TEAM CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION: PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Karomat Klicheva [1] & Gavkhar Klicheva [2]
[1]Doctor of Pedagogy, Professor Department of General Education, Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Uzbekistan
[2]Undergraduate Student, Psychology Department, Korea University
klichevagavkhar@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Innovation and creativity in the workplace have become increasingly important determinants of organizational performance, success, and longer-term survival. Yet, creativity and innovation are complex, multi-level, and emergent phenomena that pan out over time, and that require skillful leadership in order to maximize the benefits of new and improved ways of working. Creativity and innovation at work are the process, outcomes, and products of attempts to develop and introduce new and improved ways of doing things. The creativity stage of this process refers to idea generation, and innovation to the subsequent stage of implementing ideas toward better procedures, practices, or products. Creativity and innovation can occur at the level of the individual, work team, organization, or at more than one of these levels combined, but will invariably result in identifiable benefits at one or more of these levels-of-analysis. Therefore, this article will analyze psychosocial factors influencing the team creativity, and discover ideas and solutions contributing to the business development.

Keywords: Team innovation, team creativity, psychosocial factors, social influence, vision, organizational behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Innovation is highlighted as a core competence for organizations to enhance effectiveness in greatly changing and challenging environments (Bledow, Frese, Anderson, Erez, & Farr, 2009). Despite the significance of innovation, one question has received relatively less attention than others. This is how teams in organizations can facilitate innovation. An innovation is generally originated and developed by a team. Team creativity is a major contributor to innovational processes in organizations. For teams to be innovative, team members need to generate various ideas and implement them appropriately. In the US there is an increasing focus on the role of creativity (the generation of novel products) and innovation (the implementation of novel ideas or processes) on maintaining the viability of the economy and its competitiveness relative to other major powers. Corporations increasingly emphasize the need for creativity and innovation in their organization and their processes (Zhou & Shalley, 2007), as do government agencies, including the military (Isaacson, Layne, & Arquilla, 1999).

Innovation is a nonlinear process that may be in line with the stages of innovation initiation and implementation. Thus, creative thinking of the employees occurs as part of the innovation process. In the research context of this particular study, this takes place at the individual level, with the implementation of novel ideas taking place at the team level. Such setting is also supported by previous research (Amabile, 1996), yet it should not be understood as the only way to practice or examine creativity and innovation, as explained in the introduction. Best creative ideas by the employees are selected and are consequently more likely to be

implemented. This, however, takes place through selection and socialization processes, where idea champions need some political abilities to 'sell' their ideas to other team members.

Motivational process

Motivation is one of the key elements of our model. It was also a major focus of the first comprehensive analysis of the social context of creativity. Our own perspective is that task focus is the key (Paulus & Brown, 2007; see also Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). For individuals to be effective on any task, they need to be focused on the task and its successful completion. This may require a high degree of motivation, since the task may be difficult and there may be frustrations or failures along the way. Intrinsic motivation or interest in the task may wane unless there are some external reasons to persist (e.g., social pressure, monetary gain, hope of eventual success). The extrinsic factors may lead to persistence until some degree of success is achieved. This may rekindle the intrinsic motivation to work on this particular task. Therefore, to the extent that external factors/reward systems take attention away from the creative task, they harm creativity; to the extent that they increase motivation to focus on the creative task, they facilitate creativity.

A similar multi-faceted approached is implied by perspectives in scientific, organizational, and culture creativity. In each case, scholars often cite the importance of freedom, support for creativity, exposure to diverse perspectives, but they also note the importance of external rewards and external challenges such as competition and time pressure. This sets up an interesting contradiction. Much of the emphasis suggests the importance of freedom and a supportive environment due to the assumption that fear of negative evaluation inhibits individuals' ability and motivation to be creative (Baas, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2007). This fits nicely with our US cultural bias in rearing children in psychologically safe environments carefully designed to develop and maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy. Yet the irony is that growing up in hard and traumatic times is related to creative genius, and others have emphasized that ''necessity is the mother of invention.''

Social influences

Diversity. One of the most known strategy to increase exposure to diverse perspectives is to assign the creative tasks to teams of diverse individuals. However, Mannix and Neale (2005) conclude that diversity on surface-level characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, and age) can have negative effects on group processes, leading diverse groups to be less cohesive, have higher turnover rates and lower levels of commitment, and experience more relational conflict than more homogenous groups. According to social categorization theory and social identity theory salient differences among group members will lead group members to view themselves and others in terms of relevant stereotypes; in-group favoritism can cause friction between the sub-groups, diminishing the perception of a psychologically safe environment and increasing relationship conflict.

Conflict. Another strategy to increase exposure to diverse perspectives might be to encourage one or two people in the group to disagree with the others. To the extent that minority dissent leads group members to seriously consider the minority's point of view, encouraging extended focus on task-relevant information and exposure to diverse perspectives, minority dissent should improve group creativity

Vision. "Vision is an idea of a valued outcome, which represents a higher order goal and motivating force at work". If vision is high, team and organizational goals are clear to team members; goals are perceived as attainable and team members feel committed to them (Hülsheger et al., 2009). In congruence with goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), teams with clearly defined objectives are more likely to develop new goal- appropriate methods

of working since their efforts have focus and direction. Therefore, we expect that teams with high vision will be more likely to implement their creative ideas than teams with vague and abstract vision, which might find it difficult to develop the practical steps for implementing their creative ideas.

Participative safety. Participative safety has two components: One is participation in decision making and the other is intrateam safety, meaning a nonthreatening psychological atmosphere in the team, replete with trust and mutual support. This aspect is closely linked to the concept of psychological safety.

Task orientation. Task orientation means team members sharing concern for achieving a good standard of performance. It encompasses excellence of task performance, characterized by evaluations, modifications, control systems, and critical appraisals. These norms do not relate specifically to innovation but reflect a more general concern with excellence (Anderson & West, 1998). With a high level of team task orientation, the team's members are willing to work harder and are more likely to overcome obstacles during the implementation process in order to transform the creative ideas into sizable improvements in products and processes. But if team members lack a shared concern with excellence, team creativity is less likely to be translated into tangible innovative outcomes.

Support for innovation. Support for innovation means the expectation, approval, and practical support for attempts to introduce new and improved ways of doing things in the work environment (West, 1990). Support for innovation varies across teams to the extent that it is both articulated, by personnel documents, policy statements, or word of mouth, and enacted, by active promotion of innovative behavior such as sufficient time for producing novel work in the domain or availability of training. Aside from the obvious practical support required to implement new products or methods, perceptions of the adequacy of resources may affect teammates psychologically by leading to beliefs about the intrinsic value of the projects they have undertaken, which in turn enhance their willingness to dedicate time, share resources, and cooperate in implementing their creative ideas (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008). In contrast, if teams lack support for innovation, team creativity is less likely to be translated into tangible innovative outcomes.

Also, the relationship between the existence of an atmosphere of psychological safety in the workplace and employees' willingness to produce new ideas has been confirmed several times. For instance, (Ghosh, 2015) examined the relationship between organizational creativity climate and creativity. His findings revealed that organizational creativity climate had positive significant impact on both individual employee creativity and workplace innovative orientation. Finally, it has been found that the level of open team communication about new ideas will positively affect the team creativity and that there is correlation between interpersonal relationships in the workplace and individual creativity.

The wide use of teams for creative tasks is based on the notion that they bring a wider pool of perspectives and knowledge to the table. This diversity of perspectives forms a resource from which teams are expected to benefit on creative tasks. Differences in perspectives are a common part of many diversity attributes usually classified as job-related (e.g., functional diversity), but recent theorizing stresses that underlying differences in task-relevant perspectives are not a function of the diversity attribute alone but arise from the combination of this attribute with a given task (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In line with this argument, some studies indicate the task-relevance of surface-level attributes, and a recent meta-analysis finds a positive effect of relations-oriented diversity (e.g., gender, ethnicity) on the performance of teams in service industries (Joshi & Roh, 2009). Regardless of their specific source in a given situation, diverse perspectives reflect qualitative differences that equip teams

with a broader range of approaches to the task. Thus, they are best conceptualized as diversity in the sense of variety that reaches its maximum when every member has a different perspective and is minimal when all members share a perspective

Creativity as a cognitive style. A major advance in research looking at creativity and innovation at the individual level was the implication that creativity, rather than being a personality trait, or even a cognitive characteristic, may be viewed as a style. Relationships have been established between personality type and cognitive style (Isaksen, Lauer & Wilson, 2003), suggesting that this classification is not mutually exclusive. Cognitive style can be seen as one individual difference variable that may contribute to the concept of personality, and may be described as the manner in which individuals prefer to perform mental actions. Creative style breaks away from identifying ability, level or degree of creativity. Creative level refers to how much creativity an individual possesses or how well one uses creative capacity (Isaksen, 2004). By contrast, creative style refers to how people prefer to use their creativity with the emphasis being placed on modality, preference, propensity, manner or form.

Kirton (1976) first argued that individuals differ along a continuum in their preferences for styles of creativity, decision making and problem solving (Goldsmith, 1994). The contention of this theory is that everyone can be located on a continuum ranging from an ability to 'do things better' to an ability to 'do things differently', and each end of the continuum is labelled adaptive and innovative respectively (Kirton, 1976). The theory distinguishes between level and style of creativity and views creativity as a generalised attribute of every human being

CONCLUSION

Organizational creativity means "the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure, or process by individuals working together in a complex social system". World recognized author Teresa Amabile (1997) defines creativity as "the production of novel, appropriate ideas in any realm of human activity, from science, to the arts, to education, to business, to everyday life". The author emphasizes that these ideas must be novel i.e. different from what's been done before and they must be appropriate to the problem or opportunity presented. Creativity is also defined as "a complex, cognitive process that involves finding and developing solutions to novel, ill-defined problems that will enhance the organization in the form of its products, services, processes, and procedures".

If the creativity is the creation of new ideas, innovation is the successful implementation of this novel, appropriate ideas. "Creativity is the seed of all innovation, and people's motivation to generate new ideas is influenced by psychological perception of innovation (creating ideas people) within the organization". Some authors perceive innovation as a kind of organisational change and in this respect it can be defined as "the process of designing changes in an organization or component of economic activity in order to create competitive advantage" (Flamholtz and Randle, 2011). The source of competitive advantage can be a product, service or process that distinguishes organisation from competitors.

Creativity does not necessarily mean innovation. There is creativity without innovation, but there is no innovation without creativity; creativity precedes innovation. Creativity means to bring new ideas; innovation means converting these ideas into a successful business. Regarding organisational culture, it is one of the most important factors affecting both creativity and innovation in organizations.

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