also wish to convey my deep appreciation to my committee members, Dev P. Bhawe, Kenneth Tai, and Xi Zou. Your insightful comments, probing questions, and unwavering support during the process of my dissertation sharpened my thinking and elevated my work to new heights.

Special recognition goes to Marko Pitesa and Jared Nai for their unreserved support in all my scholarly pursuits. Their steadfast belief in my capabilities and invaluable guidance have significantly augmented both my work and personal growth.

I extend warm thanks to my colleagues and friends at Singapore Management University for fostering a dynamic and supportive milieu conducive to learning and growth. I am deeply appreciative of your companionship, emotional support, and understanding throughout this journey.

On a more personal note, my heartfelt thanks go out to my family and friends outside of academia. I am incredibly grateful for your unconditional love, constant encouragement, and unshakeable faith in my abilities. Your support during the highs and lows of this journey has meant more to me than words can capture.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Organizations operate in an environment where organizational and societal cultures play a simultaneous and important role. When individuals enter the workforce and join organizations, they are exposed to and impacted by the organizational culture. Organizational culture refers to the shared values and beliefs that guide behavior within an organization (Denison & Mishra, 1995). Research has focused on understanding how different organizational values impact employees and organizations from various perspectives. For example, Elsbach & Stigliani (2018) found that organizational cultures that encourage hands-on work can improve design thinking, while O’neill & Rothbard (2017) discovered that an organizational culture marked by high joviality and companionate love was associated with lower risk-taking behavior outside of work.

Besides organizations, employees are socially embedded (Davis, 2008), meaning that individuals are influenced by their social environment, including societal cultures. Societal culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and perspectives held by members of a particular community (Najeemdeen et al., 2018). These cultural norms and values may shape individuals’ attitudes and behaviors by providing guidance on acceptable conduct within specific groups. Cross-cultural studies demonstrate that cultural differences can impact various aspects of people’s attitudes and behaviors, including their motivations, trust levels, and feedback preferences (Chua et al., 2012; Kim & Drolet, 2003; Kurman et al., 2003; Morrison et al., 2004).

But current studies tend to view organizational culture in relative isolation from the societal environment, despite organizations operating within a context where both organizational and societal culture play concurrent and significant roles (Silvertone, 2015). Prior research has highlighted the independent effects of societal and organizational cultures on employees, but the interaction of these two cultural dimensions in shaping workplace

behavior remains largely unexplored. The relationship between these cultural dimensions is intricate; organizational culture does not always mirror societal culture (Gerhart, 2009; Nelson & Gopalan, 2003). While societal culture is relatively static and beyond individual or small group control, organizational culture is malleable and can be shaped by key figures such as CEOs and other executives. Moreover, organizations' cultures may change depending on their objectives, especially when operating globally. These organizations face the dilemma of balancing their cultural adaptation to local environments with the pursuit of uniformity or standardization (Perlmutter, 1969; Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994) or developing a unique culture to gain competitive advantages. To address this dilemma, gaining a deeper understanding of how societal and organizational cultures interact to shape employee work-related outcomes is crucial for crafting effective management strategies and fostering positive workplace outcomes (Schneider, 1988).

Building on the aforementioned discussion, I argue that although societal and organizational cultures are conceptually distinct, their interrelatedness is crucial to understanding how workplace behaviors are shaped. Hofstede (1991) postulated that employees' behaviors are influenced by both national and organizational cultures, suggesting that their personal values and ideals developed in their early life stages can impact their interpretation of and reactions to organizational culture and work behaviors. More specifically, earlier academic evidence has shown that the same organizational culture (i.e., empowering culture; Robert et al., 2000) can lead to contradicting effects in different societal cultural backgrounds. Further research by scholars like Joiner (2001) and Testa et al. (2003) has suggested that mismatches between organizational culture and societal context can potentially incite organizational dysfunction and inefficiencies.

However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of examining the interplay between societal and organizational cultures, there remains a considerable gap in

our understanding of how these cultures jointly influence employee behaviors. This research deficit paints an incomplete picture of culture-oriented studies and poses pertinent queries concerning how organizations can fine-tune their cultures to foster positive workplace outcomes, such as employee attitudes, performance, and mental health.

To address the above-mentioned concerns, this study focuses on a relatively new cultural dimension: cultural tightness. This term refers to the extent to which a group's norms are clearly delineated and deviations from them are rigorously punished (Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011). Predominantly, existing research has largely probed its implications for a broader cultural stratum (i.e., national culture), with burgeoning evidence suggesting that cultural tightness exerts significant psychological and cognitive impacts on individuals at the national level (Gelfand et al., 2006). Contemporary studies have illustrated considerable regional variations in cultural tightness within larger nations like the United States and China. Consequently, it is critical to tailor cultural tightness to local contexts and appreciate its multifaceted layers (Harrington & Gelfand, 2014). To this end, scholars have studied variations in cultural tightness across different states in the U.S. (Harrington and Gelfand, 2014) and provinces in China (Chua et al., 2019). Besides, Qin et al. (2021) shed light on how cultural tightness in organizations can act as a double-edged sword, potentially stifling team creativity while simultaneously restraining team deviance. Collectively, these studies provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of cultural tightness across different societal and organizational levels.

Building upon this theoretical foundation, I endeavor to utilize cultural tightness as a theoretical lens to investigate the interplay of societal and organizational cultural tightness on employee work-related outcomes. In Chapter 2, I will delve into relevant literature, encompassing both cultural tightness and social information processing theory. Subsequently, in Chapter 3, I will employ the social information processing theory as a guiding framework

to construct a theoretical model elucidating how societal and organizational cultural tightness impacts employee work performance, attitudes, and mental health conditions. Moreover, I will propose potential mechanisms underpinning these effects. Through two empirical studies (Chapters 4–5), I will scrutinize part of the theoretical model developed in Chapter 3 within the Chinese context. Finally, in Chapter 6, I will conclude my dissertation by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of my findings. In addition, I will address the limitations of my study and suggest possible future research directions to deepen our grasp of the interplay between societal and organizational culture.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational and Societal culture

Conceptual Distinctions of Organizational and Societal Culture

Culture is a comprehensive set of facts, beliefs, assumptions, ethics, and habits that govern the conduct of people in a particular community or group (Najeemdeen et al., 2018). Culture can serve as a source of knowledge, reflecting subjective and tangible parts of what is occurring in a group and training individuals on how to behave in various circumstances (Schein, 2004). Under the umbrella of the idea of culture, there are two commonly researched cultural concepts: societal culture (or national culture) and organizational culture.

Societal culture, as defined by Hofstede & Bond (1988), embodies the collective views and values of a nation, passed down through generations (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Societal culture is shaped by elements like religion, closeness, history, and education. Parallel to societal culture, organizations foster their unique organizational culture, which is a shared system of meanings that regulate employee behaviors (Denison, 1990). Organizational culture encapsulates interconnected and procedural aspects of organizations, including elements such as hierarchical dynamics, collaborative efforts, risk management, ambiguity tolerance, employee motivations, incentives, and retention strategies (Tayeb, 1994). Organizational culture can be deliberately nurtured, or spontaneously emerge, with various factors like managerial practices and tactics, the type of industry, and the size of the organization shaping its development. These descriptions illustrate the conceptual distinction between societal and organizational culture: while both pertain to shared values and perspectives, their precise content differs. Societal culture emphasizes values and beliefs pertaining to an individual's daily life across different conditions, whereas organizational culture prioritizes values and beliefs pertaining to the organization's operations.

Relationship between Organizational and Societal Culture

Societal and organizational culture, while conceptually distinct, are likely to exhibit a moderate correlation due to their reciprocal influence. The nexus between these two cultural dimensions has garnered increasing scholarly attention. Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) posits that to obtain legitimacy within a cultural milieu, organizations tend to assimilate characteristics of the prevailing societal culture. This theoretical lens suggests societal culture serves as a constraining force, aligning organizational culture with societal culture. Supporting this notion, Sullivan and colleagues (1988) argued that cultural differences influence managers' interpretation and response to strategic issues. To be more specific, Japanese managers, given their higher orientation towards uncertainty avoidance, are more likely than their American counterparts to perceive issues as threats and restrict information sharing. Similarly, Johns (2006) theorized that "microculture" (i.e., culture rooted in different industries or nations) can impact the range of organizational behaviors; moreover, Nelson and Gopalan's (2003) research demonstrated that national culture can confine the variation in organizational cultures.

On the contrary, organizational culture scholars contend that organizations can carve out a competitive edge by cultivating unique cultures, thus distinguishing themselves significantly from competitors (Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006). This perspective contrasts with institutional theory; some scholars (i.e., Oliver, 1991) can consciously deviate from institutional norms, fostering distinctive organizational cultures that set them apart. Gerhart and his collaborators (i.e., Gerhart, 2009; Gerhart & Fang, 2005) pointed out that the extent to which a national culture constrains organizational culture is exaggerated. Johns (2006) further expounded that, while national culture may circumscribe the scope of organizational culture, these constraints vary across studies due to a joint product of methodological and substantive factors.

Interactive Effects of Organizational and Societal Culture

Although there is a relative scarcity of comprehensive examinations centered on the simultaneous impacts of organizational and societal culture, a body of existing research has offered illuminating insights into how these two cultural dimensions concurrently impact organizations and their employees. For instance, Joiner (2001) investigated the interplay between societal and organizational cultures in Greece, discovering notable inconsistencies between these two forms of culture. And these discrepancies may give rise to workplace issues such as elevated job stress. In a similar vein, Robert and colleagues (2000) embarked on an exploratory study investigating the repercussions of an empowering organizational culture on employees within the same corporation operating across diverse countries, including the United States, Mexico, Poland, and India. Their findings disclosed a compelling contrast: an empowering culture demonstrated a negative correlation with satisfaction with supervisors and coworkers in India, while it exhibited a positive correlation with satisfaction with supervisors in the U.S., Mexico, and Poland.

Adding to this discourse, a comprehensive study conducted by Testa and colleagues (2003) evaluated employees from a cruise line that had representation from nearly 99 different nations. Their research indicated that alignment between an employee's national culture and the organizational culture resulted in higher job satisfaction. Conversely, a growing divergence between national and organizational cultures was associated with discomfort among employees, subsequently leading to diminished commitment. Collectively, this body of scholarly evidence suggests that a disconnect between organizational culture and the surrounding societal context may lead to inefficiencies and dysfunction within the organization.

Cultural Tightness Theory

Definition

Cultural tightness, as a distinct facet of cultural diversity, encompasses notable cultural variances. This concept is defined as “the strength of social norms and the degree of sanctioning within societies” (Gelfand et al., 2006:1226). Based on this definition, cultural tightness embodies two dimensions: 1) the robustness of established rules and norms; 2) the degree of tolerance for transgressions of social norms and regulations (Gelfand et al., 2006). In this context, tight societies (e.g., China, Singapore, and India) uphold rigorous, stringent norms and rules. They typically enforce severe penalties on individuals deviating from these prescribed standards. In contrast, loose societies (e.g., the United States and Israel) uphold more fluid norms. These societies often encourage alternative expressions of these norms and demonstrate a greater tolerance for non-conformist behaviors (Pelto, 1968).

Source of Cultural Tightness

Researchers from various fields, including anthropology (Pelto, 1968), sociology (Boldt, 1978), and psychology (Berry, 1966, 1967), have long posited that cultural tightness serves as a critical, albeit frequently neglected, parameter for understanding cultural variations. This domain of study underscores the significance of cultural tightness and delves into characteristics that classify societies as either tight or loose. The potency of cultural tightness is widely recognized to fluctuate based on a range of contextual or situational elements (Gerhart & Fang, 2005). For example, Pelto (1968) proposed that societies with unilineal kinship systems (i.e., lineage or group affiliation traced solely through paternal or maternal ancestors), a high reliance on crop cultivation, and a high population density typically exhibit stringent norms and rules. In contrast, societies featuring bilateral systems (i.e., equitable consideration of both sexes), a high dependence on pastoral or hunting practices, and a low population density are inclined towards more lenient and flexible norms.

Echoing Pelto's assertion, research conducted by Boldt and colleagues (Boldt, 1978; Boldt & Roberts, 1979) reinforced the idea that agricultural communities manifest more cohesiveness compared to societies based on hunting and fishing. This is predominantly due to the former's reliance on strict norms for maintaining order and ensuring survival. Further empirical investigations into tightness (e.g., Triandis & Vassiliou, 1972; Witkin & Berry, 1975) have elucidated that societies with high population densities, scarce natural resources, and pronounced environmental and physical vulnerabilities typically display cultural attributes associated with tightness.

Effects of Cultural Tightness

In recent years, cultural tightness has been associated with a spectrum of psychological and organizational phenomena. Notably, it exerts a significant influence on individuals' cognitive, emotional, and psychological processes. For instance, a body of research by Berry (1966, 1967), Dawson (1967), and Gelfand et al. (2006) has revealed that individuals from tight societies tend to display diminished feelings of alienation, demonstrate field-dependent cognitive styles, exhibit an amplified prevention focus, express heightened self-monitoring, and maintain superior self-control when juxtaposed with those from loose cultures. Further, Ma et al. (2022) illustrated that cultural tightness can attenuate the perception of individual autonomy while amplifying the sensation of collective control. Similarly, Liu et al. (2018) discovered that individuals from culturally tight regions were more predisposed to express positive emotions while concurrently less likely to convey negative sentiments. Additionally, Chen et al. (2021) determined that individuals originating from tight societies tend to exhibit a preference for physical formidability and interpersonal dominance.

Furthermore, a burgeoning corpus of research indicates that cultural tightness can illuminate distinct organizational behaviors and practices. Dunaetz (2019) posited that

organizations with looser cultural orientations are inclined to foster creativity and promote innovative problem-solving strategies and goal-achievement approaches. In contrast, organizations with tighter cultural orientations prioritize the maintenance of order, the facilitation of smooth operations, the development of well-defined structures, adherence to rules, and a limited spectrum of responses to arising challenges. In a similar vein, Aktas et al. (2016) found that employees from tighter cultures tend to regard autonomous leadership as more effective. Conversely, employees from looser cultures exhibit a stronger preference for team-oriented and charismatic leadership styles. Chua et al. (2015) determined that cultural tightness affects engagement levels and the likelihood of success in creative endeavors. Specifically, individuals from tight cultures are less likely to participate in such activities and more likely to encounter failure. Furthermore, Qin et al. (2021) revealed that cultural tightness at the team level can hinder team creativity while reducing team deviance.

In conclusion, cultural tightness, as a facet of cultural variation, has emerged as an extension of prevailing value-centric frameworks, pivoting the focus from individual attributes to environmental determinants that influence personal behavior. This paradigm shift furnishes us with a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of cross-cultural variations.

Societal and Organizational Cultural Tightness

Individuals within a given society encounter the intensity of social norms from a plethora of sources, encompassing consistencies in societal beliefs and behaviors, sanctions, and institutionalizations via formal structures (Morris et al., 2015). However, the current conceptualization and measurement of the cultural tightness construct do not explicitly reflect this multiplicity of sources. A substantial portion of studies on cultural tightness (i.e., Aktas et al., 2016; Chua et al., 2015; Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011) predominantly concentrated on cultural tightness at the national level. These studies measure the strength of

social norms and the extent of punishment in a country or society. For instance, Gelfand and colleagues (2011) collected data on cultural tightness from 33 countries and demonstrated the distinctions between tight and loose cultures.

In vast nations such as China and the United States, however, there are notable regional differences pertaining to social customs, historical conditions, personality characteristics, cultural practices, languages spoken, and labor mobility (Woodard, 2011; Zhou & Li, 2009). Consequently, it is plausible to anticipate differences in the degree of cultural tightness between geographic regions. Promoted by this perspective, researchers have delved into the extent to which cultural tightness changes across various locations in both China and the United States. To be more specific, Chua et al. (2019) mapped the cultural tightness across 31 provinces in China. Their findings revealed that provincial-level cultural tightness is associated with urbanization, economic growth, better health, greater acceptance of the LGBT community, gender equality, lower rates of substantive or radical innovations, and higher rates of incremental innovations. In a parallel vein, Harrington and Gelfand (2014) found considerable variability in cultural tightness across the 50 states of the United States. They discovered that culturally tight states tend to exhibit more social stability and self-control, greater inequality, decreased innovation, and lower happiness.

In addition, Gelfand et al. (2006) posited that cultural tightness is pivotal to the success of organizations. In a theoretical exposition, these researchers argued that the extent of cultural tightness within an organization is shaped not only by the culture of the nation but also by aspects of the organizational context. These aspects include managerial practice and strategies, the nature of business, the age of the firm, and the ownership structure. As a result, the rigidity of organizational norms and sanctions may not necessarily align with national or regional cultures (Gerhart, 2009; Nelson & Gopalan, 2003). Furthermore, the degree to which

organizational norms and sanctions are enforced can exhibit considerable variation across different organizations.

Social Information Processing Theory

Definition

The Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) elucidates the intricate process through which individuals' subsequent needs, attitudes, and behaviors are shaped by information gleaned from their social environment and personal activities (Goldman, 2001). From this standpoint, individuals are perceived as highly adaptive beings with the ability to modify their actions and attitudes based on their appraisal of their social context as well as their own past and present behaviors and circumstances (Peffer & Salancik, 1978). Employees, specifically, rely on cues or signals within their work environment to effectively comprehend their organizations, thereby managing or calibrating their actions in response to their surroundings (Gu et al., 2018).

Social Information Processing Stages

Scholars within this field of study, such as Crick and Dodge (1994), have outlined various stages of social information processing, including: 1) encoding: during this stage, internal and external environmental inputs are perceived and processed; 2) cue interpretation: involves the interpretation of cues, attributions, goal setting, and evaluation based on encoded information; 3) objective clarification: involves selecting a desired goal or outcome; 4) response access or generation: including searching memory for potential responses or devising a novel response; 5) response selection after thorough assessment of all viable alternatives; and 6) behavioral implementation of the chosen course of action.

Implications of Social Information Processing Theory

Huesmann (1998) proposed a novel theoretical framework grounded in social-cognitive information processing theory to explicate the origin and manifestation of human

aggressive behavior. Utilizing aggression and anger as exemplars, Huesmann (1998) postulated that individuals perceive and interpret environmental cues differently, as mediated by social information processing mechanisms, encompassing memory structures, cognitive processes, and the retrieval of social information. To be more specific, he proposed that individuals with a higher propensity for aggression tend to focus on cues that frequently signify hostility, tend to interpret ambiguous cues as hostile, and tend to expect that people in their surroundings exhibit more hostile behaviors.

Moreover, existing research has demonstrated the applicability of the social information processing paradigm across a range of organizational behavior (OB) disciplines. For instance, Wadei et al. (2021) uncovered that ethical leadership can serve as a signal to employees, instigating social information processing and fostering a sense of security and assurance that inspires their engagement in creativity-related activities. Similarly, Chen et al. (2013) employed a social information processing perspective to examine how coworkers influence the job performance behaviors of proximate (focal) employees. Their study revealed that role ambiguity acts as a mediator in the relationship between coworker-employee exchange (CEX) and employee job performance behaviors. Additionally, the emotions-as-social-information framework (Van Kleef, 2009) posited that specific emotions can function as informative social signals, transmitting vital messages to both actors and observers within a given social context.

Culture and Social Information Processing

The concept of cultural meaning systems is defined as the collective understanding among a group's members regarding norms, shared values, and anticipated behaviors (Triandis & Vassiliou, 1972). Drawing upon social information processing theory, these systems can function as repositories of knowledge, assisting individuals in interpreting and attributing meaning to events they encounter while also influencing their expectations of

future occurrences. In the organizational context, socio-cultural events — encompassing both organizational policies and practices (Schneider, 1987) as well as interpersonal interactions and behaviors (Smith et al., 1996) — can activate these cultural meaning systems. Once activated, these systems can significantly influence employees' behaviors (Hanges et al., 2000).

From this standpoint, it can be posited that social information processing theory offers a robust theoretical framework for elucidating the intricate interplay between societal and organizational cultural tightness. Societal cultural tightness, being a component of individuals' cultural meaning systems, shapes their values, beliefs, expectations, and motivational intentions. This influences how they perceive, interpret, and respond to novel stimuli. Concurrently, organizational cultural tightness serves as a new socio-cultural event within the organizational environment. It can modulate employees' subsequent behaviors by triggering the activation of cultural meaning systems.

Summary

In summary, the existing literature provides substantial insights into the influence of societal and organizational culture. Nonetheless, several questions remain unresolved: 1) How are societal and organizational cultural tightness interrelated? Societal cultural tightness can be classified based on historical and environmental characteristics such as family structures, agricultural practices, and population density (Boldt & Roberts, 1979). In a similar vein, organizations enforce different norms and standards to regulate employee conduct, ranging from tight to loose. The degree of cultural tightness within organizations may vary due to factors like management practices, industry types, and organizational size. While some studies (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2006) posit that societal cultural tightness impacts organizational tightness, other research (e.g., Gerhart, 2009) contends that organizational culture does not necessarily correspond with national or societal culture. These conflicting conclusions

prompt further exploration into the relationship between societal and organizational cultural tightness. 2) How do societal and organizational cultural tightness shape employee behaviors interactively? Organizational culture, through shared mental assumptions and prescribed behaviors, governs interactions and actions within organizations (Denison, 1990). How are employees affected by the values, attitudes, and expectations encoded in their organizational culture and by those absorbed from their national or societal cultures (Hofstede & Bond, 1988)? Furthermore, what is the precise mechanism through which the interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness manifest?

To address these unresolved issues, I intend to synthesize insights from cultural tightness literature and social information processing theory to construct a comprehensive theoretical framework. This framework (see Figure 1) will elucidate how societal and organizational cultural tightness collectively influence employees within their workplace, including their job performance, attitudes, and mental well-being. Leveraging the foundations of social information processing theory and cultural tightness literature, I aim to propose potential mechanisms by which societal and organizational cultural tightness interactively shape employees. Additionally, I plan to empirically test the proposed theoretical framework within the sociocultural context of China, providing complementary perspectives on the interaction between regional cultural tightness and organizational cultural tightness. By doing so, I expect to contribute to broadening our understanding of the interplay of societal and organizational culture.

CHAPTER 3: THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

Relationship between Societal and Organizational Cultural Tightness

As previously stated, both organizational and societal cultures reflect individuals' shared meaning, beliefs, values, and expectations within specific groups (Najeemdeen et al., 2018). However, these two cultural manifestations are conceptually distinct. Organizational culture propels interactions and activities within organizations by defining acceptable behaviors and engendering a shared cognitive framework (Fiol, 1991; Martin et al., 2006). Conversely, societal culture shapes individuals' personal beliefs, attitudes, and expectations (Hofstede, 2001).

The present research aims to further extend the discourse by examining how employees are affected by the interconnected impacts of cultural tightness at societal and organizational levels. More specifically, I argue that societal cultural tightness and organizational tightness are conceptually distinct. First, societal cultural tightness, as delineated by Morris et al. (2015), signifies the robustness of established patterns, institutional frameworks, and social norms, along with the corresponding sanctions governing the collective behavior of a nation or society. In contrast, organizational cultural tightness, as defined by Gelfand et al. (2006), pertains to the intensity of managerial practices, protocols, and informal norms that regulate employee conduct, along with the disciplinary measures employed to address deviations. Second, societal cultural tightness and organizational cultural tightness have divergent goals. Social cultural tightness represents the potency of general social norms and the enforcement of such norms to achieve societal objectives (such as social justice, peace and security, and human rights), while organizational cultural tightness signifies the strength of organizational norms employed to regulate and guide employee behaviors toward achieving organizational goals (i.e., profit maximization and operational efficiency).

The relationship between social and organizational cultures is interpreted differently across various theoretical perspectives. For instance, institutional theory posits that organizational cultures often reflect societal cultures to achieve legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This implies that societal culture may act as a form of constraint, leading to an alignment between organizational and societal cultures. Contrarily, organizational culture theory contends that organizations might deliberately resist the institutional process by cultivating unique cultures as a means of setting themselves apart from competitors (Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006). These contrasting theoretical arguments underscore the complex relationship between societal and organizational cultures.

By synthesizing insights from both institutional theory and organizational culture theory, I argue that societal cultural tightness can exert a certain level of influence on the development of organizational cultural tightness. Nevertheless, organizations retain the capacity to purposefully establish varying degrees of organizational cultural tightness to secure specific competitive advantages (Oliver, 1991; Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006). This implies that there can be variations in organizational cultural tightness, even among organizations embedded within the same societal context (i.e., the same nation). In light of this, I present my first proposition as follows:

Proposition 1: Organizations differ in their level of cultural tightness even if they are embedded in the same society.

The Different Effects of Societal Cultural Tightness and Organizational Cultural Tightness

Building upon the previously outlined discussion, it can be observed that organizational and societal cultural tightness differ in the sources of constraints they embody and the functions they serve. These differences lead to distinct effects on employee work-related outcomes, which encompass employee productivity, attitudes towards work, and

individual experiences within the work environment. Further, I posit that organizational cultural tightness serves as a proximal driver for employee work-related outcomes, as it encapsulates the norms and rules that dictate organizational expectations and acceptable behaviors within organizations. Conversely, societal cultural tightness comprises norms and rules that mold individuals' overarching beliefs and expectations about society more broadly. In accordance with social information processing theory, these beliefs and expectations function as encoded information, influencing individuals' perceptions, interpretations, and responses to new cues within their organizational environments (Hanges et al., 2000; Peffer & Salancik, 1978; Smith et al., 1996).

Empirical findings from prior research have revealed differential impacts of national and organizational culture on work-related outcomes. For instance, Silvertone (2015) demonstrated that, compared to national cultural power distance, organizational cultural power distance is a more significant predictor of job satisfaction. Similarly, Kale et al. (2000) highlighted that differences in organizational cultures among business partners account for greater variations in performance than differences in national cultures. Based on these arguments, I propose the following proposition:

Proposition 2: Compared to societal cultural tightness, organizational cultural tightness serves as a more proximal predictor of employee work-related outcomes.

Outcomes of the Interplay of Societal and Organizational Cultural Tightness

The work-related outcomes at the center of my focus for this study primarily encompass job performance, work attitudes, and mental health. This is because the overarching research inquiry guiding this study is: How does the interplay between organizational and societal factors contribute to employees' productivity, engagement, and mental well-being? Accordingly, the primary outcome variables of interest encompass job performance, work attitudes, and mental health.

1) Job performance refers to actions taken by employees that are in line with job standards and boost organizational efficiency (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Task performance and creative performance are two examples of the many dimensions that make up the concept of performance.

2) Job attitude is a multidimensional notion that incorporates organizational commitment, defined as employees' psychological attachment to their organization (Solinger et al., 2008), and job satisfaction — refers to employees' contentment with and good feelings about their job (Smith et al., 1969). An interactionist approach to job attitudes contends that such attitudes are determined by the interplay between an individual and their environment (Magnusson, 1999).

3) Mental health encompasses conditions such as depression and anxiety, which are prevalent and costly for both employees and organizations (Martin et al., 2015). Exploring factors that affect employees' mental health status is important, given the pervasive impact of mental health issues.

Besides, these three categories of outcome variables have been chosen based on academic evidence suggesting their relevance and importance within Organizational Behavior (OB) literature and the framework of social information processing theory. For example, many OB-related studies have examined various predictors and assessments of job performance (i.e., task performance, see Campbell & Wiernik, 2015 for a review; creativity performance, see Hennessey & Amabile, 2010 for a review), job attitudes (i.e., organizational commitment, see Mercurio, 2015; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016 for a review; job satisfaction, see Judge et al., 2010; Judge & Larsen, 2001 for reviews), and mental health (Martin et al., 2015). Besides that, social information process theory has primarily been used to assess job performance (i.e., Epitropaki et al., 2013; Grant, 2008; Gutworth et al., 2018) and job attitude

(i.e., Eisenberger et al., 2010; Takeuchi et al., 2009). Therefore, the selected outcomes align with the underpinnings of the current study as well as the OB literature.

Interplay of Societal and Organizational Cultural Tightness

Interactive Effects of Societal and Organizational Cultural Tightness

Drawing upon the social information processing theory, societal cultural tightness serves as cues from the external environment, impacting employees' fundamental values, expectations, attribution processes concerning others' behaviors, and their evaluation of and responses to diverse situations (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Gu et al., 2018; Huesmann, 1998). Consequently, I contend that the alignment between societal and organizational cultural tightness will amplify the anticipated effects of organizational cultural tightness, whereas a misalignment between these factors will attenuate the impact of organizational cultural tightness. Simultaneously, the degree of organizational and societal cultural tightness also plays a crucial role in shaping employees' work-related outcomes. The tightness or looseness of a culture indicates varying degrees of clearly defined information and associated sanctions (Gelfand et al., 2006).

In order to elucidate the specific interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness, I will next explore their interplay under the following four conditions:

1) When both societal and organizational cultural tightness are high, I argue that this context will yield more positive effects on employee task performance, work attitudes, and mental health while exerting more negative effects on employee creativity. The alignment of societal and organizational cultural tightness in such circumstances can amplify the potential effects of organizational cultural tightness on employee work-related outcomes.

Firstly, the presence of detailed and well-defined norms within organizations supplies a wealth of information that assists employees in understanding their organizational environment and work roles (Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011). According to social

information processing theory (Hanges et al., 2000; Peffer & Salancik, 1978), the congruence of societal and organizational cultural tightness fosters a comprehensive understanding of the organization, leadership, and colleagues, thereby empowering employees to exercise greater control over their work environment. Moreover, the alignment of societal and organizational cultural tightness enhances effective communication and interaction among coworkers, thereby satisfying the innate human need for belonging and affiliation. Together, these factors contribute to the emergence of positive task performance, work attitudes, and mental health. However, with respect to creativity performance, the tight organizational context already constrains employees' freedom to explore innovative ideas. The characteristics derived from a tight societal environment, including preferences for risk avoidance, stability maintenance, and a prevention focus, make it even more challenging for employees to engage in creative endeavors within such a restrictive organizational context.

2) When both societal and organizational cultural tightness is low, loose organizational cultural tightness can negatively impact employee task performance, work attitudes, and mental health status while having a positive effect on employee creativity performance. Furthermore, when societal cultural tightness is also low, the alignment of societal and organizational cultural tightness reinforces these negative and positive effects.

Firstly, loose organizations lack sufficient clearly defined norms and rules to guide employee work behaviors (Gelfand et al., 2011). In such a context, employees may encounter ambiguity when interpreting their work environment, roles, and interactions with colleagues and leaders, leading to diminished task performance, reduced satisfaction and engagement in their work, and increased job stress and anxiety. The congruence of societal and organizational cultural tightness implies that individuals possess limited information to understand their work roles and environment. Moreover, characteristics inherited from a loose societal environment, such as a reduced cognitive capability to associate situations with

normative behaviors (Dijksterhuis & Aarts, 2003) and weaker regulatory strength to adjust their own behaviors (Seeley & Gardner, 2003), may hinder their ability to make effective use of the limited information within their loose organizational context. Consequently, they may struggle to comprehend their tasks, become less engaged and satisfied with their work, and experience heightened anxiety and stress.

Secondly, loose organizations impose fewer constraints and sanctions, allowing employees to freely explore creative ideas without fearing that their innovative behaviors will challenge established norms and procedures or result in personal risks (Chua et al., 2015; Gelfand et al., 2011). In such a situation, if societal cultural tightness aligns with organizational cultural tightness, the loose societal cultural tightness shapes employees' specific characteristics, making them feel less accountable to external norms and reducing the salience of punishment for deviant behaviors (Gelfand et al., 2006; Kirton et al., 1991). Hence, this alignment of societal and organizational cultural tightness can further enhance employees' creativity performance.

3) When organizational cultural tightness is low and societal cultural tightness is high, loose organizational cultural tightness can negatively impact employee task performance, work attitudes, and mental health status while positively affecting creativity performance. However, the misalignment of societal and organizational cultural tightness can weaken such effects.

Firstly, as previously noted, loose organizations lack sufficient well-defined norms and rules (Gelfand et al., 2011). This can lead to ambiguity among employees, resulting in diminished task performance, lower levels of satisfaction and engagement, and increased stress and anxiety. The disparity between societal and organizational cultural tightness suggests that employees may rely more on previously encoded information and strategies to integrate their organizational environment and understand their work roles (Hanges et al.,

2000; Peffer & Salancik, 1978). Under such circumstances, the scripts derived from a tight societal environment, which dictate how to interpret and respond in specific situations, empower employees to regulate their behavior and associate organizational situations with norms. Consequently, societal cultural tightness can act as a mitigating factor, buffering the negative impacts of loose organizational cultural tightness. Furthermore, the incongruity between societal and organizational cultural tightness can trigger adaptation behaviors, including efforts to make sense of the environment, actions to modify the environment, and initiatives to regulate personal behavior and expectations (Follmer et al., 2018; Wheeler et al., 2005). These adaptive behaviors can help to attenuate the negative impact of organizational cultural tightness on task performance, work attitudes, and mental health.

Secondly, loose organizations foster an environment that enables employees to experiment with new ideas unencumbered by excessive restrictions or potential penalties (Chua et al., 2015; Gelfand et al., 2011). However, when societal cultural tightness does not align with organizational cultural tightness, the tighter societal cultural tightness amplifies the salience of organizational constraints. This heightened salience translates into a higher level of felt accountability in employees toward constraints, increases expectations of punishment for deviant behaviors, and cultivates a preference for stability and adherence to established procedures (Gelfand et al., 2006; Kirton et al., 1991). These characteristics may deter employees from engaging in creative behaviors, even in a loose organizational environment that encourages exploring new ideas. Consequently, this incongruence of societal and organizational cultural tightness may diminish the positive effects of loose organizations on employees' creativity performance.

4) When organizational cultural tightness is high and societal cultural tightness is low, the elevated organizational cultural tightness can boost employee task performance, work attitudes, and mental health status, albeit potentially suppressing creativity

performance. Nevertheless, the discordance between societal and organizational cultural tightness may attenuate these impacts.

Primarily, the well-defined and comprehensive norms within organizations provide a wealth of information for employees to understand their organizational context and job responsibilities (Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011). The dissonance between societal and organizational cultural tightness suggests a mismatch between employee characteristics shaped by society and their organizational requirements. A loose society cultivates certain characteristics, including a diminished sense of accountability and a lower cognitive assimilation of norms (Gelfand et al., 2006; Kirton et al., 1991). Such features would present obstacles when striving to discern, integrate, and comply with the norms in a tight organizational context. Moreover, it is worth noting that the incongruity between societal and organizational cultural tightness can instigate adaptive responses, encompassing environmental sense-making and actions aimed at altering the environment or adjusting individual conduct and expectations (Follmer et al., 2018; Wheeler et al., 2005). But given that employees from a loose societal environment have lower regulation strength (Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011), such adaptive behaviors would be both cognitively and emotionally taxing, thus weakening the potential positive effects exerted by tight organizations.

Secondly, tight organizations constrain employee creativity (Chua et al., 2015; Gelfand et al., 2011). In such circumstances, if societal cultural tightness is incongruent with organizational cultural tightness, the loose societal cultural tightness influences employee traits, including decreased accountability to external norms, diminished expectations of punishment for nonconforming actions, and a propensity for questioning established procedures (Gelfand et al., 2006; Kirton et al., 1991). These attributes may encourage employees to participate in creative endeavors. Consequently, this discordance between

societal and organizational cultural tightness can diminish the positive impact of loose organizations on employee creative performance.

Proposition 3a: When societal cultural tightness is aligned with organizational cultural tightness (both are high or both are low), the effects of organizational cultural tightness on work-related outcomes would be strengthened.

Proposition 3b: When societal cultural tightness is misaligned with organizational cultural tightness (one is high, the other is low), the effects of organizational cultural tightness on work-related outcomes would be weakened.

Mechanisms of Interactive Effects of Aligned Societal and Organizational Cultural Tightness

Building upon the principles of social information processing theory and research on cultural tightness, this study suggests unique pathways through which the dynamic interplay between societal and organizational cultural tightness may shape employee work-related outcomes. As per the social information processing theory (Hanges et al., 2000), socio-cultural occurrences, such as organizational practices and policies (Schneider, 1987), as well as interpersonal interactions (Smith et al., 1996), can mold individual behaviors. This process is achieved through the activation of cultural meaning systems, which are derived from societal culture. This mechanism can be further elucidated through the lens of individuals' motivational intentions, affective responses, and cognitive conceptualizations.

Motivational Mechanism

In accordance with norm psychology (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004), individuals are driven by specific motivations to adhere to norms and rules. These include:

Accuracy motivation: this is a driving force that compels individuals to identify the most effective and rewarding strategies for task execution, accurate interpretation, and appropriate responses to their environment (Thompson et al., 1994). Consequently, societal

and organizational norms and rules serve as crucial information for understanding organizational contexts, work roles, and related aspects.

Affiliation motivation: this motivation drives individuals to establish and sustain meaningful and intimate relationships with others (Hill, 1987). Motivated by this desire, employees endeavor to learn the norms and rules of their organizations and societies to foster robust and positive relationships with their members. By engaging in behaviors endorsed by these norms and rules, individuals can earn approval and affection from their colleagues (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004).

Self-concept maintenance motivation: this motivation impels individuals to exhibit consistent and positive self-concept across various situations (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Within the context of societal and organizational cultural tightness, well-defined, robust norms and the alignment between societal and organizational cultural tightness both contribute to employees maintaining a positive self-image.

Based on these, I put forward three motivational mechanisms to explain the interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness on employee work-related outcomes:

1) P-O fit measures the extent to which workers perceive that their personal values (Boxx et al., 1991; Judge & Cable, 1997), aims (Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991), and personality traits (Christiansen et al., 1997) are congruent with those of their organization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). It indicates the degree of similarity between an individual's self-concept and their perception of the organization (Kristof, 1996). Prior research has established that person-organization (P-O) fit is a robust predictor of reducing job stressors, such as role conflicts and role ambiguity (Kilroy et al., 2017), enhancing organizational identification (Edwards & Cable, 2009), and improving selection-related job outcomes (Arthur et al., 2005).

2) *Perceived interpersonal harmony* refers to employees' impressions that their colleagues are committed to establishing strong and intimate relationships and are proactive in preventing potential ruptures of these bonds (Leung et al., 2011). The maintenance of interpersonal harmony holds significant importance in East Asian cultures (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994). Previous research has demonstrated that harmony can influence employee work-related outcomes, including creativity (Chen et al., 2015) and employee efficacy (Liu et al., 2018).

3) *Self-efficacy* indicates an individual's belief in their capacity to perform certain activities that will lead to the achievement of their goals (Bandura, 1977). An individual's self-efficacy can be shaped by previous successes or mastery experiences as well as by observing the accomplishments of social role models (Bandura, 1978). Subsequently, self-efficacy can influence people's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Studies have found that self-efficacy can help enhance individuals' job performance (Judge et al., 2007; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), foster positive work attitudes (McNatt & Judge, 2008; O'Neill & Mone, 1998), and contribute to maintaining improved mental health (Amani & Shabahang, 2017).

I argue that the congruence between societal and organizational cultural tightness positively shapes all three motivational mechanisms. Firstly, when societal and organizational cultural tightness are aligned (i.e., both are either high or both low), employees may perceive a fit between themselves and their organization. This is because the values and perspectives they have absorbed from society align with those instilled in them by their organizations. Secondly, the connection between their personal values and organizational values might lead to an immediate perception of interpersonal harmony. Studies show that individuals have a fundamental need to belong to a social group and are willing to invest effort to sustain lasting affiliations. Thirdly, the alignment between these two facets of cultural tightness allows employees to readily apply prior behavioral patterns to accomplish

tasks in their work environment, facilitating a favorable view of themselves so that they can handle their roles and achieve particular objectives.

Additionally, I propose that levels of societal and organizational cultural tightness play a role in shaping employees' perceptions of person-organization (P-O) fit, perception of interpersonal harmony, and self-efficacy. Specifically, when both societal and organizational cultural tightness are loose and congruent, the flexible norms and rules within society and organizations offer employees limited information for establishing stable personal values and gaining a comprehensive understanding of their organizational context. Furthermore, the loose environment may provide fewer opportunities for employees to engage in intimate interactions with one another or to receive elaborate feedback regarding their capability to perform their work effectively. Based on these, I put forth the following proposition:

Proposition 4a: The interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness on work-related outcomes can be elucidated by motivational mechanisms such as person-organization (P-O) fit, perceived interpersonal harmony, and self-efficacy.

Affective Mechanism

The term “affective mechanism” pertains to the emotional experiences that employees encounter in their work environment. According to affective event theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), the features of the work environment can trigger affective responses in employees, which may subsequently shape their work attitudes and behaviors. Different events or experiences can elicit different affective reactions. For instance, events that satisfy an individual's goals can evoke positive affect, whereas events that jeopardize an employee's interests can induce negative emotions (Frijda & Mesquita, 1998).

- 1) ***Affective reaction*** the current study primarily concentrates on positive and negative affect (PA and NA). As defined by Russell and Carroll (1999), positive affect generally encompasses individuals' pleasant emotional states, such as

happiness, pride, and gratitude, while negative affect typically signifies unpleasant emotional states, including feelings of upset, dissatisfaction, and displeasure.

Empirical research demonstrates that PA and NA can serve as potent predictors of employee work-related outcomes. For instance, studies have revealed that both PA and NA significantly influence job performance (Kaplan et al., 2009;

Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), work attitudes (Dalal et al., 2012), and mental health status (Mandal et al., 2012).

2) ***Emotional dissonance*** refers to the incongruity between an individual's actual emotions and their outwardly expressed behaviors (Grandey, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 2020). Dissonance is characterized as negative affective states (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999) that emerge when individuals attempt to comprehend their actions with their understanding of their environment (Aronson, 1999). During this process, if individuals detect inconsistencies between their behaviors and self-concepts, they are more susceptible to experiencing emotional dissonance.

Research has shown that emotional dissonance can influence employees' well-being (Pugh et al., 2011), in-role performance (Bakker & Heuven, 2006), and job satisfaction (Cheung & Tang, 2010).

First, I propose that the alignment between societal and organizational cultural tightness can contribute to an increase in positive affect and a decrease in negative affect and emotional dissonance. More specifically, when an organization's cultural tightness aligns with societal cultural tightness, individuals experience greater congruity between their personal values and those of the organization. This enhances employees' sense of affiliation and recognition within the organization, reduces uncertainty surrounding their environment, and fulfills their fundamental needs such as belonging and competence. Consequently, employees are more likely to exhibit positive emotions. Furthermore, the congruence

between societal and organizational cultural tightness allows employees' authentic emotional responses to events or experiences to be validated by organizational norms and standards. Employees can efficiently adapt their behavioral patterns to navigate workplace events, even if such newly adopted behavior seem to contradict their true feelings. As a result, employees' behaviors and genuine emotions may become more closely aligned with their conduct.

Furthermore, I also argue that levels of societal and organizational cultural tightness play a crucial role in influencing individuals' affective responses and emotional dissonance. Drawing upon social information processing theory and affective event theory,

Proposition 4b: The interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness on work-related outcomes can be elucidated by affective mechanisms such as affective reaction and emotional dissonance.

Cognitive Mechanism

Cognitive processes encompass the mental operations through which individuals interpret their surroundings, process information, regulate attention, and make decisions (Botvinick et al., 2001). These processes involve focusing on specific stimuli, comprehending the environment and associated information, acquiring and retaining data, evaluating options, and making choices (Estes, 2022). Cognitive mechanisms play an indispensable role in shaping employee behaviors, influencing aspects such as task performance (Meyer & Kieras, 1997), creativity (Miller & Dumford, 2016; Simonton, 2000), and work attitudes (Harrison & McLaughlin, 1993; Petty & Briñol, 2015).

- 1) ***Dialectical thinking*** refers to individuals' capacity to tolerate contradiction, change, and interconnectedness within their environment (Hideg & Ferris, 2017; Paletz et al., 2018; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). To elaborate, individuals demonstrating a high degree of dialectical thinking exhibit a greater acceptance of discrepancies and opposing perspectives compared to those with lower dialectical

thinking capabilities. They are inclined to evaluate both the positive and negative facets of a situation in a balanced manner. This particular cognitive style fosters the assimilation of seemingly opposing concepts, thus equipping individuals with the ability to conceive innovative and creative solutions to complex problems (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010).

- 2) ***Uncertainty appraisal*** pertains to employees' proactive examination of ambiguity within their professional environment through the exploration and comparison of informational cues tied to their societal context and those embedded within their organization. Prior research has identified associations between uncertainty appraisal and employee well-being, mental health (Mantler et al., 2005), performance, and job satisfaction (Cullen et al., 2014).
- 3) ***Information seeking*** denotes the research on newcomer socialization, such as that by Saks et al. (2011), suggests that information seeking may have a positive effect on various socialization outcomes.

First, I propose that the misalignment of societal and organizational cultural tightness amplifies the likelihood of employees engaging in various cognitive processes. More specifically, when societal and organizational cultural tightness are incongruent, such discrepancies prompt employees to cognitively process information from both their societal and organizational contexts, assess the pros and cons of conflicting situations, and reconcile seemingly contradictory concepts while scrutinizing uncertainty and actively seeking new information to discern appropriate behaviors within their organizations. Furthermore, the presence of misalignment between societal and organizational cultural tightness signifies that one dimension is tight while the other is loose. Under such circumstances, employees are compelled to engage in a variety of behaviors, as described by Wheeler et al. (2005) and Follmer et al. (2018), to address the misalignment between personal norms and those of their

organizations. These behaviors encompass making sense of their environment and implementing actions to either modify the environment or adjust their personal behavior and expectations.

Moreover, I maintain that the degree of societal and organizational cultural tightness concurrently influences employees' engagement in the previously mentioned cognitive processes. As per cognitive psychology (e.g., Sweller, 1993), stored information serves as the primary catalyst for cognitive processing. The information individuals acquire from past experiences enables them to interpret, interact, and behave appropriately in various situations. The norms and rules within society and organizations, where employees are embedded provide crucial information that can impact their cognitive processing. However, when both organizations and society exhibit loose cultural tightness, even if they are congruent, they furnish limited information for employees to interpret and moderate their behavior. Consequently, in such circumstances, employees are also prompted to engage in cognitive processes to seek new information.

Proposition 4c: The interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness on work-related outcomes can be elucidated by cognitive mechanisms such as dialectical thinking, uncertainty appraisal, and information seeking.

CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE EFFECTS OF SOCIETAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURAL TIGHTNESS ON EMPLOYEE WORK ATTITUDES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Theory and Hypotheses

Based on Chinese contexts, my study 1 aimed to test a segment of a theoretical model, specifically investigating the potential interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness on Chinese employee job attitudes and mental health status. As one of the world's largest emerging economies, China encompasses extensive territory, a substantial population, and a rich historical backdrop, resulting in pronounced regional differences in social norms, linguistic traditions, and labor mobility. These factors have led to noticeable variations in the country's developmental stages across a spectrum of domains, such as economic, social, institutional, and scientific and technological fields. Consequently, China's provinces each manifest unique characteristics and challenges, necessitating region-specific approaches for a comprehensive investigation.

The exploration of regional variances in China can enhance our understanding of the country, with potential implications for organizational policy and practice. For instance, recent research by Chua and colleagues (2019) mapped cultural tightness across 31 provinces in China, revealing that tighter provinces are associated with urbanization, economic growth, improved health, greater happiness, higher tolerance toward LGBT groups, and support for gender equality. Moreover, the study also found that tighter provinces tend to exhibit lower rates of substantive innovation while displaying higher rates of incremental innovation. By shedding light on the nuances of cultural tightness in China and its effects on different aspects, such studies can inform organizational decision-making and contribute to a more profound understanding of the complexities of regional differences in China.

Building upon existing studies, the primary objective of the current study is to investigate the interplay between societal and organizational cultural tightness and understand its effects on Chinese employee work attitudes and mental health status (see the theoretical model in Figure 2). Specifically, I argue that regional cultural tightness and organizational cultural tightness exert a positive interactive effect on employee organizational commitment and a negative interactive effect on job anxiety. These interactions can be attributed to an increased perception of person-organization fit among employees, which refers to the extent to which an individual's values and beliefs are compatible with those of the organization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003).

In regions with high cultural tightness, an increase in organizational cultural tightness is more likely to lead employees to perceive their organization's culture as aligning with their own beliefs, attitudes, and expectations, which are shaped by regional cultures (Hofstede, 2001). This congruence may assist employees in developing a clearer understanding of how tasks should be approached and executed within their organizations (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Edwards & Cable, 2009; Kalliath et al., 1999). As a consequence of this alignment between regional and organizational cultural tightness, employees may perceive greater similarities between themselves and their organizations, leading to a stronger perception of person-organization (P-O) fit (Boxx et al., 1991; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Conversely, in regions exhibiting low cultural tightness, an increase in organizational cultural tightness may cause employees to perceive a larger incongruence between their own beliefs, attitudes, and expectations and those held by their organizations, leading to a comparatively lower perception of P-O fit.

Furthermore, such perceptions of P-O fit are likely to satisfy employees' need for validation (Tajfel et al., 1979), bolstering their psychological comfort and commitment to the organizations (Janssen & Huang, 2008). As a result, the alignment of regional and

organizational cultural tightness is predicted to exert positive effects on organizational commitment. Additionally, this perception of value congruence provides employees with a clear understanding of their organizational milieu, reducing uncertainty and helping to mitigate their level of job anxiety. Prior research (Chen et al., 2016; Deniz et al., 2015; Verquer et al., 2003) provides empirical evidence supporting the notion that employees' perceptions of person-organization (P-O) fit can yield positive outcomes for their mental health and job attitudes.

In conclusion, regional and organizational cultural tightness can have significant interactive effects on employee organizational commitment and job anxiety by influencing employees' perceptions of P-O fit. Based on these arguments, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perception of P-O fit are positively moderated by regional cultural tightness, such that when regional cultural tightness is high, it will enhance the positive effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perception of P-O fit; when regional cultural tightness is low, it will weaken the positive effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perception of P-O fit.

Hypothesis 2a: P-O fit mediates the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2b: P-O fit mediates the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee job anxiety.

Method

Participants and Procedures

To test the proposed theoretical model, I conducted a comprehensive field study on a large scale, involving approximately 2000 participants from 31 provinces in China. The

participants were recruited using www.wjx.cn, a reputable Chinese data collection website that is similar to Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) and has been widely used in previous research (e.g., Buchtel et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2020). With a daily user base of approximately ten million people, the website offers a diverse pool of participants encompassing various age groups, professions, educational levels, and geographic locations across China. Moreover, the demographic features of the website's participants accurately reflect those of China's 1.07 billion internet users (China internet user snapshot, 2023).

The survey was divided into four sections. In the first section, participants were asked to respond to questions regarding their organizational culture, specifically their perceptions of organizational cultural tightness. The second section included questions about participants' evaluations of their organizations, such as their perceptions of P-O fit. The third section comprised measures of organizational commitment and job anxiety. Finally, demographic information was collected from participants.

Following the norms of wjx, each participant received compensation of 5 Chinese yuan upon completion of the survey. The study exclusively recruited full-time employees in China who were 18 years old or above and passed attention checks. A total of 1633 full-time employees from all 31 provinces in China were included (52 participants per province on average). All participants resided within China and had an average age of 32.98 years ($SD = 7.82$), ranging from 19 to 76, with an average organizational tenure of 6.92 years ($SD = 5.59$). Among the participants, 55.73% were women. Furthermore, 81.2% of the participants obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 53.85% occupied a senior management or middle management position within their respective organizations.

Measurement

The following variables were measured in the survey. All the measures I used in the survey were originally constructed in English. To ensure linguistic accuracy and cross-

cultural equivalence for the survey conducted in China, a translation-back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980) was employed. I hired RAs who are fluent in both English and Chinese to translate all the English scales into Chinese and then independently translate them back into English.

Seven-point Likert scales were employed for all the multi-item measures, with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 7 indicating *strongly agree*. However, for the cultural tightness measure, the original survey by Gelfand and colleagues (2011) adopted a six-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 6 indicating *strongly agree*. Consistent with Gelfand et al. (2011), I used a six-point Likert scale to assess cultural tightness in this study as well.

Regional cultural tightness. I used the province-level cultural tightness data gathered in the study by Chua et al. (2019) to signify regional cultural tightness. In their research, the authors compiled an extensive dataset on cultural tightness, encompassing 31 provinces throughout China.

Organizational cultural tightness. I adapted Gelfand and colleagues' (2011) 6-item scale to measure cultural tightness in organizations. The sample items include "there are many regulations and norms that people are supposed to abide by in this organization", and "people agree upon what behaviors are appropriate versus inappropriate in most situations in this organization" ($\alpha = .64$) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*).

P-O fit. I used Cable & DeRuek's (2002) 3-item scale to measure employees' perceptions of P-O fit. Sample items include "The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values", and "my organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life" ($\alpha = .83$) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Organizational commitment. Organizational commitment was measured with three items developed by Brockner et al., (2004). Sample items include “I talk up my company as a great organization to work for”, and “I am willing to put in effort beyond what is normally expected” ($\alpha = .80$) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*)

Job Anxiety. I use a 5-item measurement developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983) to measure employees’ job anxiety. Sample items include “I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job”, and “sometimes when I think about my job, I get a tight feeling in my chest”. ($\alpha = .78$) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*)

Controls. Drawing upon research related to person-organization (P-O) fit, various demographic factors (such as age, education level, and gender; Merecz-kot & Andysz, 2017; Scott et al., 2014; Tolbert & Darabi, 2019; Van Vianen et al., 2010), job characteristics (e.g., organizational rank and tenure; O’Reilly, III et al., 1991), and organizational attributes (including organizational size and age; Kodden & Groenveld, 2019) can influence employees’ perceptions of P-O fit. Furthermore, these demographic and organizational elements can also affect employee commitment (Iqbal, 2010; Luthans et al., 1987) and job anxiety (Jafari et al., 2018).

I collected employee demographic information, encompassing age, gender (1 = *male*, 0 = *female*), education levels (1 = *less than high school*, 2 = *high school graduate*, 3 = *some college*, 4 = *bachelor’s degree*, 5 = *master’s degree*, 6 = *doctorate degree*), organizational tenure, organizational rank (1 = *senior management*, 2 = *middle management*, 3 = *entry level*), as well as organizational features such as age and size.

Moreover, considering China’s highly mobile workforce, with numerous employees relocating to work in other provinces, I included additional measures in the survey.

Participants were asked to indicate their birth province and current work location, as well as

provide information on the number of years they have lived in their birth province and the duration of their residence in the province where they are currently working.

Following the suggestions from Podsakoff et al. (2003), several strategies were implemented in this research to mitigate the potential impact of common method bias. First, during the translation process, all the questions were crafted with precision. In this survey, unfamiliar terms were defined, ambiguous concepts were avoided, and efforts were made to ensure clarity, conciseness, and simplicity. Furthermore, before the survey, I reassured participants that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and encouraged them to provide their genuine feelings and sentiments regarding their work and societal environment. At the end, I conducted confirmatory factor analyses to examine the discriminant validity of all the variables associated with the current study.

Results

Discriminant Validity

To assess the discriminant validity of the study variables, I conducted confirmatory factor analyses on the four key self-reported variables in the current study: organizational cultural tightness, P-O fit, organizational commitment, and social anxiety. The results revealed that a four-factor model provided a good fit to the data: $\chi^2 (113) = 463.76, p < .001$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .04 (refer to Table 1 for nested model comparisons). In summary, the CFA results indicate that the variables in the present study are well-defined and distinct from one another.

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the key variables. The diagonal of the table shows Cronbach's alpha for each variable. The study measured two types of regional cultural tightness: the regional cultural tightness of the working province and the regional cultural tightness of the birth province. The correlation

between these two types of cultural tightness is high and significant ($r = .77, p < .01$), suggesting that Chinese employees tend to select work opportunities in provinces that exhibit cultural values similar to their own.

However, the association between regional cultural tightness and organizational cultural tightness is weak and not significant ($r = .02, p > .05$), as indicated by the correlation table. To examine the hypotheses in this study, a linear mixed-model analysis was employed, considering the nested nature of the data across different provinces. Tables 3-6 show the results of the regression analyses.

Comparative effects of organizational and regional cultural tightness on work related outcomes

Prior to probing Hypothesis 1, it is essential to scrutinize the differential impacts of organizational and regional cultural tightness on employee-related work outcomes. This is accomplished by conducting a regression analysis incorporating both variables—organizational and regional cultural tightness—into linear mixed-effects models (refer to Table 3). The results suggest that the beta coefficients of organizational cultural tightness (without controls: 1) P-O fit: $b = 0.77, p < .001$; 2) organizational commitment: $b = 0.66, p < .001$, 3) job anxiety: $b = -0.20, p < .001$; with controls: 1) P-O fit: $b = 0.73, p < .001$; 2) organizational commitment: $b = 0.62, p < .001$, 3) job anxiety: $b = -0.12, p < .05$) manifest larger magnitudes compared to those of regional cultural tightness (without controls: 1) P-O fit: $b = 0.03, p = .17$; 2) organizational commitment: $b = -0.03, p < .30$, 3) job anxiety: $b = -0.11, p < .001$; with controls: 1) P-O fit: $b = 0.04, p = .30$; 2) organizational commitment: $b = -0.04, p = .24$, 3) job anxiety: $b = -0.09, p < .05$) Consequently, it can be inferred that, in contrast to regional cultural tightness, organizational cultural tightness serves as a more proximate determinant of an employee's perception of P-O fit, organizational commitment, and job anxiety.

Interactive effects of organizational and regional cultural tightness on P-O fit

Then Hypothesis 1 argues that effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perception of P-O fit are influenced by regional cultural tightness, such that when regional cultural tightness is high, it will enhance the effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perception of P-O fit; when regional cultural tightness is low, it will buffer the effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perception of P-O fit. To scrutinize this hypothesis, I incorporated the interaction term of regional and organizational cultural tightness into linear mixed-effect models, both without and with control variables (Table 4).

As illustrated in Table 4, regional cultural tightness significantly moderates the association between organizational cultural tightness and P-O fit ($b = 0.14, p < .01$). The inclusion of control variables, such as regional cultural tightness (born province), age, education level, gender, tenure, organizational rank, organization size, and organization age, did not alter the significance of this interaction on P-O fit (refer to Table 4, $b = 0.12, p < .05$).

To delve deeper into these interactions, I performed a set of simple slope analyses. Figure 4.1 presents the conditional relationships. The graph reveals that when regional cultural tightness is high (i.e., 1 SD above the mean), a significant positive relationship between organizational cultural tightness and P-O fit is evident ($b = 0.88, p < .001$). When regional cultural tightness is low (i.e., 1 SD below the mean), there exists a significant positive correlation between organizational cultural tightness and P-O fit ($b = 0.63, p < .001$). This result aligns perfectly with my initial prediction. Overall, these results provide support for Hypothesis 1. Figures 4.2- 4.3 show a graphic depiction of the interactive relationship between organizational cultural tightness and regional cultural tightness and employee organizational commitment and job anxiety.

Implications for organizational commitment and job anxiety

Hypotheses 2a and 2b posited that person-organization (P-O) fit mediates the connection between the interactive influence of regional and organizational cultural tightness on both organizational commitment and job anxiety. The regression analysis results (see Table 4) reveal that both organizational and regional cultural tightness have significant interactive effects on organizational commitment (without controls: $b = 0.16, p < .001$; with controls: $b = 0.13, p < .01$). In contrast, these two forms of cultural tightness do not produce significant interactive impacts on job anxiety (without controls: $b = -0.08, p = 0.13$; with controls: $b = -0.08, p = 0.11$). Nevertheless, the direction of the interaction between the two forms of cultural tightness on job anxiety is consistent with my initial expectations. In addition, P-O fit predicted employee organizational commitment (Table 5: without controls : $b = 0.52, p < .001$; with controls: $b = 0.51, p < .001$) and job anxiety (without controls: $b = -0.18, p < .001$; with controls: $b = -0.15, p < .001$).

For all indirect effect evaluations, I employed generalized structural equation modeling and executed bootstrapping analyses with 1,000 replications to determine the significance of indirect effects, as recommended by Shrout and Bolger (2002). The analysis revealed that the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of the interaction between regional and organizational cultural tightness, mediated by P-O fit, on organizational commitment (without controls: $b = 0.07, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.02, 0.12]$; with controls: $b = 0.03, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.003, 0.063]$) did not include zero. Based on these findings, I concluded that P-O fit mediates the relationship between the interaction of regional and organizational cultural tightness and organizational commitment, thereby supporting Hypothesis 2a. Furthermore, the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of the interaction between regional and organizational cultural tightness, mediated by P-O fit, on job anxiety (without controls: $b = -$

0.02, 95% CI [-0.04, -0.03]; with controls: $b = -0.01$, 95% CI [-0.02, -0.0001]) excluded zero as well, thus Hypothesis 2b was supported (see results summary in Figure 3).

CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE EFFECTS OF SOCIETAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

Consistent with the objectives of Study 1, the primary objective of Study 2 is to investigate a specific aspect of the theoretical model I developed in Chapter 3, focusing on the Chinese context. Specifically, this study examines the potential interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee creativity. The concept of creativity has long been recognized as a crucial factor that influences both organizational and individual success. Given its significance, governments worldwide, including the Chinese government, are placing significant emphasis on fostering creativity as a key national strategy. Accordingly, the Chinese government has prioritized the promotion of creativity and has made substantial investments in technology and human resources to ensure sustained growth in this domain (Deloitte China, 2019).

The significance of creativity has spurred extensive research examining the diverse array of factors that influence creativity at various levels. Research has identified links between individual personality traits, such as the Big Five, and creativity (i.e., Madjar et al., 2002; Raja & Johns, 2010). Additionally, goal orientation, including learning and master orientation, and positive and negative affect have been found to impact creativity (Amabile et al., 2005; George & Zhou, 2002; Hirst et al., 2009; Janssen & Yperen, 2004; Zhou & George, 2001).

Apart from individual factors, the socio-cultural environment plays a crucial role in enhancing creativity. Creativity is deeply influenced by cultural values that manifest at different levels, including national and organizational cultures. At the national level, cultural values such as collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance have been found to inhibit creativity (i.e., Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Zhang & Zhou, 2014). At the organizational

level, cultures that prioritize development and encourage knowledge sharing can foster creativity among employees (Wei et al., 2011).

The relationship between cultural tightness and creativity has become an increasingly scrutinized topic in contemporary research. For instance, Chua et al. (2015) discovered that cultural tightness influences not only individuals' engagement in creative tasks but also their success therein. At the regional level, Harrington and Gelfand (2014) investigated the cultural tightness across 50 states in the U.S., concluding that states with higher levels of cultural tightness tend to exhibit lower levels of innovation activity. Similarly, Chua et al. (2019) found that provincial-level cultural tightness negatively impacts the development of radical innovation in China. In a recent investigation, Qin and colleagues (2021) shed light on the implications of cultural tightness in organizational settings, suggesting that team-level cultural tightness might act as a potential obstacle to promoting team creativity. Advancing from these previous studies, the present research seeks to explore the interaction between regional and organizational cultural tightness and its impact on employee creativity.

I maintain that the interplay of regional and organizational cultural tightness significantly influences employee creativity through the mechanisms of dialectical thinking and perceived interpersonal harmony. Dialectical thinking embodies an individual's cognitive style that accepts changes and interdependence and tolerates a substantial degree of contradictions and inconsistencies within their environment (Hideg & Ferris, 2017; Paletz et al., 2018; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). On the other hand, perceived interpersonal harmony reflects individuals' perceptions that employees treasure harmonious and intimate relationships with colleagues, striving to circumvent conflict (Leung et al., 2011).

In regions with high cultural tightness, an increase in organizational cultural tightness results in congruence between regional and organizational cultural tightness. Such congruence fosters a clear understanding among employees regarding the norms, rules, and

expectations. And aligned and tight regional and organizational cultural tightness promotes employees to prioritize stability and safety (Gelfand et al., 2006), thereby limiting their adaptability to new situations, engagement in goal-directed activities, and pursuit of learning opportunities. These restrictions thus hamper the cultivation of dialectical thinking. Besides, the matched regional and organizational cultural tightness facilitates clear communication, effective conflict resolution, and collaborative cooperation (Morris & Liu, 2015a; Peffer & Salancik, 1978), fostering interpersonal harmony and minimizing conflict among members.

Conversely, in regions with low cultural tightness, an increase in organizational cultural tightness can result in a misalignment between employees' personal values, expectations, and work approaches and those mandated by their organization. In such circumstances, employees must adapt their cognitive styles and learn to effectively manage and leverage contradictory sources of information, consequently fostering higher levels of dialectical thinking. However, the presence of conflicting situations may lead to incongruent expectations regarding appropriate behavior within organizations, increasing the likelihood of conflicts and diminishing harmony among members.

Hypothesis 3a: The effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's dialectical thinking are negatively moderated by regional cultural tightness, such that when regional cultural tightness is high, it will strengthen the negative effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's dialectical thinking; when regional cultural tightness is low, it will buffer the negative effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's dialectical thinking.

Hypothesis 3b: The effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perception of interpersonal harmony are positively moderated by regional cultural tightness, such that when regional cultural tightness is high, it will enhance the positive effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perceived interpersonal harmony; when

regional cultural tightness is low, it will weaken the positive effects of organizational cultural tightness on an employee's perceived interpersonal harmony.

High dialectical thinkers are more open to inconsistencies and contradictions than individuals with lower dialectical thinking and are more inclined to consider both positive and negative perspectives on a given situation. This cognitive style facilitates the integration of seemingly contradictory ideas, enabling individuals to develop novel and creative solutions to problems (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). From the following perspectives, dialectical thinking may have a positive impact on employee creativity: To begin, from the standpoint of the creative idea generating process, creativity involves the amalgamation of numerous components into a unique and valuable synthesis (Ward et al., 1997). The ability to harness contradicting or diverse sources to conceive something novel enhances an individual's creative potential (Paletz et al., 2018). Second, dialectical thinking helps employees pay attention to the synthesis of contradictions, heightening their consciousness of change, originality, and the complex interplay between various elements (Benack et al., 1989).

Third, dialectical thinking enables employees to emotionally embrace ambiguity and manage the conflicts arising from contemplating opposing components. It primes individuals to confront and resolve disputes within their organizations, thereby enhancing employee creativity. Previous research has backed up these claims. For example, Leung and his colleagues (Leung et al., 2018) discovered that thinking about paradoxes and contradictions increases creativity; Paletz and Peng (2009) discovered that individuals who perceived themselves as engaged with change and actively participating in it, exhibited higher originality in tackling scientific problem-solving tasks.

Conversely, perceived interpersonal harmony may impede employee creativity. While some studies suggest that interpersonal harmony can bolster employee creativity by fostering

psychological safety and encouraging risk-taking behaviors (Leung et al., 2015), a high degree of harmony may not always be beneficial. Research has shown that conflict and challenging situations can stimulate greater group creativity (Beersma & De Dreu, 2005; Nemeth & Ormiston, 2007). Thus, I postulate that interpersonal harmony could inadvertently stifle creativity by curtailing dissent and deterring risk-taking behaviors. In a harmonious environment, employees may become acutely aware of the significance of maintaining friendly and close relationships with their colleagues (Chen et al., 2015; Goncalo & Staw, 2006). To preserve these positive relationships, employees may be hesitant to engage in creative behaviors (Kačerauskas, 2016) that could challenge the status quo and disrupt the balanced relationships among colleagues (Sternberg, 2006). Accordingly, I propose the following hypothesis (see the theoretical model in Figure 5):

Hypothesis 4a: Dialectical thinking mediates the relationship between the effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee creativity.

Hypothesis 4b: Perceived interpersonal harmony mediates the relationship between the effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee creativity.

Method

Participants and Procedures

To test the proposed hypotheses, I recruited participants from 31 provinces in China with the same data collection platform as in Study 1 (www.wjx.cn). The survey was divided into four distinct sections. In the first section, participants were invited to respond to questions regarding their organizational culture, specifically their perceptions of organizational cultural tightness. The second section encompassed questions about participants' evaluations of themselves and their organization, including their dialectical thinking and their perception of interpersonal harmony. The third section incorporated

measures of creativity (idea generation tasks). Finally, demographic information was collected from participants.

In line with the approach taken in Study 1, each participant received compensation of 5 Chinese yuan upon completion of the survey. The study only recruited full-time employees in China who were over 18 years old and successfully passed attention checks.

The final sample comprised 2306 full-time employees from 31 provinces in China, with an average of 74 participants per province. All participants resided in China. Participants had an average age of 32.96 years ($SD = 7.51$), with a range from 19 to 76 years old, and the average organizational tenure stood at 6.95 years ($SD = 5.44$). 56.16% of the participants were women. A total of 83.13% of the participants obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. Furthermore, 55.98% of the participants held a senior management or middle management position within their organization.

Measurement

The following variables were measured in the survey. In line with Study 1, all the measures employed in the survey were originally formulated in English. I converted all the survey questions into Chinese following the translation-back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980).

For all the multi-item measures, seven-point Likert scales were applied, with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 7 indicating *strongly agree*. However, cultural tightness measure deviated from this pattern. In the original survey, Gelfand et al. (2011) used a six-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 6 indicating *strongly agree*. I followed Gelfand and colleagues' (2011) way and used a six-point Likert scale for measuring cultural tightness.

Regional Cultural Tightness. Similar to Study 1, I used the province-level cultural tightness data gathered in the study by Chua and colleagues' (2019) to signify regional cultural tightness.

Organizational Cultural Tightness. Organizational cultural tightness was measured with the same scale used in Study 1. ($\alpha = .63$) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*).

Dialectical Thinking. I use the 14-item scale developed by Spencer-Rodgers et al., (2004) to measure dialectical thinking. Sample items include "I am the same around my family as I am around my colleagues" and "I am constantly changing and am different from one time to the next". ($\alpha = .74$) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Perceived Interpersonal Harmony. I used 4-item measure developed by Beehr et al. (1997) to assess interpersonal harmony within organizations. Sample items include "People in my organizations seem to get along with each other better than people in most organizations do", and "The people in my organization are very compatible with each other" ($\alpha = .76$) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Employee Creativity. I measured employee creativity at an individual level by utilizing a task centered around workplace idea generation. This method has been previously employed in several creativity studies. Burt (2004), for instance, encouraged participants to identify a single alteration they would make to enhance their company's supply-chain management. Drawing from this approach, the participants in my current study were prompted with the following: "*As we enter the age of industrial revolution 4.0, many companies are increasingly interested in harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI). Please propose one new and useful approach that AI can be incorporated in your company*"¹.

¹ Besides the AI idea generation task, which is work-related, I also included an unusual uses task asking participants to generate new and unusual uses of bamboo. The aim is to test the relative effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on a general creativity task outside of the work context. Five research assistants rated the ideas on fluency (the number of nonredundant ideas), idea flexibility (the number of different semantic categories) and idea originality of all ideas that each participant generated. Subsequently, I computed one

The quality of the responses generated was assessed on the basis of the three cardinal dimensions of creativity, as outlined by Torrance (1998): *originality*, *usefulness*, and *feasibility*. *Idea originality* gauges the degree of novelty and distinctiveness inherent in the generated ideas, highlighting the original aspects; *idea usefulness* captures the potential applicability of these ideas in addressing real-world issues, capturing their pragmatic relevance; and *idea feasibility* refers to the practicality of the ideas produced, focusing on their potential for effective implementation.

Three AI experts (senior Ph.D. students specializing in AI research) who were blind to the study's hypotheses were hired to rate these three idea qualities of the AI task using a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*). The internal consistency values for AI task idea originality, idea usefulness, and idea feasibility were .73, .76, and .72 respectively. I averaged standardized scores of these three dimensions to create a single overall idea creativity score: idea creativity (mean) ($\alpha = .79$). Following Montag et al.'s (2012) approach to measuring idea creativity, I generated another creativity variable by multiplying the scores for idea originality and usefulness (idea creativity (Ori*Use)). This measure simultaneously accounts for the significance of both originality and usefulness. For hypothesis testing, I independently assessed each of these five dimensions of idea quality (idea originality, idea usefulness, idea feasibility, idea creativity (mean), and idea creativity (Ori*Use)).

Controls. Drawing on studies on dialectical thinking and interpersonal harmony (Chen et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2013; Kramer & Melchior, 1990; Moraitou & Efklides, 2012), it has been shown that various demographic factors, such as gender, age, and educational level, can have an impact on an individual's dialectical thinking and perception of

creativity measure (idea creativity) using the mean of these three dimensions. I expect the effects of organizational cultural tightness to be weaker than those of regional cultural tightness, for this general creativity task given that this task is not relevant to what employees do in the company

interpersonal harmony. Additionally, research has demonstrated that demographic variables, including gender (Chua & Jin, 2020), educational level (Amabile, 1983), age (Jones & Weinberg, 2011), rank in the organization (Perry-Smith, 2006), work experience (Zhang & Bartol, 2010), and organizational attributes (such as organizational size and age, Choi, 2007; Gong et al., 2013), can have an impact on employee creativity.

To account for the potential influence of certain variables on dialectical thinking, perceived interpersonal harmony, and creativity, I gathered demographic data from employees in Study 2. This data comprised age, gender, educational background, organizational tenure, rank within the organization, as well as attributes of the organization itself, such as its age and size. The same set of questions deployed in Study 1 were reused in Study 2 to obtain this information.

Results

Discriminant Validity

To assess the discriminant validity of the study variables, I conducted Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) on the three key self-reported variables in the current study: organizational cultural tightness, dialectical thinking, and perceived interpersonal harmony. The results revealed that, compared to two-factor and one-factor model, a three-factor model indicator better fit: $\chi^2 (249) = 2977.03$, $p < .001$, CFI = .66, TLI = .61, SRMR = .097, RMSEA = .08 (refer to Table 7 for nested model comparisons).

Given the suboptimal fit indices obtained from the CFA, I proceeded to conduct Harman's one-factor test utilizing unrotated factor solutions, as a precautionary measure to assess potential common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results indicated that a mere 17.25% of the total variance could be accounted for by a single factor, a value substantially below the recommended threshold of 50%. This outcome strongly suggests that common method bias does not pose a significant concern in the current study.

Descriptive statistics

Table 8 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among all key variables. The diagonal of the table shows Cronbach's alpha for each variable. Similar to Study 1, the current study also measured two types of regional cultural tightness: the regional cultural tightness of the working province and the regional cultural tightness of the born province. The correlation between these two types of cultural tightness is high and significant ($r = .75, p < .001$), suggesting that Chinese employees tend to choose to work in provinces that share similar cultural values with their own.

However, the association between regional cultural tightness and organizational cultural tightness is weak and not significant ($r = -.01, p > .05$), as indicated by the correlation table. To test the hypotheses in my study, I used a linear mixed-model analysis, given that the data were nested in different provinces. Tables 9-18 show the results of the regression analyses.

Comparative effects of organizational and regional cultural tightness on work-related outcomes

Before testing the hypotheses, I examined the differential impacts of organizational and regional cultural tightness on employee-related work outcomes with the same method I employed in Study 1. The results (Table 9) suggest that the beta coefficients of organizational cultural tightness (without controls: 1) dialectical thinking : $b = -0.21, p < .001$, and 2) perceived interpersonal harmony: $b = 0.61, p < .001$; with controls: 1) dialectical thinking : $b = -0.17, p < .001$, and 2) perceived interpersonal harmony: $b = 0.59, p < .001$) manifest larger magnitudes compared to those of regional cultural tightness 1) dialectical thinking : $b = -0.03, p = .08$, and 2) perceived interpersonal harmony: $b = 0.05, p < .01$; with controls: 1) dialectical thinking : $b = -0.01, p = .45$, and 2) perceived interpersonal harmony: $b = 0.03, p = .23$). Consequently, it can be inferred that, in contrast to regional cultural tightness,

organizational cultural tightness serves as a more proximate determinant of an employee's dialectical thinking and perceived interpersonal harmony.

Regarding employee creativity, my findings indicated that regional and organizational cultural tightness had strikingly similar and modest impacts. Yet the influence exhibited by regional cultural tightness appeared relatively more robust. These findings, as illustrated in Tables 10.1 to 10.2, will be further discussed in the forthcoming discussion section².

Interactive effects of organizational and regional cultural tightness

First, I assessed the interactive effects of regional cultural tightness on the relationship between organizational cultural tightness and dialectical thinking (Hypothesis 3a) and perceived interpersonal harmony (Hypothesis 3b). To scrutinize these hypotheses, I incorporated the interaction term of regional and organizational cultural tightness into linear mixed-effect models, both without and with control variables (Table 11).

As illustrated in Table 11, regional cultural tightness significantly moderates the association between organizational cultural tightness and dialectical thinking ($b = -0.06, p < .05$) and perceived interpersonal harmony ($b = 0.08, p < .05$). The inclusion of control variables, such as regional cultural tightness (born province), age, education level, gender, tenure, organizational rank, organization size, and organization age, did not alter the significance of this interaction on dialectical thinking ($b = -0.07, p < .01$) and perceived interpersonal harmony ($b = 0.07, p < .05$).

To delve deeper into these interactions, I performed a set of simple slope analyses. Figures 7.1- 7.2 present the conditional relationships. The graph reveals that when regional cultural tightness is low (i.e., 1 SD below the mean), there exists a significant positive

² For the bamboo unusual uses task, I found that regional cultural tightness (idea flexibility: $b = -0.13, p < .001$; idea fluency: $b = -0.11, p < .001$; idea originality: $b = 0.03, p = .09$, idea creativity: $b = -0.07, p < .05$) has stronger effects on creativity, than organizational cultural tightness (idea flexibility: $b = -0.03, p = .50$; idea fluency: $b = -0.05, p = .32$; idea originality: $b = -0.02, p = .37$, idea creativity: $b = -0.03, p = .32$).

correlation between organizational cultural tightness and dialectical thinking ($b = -0.25, p < .001$) and perceived interpersonal harmony ($b = 0.52, p < .001$). Similarly, when regional cultural tightness is high (i.e., 1 SD above the mean), a significant positive relationship between organizational cultural tightness and dialectical thinking is evident ($b = -0.12, p < .01$) and perceived interpersonal harmony ($b = 0.67, p < .001$). Overall, these results provide support for Hypotheses 3a and 3b.

Implications for employee creativity

Hypothesis 4a posited that dialectical thinking mediates the connection between the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee creativity. Table 12.1 and Table 12.2 show that the interactive effects of organizational and regional cultural tightness are all insignificant on all five idea dimensions: without controls: 1) idea originality ($b = 0.01, p = .70$), 2) idea usefulness ($b = 0.01, p = .66$), 3) idea feasibility ($b = -0.00, p = .85$), 4) idea creativity (mean) ($b = 0.00, p = .93$), and 5) idea creativity (Ori*Use) ($b = 0.02, p = .61$); and with controls: 1) idea originality ($b = 0.01, p = .62$), 2) idea usefulness ($b = 0.01, p = .63$), 3) idea feasibility ($b = -0.01, p = .84$), 4) idea creativity (mean) ($b = -0.00, p = .93$), and 5) idea creativity (Ori*Use) ($b = 0.03, p = .54$).

The results indicated that dialectical thinking has significant effects on idea creativity (mean) (without controls: $b = 0.04, p < .05$; with controls: $b = 0.04, p < .05$) but has insignificant associations with all other four idea quality dimensions: without controls: 1) idea originality ($b = 0.01, p = 0.49$), 2) idea usefulness ($b = 0.03, p = 0.28$), 3) idea feasibility ($b = 0.02, p = 0.49$), 4) idea creativity (Ori*Use) ($b = 0.04, p = 0.31$); with controls: 1) idea originality ($b = 0.03, p = 0.16$), 2) idea usefulness ($b = 0.04, p = 0.14$), 3) idea feasibility ($b = 0.01, p = 0.61$), 4) idea creativity (Ori*Use) ($b = 0.06, p = 0.11$)(see Table 13.1- 13.2).

For all indirect effect evaluations, I employed generalized structural equation modeling and executed bootstrapping analyses with 1,000 replications to determine the

significance of indirect effects, as recommended by Shrout and Bolger (2002). The analysis revealed that the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of the interaction between regional and organizational cultural tightness, mediated by dialectical thinking, on all five creativity dimensions (Table 15: 1) idea originality, $b = 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.004, 0.005]; 2) idea usefulness, $b = 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.005, 0.006]; 3) idea feasibility, $b = -0.001$, 95% CI [-0.008, 0.006]; 4) idea creativity (mean): $b = 0.000$, 95% CI [-0.004, 0.005]; and 5) idea creativity (Ori*Use): $b = 0.002$, 95% CI [-0.008, 0.011]). When I added control variables (such as regional cultural tightness (born province), age, education level, gender, tenure, organizational rank, organization size, and organization age), years in working rovince, confidence intervals for the indirect effect of the interaction between regional and organizational cultural tightness were still not significant (Table 15: 1) idea originality, $b = 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.004, 0.005]; 2) idea usefulness, $b = 0.000$, 95% CI [-0.005, 0.006]; 3) idea feasibility, $b = -0.001$, 95% CI [-0.008, 0.006]; 4) idea creativity (mean): $b = 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.004, 0.006]; and 5) idea creativity (Ori*Use): $b = 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.008, 0.011]) included zero. Based on these findings, I concluded that Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

Hypothesis 4b stated that employee perceived interpersonal harmony mediates the relationship between the interaction of regional and organizational cultural tightness and employee creativity. I used the same procedure to test Hypothesis 4b. The results (see Table 14.1- 14.2) indicate that perceived interpersonal harmony has significant effects on idea quality dimensions: without controls: 1) idea originality ($b = -0.02$, $p < .05$), 2) idea usefulness ($b = -0.04$, $p < 0.05$), 3) idea creativity ($b = -0.03$, $p < .01$) and 4) idea creativity (Ori*Use) ($b = -0.06$, $p < .05$); and with controls: 1) idea originality ($b = -0.03$, $p < .05$), 2) idea usefulness ($b = -0.04$, $p < 0.01$), 3) idea creativity ($b = -0.03$, $p < .01$) and 4) idea creativity (Ori*Use) ($b = -0.06$, $p < .05$). But the association between perceived interpersonal

harmony and idea feasibility remains insignificant (without controls: $b = -0.02, p = .14$; with controls: $b = -0.02, p = .18$)³.

The results show that indirect effects of perceived interpersonal harmony were insignificant, both with and without controls (Table 16: without controls 1) idea originality: $b = -0.003, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.013, 0.007]$, 2) idea usefulness: $b = -0.006, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.021, 0.010]$; 3) idea feasibility: $b = -0.004, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.017, 0.008]$, 4) idea creativity (mean): $b = -0.005, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.017, 0.008]$, and 5) idea creativity (Use*Ori): $b = -0.008, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.030, 0.015]$; with controls 1) idea originality: $b = -0.003, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.013, 0.007]$, 2) idea usefulness: $b = -0.005, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.021, 0.010]$, 3) idea feasibility: $b = -0.004, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.017, 0.008]$, 4) idea creativity (mean): $b = -0.004, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.017, -0.008]$, and 5) idea creativity (Use*Ori): $b = -0.007, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.029, -0.015]$). Thus, Hypothesis 4b was not supported.

Supplementary Analysis

Linear effects of organizational cultural tightness. Given that dialectical thinking and perceived interpersonal harmony are more related to organizational context. Therefore, besides the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee creativity, I also want to explore the direct effects of organizational cultural tightness on employee creativity via dialectical thinking and perceived interpersonal harmony. Results indicate that organizational cultural tightness is negatively and significantly related to dialectical thinking (without controls: $b = -0.21, p < .001$, with controls: $b = -0.17, p < .001$) but has significantly positive effects on employee perceived interpersonal harmony (without controls: $b = 0.61, p < .001$, with controls: $b = 0.59, p < .001$).

In addition, results show that the indirect effects of dialectical thinking on creativity (mean) were statistically significant, as the 95% confidence interval did not include zero

³ For Bamboo task, I did not find any significant correlations between the variables of dialectical thinking and perceived interpersonal harmony, and all idea quality dimensions.

(without controls, idea creativity (mean): $b = -0.009$, 95% CI [-0.017, -0.001]; with controls, idea creativity (mean): $b = -0.007$, 95% CI [-0.014, -0.001]), but the indirect effects of dialectical thinking on the other four idea dimensions remain insignificant (Table 17: without controls 1) idea originality: $b = -0.003$, 95% CI [-0.012, 0.005], 2) idea usefulness: $b = -0.007$, 95% CI [-0.017, 0.003], 3) idea feasibility: $b = -0.005$, 95% CI [-0.015, 0.004], and 4) idea creativity (Use*Ori): $b = -0.010$, 95% CI [-0.026, 0.006]; with controls 1) idea originality: $b = -0.004$, 95% CI [-0.011, 0.002], 2) idea usefulness: $b = -0.007$, 95% CI [-0.015, 0.002], 3) idea feasibility: $b = -0.003$, 95% CI [-0.011, 0.004], and 4) idea creativity (Use*Ori): $b = -0.011$, 95% CI [-0.024, 0.002]).

For the indirect effects of perceived interpersonal harmony between the relationship of organizational cultural tightness and employee creativity (Table 18), I found that without control, the indirect effects are statistically significant for the following three idea dimensions: 1) idea originality: 1) idea originality: $b = -0.017$, 95% CI [-0.033, -0.001], 2) idea usefulness: $b = -0.003$, 95% CI [-0.051, -0.008], and 3) idea creativity (Use*Ori): $b = -0.042$, 95% CI [-0.076, -0.009]), but remain insignificant for the rest two idea dimensions: 4) idea feasibility: $b = -0.018$, 95% CI [-0.041, 0.001], and 5) idea creativity (mean): $b = -0.018$, 95% CI [-0.039, 0.002]. When I added control variables (such as regional cultural tightness (born province), age, education level, gender, tenure, organizational rank, organization size, and organization age), confidence intervals for the indirect effect of organizational cultural tightness were significant for all the five idea quality dimensions: 1) idea originality: $b = -0.017$, 95% CI [-0.033, -0.002], 2) idea usefulness: $b = -0.029$, 95% CI [-0.050, -0.009]; 3) idea feasibility: $b = -0.018$, 95% CI [-0.004, -0.001], 34) idea creativity (mean): $b = -0.024$, 95% CI [-0.039, -0.008], and 5) idea creativity (Use*Ori): $b = -0.029$, 95% CI [-0.049, -0.009].

CHAPTER 6: FUTURE RESEARCH & CONCLUSION

Summary of findings

This dissertation integrated insights from cultural tightness and social information processing theory to develop a comprehensive model elucidating the effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness on various employee work-related outcomes. These outcomes encompass work performance, attitudes, and mental health, which are crucial factors contributing to employee career success and overall organizational success (i.e., Martin et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Russo et al., 2014). In addition, I sought to identify the mechanisms through which societal and organizational cultural tightness exert influence on employee work-related outcomes, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between these cultural dimensions.

Expanding on this theme, I assert that compared to societal cultural tightness, the cultural tightness within an organization serves as a proximate determinant with the potential to exert positive influences on employees' work performance, attitudes (including job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational commitment), and mental health (manifested as reduced stress and job anxiety). Drawing upon the social information processing theory, I put forth the notion that societal cultural tightness functions as stored information, melding individuals' expectations, values, and behavioral strategies. In this context, both societal and organizational cultural tightness can interactively shape employee work-related outcomes. Specifically, if there is alignment between societal and organizational cultural tightness, such congruence can amplify the effects of organizational cultural tightness. Conversely, any discordance can attenuate the anticipated effects of organizational cultural tightness. Additionally, I propose a suite of motivational (i.e., person-organization fit, perception of interpersonal harmony, and self-efficacy), affective (emotional dissonance and affective reaction), and cognitive mechanisms (dialectical thinking, information seeking, and

uncertainty appraisal) to elucidate the impact of societal and organizational cultural tightness on work-related outcomes.

To empirically validate and refine the proposed model, I embarked on a series of studies within the distinctive context of China. This nation, marked by its rich cultural variations across different regions (Chua et al., 2019) and rapidly evolving workplace dynamics, offered an unparalleled setting for this investigation. In Study 1, I specifically examined the potential interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee work attitudes and mental health status. My findings revealed that regional cultural tightness can strengthen the positive effects of organizational cultural tightness, including enhanced organizational commitment and reduced job anxiety, when there is an alignment with organizational cultural tightness. On the contrary, when regional cultural tightness is incongruent with organizational cultural tightness, the expected benefits of organizational cultural tightness are mitigated. I further demonstrated that these effects can be accounted for by employees' perceptions of P-O fit, which serves as a critical psychological mechanism linking the interaction of regional and organizational cultural tightness with positive work-related outcomes.

Study 2 explored the potential interactive implications of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee creativity. My findings demonstrate that regional cultural tightness could magnify the negative effects of organizational cultural tightness on dialectical thinking but can also amplify the positive impact of organizational cultural tightness on employees' perceptions of interpersonal harmony when congruence with organizational cultural tightness is present. The reverse is true when incongruence is observed. Furthermore, dialectical thinking and perceived interpersonal harmony were found to act as both catalysts and dampeners, respectively, for employee creativity.

Theoretical implications

My dissertation offers significant theoretical contributions. To begin with, it pioneers a dialogue that bridges the gap between societal and organizational culture studies. Previous scholars (i.e., Silvertone, 2015) have raised concerns that the majority of organizational culture studies have largely centered on intra-organizational dynamics, thereby inadvertently creating a disconnect between organizations and the societal milieu in which they operate. Both societal and organizational cultures play pivotal roles in shaping individual behaviors. However, prevailing research has often examined these two cultural aspects in isolation, leaving several important research questions unanswered. These include: how do multinational organizations navigate the challenge of aligning their inherent organizational culture with the diverse societal cultures present in the various nations where they operate? How does organizational culture exert different influences on employees with diverse societal cultural backgrounds? My dissertation provides a comprehensive exploration of the interplay and mechanisms of societal and organizational cultural tightness on work-related outcomes, including work attitudes, job performance, and mental health status. In doing so, I offer a more holistic and nuanced comprehension of how society and organizations simultaneously shape individuals.

My dissertation makes significant contributions to the field of cultural tightness. Prior research has established that cultural tightness is a multifaceted concept that can be operationalized at multiple levels, including national, regional, organizational, and industry levels (Gelfand et al., 2006). For instance, studies have demonstrated how cultural tightness at different levels can affect employee behaviors and work-related outcomes (Aktas et al., 2016; Chua et al., 2015, 2019; Gelfand et al., 2011; Harrington & Gelfand, 2014). However, employees do not exist in isolation from their organizations or society, and they are influenced by both societal and organizational cultural tightness. By exploring the interactive

effects of cultural tightness at societal and organizational levels, my research found that congruence between organizational cultural tightness and the corresponding societal cultural tightness tends to foster more positive work attitudes and enhance mental health status.

Interestingly, incongruence between these two cultural tightness facets also appears to have its advantages, as it contributes positively to the enhancement of employee creativity. These insights offer a deeper, more integrative understanding of how these cultural elements influence employee behavior.

My current research deepens our understanding of social information processing theory by integrating it with a relatively nascent cultural dimension—cultural tightness. Societal cultural tightness signifies the degree of adherence to norms and regulations within the society that shapes and molds employees (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Consistent with the social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), societal cultural tightness offers key insights that influence employees' decoding of organizational norms and rules, and suggests potential behavioral strategies for dealing with organizational scenarios (Morris & Liu, 2015). Conversely, organizational cultural tightness underscores the intensity of norms and regulations within organizations, articulating organizational expectations and delineating employee roles. By incorporating both societal and organizational cultural tightness into the analysis, the present studies demonstrate that the social information cues embedded within an individual's societal cultural tightness play a critical role in shaping their interpretation of and response to organizational cultural tightness. This, in turn, has diverse impacts on their work-related outcomes via various mechanisms, such as their perception of P-O fit, interpersonal harmony, and dialectical thinking. In doing so, I shed light on the more intricate role of culture within the framework of social information processing.

Practical implications

My dissertation offers numerous practical insights as well. Firstly, it heightens managers' awareness of cultural differences from a relatively novel perspective, that of cultural tightness. Cultural values significantly shape how employees and managers interpret their environment, along with their approach to resolving issues and fostering collaboration within their organizations (Abramson et al., 1993; Longenecker et al., 1987). As a new cultural dimension, cultural tightness measures the strength of norms and the degree of sanctions within these norms (Gelfand et al., 2006). The current studies provide insights into how cultural tightness influences crucial work-related outcomes, including work performance, work attitudes, and mental health conditions. This understanding equips practitioners with the knowledge required to craft or adapt norms of varying tightness or looseness, to achieve desirable outcomes.

Secondly, my dissertation offers valuable insights for managers on how organizations can strategically alter their culture in alignment with societal cultural backgrounds to attain positive outcomes for both employees and the organization. In the era of multinational corporations, the issue of national or societal culture versus organizational culture has become increasingly complex and critical to address. It is also important for managers to ponder the role of organizational culture when they pursue a global strategy (Schneider, 1988). The findings of the current study can provide practical suggestions on how managers can adjust the relationship between their organizational culture and that of the societies or nations in which they operate. This can facilitate the achievement of an optimal cultural fit or foster an environment that celebrates diversity.

Furthermore, the benefits and drawbacks of interactions between societal and organizational cultural tightness offer valuable guidance for organizations on how to customize their management practices, norms, and regulations to accommodate their

employees' societal cultural tightness backgrounds. Additionally, the findings of the current study underscore the significance of ensuring a suitable match between job candidates and organizations with regard to their cultural backgrounds when making hiring decisions.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the contributions discussed in previous sections are noteworthy, there are limitations to this study that can provide fruitful opportunities for future research. Firstly, utilizing social information processing theory and the cultural tightness literature as theoretical lenses, I argue that organizational cultural tightness positively influences employee work performance, attitudes, and mental health, but inhibits creativity. Social information processing theory (Hanges et al., 2000; Schneider, 1987; Smith et al., 1996; Triandis & Vassiliou, 1972) posits that societal cultural tightness is encoded in individuals' memory, shaping their interpretation, attribution, and response to stimuli within the construct of organizational cultural tightness. From this perspective, I contend that a tightly structured organization, characterized by a multitude of clearly defined norms and rules, provides abundant information for employees, enabling a better understanding of their environment, work roles, and social interactions. By offering clear guidelines and reducing ambiguity, organizational cultural tightness positively impacts work performance, attitudes, and mental health. However, creativity - the generation of novel and useful ideas that challenge the status quo - suffers under these conditions as the numerous norms and rules limit employees' freedom to explore innovative concepts.

However, studies show that cultural tightness may yield absolutely different effects. Cultural tightness literature indicates that cultural tightness could lead to different effects in different sociocultural contexts. For example, Chua and colleagues (2011) found that cultural tightness is related to happiness, better health, and higher rates of incremental creativity, while Harrington and Gelfand found that societal cultural tightness is negatively related to happiness and creativity. Therefore, I encourage future studies to capture these distinct effects of organizational cultural tightness from different theoretical perspectives. For example, the principle of “what goes too far must reverse course” could hold true for organizational cultural tightness and its effects on work performance, attitudes, and mental health. There may be a curvilinear relationship whereby, up to a certain point, increased organizational cultural tightness offers beneficial context for employees by providing an abundance of interpretive information. However, if the cultural tightness surpasses certain thresholds, it could impose excessive constraints, causing employees to focus excessively on adhering to norms and rules rather than concentrating on their tasks. As a result, an extreme degree of organizational cultural tightness might induce negative outcomes for work performance, attitudes, and mental health.

Secondly, the theoretical model was only tested within the Chinese context. Given that (Gelfand et al., 2011) characterized China as a generally tight nation, questions arise: Do the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee work-related outcomes I found only apply to tight societies? Chua et al. (2019) discovered that the regional variance of cultural tightness in China is significant, and this regional-level cultural

tightness can explain various phenomena, such as innovation rates and economic growth. These findings lend some support to the current research, as the significant variance in cultural tightness across different provinces classifies them into loose and tight regions. Consequently, this offers a rich foundation to examine the variance of regional and organizational cultural tightness.

Even though my study examines both tight and loose regional cultural tightness in China, it is important to consider the other cultural impact on employee work-related outcomes. Besides, cultural psychology (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) reveals that individuals from different cultures exhibit distinct self-construal, cognitive, emotional, and motivational patterns. For instance, Chinese culture is characterized by collectivism, interdependence orientation, and long-term orientation compared to the individualism found in the United States (Hofstede, 1997). As a result, Chinese employees may place greater emphasis on affiliation with significant people and their organizations, focusing on long-term consequences. This cultural difference raises the question of whether employees from different nations would react differently to the alignment and misalignment of societal and organizational cultural tightness. Consequently, future research should broaden the scope of the current model to encompass diverse cultural contexts, investigating whether the proposed relationships and mechanisms are universally applicable or if they are culture specific.

Thirdly, there are several methodological limitations to consider. To obtain sufficient variance in regional cultural tightness, data collection was required across all 31 provinces in China. To accomplish this, I utilized the wjx sample service. While the large sample pool and the representativeness of the general Chinese population (Lu et al., 2020; China Internet Network Information Center, 2023) contribute to the robustness of my findings on the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness, some issues remain. One significant concern is the substantial attrition rate across different time points, which renders

cross-sectional data collection infeasible for the wjx sample service. This limitation introduces the concern that common method variance (CMV) will affect the current research, particularly in Study 1. Although the confirmative factor analyses and Harman's one factor test showed that common method bias is not a significant concern for current studies. Future research should consider conducting cross-sectional field studies to replicate the current findings and further validate the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee work-related outcomes.

Additionally, given the challenges encountered by wjx in recruiting participants from the same groups or organizations, I collected data on individuals' perceptions of organizational cultural tightness instead of aggregate organizational data. This strategy underscores the significance of each employee's unique interpretation of organizational cultural tightness, an element that has been shown to be a proximal predictor for work-related outcomes (Long et al., 2011). Theoretically and practically, cultural tightness manifests at multiple layers, encompassing national, regional, organizational, and individual perceptions (Gelfand et al., 2006). As such, I recommend future studies extend the application of current theory across these various levels. This could include field studies in organizations operating in diverse locations to explore the interplay between regional and aggregated organizational cultural tightness and its impact on employee work-related outcomes.

Fourthly, the current study did not find significant direct effects of dialectical thinking on most of the idea quality dimensions. Although there are several possible approaches via which dialectical thinking might favorably affect creativity. The contradictory results in the link between dialectical thinking and creativity cast a twofold shadow: dialectical thinking does not always translate to creative outputs, and certain variables influence how dialectical thinking influences creativity (Chua et al., 2022), for example, discovered that leadership styles have a role in unleashing the potential of dialectical thinking on creativity.

Furthermore, Paletz & Peng (2009) revealed that ethnicity acts as a moderator in the association between dialectical thinking and creativity.

In addition to examining the conditional factors, several studies have delved into the underlying mechanisms that explain the connection between dialectical thinking and employee creativity. For instance, Bai et al. (2015) discovered that a leader's dialectical thinking can significantly predict an employee's creative performance, and this correlation is mediated by the leader's conflict management approach and team conflict styles. Therefore, I encourage future studies to explore the underlying mechanisms and conditional factors that drive the relationship between dialectical thinking and employee creativity.

Fifthly, a comparative analysis of the impacts of organizational and regional cultural tightness on employee creativity reveals that organizational cultural tightness did not exert the anticipated substantial effects on employee creativity. A plausible explanation might lie in the fact that the idea generation task score, employed to denote employees' creativity, is influenced not solely by the employee's comprehension of organizational norms and rules or their perception of support or risk within their organizations, but also by individual differences. These may include their openness to experience and their preferences for stable or challenging the status quo, which are notably shaped by their societal cultural tightness (Gelfand et al., 2006).

The idea generation task, being a robust and frequently employed measure of creativity (Burt, 2004), holds distinct advantages. For instance, by diversifying the response format in the survey and enabling third-party evaluation, the idea generation task can, to some extent, mitigate common method variance issues. Additionally, the task utilized in the present study was tailored to the employee's working environment, aligning it with creativity performance within organizations. Given the potential limitations of this measure, I encourage future research to evaluate employees' creativity performance with different

measures when exploring the complex interplay between organizational and societal culture and creativity.

Lastly, the current studies primarily concentrate on the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness on employee work-related outcomes and the mechanisms that can explain these effects. Future research should investigate potential conditional effects within the research models. For instance, it would be valuable to explore the moderating influence of other cultural dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism, on the relationships between the interactive effects of regional and organizational cultural tightness and employee outcomes. Moreover, future studies could examine the moderating effects of individual differences, such as independent versus interdependent self-construal levels, on the impact of cultural tightness alignment or misalignment and the associated mechanisms on work-related outcomes. Investigating these factors will help develop a more robust theoretical framework for addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from cultural tightness within the context of modern organizations.

Conclusion

In closing, individuals do not enter organizations as entities isolated from external influences. Therefore, it is imperative for managers and theorists specializing in organizational behavior to expand their perspectives beyond the confines of culture-bound models. This would entail formulating theories and models that duly consider the role and impact of the external environment on the organization and its members. This dissertation seamlessly integrates the concepts of cultural tightness and social information processing theory, resulting in a model that illuminates the interactive effects of societal and organizational cultural tightness on employees' work-related outcomes. This research uncovers a complex, nuanced tableau of how societal and organizational cultures concurrently shape employees within an organization. However, despite these insights, there

remain key questions yet to be explored. My hope is that this research serves as a catalyst, sparking curiosity and encouraging further exploration into the dynamic interplay between societal and organizational culture.

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Tables

Table 1

Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Study 1)

Model	Factors	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Model 1	4-factor: OCT, POF, OC, JA	463.76	113	.96	.95	.05	.04
Model 2	3-factor: OCT, POF, OC+JA	2600.66	116	.70	.65	.10	.12
Model 3	2-factor: OCT+POF, OC+JA	3116.00	118	.64	.58	.11	.13
Model 4	1-factor: OCT+POF+OC+JA	3733.78	119	.56	.50	.12	.14

Note. N=1633; OCT = organizational cultural tightness; POF = P-O fit; OC = organizational commitment; JA = job anxiety; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Key Variables (Study 1)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Regional cultural tightness (working province)	3.19	1.04	—												
2. Regional cultural tightness (born province)	3.19	1.03	0.77	—											
3. Organizational cultural tightness	4.79	0.49	0.02	0.03	(0.64)										
4. P-O fit	5.11	1.07	0.04	0.03	0.36	(0.83)									
5. Job anxiety	3.36	1.12	-0.1	-0.08	-0.09	-0.17	(0.78)								
6. Organizational commitment	5.46	0.98	-0.02	-0.01	0.33	0.57	-0.22	(0.80)							
7. Organization age	4.73	1.16	0.09	0.08	0.12	0.08	-0.12	0.04	—						
8. Organization size	2.01	0.98	0.06	0.06	0.11	0.10	-0.07	0.07	0.37	—					
9. Rank in organization	2.43	0.56	-0.14	-0.15	-0.08	-0.14	0.12	-0.20	-0.10	-0.07	—				
10. Tenure	6.92	5.59	0.05	0.05	0.15	0.06	-0.13	0.07	0.44	0.08	-0.20	—			
11. Education level	3.81	0.76	0.12	0.15	0.08	0.16	-0.07	0.11	0.15	0.18	-0.21	-0.06	—		
12. Age	32.98	7.82	0.06	0.04	0.11	0.04	-0.16	0.03	0.32	0.03	-0.24	0.74	-0.15	—	
13. Gender (1 = male)	0.44	0.50	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.03	-0.07	0.01	0.05	0.07	-0.11	0.12	0	0.16	—
14. Years in working province	19.27	14.09	0.14	0.15	0.08	0.04	-0.12	0.02	0.26	0.02	-0.11	0.50	-0.09	0.55	0.11

Note. $N=1633$. Values greater than |0.08| are significant at $p < .001$, values greater than |0.06| are significant at $p < .01$ and values greater than |0.05| are significant at $p < .05$.

Alphas are on the diagonal.

Table 3*Regression Results of Organizational and Regional Cultural Tightness on Work Outcomes with and without Controls (Study 1)*

Variables	P-O fit		Organizational Commitment				Job Anxiety					
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE		
Organizational Cultural tightness	0.77***	(0.05)	0.73***	(0.05)	0.66***	(0.05)	0.62***	(0.05)	-0.20***	(0.06)	-0.12*	(0.06)
Regional Cultural tightness (working province)	0.03	(0.02)	0.04	(0.04)	-0.03	(0.03)	-0.04	(0.04)	-0.11***	(0.03)	-0.09*	(0.04)
Regional cultural tightness (born province)			-0.05	(0.04)			-0.02	(0.03)			0.02	(0.04)
Age			-0.00	(0.01)			-0.01	(0.00)			-0.02**	(0.01)
Educational level			0.15***	(0.03)			0.06	(0.03)			-0.08*	(0.04)
Tenure			-0.00	(0.01)			0.01	(0.01)			0.00	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)			-0.17***	(0.05)			-0.32***	(0.04)			0.12*	(0.05)
Rank in organization			-0.02	(0.05)			-0.05	(0.05)			-0.08	(0.06)
Organization size			0.04	(0.03)			0.03	(0.02)			-0.03	(0.03)
Organization age			0.01	(0.03)			-0.02	(0.02)			-0.04	(0.03)
Years in working province			0.00	(0.00)			0.00	(0.00)			-0.00	(0.00)
Constant	1.33***	(0.25)	1.42***	(0.33)	2.40***	(0.24)	3.34***	(0.30)	4.65***	(0.28)	4.75***	(0.36)
R^2	0.13		0.15		0.11		0.15		0.02		0.05	
ΔR^2			0.02				0.04				0.03	

Note. $N=1633$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 4*Interactive Effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural Tightness with and without Controls (Study 1)*

Variables	P-O fit		Organizational Commitment				Job Anxiety					
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE		
Organizational Cultural tightness	0.35*	(0.15)	0.37*	(0.15)	0.18	(0.14)	0.22	(0.14)	0.04	(0.17)	0.13	(0.16)
Regional Cultural tightness (working province)	-0.64**	(0.23)	-0.54*	(0.23)	-0.79***	(0.21)	-0.68**	(0.21)	0.27	(0.25)	0.32	(0.25)
Organizational cultural tightness x Regional cultural tightness (working province)	0.14**	(0.05)	0.12*	(0.05)	0.16***	(0.04)	0.13**	(0.04)	-0.08	(0.05)	-0.08	(0.05)
Regional cultural tightness (born province)			-0.05	(0.04)			-0.01	(0.03)			0.01	(0.04)
Age			-0.00	(0.01)			-0.01	(0.00)			-0.02**	(0.01)
Educational level			0.14***	(0.03)			0.05	(0.03)			-0.08*	(0.04)
Tenure			-0.00	(0.01)			0.01	(0.01)			0.00	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)			-0.02	(0.05)			-0.05	(0.05)			-0.09	(0.06)
Rank in organization			-0.17***	(0.05)			-0.31***	(0.04)			0.11*	(0.05)
Organization size			0.04	(0.03)			0.03	(0.02)			-0.03	(0.03)
Organization age			0.01	(0.03)			-0.01	(0.02)			-0.04	(0.03)
Years in working province			0.00	(0.00)			0.00	(0.00)			0.00	(0.00)
Constant	3.31***	(0.72)	3.10***	(0.73)	4.66***	(0.67)	5.21***	(0.67)	3.51***	(0.80)	3.57***	(0.82)
R^2	0.13		0.16		0.12		0.15		0.02		0.05	
ΔR^2			0.03				0.03				0.04	

Note. $N=1633$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5*Regression Results of P-O Fits on Organizational Commitment and Job Anxiety with and without Controls (Study 1)*

Variables	Organizational Commitment				Job anxiety			
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
P-O fit	0.52***	(0.02)	0.51***	(0.02)	-0.18***	(0.03)	-0.15***	(0.03)
Age			-0.01	(0.00)			-0.02***	(0.01)
Educational level			-0.01	(0.03)			-0.06	(0.04)
Tenure			0.01*	(0.01)			0.00	(0.01)
Rank in organization			-0.23***	(0.04)			0.09	(0.05)
Gender (1 = Male)			0.03	(0.04)			0.09	(0.05)
Organization size			0.01	(0.02)			-0.04	(0.03)
Organization age			-0.02	(0.02)			-0.04	(0.03)
Constant	2.78***	(0.10)	3.56***	(0.20)	4.29***	(0.14)	4.62***	(0.27)
R2	0.32		0.34		0.03		0.06	
ΔR^2			0.02				0.03	

Note. $N=1633$, Level-1 Note. $N=1633$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 6*Mediated Effects of Person and Organization Fit with and without Controls (Study 1)*

Mediated Pathways	Without controls				With controls			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Organizational cultural tightness x regional cultural tightness →P-O fit → Organizational commitment	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.12	0.03	0.02	0.003	0.063
Organizational cultural tightness x regional cultural tightness →P-O fit → Job anxiety	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.0001

Note. $N=1633$, LLCI 5 lower level of 95% confidence interval; ULCI 5 upper level of 95% confidence interval.

Table 7*Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Study 2)*

Model	Factors	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Model 1	3-factor: OCT, DT, IH	2977.03	249	.66	.61	.097	.08
Model 2	2-factor: OCT, DT+IH	4174.55	251	.50	.45	.10	.10
Model 3	1-factor: OCT+DT+IH	4616.84	252	.44	.39	.11	.10

Note. $N=2306$; OCT = organizational cultural tightness; DT = dialectical thinking; IH = interpersonal harmony; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index;

SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

Table 8*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Key Variables (Study 2)*

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.Regional cultural tightness (working province)	3.30	1.07	—										
2.Regional cultural tightness (born province)	3.23	1.05	0.75	—									
3. Organizational cultural tightness	4.78	0.49	-0.01	0.02	(0.63)								
4.Dialectical thinking	3.90	0.65	-0.04	-0.04	-0.16	(0.74)							
5. Perceived interpersonal harmony	5.19	0.95	0.05	0.05	0.31	-0.29	(0.76)						
6.Idea Originality ^a	3.57	0.54	0.04	-0.02	0.01	0.02	-0.04	(0.73)					
7.Idea Usefulness ^a	4.03	0.72	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.02	-0.05	0.80	(0.76)				
8.Idea Feasibility ^a	4.01	0.70	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.01	-0.03	0.47	0.75	(0.72)			
9.Idea Creativity (mean) ^a	3.71	0.54	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.04	-0.06	0.80	0.90	0.81	(0.79)		
10.Idea Creativity (Ori*Use) ^a	2.37	1.12	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.02	-0.05	0.95	0.94	0.62	0.88	—	
11.Educational level	3.88	0.72	0.12	0.12	0.07	-0.05	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.06	—
12.Age	32.87	7.39	0.01	0.01	0.08	-0.20	0.01	0.02	0.01	-0.03	-0.02	0.02	-0.16
13.Gender (Male=1)	0.43	0.50	-0.03	-0.02	0.07	-0.12	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.01
14. Rank in organization	2.41	0.55	-0.11	-0.13	-0.07	0.17	-0.13	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.18
15.Tenure	6.91	5.39	0.01	0.02	0.13	-0.18	0.05	0.04	0.01	-0.03	-0.01	0.02	-0.08
16. Organization age	4.75	1.14	0.07	0.06	0.11	-0.13	0.08	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.12
17. Organization size	2.01	0.98	0.05	0.06	0.11	-0.11	0.08	0.03	-0.01	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	0.16
18. Years in working province	20.12	13.65	0.07	0.14	0.08	-0.15	-0.00	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.06	-0.08

$N=2306$. ^a $N = 2198$, Values greater than $|0.07|$ are significant at $p < .001$, values greater than $|0.06|$ are significant at $p < .01$ and values greater than $|0.04|$ are significant at $p < .05$. Alphas are on the diagonal.

Table 8 (Continued)*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Key Variables (Study 2)*

	12	13	14	15	16	17
12.Age	—					
13.Gender (Male=1)	0.15	—				
14. Rank in organization	-0.23	-0.15	—			
15.Tenure	0.75	0.12	-0.21	—		
16. Organization age	0.33	0.07	-0.09	0.43	—	
17. Organization size	0.05	0.08	-0.08	0.11	0.37	—
18. Years in working province	0.54	0.09	-0.11	0.49	0.26	0.03

$N=2306.$, Values greater than $|0.07|$ are significant at $p < .001$, values greater than $|0.06|$ are significant at $p < .01$ and values greater than $|0.04|$ are significant at $p < .05$.

Alphas are on the diagonal.

Table 9*Regression Results of Organizational Cultural Tightness on Mediators without and with Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Dialectical thinking				Perceived Interpersonal Harmony			
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Organizational Cultural tightness	-0.21***	(0.03)	-0.17***	(0.03)	0.61***	(0.04)	0.59***	(0.04)
Regional cultural tightness (working province)	-0.03	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.02)	0.05**	(0.02)	0.03	(0.03)
Regional cultural tightness (born province)			0.00	(0.02)			0.00	(0.03)
Educational level			-0.03	(0.02)			0.01	(0.03)
Age			-0.01	(0.00)			0.01	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)			-0.08**	(0.03)			0.03	(0.04)
Rank in organization			0.12***	(0.02)			-0.19***	(0.04)
Tenure			0.00	(0.00)			0.01*	(0.01)
Work experience			-0.00	(0.01)			-0.02**	(0.01)
Organization age			-0.01	(0.01)			0.03	(0.02)
Organization size			-0.04**	(0.01)			0.02	(0.02)
Years in working province			-0.00	(0.00)			-0.00	(0.00)
Constant	5.01***	(0.14)	4.92***	(0.18)	2.10***	(0.19)	2.58***	(0.25)
R^2	0.03		0.09		0.1		0.12	
ΔR^2			0.06				0.02	

Note. $N=2306$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 10.1*Regression Results of Organizational and Regional Cultural Tightness on Creativity without Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Ori*Use)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Organizational cultural tightness	0.01	(0.02)	0.01	(0.03)	0.02	(0.03)	0.01	(0.02)	0.01	(0.05)
Regional cultural tightness	0.02	(0.01)	0.04**	(0.01)	0.03	(0.02)	0.04**	(0.01)	0.05*	(0.02)
Constant	3.48***	(0.12)	3.87***	(0.16)	3.80***	(0.16)	3.53***	(0.12)	2.15***	(0.25)
R^2	0.001		0.003		0.002		0.005		0.002	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 10.2*Regression Results of Organizational and Regional Cultural Tightness on Creativity with Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Ori*Use)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Organizational Cultural tightness	-0.01	(0.02)	0.00	(0.03)	0.03	(0.03)	0.01	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.05)
Regional Cultural tightness (working province)	0.06***	(0.02)	0.07**	(0.02)	0.05*	(0.02)	0.08***	(0.02)	0.12***	(0.03)
Regional cultural tightness (born province)	-0.06***	(0.02)	-0.05*	(0.02)	-0.03	(0.02)	-0.06***	(0.02)	-0.11**	(0.03)
Educational level	0.05**	(0.02)	0.06**	(0.02)	0.06*	(0.02)	0.06***	(0.02)	0.10**	(0.04)
Age	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.01**	(0.01)	-0.01*	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)	0.06*	(0.02)	0.04	(0.03)	0.04	(0.03)	0.03	(0.02)	0.09	(0.05)
Rank in organization	0.03	(0.02)	0.03	(0.03)	0.03	(0.03)	0.03	(0.02)	0.06	(0.05)
Tenure	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.01*	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)
Work experience	0.00	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)	0.02**	(0.01)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)
Organization age	0.02	(0.01)	0.02	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.01)	0.03	(0.02)
Organization size	0.00	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.02)	-0.05**	(0.02)	-0.03*	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.03)
Years in working province	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)	0.01**	(0.00)
Constant	3.22***	(0.16)	3.52***	(0.21)	3.50***	(0.21)	3.23***	(0.16)	1.60***	(0.32)
R^2	0.02		0.01		0.02		0.02		0.01	
ΔR^2	0.019		0.007		0.018		0.015		0.008	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 11*Interactive Effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural Tightness on Mediators without and with Controls (Study 2)*

Variable	Dialectical thinking				Perceived interpersonal harmony			
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Organizational cultural tightness	-0.04	(0.08)	0.04	(0.08)	0.36**	(0.12)	0.37**	(0.12)
Regional cultural tightness (working province)	0.24*	(0.12)	0.30**	(0.12)	-0.34*	(0.17)	-0.30	(0.17)
Organizational cultural tightness x Regional cultural tightness (working province)	-0.06*	(0.02)	-0.07**	(0.02)	0.08*	(0.03)	0.07*	(0.03)
Regional cultural tightness (born province)			0.00	(0.02)			-0.00	(0.03)
Educational level			-0.03	(0.02)			0.01	(0.03)
Age			-0.01	(0.00)			0.01	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)			-0.08**	(0.03)			0.03	(0.04)
Rank in organization			0.11***	(0.02)			-0.19***	(0.04)
Tenure			0.00	(0.00)			0.01*	(0.01)
Work experience			-0.00	(0.01)			-0.02**	(0.01)
Organization age			-0.01	(0.01)			0.03	(0.02)
Organization size			-0.04**	(0.01)			0.01	(0.02)
Years in working province			-0.00	(0.00)			-0.00	(0.00)
Constant	4.17***	(0.39)	3.93***	(0.40)	3.33***	(0.56)	3.62***	(0.58)
R^2	0.03		0.09		0.1		0.12	
ΔR^2			0.06				0.02	

Note. $N=2306$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 12.1*Interactive Effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural Tightness on Creativity without Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Ori*Use)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Organizational cultural tightness	-0.02	(0.07)	-0.04	(0.09)	0.04	(0.09)	0.00	(0.07)	-0.07	(0.15)
Regional cultural tightness (working province)	-0.02	(0.10)	-0.03	(0.14)	0.05	(0.13)	0.02	(0.10)	-0.07	(0.21)
Organizational cultural tightness x Regional cultural tightness (working province)	0.01	(0.02)	0.01	(0.03)	-0.00	(0.03)	0.00	(0.02)	0.02	(0.04)
Constant	3.62***	(0.34)	4.07***	(0.45)	3.71***	(0.45)	3.66***	(0.34)	2.52***	(0.70)
R^2	0.002		0.004		0.002		0.006		0.003	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 12.2*Interactive Effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural Tightness on Creativity with Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Ori*Use)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Organizational cultural tightness	-0.04	(0.07)	-0.04	(0.09)	0.05	(0.09)	0.02	(0.07)	-0.09	(0.15)
Regional cultural tightness (working province)	0.01	(0.10)	0.00	(0.14)	0.07	(0.13)	0.08	(0.10)	-0.01	(0.21)
Organizational cultural tightness x Regional cultural tightness (working province)	0.01	(0.02)	0.01	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)	-0.00	(0.02)	0.03	(0.04)
Regional cultural tightness (born province)	-0.06***	(0.02)	-0.05*	(0.02)	-0.03	(0.02)	-0.06***	(0.02)	-0.11**	(0.03)
Education	0.05**	(0.02)	0.06**	(0.02)	0.06*	(0.02)	0.06***	(0.02)	0.10**	(0.04)
Age	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.01**	(0.01)	-0.01*	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)	0.06*	(0.02)	0.04	(0.03)	0.04	(0.03)	0.03	(0.02)	0.09	(0.05)
Rank in organization	0.03	(0.02)	0.03	(0.03)	0.03	(0.03)	0.03	(0.02)	0.06	(0.05)
Tenure	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.01*	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)
Work experience	0.00	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)	0.02**	(0.01)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)
Organization age	0.02	(0.01)	0.02	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.01)	0.04	(0.02)
Organization size	0.00	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.02)	-0.05**	(0.02)	-0.03*	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.03)
Years in working province	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)	0.01**	(0.00)
Constant	3.38***	(0.35)	3.74***	(0.47)	3.39***	(0.46)	3.39***	(0.35)	2.00**	(0.73)
R^2	0.02		0.01		0.02		0.03		0.02	
ΔR^2	0.018		0.006		0.018		0.024		0.017	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 13.1*Regression Results of Dialectical Thinking on Employee Creativity without Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Ori*Use)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Dialectical thinking	0.01	(0.02)	0.03	(0.02)	0.02	(0.02)	0.04*	(0.02)	0.04	(0.04)
Constant	3.52***	(0.07)	3.93***	(0.09)	3.93***	(0.09)	3.56***	(0.07)	2.22***	(0.15)
R^2	0.0002		0.0005		0.0002		0.002		0.0004	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 13.2*Regression Results of Dialectical Thinking on Employee Creativity with Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Use*Ori)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Dialectical thinking	0.03	(0.02)	0.04	(0.02)	0.01	(0.02)	0.04*	(0.02)	0.06	(0.04)
Educational level	0.05**	(0.02)	0.07**	(0.02)	0.06**	(0.02)	0.07***	(0.02)	0.11**	(0.03)
Age	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.01)	-0.01*	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)	0.06*	(0.02)	0.04	(0.03)	0.04	(0.03)	0.04	(0.02)	0.10*	(0.05)
Rank in organization	0.03	(0.02)	0.03	(0.03)	0.03	(0.03)	0.02	(0.02)	0.05	(0.05)
Tenure	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.01*	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)
Work experience	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)	0.02**	(0.01)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)
Organization age	0.02	(0.01)	0.03	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.01)	0.04	(0.02)
Organization size	0.00	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.02)	-0.05**	(0.02)	-0.03*	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.03)
Constant	3.07***	(0.13)	3.44***	(0.17)	3.64***	(0.17)	3.16***	(0.13)	1.34***	(0.27)
R^2	0.01		0.01		0.01		0.02		0.01	
ΔR^2	0.0098		0.0095		0.0098		0.0198		0.0096	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 14.1*Regression Results of Perceived Interpersonal Harmony on Employee Creativity with Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Ori*Use)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Perceived interpersonal harmony	-0.02*	(0.01)	-0.04*	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)	-0.03**	(0.01)	-0.06*	(0.02)
Constant	3.69***	(0.06)	4.24***	(0.08)	4.11***	(0.08)	3.86***	(0.06)	2.67***	(0.13)
R^2	0.002		0.003		0.001		0.003		0.003	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 14.2*Regression Results of Perceived Interpersonal Harmony on Employee Creativity with Controls (Study 2)*

Variables	Idea Originality		Idea Usefulness		Idea Feasibility		Idea Creativity (mean)		Idea Creativity (Ori*Use)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Perceived interpersonal harmony	-0.03*	(0.01)	-0.04**	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)	-0.03**	(0.01)	-0.06*	(0.03)
Educational level	0.05**	(0.02)	0.07**	(0.02)	0.06**	(0.02)	0.06***	(0.02)	0.11**	(0.03)
Age	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.01)	-0.01*	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.01)
Gender (1= male)	0.06*	(0.02)	0.04	(0.03)	0.04	(0.03)	0.04	(0.02)	0.10*	(0.05)
Rank in organization	0.03	(0.02)	0.02	(0.03)	0.03	(0.03)	0.02	(0.02)	0.05	(0.05)
Tenure	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.01	(0.01)
Work experience	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)	0.02**	(0.01)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)
Organization age	0.02	(0.01)	0.03	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.02)	0.03*	(0.01)	0.04	(0.02)
Organization size	0.00	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.02)	-0.05**	(0.02)	-0.03*	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.03)
Constant	3.32***	(0.12)	3.82***	(0.17)	3.79***	(0.16)	3.51***	(0.13)	1.94***	(0.26)
R^2	0.01		0.01		0.01		0.02		0.01	
ΔR^2	0.008		0.007		0.009		0.017		0.097	

Note. $N=2198$, Level-1 pseudo R^2 values were calculated following Snijders and Bosker's (1999) formula.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 15

Mediating Effects of Dialectical Thinking Between Interactive Effects of Organizational Cultural Tightness and Regional Cultural Tightness on Creativity with and without Controls (Study 2)

	Without control				With Controls			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea originality	0.001	0.002	-0.004	0.005	0.001	0.002	-0.004	0.005
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea usefulness	0.001	0.003	-0.005	0.006	0.000	0.003	-0.005	0.006
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea feasibility	-0.001	0.003	-0.008	0.006	-0.001	0.004	-0.008	0.006
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea creativity (mean)	0.000	0.002	-0.004	0.005	0.001	0.002	-0.004	0.006
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea creativity (Ori*Use)	0.002	0.005	-0.008	0.011	0.001	0.005	-0.008	0.011

Note. N = 2198

Table 16

Mediating Effects of perceived interpersonal harmony Between Interactive Effects of Organizational Cultural Tightness and Regional Cultural Tightness on Creativity with and without Controls (Study 2)

	Without control				With Controls			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea originality	-0.003	0.005	-0.013	0.007	-0.003	0.005	-0.013	0.007
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea usefulness	-0.006	0.008	-0.021	0.010	-0.005	0.008	-0.021	0.010
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea feasibility	-0.004	0.006	-0.017	0.008	-0.004	0.006	-0.017	0.008
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea creativity (mean)	-0.005	0.006	-0.017	0.008	-0.004	0.006	-0.017	0.008
Organizational cultural tightness X regional cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea creativity (Ori*Use)	-0.008	0.011	-0.030	0.015	-0.007	0.011	-0.029	0.015

Note. N = 2198

Table 17*Mediating effects of dialectical thinking between organizational cultural tightness and creativity with and without controls*

	Without control				With Controls			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Organizational cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea originality	-0.003	0.004	-0.012	0.005	-0.004	0.003	-0.011	0.002
Organizational cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea usefulness	-0.007	0.005	-0.017	0.003	-0.007	0.004	-0.015	0.002
Organizational cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea feasibility	-0.005	0.005	-0.015	0.004	-0.003	0.004	-0.011	0.004
Organizational cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea creativity (mean)	-0.009	0.004	-0.017	-0.001	-0.007	0.003	-0.014	-0.001
Organizational cultural tightness → dialectical thinking → idea creativity (Ori*Use)	-0.010	0.008	-0.026	0.006	-0.011	0.007	-0.024	0.002

Note. N = 2198

Table 18*Mediating effects of perceived interpersonal harmony between organizational cultural tightness and creativity with and without controls*

	Without control				With Controls			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Organizational cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea originality	-0.017	0.008	-0.033	-0.001	-0.017	0.008	-0.033	-0.002
Organizational cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea usefulness	-0.030	0.011	-0.051	-0.008	-0.029	0.011	-0.050	-0.009
Organizational cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea feasibility	-0.018	0.011	-0.041	0.001	-0.018	0.010	-0.040	-0.001
Organizational cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea creativity (mean)	-0.018	0.011	-0.039	0.002	-0.024	0.008	-0.039	-0.008
Organizational cultural tightness → perceived interpersonal harmony → idea creativity (Ori*Use)	-0.042	0.017	-0.076	-0.009	-0.029	0.010	-0.049	-0.009

Note. N = 2198

Figures

Figure 1

Overarching Theoretical Model

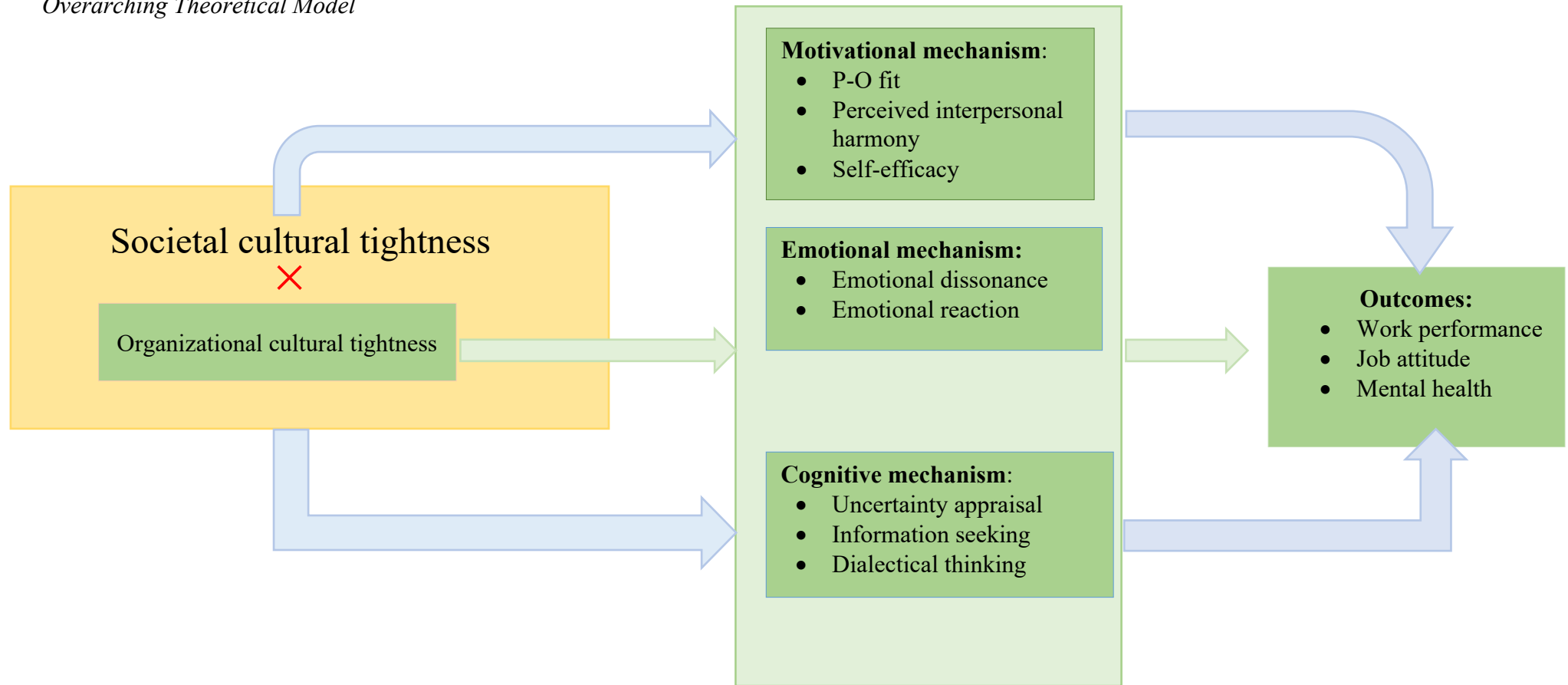


Figure 2

Theoretical Model of Study 1

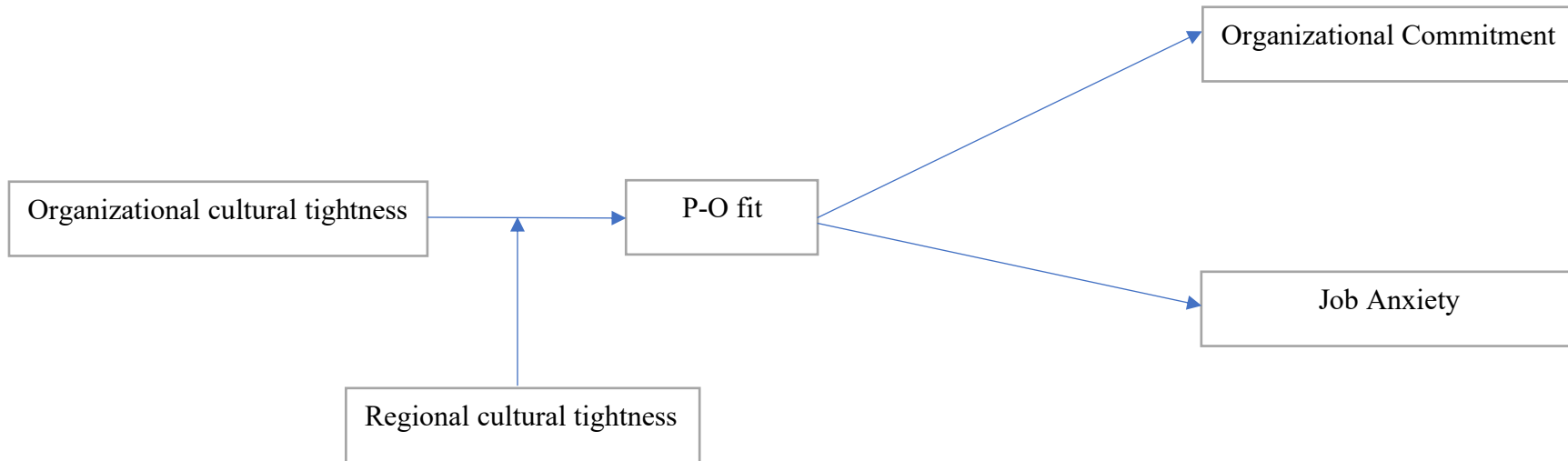


Figure 3

Regression results summary for study 1

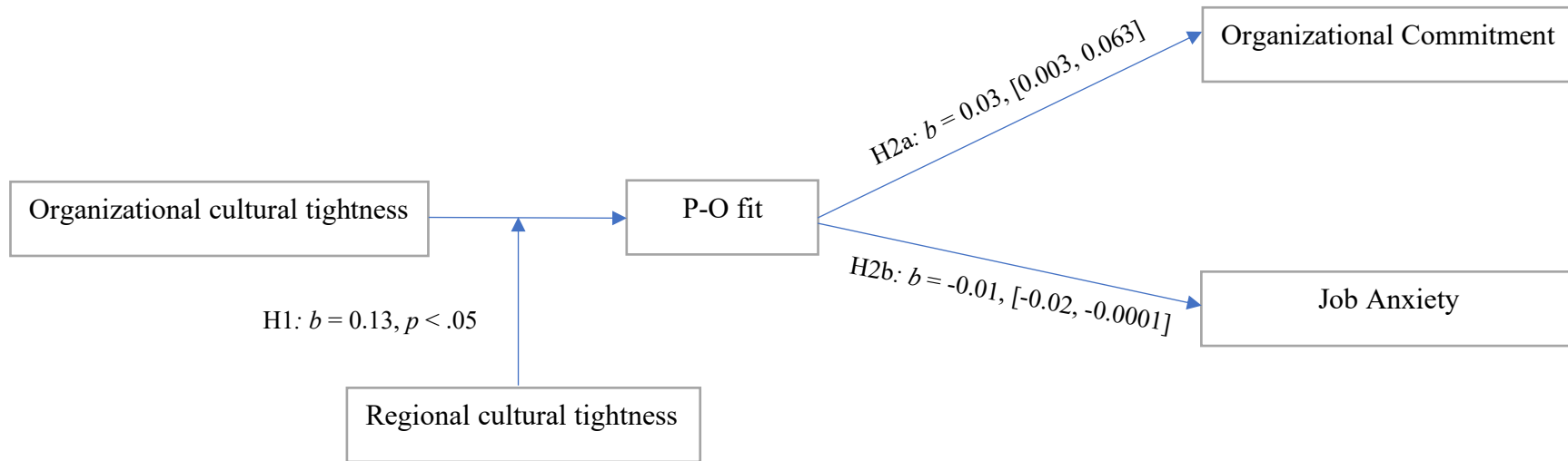


Figure 4.1

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on P-O fit (Study 1)

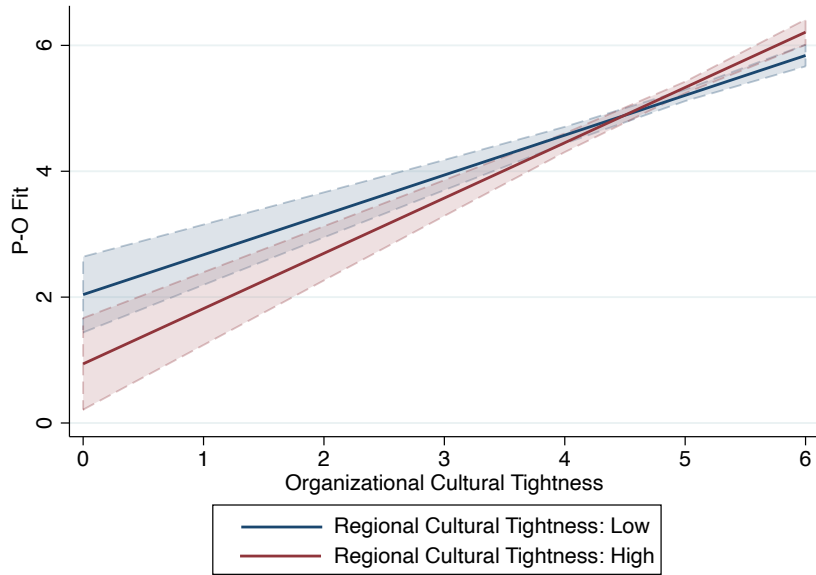


Figure 4.2

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Organizational Commitment (Study 1)

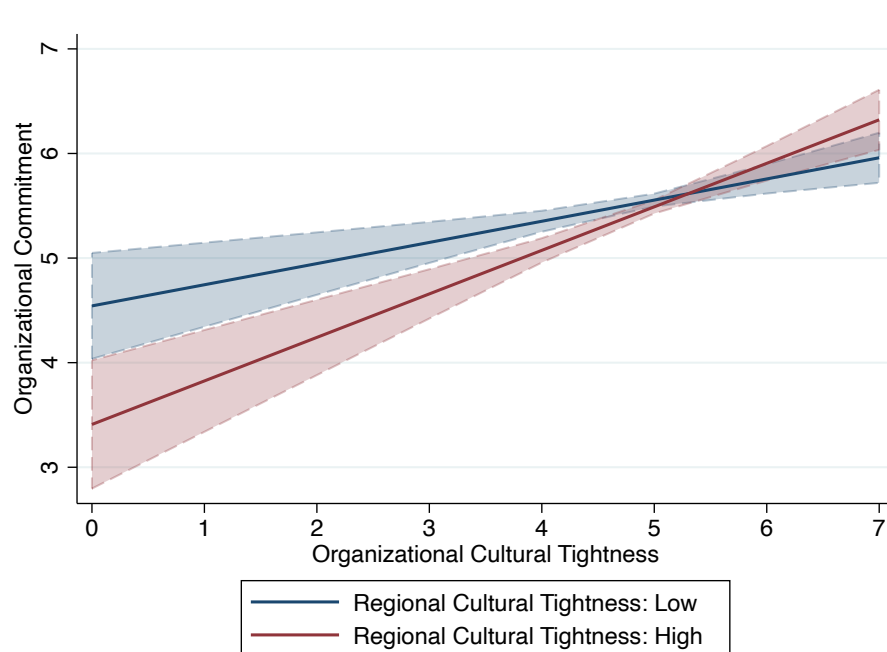


Figure 4.3

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Job Anxiety (Study

1)

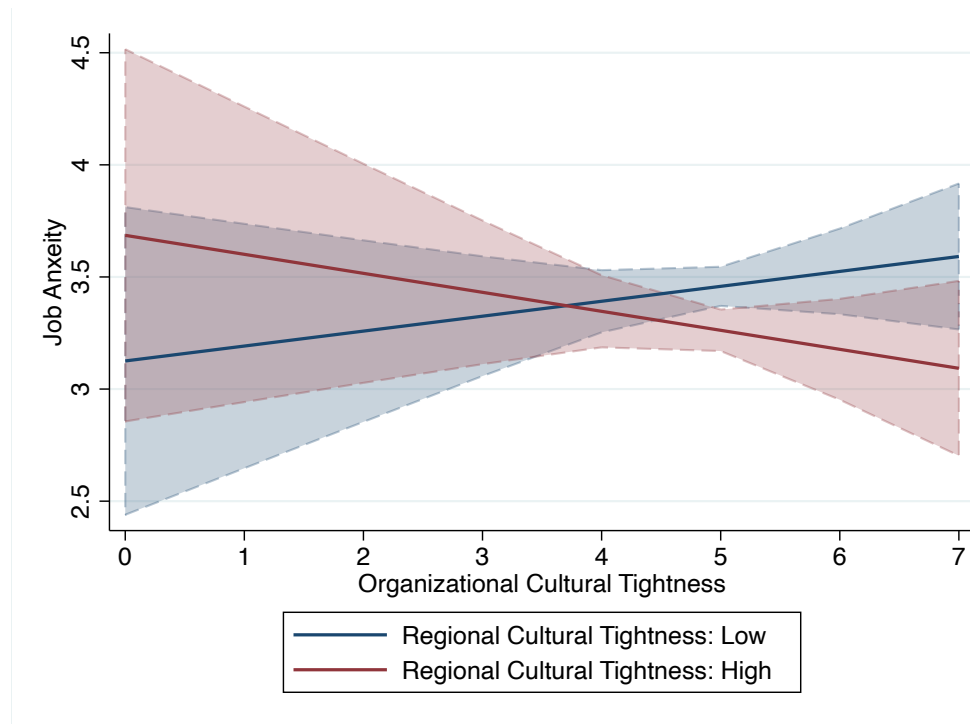


Figure 5

Theoretical Model of Study 2

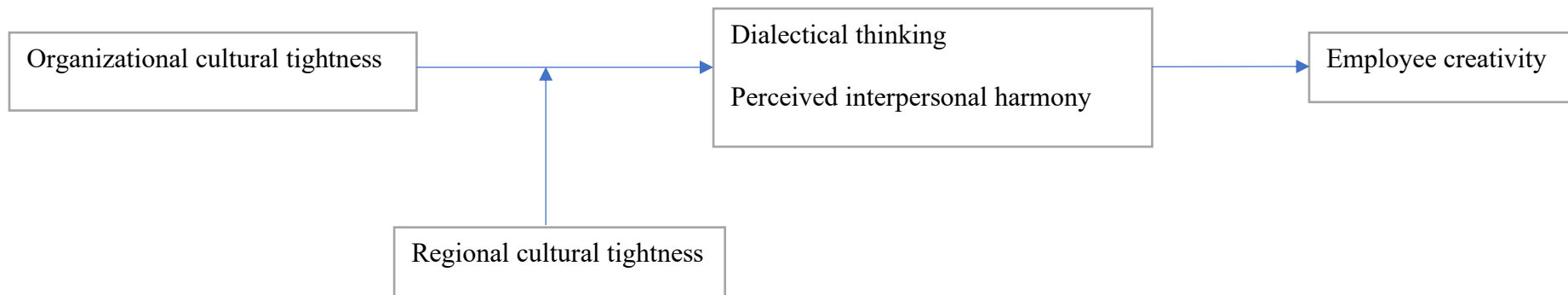


Figure 6.1

Regression Results Summary for Study 2

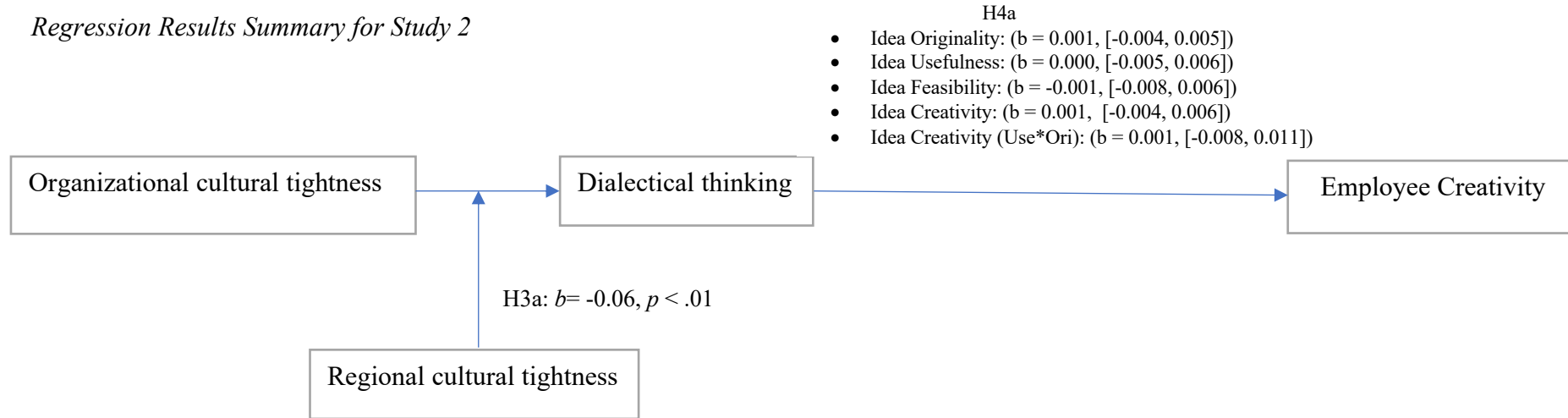


Figure 6.2

Regression Results Summary for Study 2

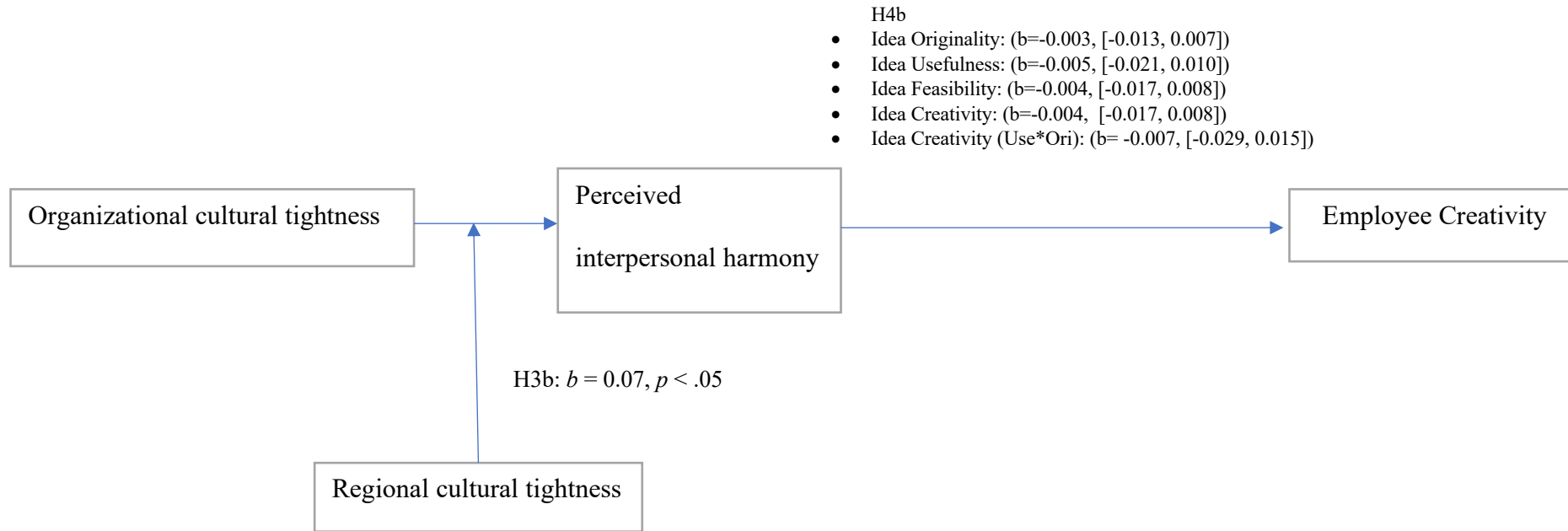


Figure 7.1

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Dialectical Thinking

(Study 2)

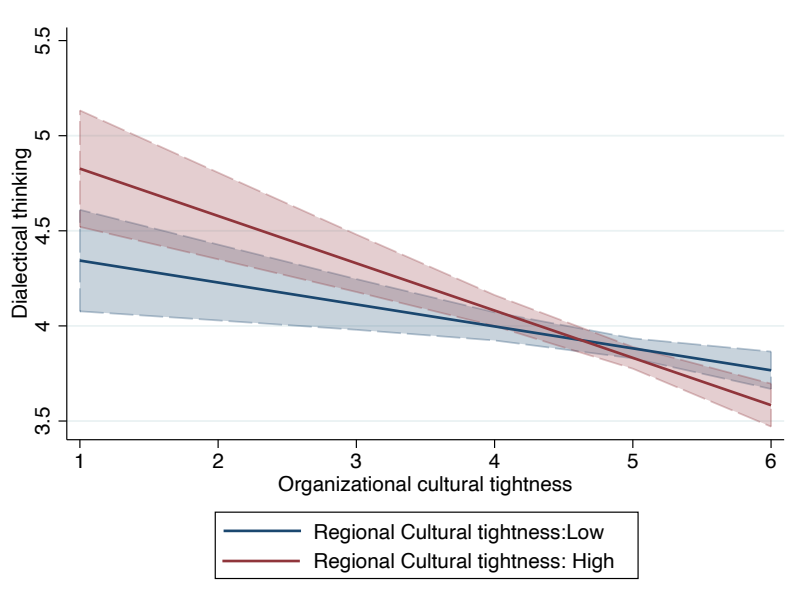


Figure 7.2

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Perceived

Interpersonal Harmony (Study 2)

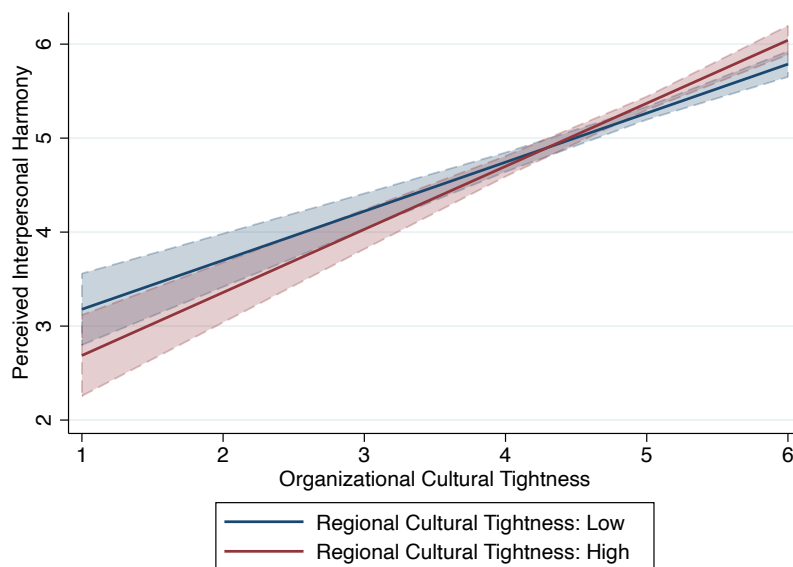


Figure 8.1

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Idea Originality

(Study 2)

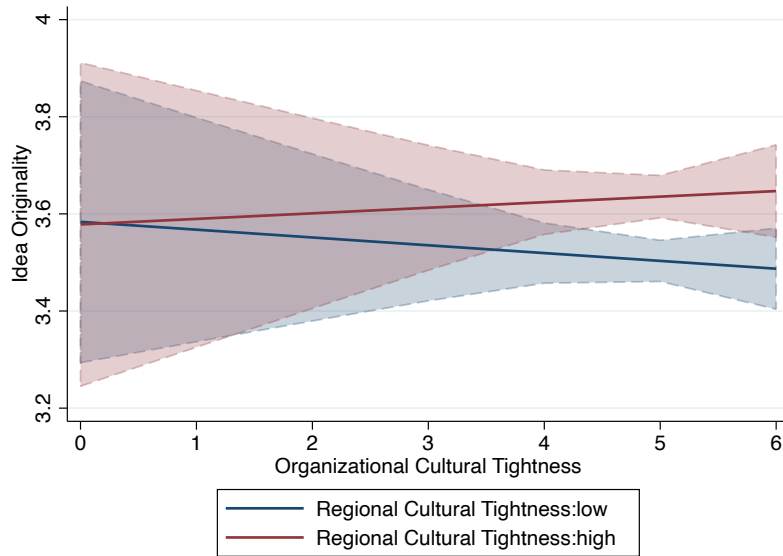


Figure 8.2

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Idea Usefulness

(Study 2)

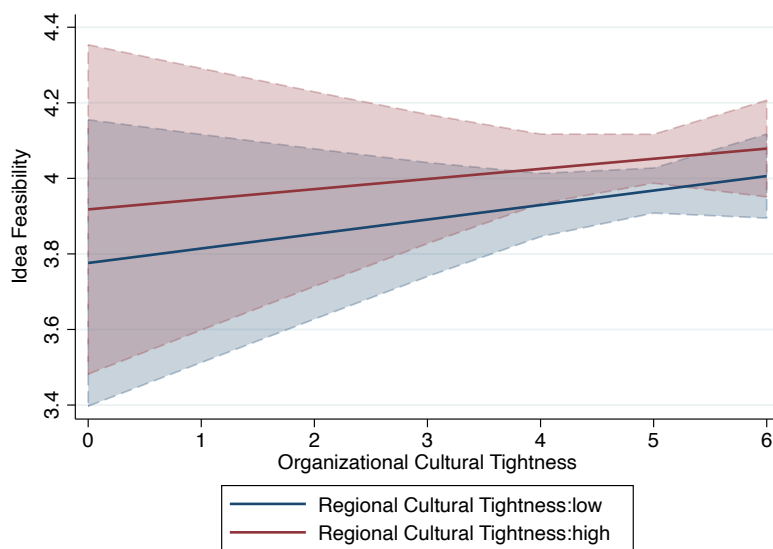


Figure 8.3

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Idea Feasibility

(Study 2)

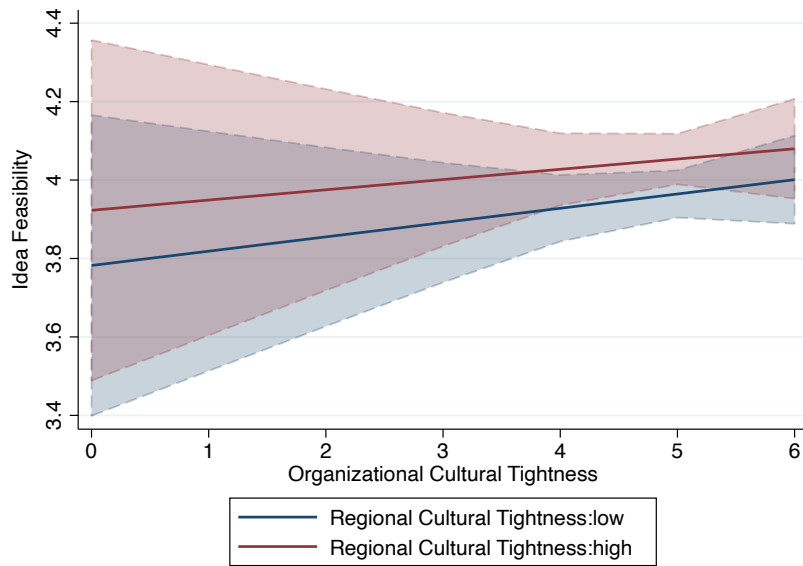


Figure 8.4

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Idea Creativity

(Mean) (Study 2)

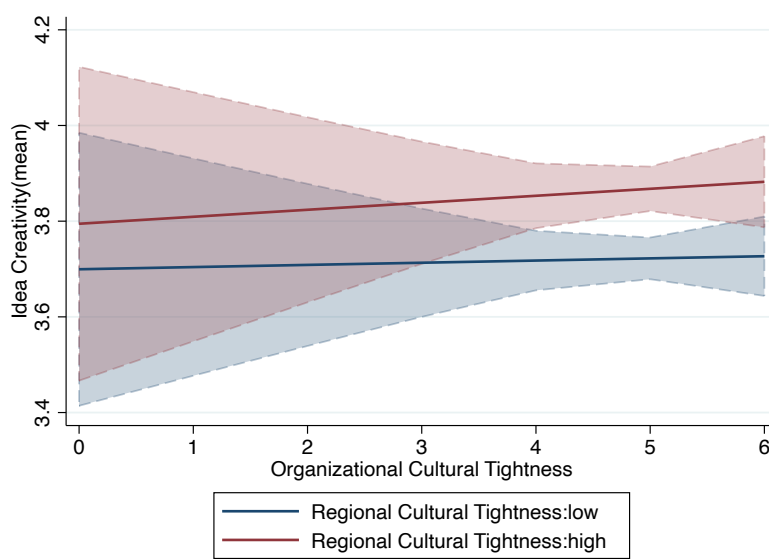


Figure 8.5

Interactive effects of Regional and Organizational Cultural tightness on Idea Creativity

*(Ori*Use) (Study 2)*

