

Course Name: Organizational Behaviour: Individual Dynamics in Organization

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Week – 10

Lecture – 01

Lecture 46: Understanding Creativity

Hello students. Welcome back to the course on Organizational Behavior, Individual Dynamics in Organization. Today we will move to module 10 where we look into one of the most interesting aspects throughout this course which is creativity. Creativity, psychological capital and a little bit about mindfulness.

So, we start with today's lecture on understanding creativity.

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So, today's theme would be, “team composition, member behaviors, collective affective states and task experience impacts creativity.” So, when we are trying to understand creativity, we have to first acknowledge the fact that creativity does not depend on one single factor.

Creativity is an outcome of a lot of factors and we are making an attempt to understand those factors. So on that note we will start with what we have today in terms of our discussion.

What is creativity? Take a moment and think what is creativity.

In 1953, the Journal of Psychology, the article by an American psychologist named Morris Tain defined creative work as a novel work that is accepted as tenable or useful or satisfying by a group in some point in time. So, it is not the regular solution or the regular idea. It is an idea that has come up with a sort of an intuition, a sort of a bit of experience into it, a lot of other factors which has triggered that person to bring out that idea or elicit that idea. Based on that idea if some application could be made out of it, whether it could be useful in the organization for that particular activity or if that idea is going a lot ahead and giving you a different product altogether or different scheme of service altogether, then it is nothing but creativity.

So, when we look into creativity, the first understanding that should come our way is that it is basically an idea that needs to be useful, tenable for the organization. See you can generate a number of ideas. You have the potential to give a lot of solutions to a lot of problems.

You have capability to maybe design altogether a different let us say product or service. That said if that is not useful for your organization, if that is not tenable or let us say making use of that is virtually impossible, then it does not amount to creativity. Creativity should have some purpose. You can obviously tag yourself as creativity but there is some result orientation that you have to associate. That is the basic understanding you should have with respect to creativity because we are living in a result-oriented purpose driven world.

So let us look into the creativity definition in detail because we have used a term novel. So, when we are using that let us understand why we have used it and what are the ramifications of using that. So, when we look into the previous definition particularly as I have already mentioned, there is a usage of novel. The creative product did not exist previously. That is the premise with which we are starting the whole discussion in precisely the same form.

So, if there was a product that was there in some other form like rudimentary product or let us say version one of that particular product, we can bring in a different product. Case in point could be any car models. We are living in a world of facelifts. We are living in a world of new innovative designs that are being improvised on the previous ones. If the creative product did not exist that is the first class previously in precisely the same form then we can say that that is novel.

It can be also understood when it is said that it arises from a reintegration of already existing materials or knowledge. Please note that these are already existing. There is nothing new that is coming in but there is increased reintegration of these materials or knowledge but when it is completed it contains elements that are new. So essentially it is not the old wine in the new bottle rather it is like you may have the usage of or you may use some existing materials or knowledge no doubt about it but what you are essentially bringing out as a product is something which is brand new. This is the understanding when you are using the word novel in the definition.

It can be also understood by the fact that you are actually making it a case of the creativity. So let us look into creativity what does it involve. So, creativity involves the skill rather than the gift of bringing about something new and valuable. So, when you are looking into certainly creativity, newness is something which is very critical. So, in the

previous discussion I have already mentioned that you may use some of the existing resources some of the old resources if I can use the word there but essentially the product that is coming out or the service that is coming out or whatever is the outcome that is coming out that should have a tag of newness associated with that.

That is why I took some time in explaining the importance of being novel. So, newness is described as originality, statistical infrequent, a change from tradition. You are not looking into something which is sacrosanct and it is there as a tradition we are completely looking at something which is new, which is modern, which is something which can be which has never been observed previously, renovated, rejuvenated or regenerated past ideas and the unique personal expression. Now this is wonderful when you look into or this should be understood when you are actually looking into examples of let us say design in automotive industry. When you are looking into the competition, the fight that is going on in the automotive industry you will see that most of the Indian consumers now they look into the customers they go in for SUV type of model.

So, when you are looking into that particular field or that particular area you will see that lot of players are brought in a lot of different models and different variants of those models. Now when you are looking into those models let us take an example in this case we have let us say the players like Hyundai, Kia, Honda, even the Suzuki, Toyota everybody is coming and playing in that particular segment because that is the prime segment which the Indian customers like they have understood that.

So, when you are looking into an established setup it is difficult to sell your products because there are lot of options you do not have anything close to a monopoly you have to work hard your marketing strategy should be on dot it should be too precise and it should not be that the case that you are just selling you know the same wine in a new bottle that should not be the case. So, this is where you see a lot of creativity is happening sometimes, they change with respect to the power train, sometimes they change with respect to the transmission, sometimes a minor design change can lead that model all the way along, sometimes the features that are provided, sometimes aggressive pricing. So all these aspects have to be understood that how people or how companies are trying to capture or trying to make the market share increased or having a higher you know say in their market.

So this is what the creativity can be seen observed directly in the Indian automotive industry. So, when we look into creativity in particular understanding it is always better and that is the theme of our course even. We fall back to empirical research we have to understand what research says about workplace creativity. Now based on sound empirical research we can obviously say that creativity is widely seen as a driver of innovation undoubtedly growth and societal development. So these are the three aspects which

creativity is totally connected to or intertwined with.

Creativity is seen as vital for organizations to thrive in constantly changing environments. Now this is something which is making the whole definition or understanding of creativity all the more critical because we are living in a world which is constantly changing, the environment is constantly changing and coping with unforeseen challenges, developing new capabilities have to be there so that we adjust, we adapt to the constantly changing environment. So, creativity and innovation when we look into that these are two distinct words. We should understand that many a time we tend to use or we see that the literature or specifically the media uses creativity and innovation in a very very interchangeable manner which is categorically wrong. They are distinct concepts but they reserve both of them reserve a central role for creativity in providing the core ideas that may ultimately lead to innovation.

So creativity should be understood as a precursor as an antecedent to what we know as innovation and help overcome the challenges arising during the implementation of the entire process. So, this is what should be the primary understanding of creativity and this should also be the primary understanding of what innovation is specifically. So accordingly, research specifically on workplace creativity may offer valuable insights into how to promote workplace creativity thus increasing the chance of achieving innovative outcome.

So, what we understand basically is that creativity refers to the ability to come up with original ideas while innovation is all about implementation. Innovation is all about implementing those ideas to create value.

It can also involve improving something that already exists. Now that improvisation again I am repeating it should not be an old product, should not be an existing product or should not be an existing version. It should be a facelift, it should be a new version, it should be an upgrade over the previous essentially, it should be a new product, it should be a new entity or it should be a new service whatever you are under consideration. So, this is what the research on workplace creativity is. If you look into the field of organizational behaviour management specifically creativity is used to define an outcome.

Basically you see that creativity is an idea generation process. This is what the understanding we are having till now. When you are specifically looking to the role of creativity in OBM you will understand that it is more of an outcome, it is understood or at least deciphered more as an outcome that is products, it could be services, it could be business models, even work methods or management processes that are novel and useful. So, this is the basic shift in understanding of what creativity is when it comes to its

understanding in the discipline of OB or OBM specifically. So this emphasis on creativity as an outcome rather than just as an idea generation process instead of the mental process through which we generate or create ideas as I have mentioned ultimately emerges or allows creativity to be quantified with relative ease and consensus.

So why we do it, why we take creativity or why we try to assume creativity as a precursor as more of an outcome in a process it is mainly because we need to measure it. So, when we are looking into a science basically if you recall my earliest lecture 1, lecture 2 in module 1 I have emphasized on the importance and relevance of scientific temper in actually defining OBM. So more than intuition we are actually following a systematic method when it comes to the research in OB and HR specifically. For that we need to understand the concept and if we need to understand the concept there is no better way than to understand how to measure it. For measuring it or to increase the ease to measure that we generally come out with something which is more of an assumption that creativity happens to be an outcome. So this is the convenience which we are making in actually understanding creativity in the field of OBM, in the realm of OBM.

So, when you look into workplace creativity specifically, creativity may be the outcome of individuals or teams regardless of their functional areas and positions in the organizational hierarchy. So, it does not restrict you if you are down the hierarchy, if you are not in a part of a decision-making body it will not prevent you from being creative. This is the fundamental understanding; this is the passion that should drive you. If you are creative, if there is creative potentiality is resting within you, you cannot blame the organizational hierarchy, you cannot blame the position you are in moreover you cannot blame any other extrinsic or extraneous variables that those variables are going to affect the creativity, no. Rather than it is more of individual intrinsic motivation, intrinsic factors, internal factors that drive creativity which is exclusive of the organizational hierarchy. When you are looking into creativity it is nothing but the first and the crucial stage of innovation but predictors of ideas and implementation are likely to differ. There is no doubt about it but we should understand and acknowledge the fact that creativity happens to be the first and the crucial stage of innovation.

Now is creativity an individual characteristic only? This is where we need to have a detailed understanding is creativity an individual characteristic only. When we look into organization specific dynamics, when we look into people who are actually interacting in organization interpersonal relationships or may be the team formation, the cohesion within the organization all these factors have a significant impact on what is known as creativity. So let us understand is creativity an individual characteristic only whether person X and person Y both individuals in the same organization, same organizational set up may be in the same positions of hierarchy having the same workers, co-workers being in the same team but still their performance in terms of creativity or the creativity

potential varies and they are able to deliver it in a different way whereby maybe Y is excelling in his or her performance than X possibly it could be. So essentially let us understand whether it is an actual individual characteristic only.

When we look into the ongoing debates to answer this particular question creativity at workplace studies are broadly separated on the basis of whether they focus on the actor or specifically the individual or the context as the major driving force of creativity. So, this is the basic understanding with which we go ahead. When we are looking into, when we are actually observing creativity as an individual outcome let us look into an actor centered accounts of workplace creativity.

Effects of individual's personality characteristics on creativity is emphasized let us say it could be based on your proactive personality, creative self-efficacy, individual differentiation from teammates in terms of maybe thinking of feeling, positive affect or even optimism and hope. So, these are certain factors which clearly tell you the story that there are certain individual personality characteristics that have an impact on the creative potential of an individual. But contradicting studies have also found that apart from openness if we are actually looking into the big five aspect apart from openness to experience none of the big five personality factors directly affect creativity. So, this is a bit of confusion that there are majority of studies which actually underscore the relevance of individual's personality. But let us understand this rather than creating a confusion let us understand this in this way.

Personality characteristics there are some aspects, some elements like creative self-efficacy, some elements like positive affect, optimism, hope these are some of the not essentially the traits, these are not essentially the personality elements rather than these are some of the factors that are observed within the personality. Those factors have a clear affinity or connect or maybe an influence over the creative potential of an individual. That said when we are looking into, when we are trying to actually make, assume or give our correlations with respect to the different traits of personality we should understand that apart from openness along the entire big five traits there is no other trait which actually correlates to the creative potential essentially making it an individual characteristics.

So basically when we look into context-centered accounts of workplace creativity, employee creativity varies as a function of the characteristics of the task at work. So, task characteristic gets mentioned here, employee creativity to a certain extent depends on let us look into a mundane let us say a day-to-day task. There is no need for any creativity, there is no need to improvise or anything on that, there is no actual need to bring something out of an existing task. So it happens in such a way that task characteristics how complex they are, how uncertain they are that becomes a determining factor when it

comes to the employee creativity. When we look into job control and routinization both are positively related to self-reported creativity and we can also find a curvilinear relationship between time pressure and creativity. So, with those employees working under we have to be very clear with this understanding from the study moderate degrees of time pressure. I will share the references in the last slide, the study is not looking into very high time pressure rather moderate degrees of time pressure reports the highest levels of creativity.

So actors social environment promotes creativity that is also a clear understanding we have. So when we are looking into creativity whether to settle the debate that it is individualistic or it is more of a context driven let us take this point a little bit further.

When we are looking into individualistic aspect I have already mentioned that there are certain personality factors that may have or the studies might have, the researchers might have observed some connect with those factors that is said there is actually no correlation between traits of personality and creativity as such except openness. But when we look into the context specifically, we see that the social element, the task characteristics, the time pressure all these are relevant factors so there is a significant impact of the context on the creative potential of an individual. So please I just want you to remind of my introductory video in which I had categorically said that any OB course should actually delve into the context also because context gives more clarity to the behaviour under consideration. So this is what we are doing now, this is where we see that there can be a different understanding when context is at play. So, when you are looking into creativity we have to essentially understand it in this way that it is not an individual characteristic per say but there are some effects or some impacts of certain social elements, certain characteristics of the task you are related to, certain organizational dynamics, organizational elements that also triggers, that also impacts or influences your creativity.

Now when we look into the dyadic relationship or the team outcome when we are actually going through the studies how team compositions or member behaviours, collective, effective states, task experiences they all have or they are all connected to relativity and this is where I come to the theme of this lecture. Creativity is not a simple concept, there are lot of factors which I have already mentioned that have a significant impact on creativity. So if you see that a person is creative by the innate nature it is because of his genes that he is creative it will be a wrong assumption to start with.

There are lot of factors within the organization that actually can bring out, can elicit your creativity and also there are factors within your organization that can actually create or make or generate or evolve as a barrier to your creative potential or to your creative let us say measures or attempts. So, this is the understanding you should have when it comes to the creativity at workplace.

Groups composed of members high in dispositional need for closure were less creative than were groups with low member need for closure. Also, teams reporting shared goals, participative decision making, a supportive climate member socializing and longer organizational tenure of team members also engaged in the creative process to a high degree. Now that said we do not again undermine the impact of task, task structures, creativity requirements and organizational climate. These factors have an effect on the team creativity when you look into the context centered accounts of workplace creativity.

By contrasting different task structures it was found that allowing team members to tackle an idea generation task individually, I repeat individually first before engaging in collective ideation let teams to generate thorough purely group-based ideation. So, when you are looking into first before engaging in collective ideation let teams to generate ideas of higher quality than those generated through purely group-based ideation. So, this is the understanding we should have when creativity is dissected as a dyadic or team outcome.

Now let's look into creativity as an individual outcome, interactions between actor and the context specifically.

Wang and Chen 2010 showed that the positive effects of benevolent leadership on follower creativity in Taiwan depended on the follower considering creativity and important part of role identity. So, if you are being recruited on to a creative post you have a certain level of role identity, you have already made yourself distinct, you have already made yourself identified with respect to the role and when there is role clarity and when there is role identity you are performing in a better way in terms of the creativity. So, this is what Wang and Chen 2010 actually portrays. The effect of transformational leadership was most positive when both employees' identification with their leaders and organizational innovative climate were high. So, it depends on organizational innovative climate as well as the employees identification with their leaders.

So it's not cup of tea for those organizations which do not generally provide an innovative climate and it is also not the cup of tea for those employees which or whom they do not identify with their leaders. So, when identification was low the effect of transformational leadership was more positive at lower levels of innovative climate. This was what the study found out. Now creativity as a dyadic or team outcome we understand that certain leadership characteristics and styles are necessary to bring out the positive potential inherent in a team's informational resources which otherwise remain without effect. So, you are to be the person who is to make a call on a certain level of creativity to be induced in an organization you see that the role of leadership is critical. The role of leadership is vital in actually making the organization a critical organization or making the organization a creative organization considering the informational resources at play.

Now these are some of the references which I have collated here which have been linked to the different points in the slides. So, when we look into creativity the attempt was to understand a very talked about phenomena, a phenomena which generally people use misuse in actually delivering something or actually claiming something. So let us understand creativity very well. Creativity is all about idea generation no doubt about it but that said it is not a simple concept.

There are certain complex entities, there are certain complex factors that are related to creativity. It need not be your only personality characteristics, it need not be that creativity comes from innate structure or it is dependent on your genes no. There are certain factors within organization this is the relevance of OBM, this is the relevance of this class including this in the entire syllabus of OBM. There are certain factors like task uncertainty, task complexity, characteristics of different task that you are assigned to, the team dynamics, the way people are behaving, the interpersonal associations all these aspects, all these elements are vital in eliciting the creativity out of you. So it is not a simple factor, it is a complex factor and that understanding it should be the takeaway from this particular lecture.

Thank you for listening to me patiently, see you in the next class with more insights into creativity till then take care, bye bye.