Key Perspectives and Mechanisms

Creativity and Innovation in Organizations

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Overview

Antecedents
- Person factors
- Social factors
- Organizational factors

Perspectives/Mechanisms
- Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation
- Efficiency-oriented and social-political perspectives
- Creative self-efficacy

Outcome
- Employee and team creativity and innovation

Staff Leadership Summit
Key perspectives and mechanisms

- **Motivation:**
  - Intrinsc/extrinsc motivation
  - Efficiency-oriented and social-political perspectives

- **Ability:**
  - Creative self-efficacy
The intrinsic motivation perspective: Amabile 1988 study

- Sample: 120 R&D scientists from over 20 different corporations
- Method: Critical incident technique
Amabile 1988 study: Findings for individual creativity

Qualities of individuals that promote creativity

1. Various personality traits (41%) including persistence, curiosity, energy and intellectual honesty

2. **Self-motivation** (40%): being self-driven, excited by the work-itself, etc.

3. Special cognitive abilities (38%): special talents in the problem solver’s particular field, general problem-solving abilities, tactics for creative thinking

4. Risk-orientation (34%)

5. Expertise in the area (33%): experiences, knowledge

6. Qualities of the group (30%)

7. Diverse experience (18%)

8. Social skills (17%)

9. Brilliance (13%): a high level of general intelligence

10. Naïveté (13%): being naive or new to the field, not biased by preconceptions of bound by old ways of doing things
Amabile 1988 study: Findings for individual creativity (cont.)

Qualities of individuals that inhibit creativity

1. **Unmotivated** (30%)
2. Unskilled (24%)
3. Inflexible (22%)
4. **Externally motivated** (14%): being motivated primarily by money, recognition, or other factors aside from the work itself, responding primarily to restrictions and goals set by others, being competitive and jealous of someone else’s success
5. Socially unskilled (7%)
Amabile 1988 study: A componential model of individual creativity

Three major components necessary for individual creativity

- **Domain relevant skills:** Factual knowledge, technical skills, and special talents in the domain in question. They constitute the individual’s “raw materials” for creativity.

- **Creativity-relevant skills:** Cognitive-perceptual style that facilitates the understanding of complexity and an ability to break mental set during problem solving.

- **Intrinsic task motivation:** A central tenet of Amabile’s componential model of creativity is that intrinsic motivation is essential for individual creativity.
Amabile 1988 study: The intrinsic motivation principle of creativity

- People will be more creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself - and not by external pressures.

- Why?

  Intrinsinc task motivation leads to a higher level of cognitive involvement (fully immersed in the task) and cognitive flexibility (a sense of playfulness) that are essential for the generation of novel ideas.
The intrinsic motivation perspective: Findings, updates, and consensus

- **Mixed findings:** In some studies, intrinsic motivation was not significantly related to creativity. Other studies also found positive effects of extrinsic motivators (such as a creativity goal, external evaluation) on creativity under some circumstances.

- **Updates:** Amabile’s recent research also modified the intrinsic motivation principle of creativity by recognizing that extrinsic motivators can also facilitate creativity in some situations.

- **Consensus:** Intrinsic task motivation is one important factor to look at but it is not the whole story.
Efficiency-oriented and social-political perspectives

- The efficiency-oriented perspective of innovation: Individuals and organizations innovate to bring performance or efficiency gains.

- The social-political perspective of innovation: Innovation has symbolic meanings. Image and legitimacy considerations also affect innovation decisions.
Efficiency-oriented perspective: The dominant perspective

- **Assumption:** Organizations adopt innovations to maximize efficiency. Employees innovate to do their work better. (Necessity is the mother of invention.)

- **Emphasis:** The technical function of innovation

- **Findings (Yuan & Woodman, 2010):** Employees are more likely to innovate if doing so helps them do better on their job.
Social-political perspective: The emerging perspective

- **Assumption**: Regardless of whether the introduction of new ideas or procedures will achieve efficiency gains, the act of engaging in innovative behaviors affects the image of the actor.

- **Emphasis**: The symbolic function of innovation

- **Findings (Yuan & Woodman, 2010)**: Expected image risks significantly inhibit employee innovation at work.
Yuan & Woodman (2010) findings: Image risks

- The fear factor: Potential image risks will constrain employee innovativeness. An employee may choose to “play it safe” and avoid “rock-the-boat” innovative behaviors in order to look socially appropriate and to prevent negative social evaluations.
Yuan & Woodman (2010) findings: Factors that reduce innovation-related image risks

- **Organization support for innovation**: an organization culture that legitimizes experimentation and explicitly values innovative activities from employees.

- **Job requirement for innovation**: represents external demand and expectations for innovativeness, which makes the job incumbent’s innovative behavior officially legitimate.
Yuan & Woodman (2010) study implications

- Extrinsic considerations such as expected performance gains and expected image risks affect employee innovation.

- Innovation has both technical and symbolic functions. Potential image risks can constrain the innovativeness of employees working on non-R&D positions and in organizations that do not have an innovative culture.
Creative self-efficacy

- **Definition:** the belief that one has the ability to produce creative outcomes.
- It is possible that individuals can perform a job to standards but lack the ability—or, just as important, perceive themselves as lacking the ability—to be creative in that job.
- **Tierney & Farmer (2002) findings:** Creative self-efficacy was significantly related to employee creativity.
Tierney & Farmer (2002) findings: Factors contributing to creative self-efficacy

- **Job self-efficacy:** an employee's view of his or her capacity to conduct the overall job
- **Supervisor support:** role modeling and verbal persuasion
- **Job complexity:** jobs that are multi-faceted, less specified, and non-routine
Key perspectives and mechanisms

- Motivation:
  - Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation
  - Efficiency-oriented and social-political perspectives (expected performance gains and expected image risks)

- Ability:
  - Creative self-efficacy