Self-reported Creativity and Job Satisfaction - How Individual and Social Creativity Relates to Job Satisfaction

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The aim of the present study was to explore the relationships between perceived individual creativity, social creativity and job satisfaction. Self-reported creativity was measured with a recently validated creativity scale and job satisfaction through the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). Participants (N=168) were randomised from a list of employees at one workplace and consisted of 73 men and 95 women with a mean age of 33.16. The results indicate that participants who perceive themselves as individually creative score their job satisfaction differently from participants who perceive themselves as socially creative. People scoring high on individual creativity also score high on job satisfaction, while self-reported social creativity correlates negatively with job satisfaction. This has been reported in earlier studies with other dependent variables and the result are being discussed.

How individual and social creativity relates to Job satisfaction

Findings indicating clear differences between individual and social creativity have been published in two start-up studies prior to the validation of the creativity scale (Eisele, 2017a, b). In another study, which aimed to validate the creativity scale, principal component factor analyses and confirmatory factor analyses both confirm differences between individual and social creativity (Eisele, 2019).

Job satisfaction was measured with the Spectors (1995) job satisfaction survey which has been validated in many countries, most recently in Greece (Tsounis & Sarafis, 2018), Nigeria (Ogunkuade, & Ojiji, 2018) and Sweden (Eisele, 2019).

Creativity

For a long time, research on creativity focused on individual creativity. However, there is much to be said about distinguishing social creativity as a separate type of creativity. Some creative tasks can be managed by single individuals, but many tasks require collaboration between people with different skills. In two studies, individual creativity and social creativity even correlated negatively (Eisele, 2017a, b). Also, social creativity is not the same as social competence or social skills (see e.g. Fischer, Giaccardi, Eden, Sugimoto & Ye, 2005).

Another important distinction is whether creativity is best seen as one single domain or belonging to several domains. According to the first viewpoint, creativity is a way of being, regardless of whether a person is creative or not. Seeing creativity as domain specific has increased in popularity lately. Kaufman (2012) in developing the K-DOCS has provided empirical support for creativity as belonging to several domains.

According to Amabile (1997), there are three major components contributing to individual creativity: expertise, creative-thinking skill, and intrinsic motivation

The interactionist perspective of organisational creativity (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993) describes antecedent conditions at an individual level (biographical variables, cognitive style, ability, personality, relevant knowledge, motivation, social influences, and contextual influences) and at a team level (individual creative behaviours, the interaction between the group members, group characteristics, team processes, and contextual influences).

The work of Amabile (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron, 1996) and the interactionist theory (Woodman et al., 1993) both have demonstrated the importance of the social context for creativity at work. However, more effort is needed to acknowledge social creativity.

Self-report measurers of creativity

One measure of creative style, the Kirton Adaption Innovation Inventory (KAI), puts respondents in qualitatively different categories (see e.g. Fleenor & Taylor, 1994). These categories are based on cognitive styles and does not acknowledge social creativity.

The importance of different subscales in self-report measures of creativity has been brought up by Baer (1998) and Kaufman and Baer (2004).

Creative domains can be separated from each other and are convergent with personality factors (Kaufman, 2012), which supports the multiple domain viewpoint. Kaufman (2012) developed the K-DOCS, which describe creativity in five domains: self/everyday, scholarly, performance (writing, music), mechanical/ scientific, and artistic. In this 50-item scale there are several

social items, but the emphasis is on individual creativity. Shorter instruments like the Creativity Domain Questionnaire (CDQ) (see e.g. McConell & Strain, 2007) or CDQ-R (Silvia, Wigert, Reiter-Palmon & Kaufman, 2012) are even more focused on individual creativity.

Individual creativity concerns the ability to choose the best solution to a problem, which can manifest itself in many different forms. Examples of domains typical to individual creativity include writing, analysing, musical composition, acting, woodcraft, repair work, solving mathematical problems, designing a room or garden, innovation, writing a mental map, drawing or painting.

Social creativity can also be domain specific. This specific type of creativity concerns helping people to solve a tricky situation, teaching, finding innovative ways to help people, mediating between fighting friends, making people feel at ease, debating, adapting to different social settings, getting the best information, arguing outside or even against one's own personal viewpoint, listening, and encouraging other people to talk.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction includes an emotional and a cognitive aspect of satisfaction and assumes that deliberate evaluations reflect emotional aspects. Job satisfaction is important for employee's well-being (Karabati, Ensari & Fiorentino, 2019) as well as for organisational performance and effectiveness (Pang & Ruch, 2019). Considering the amount of time people spend at work, it is not surprising that job satisfaction also has an impact on general life satisfaction beyond working hours (Hünefeld, Gerstenberg & Hüffmeier, 2019).

Many job satisfaction instruments acknowledge two basic dimensions, extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction (see e.g. Van Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek & Frings-Dresen, 2003). Extrinsic job satisfaction refers to different aspects of employment like salary, relationships, promotion and the work environment. Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to sense of autonomy, development opportunities and achievement. The JSS distinguishes nine factors involving both extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions and is one of the most used measurement of job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction has been found to be positively related to many work-related variables including behaviour-based work-family conflicts (Bruck, Allen and Spector, 2002) organisational commitment (Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane & Ferreira, 2011), perceived organisational support (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli & Lynch, 1997) and performance (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007).

In a longitudinal study, Blau (1999) found that task responsibilities and performance appraisal were antecedents to job satisfaction. In a study on nurses it was found that a lack of support was

associated with burnout, while patient care was associated with job satisfaction (Khamisa, Oldenburg, Peltzer & Ilic, 2015).

Creativity and job satisfaction

Research on self-report measures of creativity and job satisfaction are sparse. Judge, Heller and Mount (2002) conducted a meta-analysis on personality traits and their correlation with job satisfaction. Openness to experience is the personality trait that is most associated with creativity but according to this meta-analysis it is not correlated to job satisfaction.

In a study measuring individual level creativity requirements, work environments that complemented the creative requirements of employees were linked to job satisfaction. Job-required creativity was more associated with proximal job characteristics than distal characteristics (Shalley, Gilson & Blum, 2000).

One study examined how empowering leadership (psychological empowerment and self-leadership) was associated with creativity and satisfaction (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). Using a short three item scale to measure job satisfaction, they found that psychological empowerment influences job satisfaction but not creativity, while self-leadership influences creativity but not job satisfaction.

To my knowledge, no study has used a self-repost measure of creativity and examined the relation with job satisfaction. The aim of the present study was to explore how individual creativity and social creativity are associated with job satisfaction.

Method
Participants

The sample consisted of employees (N=168) at one company in the South of Sweden. There were 73 men (mean age 31.96) and 95 women (mean age 34.07) and the sample was homogenous regarding economic status.

Material
Creativity

Both creativity scales use a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Individual creativity is measured on a 15-item scale and social creativity on a 16-item scale. The following is an example item for the individual creativity subscale: "Choose the best possible solution to problems." The following is an example item for the social creativity subscale: "Find out new ways to think of an old debate." Note that the English translation at this point is only for the purpose of presenting the data, it was the Swedish version that was used in the study. The

creativity scale has been validated prior to this study and had strong factor loadings and internal consistency: .95 for social creativity and .92 for individual creativity.

Job satisfaction

The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) constructed by Spector (1994) is a nine-facet scale. The 36 items are on a summated rating scale with six choices ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Half of the items are revered. The following is an example item: "When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive." The nine subscales of the JSS are pay, supervisor, benefits, rewards, operation, co-workers, communication, work tasks and promotion. Each subscale is built on 4 items.

Procedure

Participants in the sample were randomised from a list of employees at one workplace, a civil service company in the state sector.

The participants filled out an electronic form of the questionnaire two weeks prior to an internal meeting where all employees were supposed to discuss their work situation and report on the group to their supervisors. All participants got one hour off to fill out the electronic questionnaire on their job computer. Anonymity was guaranteed but the participants filled out their own name or a made-up name that they were instructed to remember for future identification.

After the completion of the data the result was presented in a PowerPoint file and sent to the administration before they were distributed to the participants and human resource personnel in the planned meeting.

Result

Mean values for the creativity scale were above the mean for the sample and communication stands out with a higher mean than the other creativity subscales. Means for the job satisfaction subscales were in the ambivalent category in general, but supervision was in the category of dissatisfied (Table 1). The internal consistency was high for all subscales. For the individual creativity scale the Cronbach's alpha score was .93, for the social creativity scale it was .91, and for job satisfaction it was .86.

Pearson bivariate correlations indicate that individual creativity had a weak positive correlation ($r = .39$, $p < .001$) with job satisfaction while social creativity had a weak negative correlation with innovation ($r = -.16$, $p =. 04$).

To further investigate this correlational pattern, regression analyses were performed to test whether the subscales of self-reported creativity could predict job satisfaction or not. Social creativity and individual creative were analysed separately. The social creativity subscales could not predict job satisfaction. Linear regression analysis showed that individual creativity could predict job satisfaction with an explained variance of .18 (F (5,162 =7.16, p<.001). But individual creative action (doing) was a significant predictor with a standardised Beta of .44 (t=2.52, p=.013).

Discussion

Individual creativity had a positive correlation with job satisfaction while social creativity had a negative correlation with job satisfaction. This has been found in earlier studies with other dependent variables, perceived organisational innovation (Eisele, 2017a), and leadership for innovation (Eisele, 2017b). A small majority of the sample reported low or high on both individual creativity and social creativity. But many participants reported high on one subscale and low on the other subscale. Unlike other findings (see e.g. Kaufman, 2006), no gender differences were found in the present study.

Future studies should examine the differences between individual and social creativity in many different settings and contexts. Most important is perhaps to examine if social creativity can be distinguished from general social skills. The social skills inventory (SSI) incorporate both nonverbal, emotional and interpersonal skills (Riggio, 1986). It is also important to compare self-ratings with other type of measures (Ng & Feldman, 2012), and examine in what way the different creativity subscales relate to concepts like fantasy proneness (see e.g. Merckelbach, Horselenberg & Muris, 2001).

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore how employees assess job satisfaction and explore how individual and social creativity relate to job satisfaction. The result highlights the importance of making a distinction between individual creativity and social creativity. In short, the implications of the findings for organisations is that some people may be socially creative but not individually creative and these employees could be an unused and valuable access if recognised by management.

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