

Creativity-performance Relationship: The Moderating Role of Working Engagement and Mindfulness

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Abstract. Employee creativity is a widely studied quality in the workplace. There are accumulated findings and contrary conclusions in the creativity-performance relationship literature. This paper screens and summarizes the existing paper about the relationship between creativity and job performance. Extra ideas and further conclusions are developed. The social background highlights the significance of the research: the technology-driven economy and competitive market inspire organizations to train for creative minds and hands. Employee creativity itself is a positive predictor of job performance, while interacting with various factors related related with workforce production. Creativity mediates working engagement which boosts job performance. Also, there is a mutual promotion between creativity and mindfulness, which stimulates work performance. As a supplement, the paper discusses the specific situations where these positive factors fail to produce the expected outcome. Based on the findings, management suggestions are given to improve the transformation from creativity and job performance. Paradoxical leadership behaviors and entrepreneurial leadership embodied in high-performance working systems are introduced. This paper further identifies the key elements to achieve the potential of these methods. The conclusion is that creativity mediates working engagement and mindfulness to lean towards positive job performance when the individuals focus on the valuable points according to the real work context.

Keywords: Mindfulness, creativity, job performance.

1. Introduction

Company transformation is taking place under the new normal. The traditional development of enterprises used to be driven by factor-and-investment mode. Now its driver is gradually shifting to the innovation-talent mode. During the transformation process, creative employees will be an importance factor because the innovation of companies is fueled by creativity. Technologies can save a considerable amount of cost and bring the same blessing counterpart in profit by employing innovative alternatives in the industry chain, including production, processing and selling. The innovative climate in economy requires enterprises to engage in the revolution with creative workforce managed by methods of efficiency and novelty. To thrive in the new climate, companies are adopting new ways of working. An organization's creative workforce is closely related to its survival and thriving in the present market with dynamic competitors and globalized business boosted by the advancing technologies [1]. Another reason stems from the new style in work environment. New techniques, such as artificial intelligence and digitization, lead to dynamic work environment and agile market. The office is being transformed physically and systematically. The introduction of intelligent robots and arithmetic is likely to replace the repeated labor with high efficiency. Independent thinking and personalized ideas are therefore highlighted as a rising standard for employees.

This article examines the role of creativity in employee job performance in a general situation. The gathering and summary of the previous studies on the two qualities suggest that creativity can efficiently lead to good work performance. That is because creativity along with creative activity engagement has interrelated relationship with work performance and its several positive predictors. Creativity is linked with working performance by the mediating roles of both employee engagement and mindfulness. At the same time, employee engagement also contributes to mindfulness. Suggestions for company managers are provided according to the previous study: paradoxical leadership behaviors are one way of management to improve the likelihood of the employees being

provoked to develop experimental ideas and transform them into adventurous tryouts with rewards. Thriving at work plays the mediating role in the PLB to boost employee creativity. The high-performance work system is another way to enhance workers' creativity. A well-designed management system with the employment of entrepreneurial supervisors is hopeful to encourage the openness to innovation and novelty. However, HPWS along with the entrepreneurial leaders does not necessarily lead to a rise in employee performance and organizational progress. It is also a significant factor that whether the entrepreneurial experiments are suitable for the real context of employee personality and the project's features.

2. The Moderating Role of Creativity and Job Performance

2.1. The Linkage between Working Engagement and Work Performance

Employee creativity refers to the ability to engage in innovative thinking activities and constantly produce problem-solving and ideas. Previous studies validate that worker creativity is positively related to employee performance. Creative workforce is likely to improve their job performance because creativity is an important aspect of solving employee problems. The organizational science literature provides valid evidence to suggest that workforce creativity conduces to problem-solving, innovation and company effectiveness [2] [3]. According to the study about high-performance work system (HPWS) and creativity, employee creativity increases the chance to find solutions to challenges at work [4]. This indicates that creative workers are likely to accomplish job tasks with quality and efficiency, as well as actively take responsibilities to do extra exploration aiming at progress. The engagement in activities with creative thinking and exploration involved provides employees the tendency to produce unconventional thoughts and schemes. Worker's practice digging the other possibilities besides the usual path, taking risks to seek for opportunities to improve the existing system. In the long term, employees get to develop the creative thinking patterns, accumulate the experience to explore their way to higher gaining and more creative model and grow the fruit of their experiments and efforts. Ultimately, creative workers are hopeful to improve their job performance.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the creativity-performance relationship is interrelated, instead of automatically interacted with one another. Creativity at work can be influence by various personal and organizational variables. These factors may have contrary influence on employee performance under different circumstances and the interaction between these factors and other elements from the context, including the characteristics of the employees and the requirement and features of the projects. According to these interventions or boosters, the factors related to employee job performance can either support or hinder their outcome.

Work engagement is one positive factor that usually predicts enhanced employee performance. According to the study of Ismail et al. In 2015 [5], creativity has a mediating role between engagement and performance. When workers are more engaged, they are more likely to focus on the details in their work, which improves the quality of their work. Working engagement also serves as a mediator of the predictors of positive job performance. In the process that the working engagement stimulates job performance, job satisfaction and work motivation are two main predictors moderated by working engagement that have been widely studied and validated [6]. When individuals make commitment to work both physically and mentally, they tend to get the sense of satisfaction. The obsessive attention and efforts in actual actions can breed the fulfilled feelings. Satisfactory feelings cause strong motivations for workers to produce work of high quality. Employees will be qualified of increasing self-efficacy, driving them to practice professional skills, gather related information, generate new ideas and process the work to conform the standards. The passion and conscious focus lead to the actions that grow profits. However, engagement sometimes do not lead to necessary productive outcome of work. The information gathering and processing cannot be guaranteed to be directed to the expected goals and employee the methods suitable for the specific project in real working context. In the process of a project, the variety of choices provided by advanced technology can be potential

as well as intervention, because the efficiency of the techniques can be a lure when workers consider which methods to employ, yet the up-to-date technology does not always contribute to the wanted goals. In general, highly engaged workers are likely to gain progress in job performance.

2.2. The Interrelated Relationship between Creativity and Mindfulness

Mindfulness is another factor in the creativity-performance relationship. According to existing research, employee mindfulness itself is positively related with job performance. A relatively creative performance is achieved constantly only when workforce is driven to participate in creativity-specific processes. Such processes are referred to as creative process engagement (CPE) [5]. Creativity along with creative process engagement is significant linkage in turning mindfulness into job performance, and vice versa [7].

There are basically two kinds of definition of employee mindfulness. Employee mindfulness can refer to a positive condition where one is able to actively focus on what happens in one period of time and accept information without making immediate and attached judgement. Another way is to see mindfulness as a set of skills. The skills include concentration on various information through observation and act in response to the information with full awareness [8]. The variety of information includes the interpretation of words and contexts, stated and potential intentions, thoughts and feelings. The ability of giving description instead of subjective evaluation of others' action is also included [9].

Based on the definition from the summary of the mindfulness literature, employee mindfulness is likely to promote employee performance. Mindful employees tend to pay full attention to tasks, leading them to be efficient at work. Satisfactory results can be produced by following the superior's instructions and observing the environment. The intended observation enables individuals to identify the information as the foundation for creating unconventional alternatives and solving problems. Mindful individuals can also construct thriving team with harmonious interpersonal relationships. These workers tend to provide impersonal description on their colleagues' behavior without showing favored attachment. This helps with the communications with peer workers and adjustment to team members' work. Team members are less likely to feel offended by prejudice or unfair, and more likely to make actual progress by reviewing their true condition.

Employee creativity along with creative process engagement plays a significant role in turning mindfulness into good job performance [9]. Creative process engagement refers to the process or method of being engaged in activities involving creativity practices [10]. Regular skills required for a productive employee are indicated in creative process engagement, such as problem identification, information devising and encoding and idea creating [10]. The existing creativity literature suggests that employee creativity serves as a linkage between mindfulness and performance, because creative capacity can be promoted by mindfulness. Several reasons support this interrelated correlation. Firstly, mindfulness is comprised of different components, and the qualities defined in creative process engagement and mindfulness can be related. A mindful worker can observe and attend to various stimuli and focus on the applicable information with awareness. The multiple dimensions of the definition of mindfulness includes several skills and activities that can be identified to have connections with other predictors. Specifically, the overlapping between the items involved in the two constructs indicates that creativity is linked with mindfulness. Mindful individuals are sharp-minded to detect the determinants, key elements and potential risks and opportunities of a project, which can also be promoted by creative process engagement. This is because CPE develops the intention to dig new possibilities behind the known facts, which is built on the basic information identification. Therefore, CPE encourages individuals to be sensitive to the available information, filter the trivial distraction and transform their thoughts into feasible schemes polished by information-based innovative ideas. Secondly, mindfulness in turn encourages creativity as well. Mindful mind provides the motivations to engage in creative process actively by self-regulating in specific contexts. In the encounter of challenging situations, mindful workers tend to sustain a dispassionate statement in mind and make passionate devotion in actions. A concentrated mind tends

to shield the stressors that distract attention and energy, and probe the solution in exploration, which is contributed by creative process engagement. Therefore, mindful employees are likely to participate in CPE and develop creativity.

2.3. The Mechanism of the Mindfulness-creativity Transformation

Mindfulness is one efficient predictor of employee creativity because workers will be motivated when they practice the mindful skills. The motivation comes from mindfulness. Motivated information processing (MIP) theory from indicates that behaviors with information processing included are influenced by individual motivations [11]. Information processing is also one major activity in mindfulness practices. Some studies suggest that the creative process of information gathering and integrating is driven by individual motivations to be carried out in a focused, impartial, persistent way. Furthermore, mindful workers will be driven to participate in CPE with both epistemic and social initiatives [12]. Epistemic motivation refers to the individual initiatives to comprehend their social circumstances [12]. There are massive social interactions in complex social scenarios and conversations, with different manners, goals, conversation partners and ways of interaction. To understand these socializing-related items in one's world is an intricate cognitive activity and therefore requires cognitive drivers. Epistemic motivation describes the degree of one individual's yearning for the effort-taking processing of social information [12]. Epistemic motivation leads workers to construct daily working routines in integrated ways and to generate reasonable output from their social interactions. Social motivation refers to the urge and awareness to recognize the quality of relationships [12]. Organizations are composed to groups of stuff focusing on similar goals and working together in interactive, social and productive manners. Tasks, assignments and projects included in work require a considerable amount of effort that can be stimulated by social forces. The social motivation includes social forces for multiple dimensions of interpersonal engagement at work, such as competitions, prosocial interactions and collaboration. Social motivations can lead workers to sharp their creativity through status striving, impulses for success, the handling of social proximity, the desire to benefit others and construct productive connections with colleagues, and other social items.

The mechanism in the process of how mindfulness motivates employee creativity is illustrated by relational information processing (RIP) and team member exchange (TMX), which are separately asserted by epistemic and social motivations [12]. Mindfulness is likely to promote both RIP and TMX, which further boost employee creativity. RIP indicates that if employees take a review on their goals and behaviors when they interact with others, they can acknowledge the social environment with information required in their work and be directed to deal with the information contributing to these goals [13]. When employees are epistemically motivated to be aware of their targets and tendency in social activities at work, they can be directed to seek, classify and apply to information. In this way, the various distractions from the irrelevant information are reduced and therefore RIM is promoted with interferential items taken away. Workers will be more focused on the items available for jobs and tasks and yield productive outcomes in CPE.

TMX means that employees can construct connections with their partners at the same level in the organization. These connections are embodied by trust, willingness to support one another, the openness to demanding jobs and other qualities of productive employee relationships [12]. When employees are socially motivated by mindfulness, they tend to regulate their emotions and capture the mental state of their colleagues in a detached way. In this way, mindful workers are impelled to practice TMX. This means workers exchange information in emotionally-echoing, respectful and psychologically safe manners with team member. Mutual understanding and trust is put into the team member interactions, which leads workers to help one another on tasks and further learn from coworkers.

3. Suggestions for Enterprises to Improve Employee Creativity

3.1. Paradoxical Leadership Behaviors

Some established studies develop the theory based on self-determination perspectives that paradoxical leader behavior (PLB) has positive effects on employee creativity via the mediating effect of thriving at work [14]. Specifically, the positive correlation between thriving at work and creativity will be strengthened when employees are provided with working environment where they feel psychologically safe, such as supported and trusted, at a high level [15].

PLB is characteristic of restraints and freedom. When organizations carry out PLB, supervisors lead and empower subordinates by giving them rights, opportunities and responsibilities to participate in making decisions and performing automatically [15]. PLB therefore creates controlled chaos in the working environment. In comparison with full sharing of power and freedom, the optimally restrained power contribution in PLB enables workers to make use of their potential creativity provoked by the properly expanded autonomy. Conflicts caused by unclear work distribution and managerial duty scopes. Self-determination perspectives represent the mechanism of how PLB's deliberate chaos enhance supervisor-subordinate creativity by making employees thrive at work. Individuals have the intricate needs for freedom, rights of management and interpersonal relationships of high quality. These intrinsic needs can be assorted into three main elements: autonomy, competence and interpersonal needs [16]. PLB provides support for workers' psychological safety, meaning these needs related to self-determination are fulfilled. Therefore, workers tend to establish an automatic and strong motivation, which impels them to perform in a way toward their thriving at career. In this way, individuals tend to thrive at work, meaning that they are vigorous and positive to learn. Employees will be passionate and energetic at tasks, and able to constant acquire knowledge and skills to improve their abilities.

Based on the PLB theory, cooperatives can carry out specific organizational methods to encourage employee creativity. When it comes to dealing with a project, rules can be set for the team members to be put randomly into small groups and form a weekly meeting to catch up with what have been collected and analyzed for a small period. This provides opportunities for members to learn from each other and build social connections with partners. A distribution of duty and work with layers of empowerment can be set up as well. The major manager can distribute the overall leadership to each group leader. Each group leader is responsible for the weekly report combined of all members' information gathering and absorbing. The major manager can be set responsible for the monthly meeting to review the general progress of the group combined of the group leaders' summary.

3.2. Entrepreneurial Leadership in an Appropriate Way

According to a substantial amount of study on the relationship between the leadership and employee performance, entrepreneurial leadership can possibly strengthen employee performance when employee creativity and high-performance work system (HPWS) are embodied [17]. Additionally, both entrepreneurial leadership style and high-performance work system are positively related to employee creativity. A well-organized work system applied in tasks as well as the entrepreneurial quality of leaders motivate workers to perform well. Entrepreneurial leadership serves as a moderating role in the employee creativity-performance transformation. Specifically, previous study indicates that HPWS and entrepreneurial leadership are two factors with possibly contradictory influence on employee performance [18]. The creativity-system entrepreneurial leadership style should be designed to be suitable for the real-life contexts in specific cases.

HPWS is a system to decide the functions of departments in a company's HR system, which aims at the maximized the effectiveness of the organization's sections and employees. HPWS is a kind of human resource management designed to inspire individuals' creativity and working effectiveness [Huskin]. When cooperatives develop their operating models, the implementation of entrepreneurial supervisor hiring should be taken into consideration. A manager with entrepreneurial spirits is proactive, creative and responsible for the company. Specifically, such kind of leaders tend to risk

innovative plans and movements that is new and potentially damaging when failure happens. Accordingly, if the entrepreneurial supervisor manages to create the experimental schemes functional in the case, the subordinates are likely to be combined to be increasingly creative and efficient, and vice versa.

The key to make the entrepreneurial leadership combined with HPWS work is to guide the innovations made by managers and employees in the direction of the final expected products. The employee personality is one vital factor. When the manager is distributing jobs and grouping up employees in an experimental manner, employees' features and specialties should be taken into consideration. Individuals with introverted personalities and relatively low openness to new experience can be matched with those extroverted to express their ideas and daring to take risks when handling missions. Such combination of personality improves the likelihood to grow a fruit of the creativity put in work, because an expanded variety of elements are seen and thought of by individuals with different views and thinking model.

4. Conclusion

Employee creativity has direct and indirect impacts on job performance. Creativity is practiced in creative process engagement, which boosts idea-generating problem-solving and other abilities useful for growing organizational profits. Meanwhile, creativity plays a moderating role on working engagement and mindfulness. These two factors are positively related to work performance as well. Specifically, the correlation between creativity and mindfulness are interactive. Mindfulness refers to a series of skills and state of mind advantageous in professional occasions, including focus with awareness, information gathering, self-regulating and indifferent judgement. The items involved in the two constructs have overlapping and the mutual influence on each other. Mindfulness enables individuals to observe efficiently with accessible information gathered and interventions filtered, which provides the foundation of creation and innovation. The mechanism of creativity's moderation comes from the epistemic and social motivation on relational information processing and team member exchange. However, potential risks make these positive predictors do not always lead to usual fruitful outcomes. The focus of attention, awareness and efforts may be disoriented from the wanted goals in the specific working tasks, causing the innovation and payout to generate unsatisfactory result. The employment of paradoxical leadership behaviors (PLB) and entrepreneurial leaderships involved in high-performance working system (HPWS) is likely to improve the creativity-performance relationship. PLB empowers subordinates' suitable freedom and rights to engage them into responsibility-taking, outlining, decision-making and other management duties. A well-designed working system with entrepreneurial leaders can lead the team to take experiments to generate novel methods and solutions and be open to new experiences and progress. The key to make the two methods work is to control the limits and inspiring chaos by considering the characters of employees and the features of the project should be taken into consideration.

The future study can aim at the mediators between creativity and mindfulness and how they interact with the predictor and outcome. The contradictory conclusions about the PLB and entrepreneurial leadership from separate studies can be deeply studied as well. The professions and the category of the organizations can be the new focus, because different occupations have various kinds of requirement in employment and training and different conventions in management and models. Creativity, mindfulness and other factors will influence separate aspects for these jobs and companies.

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