

Creativity - Evidence Review

What is creativity?

Massey (Massey & Munt, 2009) discusses creativity (or the lack thereof) in the NHS whilst Ma (X. Ma, Yang, Wang, & Zang, 2018) carried out a literature review of creativity in nursing. Kirton distinguishes between adaptive creativity (little c creativity) - where employees find better ways to do their work - and innovative creativity (big C creativity), the ability to dream up the really big, or strange idea (Filipczak, 1997); this has also been referred to as radical and incremental creativity (Jaussi, Knights, & Gupta, 2017). Beghetto (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007) added Mini-c creativity - the creative processes involved in the construction of personal knowledge and understanding. The components of creativity include expertise, creative-thinking skills, and motivation (Amabile, 1998). Han (Han, Peng, Chiu, & Leung, 2011) examined how diversity could increase individual and team creativity. There is also a difference between creativity - the quality of ideas - and fluency, the number of ideas (Nusbaum, Silvia, & Beaty, 2014). Reiter-Palmon (Reiter-Palmon & Sands, 2015) discusses the way creativity works in team meetings.

Books

[The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity](#)

[Team creativity and innovation](#)

What reduces creativity?

- Goals based purely on productivity (Shalley, 1991)
- Lack of personal discretion (Shalley, 1991)
- Not having creativity as a goal (Shalley, 1991)
- Workload pressure (Hickman, 1997) - but having too little time pressure can also impede creativity (Aleksic, Mihelić, Cerne, & Skerlavaj, 2017)
- Fear (DeSalvo, 1999)
- Lack of passion (DeSalvo, 1999)
- Lack of self-confidence (Sadi & Al-Dubaisi, 2008)
- A need for conformity (Sadi & Al-Dubaisi, 2008)
- Aversive leadership (Choi, Anderson, & Veillette, 2009)
- An unsupportive organisational climate (Choi et al., 2009)
- Role ambiguity (Coelho, Augusto, & Lages, 2011)
- Excessive learning and exploratory behaviour - "paralysis by analysis." (J. Ma, Zhang, & Yang, 2015)
- "Performance avoidance goal orientation," - wanting to avoid things going wrong (J. Ma et al., 2015)
- A large top management team (Yoon, Kim, & Song, 2016)
- An older top management team (Yoon et al., 2016)
- Over-conscientiousness (Patterson & Zibarras, 2017)

What encourages creativity?

Leadership Factors

- Leaders encouraging people's self-efficacy (Redmond, Mumford, & Teach, 1993)
- Supervisory encouragement (Hickman, 1997)
- Better-educated managers (Mostafa, 2005)
- Managerial support for work/life balance (Pevney, 2007)
- Creative leaders fostering a creative organisational climate (Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2012)
- Authentic leadership (Zubair & Kamal, 2015) (Alzghoul, Hamzah, Emeagwali, & AlShboul, 2018)
- Transformational leadership creates creative self-efficacy which in turn encourages creativity (Mittal & Dhar, 2015)
- A top management team drawing from many different areas of the organisation (Yoon et al., 2016)
- Servant leadership (Weaver, 2018) (J. Yang, Gu, & Liu, 2019)
- Good leader-member exchange (Khalili, 2018)
- Ethical leadership (Tu, Lu, Jin Nam, & Guo, 2018)
- Humble leader behaviour - spotlighting others' advantage; acknowledging self-limitations and modelling teachability (Shengming, Lifan, & Simai, 2018)
- Paradoxical leadership - being open about competing trends and pressures (Y. Yang, Li, Liang, & Zhang, 2019)
- Team learning and team reflexivity enhance top management teams' creativity (Rong, Li, & Xie, 2019)

Work Factors

- A clear, elevating goal (Hickman, 1997) (Aleksic, Cerne, Dysvik, & Kerlavaj, 2016)
- Organisational encouragement (Hickman, 1997)
- Challenging work (Hickman, 1997)
- Cultures with strong, shared values (DeSalvo, 1999)
- Autonomy for employees (McElvaney, 2006)
- Elsbach (Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006) suggested 'mindless work,' as a way of stimulating creativity
- A perception that the organisation is "family supportive." (Pevney, 2007) (Wang, Zhang, & He, 2012) (McKersie, Matthews, Smith, Barratt, & Hill, 2019)
- Close monitoring (Choi et al., 2009)
- Experiencing "flow," at work (Moneta, 2010)
- Role conflict (Coelho et al., 2011)
- Interventions focused on training supervisors and work-group members to support creativity (DiLiello, Houghton, & Dawley, 2011)
- Alignment between an organisation's values and an employee's values (Saraç, Efil, & Eryilmaz, 2014)
- High-commitment work systems when team cohesion is high and the task is complex (Chang, Jia, Takeuchi, & Cai, 2014)
- Being told to be creative (Nusbaum et al., 2014)

- Trust in the organisation (Jo, Lee, Lee, & Hahn, 2015)
- Learning from others but not via computer (Giustiniano, Lombardi, & Cavaliere, 2016)
- Joint decision making in stable, psychologically-safe teams (Guo & Wang, 2017)
- Psychological safety (Agarwal & Farndale, 2017)
- Job crafting – adapting people’s roles to their interests and strengths (Mihelič & Aleksić, 2017)
- Fun at work (Jaussi et al., 2017)
- Taking other people’s perspectives as long as people don’t always agree with each other (Wu, 2018)
- A collaborative team climate (Yu-Qian, Gardner, & Chen, 2018)
- Team-learning orientation (Sung, Du, & Choi, 2018)
- Collective problem solving (Sung et al., 2018)
- [Team unlearning](#) (Matsuo, 2018)
- Sharing adverse experiences can boost social support which, in turn, can increase creativity (Bastian, Jetten, Thai, & Steffens, 2018)

Individual Factors

- Optimism (Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Cunha, 2012)
- Holidays make people more flexible but not more original (de Bloom, Ritter, Kühnel, Reinders, & Geurts, 2014)
- Emotional intelligence (Khalid & Zubair, 2014)
- “Mastery goal orientation.” (J. Ma et al., 2015)
- “Performance approach goal orientation.” – wanting to make a success of things (J. Ma et al., 2015)
- Psychological capital (Zubair & Kamal, 2015)
- Motivation (Patterson & Zibarras, 2017)
- Openness to experience (Patterson & Zibarras, 2017)
- Being happily married (Tang, Huang, & Wang, 2017)
- A joyful affective perspective (X. Ma et al., 2018)
- Artistic expression (X. Ma et al., 2018)
- Self-directed learning (X. Ma et al., 2018)

Effects of creativity

- A fit between demands for creativity and abilities for creativity is related to lower strain and higher job satisfaction (Livingstone, Nelson, & Barr, 1997)
- The health advantage of being at the 60th versus the 40th percentile of creative work is equivalent to that of being 6.7 years younger, or having two more years of education, or 15 times greater household income (Mirowsky & Ross, 2007)
- More creative individuals are more likely to be good organisational citizens and less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviour (Barratt, 2016)
- It makes people happier at work (Tavares, 2016)

Doubts and scepticism

Cokpekin (Çokpekin & Knudsen, 2012) found that a creative environment did not lead to more product or process innovation in small- and medium-sized businesses.

Van Knippenberg (van Knippenberg & Hoever, 2018) found that “the accumulated evidence speaks overwhelmingly against a robust main effect of team diversity on team creativity.”

Harvey (Harvey & Kou, 2018) found that while working in a team could stimulate creativity too much team interaction could interfere with individual creative processes.”

Ng (Ng & Yam, 2019) found that creative people sometimes give themselves permission to behave badly in other ways; particularly if they are not rewarded for their creativity

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