

Course Name: Organizational Behaviour: Individual Dynamics in Organization

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Week – 10

Lecture – 02

Lecture 47: Stages of individual creativity

Hello students. Welcome back to the course on Organizational Behaviour, Individual Dynamics in Organization. So, we started with one of the most interesting aspects we see across organization which is creativity. Now today we will look into the different stages of individual creativity.

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So, let us look into today's theme. Creativity potential includes the persistence of trying out more ideas whereas less creative people give up sooner. So, if you want to have a clear understanding of creativity, please understand that the functional word in that would be persistence.

Persistence is what makes it critical. Persistence is what makes creativity sometimes unachievable because many a time people tend to start with great fervor, great motivation, great enthusiasm but somewhere down the line they lose the feast, they just lose the steam. They actually come back and lament that this is not a cup of tea for me.

So, on that note we will start today's lecture. Let us understand again what creativity is from a more of a social perspective.

So, when we are looking into the different attributes of creativity, the first and the foremost understanding one should have is creativity is all about development of original ideas. In the last lecture we had discussed this and if you recollect that we have clearly understood that creativity is not about bringing something old. It is all about bringing something new. Maybe it could be in your workplace, it could be with respect to the product you are designing, it could be with respect to the product you are developing, manufacturing or it could be with respect to a service you are entering, systematic upgrade of the service, all these aspects are essentially new and this the newness or the novelty is what actually makes creativity the most vital factor, the most sought after

factor or sought after quality in an organization. So when you are looking into creativity the first and the foremost understanding you should have is that it is nothing but development of original ideas.

Now when you are looking into creativity specifically you have to also understand that you are going to make a socially recognized contribution. Now sometimes there are individuals whom you feel in the organization they are very creative, they are much ahead of you, sometimes you have a personal judgment about them that they are much ahead of you or much above you in terms of creativity but seldom we see that their names appearing anywhere in terms of when it comes to the recognition part of a creative product or a creative service delivery or a creative improvisation, anything. This is mainly because there should be a clear socially recognized contribution associated when it comes to creativity. If the entire process of creativity, I have already mentioned that in OBM, organizational behavior management creativity is generally observed not as a process but it is observed more as an outcome, as a result this is the key aspect why creativity becomes essential or becomes the sought after factor in the organization.

The third factor would be we rely on creativity to find problems, identify alternatives and to implement solutions.

So when you are actually looking into creativity as just way to get famous in your organization or just to you know stand out of the crowd or make yourself pamper that you are the most creative person in the organization it does not serve the purpose. Creativity comes to significance or it becomes significant only when you identify a problem, a problem which cannot be solved by the actual traditional conventional methods you bring out a new idea, the new ideation is followed by a good implementation and that implementation essentially solves the problem. This set of process, this entire set of process will actually lead you to understand what specifically creativity is or this will qualify essentially as a creative idea or a creativity in general. So please make a note of it that you might have seen individuals, you might have personal incidences or personal experiences that these individual X or Y let us say any name in your organization he might or she might be more creative than you, you might have a personal understanding, a personal analysis but please note that if you are not able to identify a problem in the organization bring out solution to that implement that to overcome that then it is not creativity. The fourth point would be it is also an integral part of the decision-making that is about to happen.

So when you are looking into creativity in general one important aspect is that it need not be only an idea generation process it should also be an integral part of the decision making. Let us say till point number 3 you are able to bring out the solution to the peculiar problem which otherwise nobody was able to decipher or even solve or attempt

to solve. You have been the blue-eyed baby of your particular boss that you brought out the solution to that particular problem, very creative solution but if you cannot go one step ahead and if you are not in a position to actually or if that idea is not in a position to command as a or translate as a solution and convert itself as a decision within the organizational set up then there is no creativity that is happening.

So, this general understanding should be there when you are looking into, when you are studying creativity from the OBM angle. Otherwise, creativity might have a slight difference because what I have observed here is that when you are looking into OBM it is not a process merely it is more of a result orientation that takes the front side.

Now let us look into the main aspect of today's class which are the stages of creativity. So when you are looking into the stages specifically the stages of creativity as explained by the social psychologist Graham Wallace given in the 20s is relevant and used to understand creativity even till date. So that is why I am using this in addition to the first four stages given by him. A fifth stage is also important it has also found relevance in the research literature. So, when you are looking into the different stages what Graham Wallace put forward was the first one would be preparation, the second would be incubation, third would be insight, fourth would be verification. There is also an additional stage implementation because this was the point I tried to underscore in the earlier discussion today. When we are talking about creativity, when we are actually looking into creativity if the implementation part is not there sometimes what happens is that we feel that the organization has taken your idea and will implement that this is an assurance you get from the higher management but sometimes down the line you feel that those files or those you know prospective ideas never found the limelight. They never came to light and it has never been you know taken to implementation stage. So that would be very difficult in actually when we cannot actually define them as creativity. So, implementation happens to be or has found out or is emerging as a significant stage in creativity.

So that is where when Wallace stopped with the four stage there is a fifth stage that is equally relevant especially in the realm of OBM and that is implementation. So, when we look into these stages particularly the preparation phase.

The first stage the preparation phase is all about the person's or the team's effort to acquire knowledge and skills regarding the problem or the opportunity. You cannot have a go ahead or you cannot have a path ahead if you do not know what exactly the problem is and how it could be understood. Preparation involves developing a clear understanding of what one is trying to achieve.

So this understanding becomes vital, this understanding becomes critical because if you do not know what you are trying to solve, you are not in a position even to understand and acknowledge the problem that is existing you are not doing the right thing when it comes to creativity. It has to be done through a novel solution again and again I try to underline this word it is a new solution that has to come up not the old one or not the modified one which resembles the old one. It should be a novel solution and then actively studying information seemingly related to the topic.

When you look into the second phase particularly incubation it is more of a period of a reflective thought. It is more of a period of reflective thought where you have understood the problem, you have understood the criticality of the problem, you have understood what are the different dimensions of the problem.

Now you are trying to reflect on that particular problem. So, solution might not come just like that you have to understand the different dimensions of the problem. Let us take a real time example in terms of organization. You are working on a particular product delivery and your client is expecting something but there is some other add-ons that your client has actually asked you for. That becomes or that is translated into a problem.

Now understanding the actual requirements that your client has placed over and above the actual deliverables would be the understanding of the problem, the first phase. Now when it comes to incubation you have to actually reflect with the available sources is it possible for me to deliver the updates or deliver the add-ons, is it possible for me to improve on the design with the available resources. So this is where incubation becomes critical, this is where reflection on the particular problem becomes vital, this is where actually you try to understand the problem in a deeper sense. When you look into incubation the problem is put aside but our mind is still working on it in the background. Now this is what makes the reflection more deep and more powerful.

The important condition here is to maintain a low level of awareness by frequently revisiting the problem. Sometimes what we do is in actually understanding the problem we generally fail to reflect that problem. We see that okay I have understood the problem the moment you read it sometimes there are things which are said between the lines. Sometimes there are different dimensions which were not actually codified or not actually explicitly mentioned in the problem. Sometimes you must have seen that let us take an example you work as an interior architect in a real estate realm.

So you are actually doing something a top notch higher than what your client was expecting. Now this was not communicated explicitly but some or the other way you try to understand, you try to navigate through the expectations of your particular client and based on that you tend to understand that he or she needed or would have appreciate,

would appreciate if you go a notch higher. So, this is what makes you a better performer in your job. You take any field you are working in, in your organization if you have an interface with your manager or if you have an interface with your organization, the customer, the client please understand navigating through their expectations, reflecting through those expectations will make you better informed, will make you understand the problem more clearly and this is what makes you vital in terms of being creative, in terms of being nurturing your creative potential.

The third stage would be insight or illumination and when you look into the insight and illumination the experience of suddenly becoming aware of the unique idea. This is where the eureka moment comes to you. Okay, I have understood the problem, it has taken me some time no doubt about it but I have also reflected on the problem now I am having a clear grip over the problem. Now this is where the insight strikes, this is where the eureka moment comes in where you actually find out that you have a unique idea that is approaching you. These bits of inspiration are fleeting and can be quickly lost if not documented. So moment you might have observed within the organization you are working and this eureka moment trust me it does not happen like that, it is not a miracle specifically, it is years of job experience you have seen this that is actually guiding you or that has given you the trigger of eureka.

So whatever happens the eureka moment has happened but many a time you will also agree with me that you were bit lethargic, bit lazy in noting down what was the outcome or what was that idea and it faces out. It happens that at a later stage you try to recollect that but it does not come to you. So please note that when such a miracle happens, when such eureka moment happens to you please make it a point that you note it down. Flickering insightful ideas can come to the individuals at any point in time irrespective of one scheduled time of work. So, it could be anywhere, it could be at any time, at any point in life it can come to you. So this is the third stage of creativity.

When it comes to the next stage it is more about verification, it is more about validation, its usefulness still requires verification through detailed logical evaluation. So experimentation is there and further creative insight is developed. So verification is labeled as the final stage of creativity because as I said initially we started with four stages. It is really the beginning of a long process of creative decision-making.

So you tend to see that you have got to a conclusion but this is where you have to start the implementation process. You have to think about the coming factors or the upcoming issues or the upcoming consequences of your particular solution. So, this is just the beginning and not the end. So, this lead towards the development of an innovative product or service no doubt about it but again as I said it is just the beginning and not the end. Another important stage that was added as I have tried to underscore it was the

implementation.

The creative ideas and its execution has to come together. It cannot happen that these two are mutually exclusive. The creative idea and there should be a clear execution or implementation associated with that and if they are not inclusive, if they are standing as mutually exclusive then your creative potential is not valued. It is always undermined because of that. A person puts their creativity to use only when the actual implementation happens. So this emerges as one of the most important stage in the creativity process. A final product is created which is usable by others. Let me extend this. A final service is created, a final whatever improvisation you are working on, a final version is created of that. So, these are the different stages of creativity.

So when you look into creativity it happens not in a go. It happens systematically over the different stages which we have understood and that makes creativity more intriguing, that makes creativity more systemic and systematic. So, looking into characteristics of creative people let us summarize them as intelligence to synthesize information, no doubt about it. You are a creative person only if you have the ability to synthesize information. Information you are living in an era of information. Information overload is what exactly is happening. If you are incapable to synthesize the information that is coming to you, actually try to filter out the information which is not useful to you and make use of the useful information, synthesize that information, analyze ideas and apply their ideas that is the first and foremost characteristic of the creative people.

Second and needless to say persistence which I have already mentioned in my previous class to seek out these ideas through trial and error in the phase of resistance because you are a person whom here is where we come to the theme of the lecture also. You are a creative person so there might be obvious barriers, obvious opposition to your ideas because there might be a set of people who might not be interested in actually giving you an upper hand or giving you the right position what you actually deserve. There might be issues of professional jealousy, there might be problems of personal jealousy.

So all these aspects would actually demand, warrant a lot of persistence from creative people. Sufficient knowledge and experience on the subject is a must. Let us look into this from a different angle. You are let us say an expert in some field of biotech.

You are working on GM crops. You are a scientist working on GM crops. Now somebody comes to you and is asking about let us say how to launch a rocket or may be working on or asking you some doubts about the missile systems then it is very difficult permutation that is happening. So, you to show your creativity the first and the foremost thing is it should be in your domain and what do you mean by in your domain is that you should have the sufficient subject knowledge. So, you should not have the subject knowledge

whatever creative ideas you put forward might be half bake because you do not have seen or you have not seen the entirety of the problems, the scale or the magnitude which the problem can take. So that is where the sufficient knowledge of or the experience of the subject is vital.

A cluster of personality traits and values that support an independent imagination is also vital when it comes to characteristic of creative people. You need to have a personality trait in the previous class I have actually tried to underscore that there is one personality trait like openness which is vital when it comes to creativity and certain values that support an independent imagination and independent imagination is inconspicuously the precursor, the antecedent towards creativity.

Now let us look into a particular example, a particular case of the Nottingham Spirk Design Associates Incorporated where we tried to understand it as an example of creative environment. I have taken it from the text book you can obviously refer to that. You might say that creativity is a religious experience at Nottingham Spirk Design Associates.

A few years ago the industrial design company moved into an old church in Cleveland's University Park area. Perched atop an escarpment on five acres of property the twenties octagon shaped limestone building looks like a Roman temple moor. Inside implies work in a large rotunda below a domed ceiling supported by twenty columns. Symbols of the original church remain including a choir, loft and soaring pipe organ. You can't help but walk in here and say I want to create something new says John Nottingham who cofounded Nottingham Spirk with John Spirk three decades ago.

Along with having an inspiring church building Nottingham Spirk supports creativity through its risk tolerant learning orientation culture. We stick our necks out says Nottingham. If we fail, we go down the wrong path. We dust ourselves off and go the other way. So, this is the spirit I would try to underline here.

This is the understanding you should take away from this particular case. We understand that's innovation. The cofounders and the seventy employees also discover ideas by looking around store shelves. We are trying to figure out what consumers will want two years down the road explains Spirk. The future oriented approach is what makes them stand out.

We look and see what's not there Nottingham adds. We literally visualize an innovation sitting on the shelf next to the competition at a price point. These activities produce sparks of insight but they are only the starting point in the creative process. Anyone can have a good idea says Nottingham. The difficult thing is to get it to market. You have got to make the idea work and prove its feasibility as a product.

To transform ideas to profitable products Nottingham Spirk forms teams of up to ten employees who hold two types of meetings. So, in the first meeting called as a diverging session team members brainstorm ideas. So, this is the basic emergence of creativity in the entire case. We start with the creative session people from our team that can complement each other and we come up with as many ideas as you can says Nottingham. These ideas are documented as scribbles and sketches on slips of paper up to hundred of them plaster the walls by the end of the session.

In the second round of meetings called the converging sessions we have the diverging sessions as well as the converging sessions. Each idea is systematically evaluated by the team. I pass around the note cards each with a word or phrase on it that says who cares nice or wow Nottingham explains. The person who introduced an idea can explain it further and then each team member judges the idea by selecting one of the three cards. If everyone holds up a wow card you know you have got something.

So that is the outcome says Nottingham. Those who cares ideas are tossed out some of the nice ideas are developed further by an idea champion. For example, the civil street one minute Christmas tree stand was mainly nice ratings when it was first proposed but co-workers gave it wow ratings after Nottingham Spirk designer Craig Saunders refined it further. Those one million civil street stands were sold in the products first five years in the market. Diverging and converging sessions are complemented by focus group meetings and client feedback to improve prototypes. Nottingham Spirk's redesign of the round metal paint can which has changed little over the past century is a case in point.

Employers knew from experience the frustration of working with traditional paint cans. We couldn't think of another consumer product that you need a screwdriver to open and a hammer to close. So that was a design development that they had says Craig Saunders. So, Saunders and his co-workers created a paint can with a twist top and built in no drip or spout. So, this is classy, this is what the improvisation or the creativity has brought in as a product output.

When shown an early prototype potential users claimed the container would not stack well in warehouses and stores so the revised prototype was made wider and more stackable. Next users were concerned that the plastic container would break if it was dropped. So, we took a bunch of them up on ladders and dropped them says Nottingham, they bounced. This feedback made the twist and pour paint can an instant success. Sherwin Williams tripled sales of this Dutch boy paint in the first six months thanks to its creative work environment and innovation process. Nottingham's-spirk has registered close to 500 patents and helped clients achieve more than 30 billion USD sales over the

past three decades. Its most visible innovations include the Crest spin brush, Invacare Corp wheelchair, Swiffer sweeper Vac, wide oval shaped anti-perspirant containers, MRI scanner design and the twist and pour paint can obviously.

So, what we understand with the case is that they take the creativity as a serious business. They take creativity as a serious process. You must have observed about the converging sessions, the diverging sessions. So, when it comes to creativity please understand the takeaway for you in this lecture should be that creativity is not a simple process. It is not a simple miracle that happens to you because of your genes or you are inherited something like that. No, it is a stage-by-stage process and it happens through your experience. A lot of this happens because of your experience with a particular job. Again, please remember if you are in a different domain and somebody is asking you to work on a particular domain you might not be that proficient in working there or you might not be that proficient in bringing creative ideas there.

So somebody who is working again in a field of biotech might not be proficient in bringing a creative idea in rocket science. Those things have happened but it is very rare. Please try to understand that creativity happens to be a stage-wise process. We have seen what are the stages but that is it. The most important stage as concerned with OBM, organizational behavior management or when it comes to the field of OBM specifically is the implementation.

If the process is not implemented, if the creative idea is not implemented you are not going to get a creative output. You cannot term yourself as a creative idea, you cannot term yourself as a creative person. On that note we will end today's lecture. See you in the next class with more insights into creativity. Till then take care.