

# [Theoretical in gender and creativity, no clear](https://assignbuster.com/theoretical-in-gender-and-creativity-no-clear/)

Theoretical Background and HypothesesAgrowing reliance on team creativity in changing and uncertain organizationalenvironments calls for an understanding of the factors that enable teams to becreative.

Although much has been written about teams and about creativity inorganizations, our understanding of creative differences among different sexesin teams remains limited. Despite four decades of scholarly interest in genderand creativity, no clear picture has emerged regarding the gender differencesin creativity. As Baer and Kaufman (2008) observed in their comprehensivereview a state of current literature as composed of mixed results. Directcomparisons of the performance of men and women on a wide array of creativitymeasures has revealed no discernible gender differences in some studies (Amabile, 1983; Kaufman, Baer, & Gentile, 2004), while other studies demonstrated anadvantage of women over men (Chia, Koh, & Pragasam, 2008; Reuter et al., 2005; Wolfradt & Pretz, 2001), and many more revealed that men outperformedwomen in creative pursuits (Chavez-Eakle et al.

, 2006; Cox, 2002; Dollinger,& Centeno, 2005). While cognitive flexibility (Carter, 1985) andpersonality traits (Karwowski, 2013) have been considered compelling factorsgoverning the relationship between an individual’s sex and their creativeperformance, gender roleidentification paradigm remains central to our understanding of differencesin creativity among men and women. An emerging literature on gender andcreativity has raised more questions than answers about how men and womendiffer and resemble one another in their creative pursuits.

A pressing reasonfor that has been the dominant use of the ‘ main effects approach’ in the extantcreativity and gender literature (Kemmelmeier & Walton, 2016). Barring afew studies (Baer, 1997; Kirkland, Kilpatrick & Barker, 1976), scholarshave attempted to identify gender differences in creative behavior regardlessof situational factors that significantly impact creative outcomes (Kemmelmeier& Walter, 2016). To address the same, our study serves as an opportunity torevisit and explore the differences that exist in the creative outcomes of menand women and address the contextual features that influences the creative attributesof these individuals. Priorresearch on creativity has indicated that creativity is jointly affected byindividual and contextual factors (Amabile, 1983).

The environment in which anindividual works, to a large extent determines the actualization of his or hercreative potential. The current study draws from the predominantly acceptedinteractionist perspective that views creativity as a function of theindividual, work context and their interaction (Amabile, 1988; Woodman et al., 1993). The central argument proposed in this framework is that individuals withcertain attributes are most likely to value the rewards and opportunitiesprovided by a supportive work context, and thus exhibit higher creativity whenboth the individual characteristic and the right work context are present (Madjar, Oldham, & Pratt, 2002; Ohly, Sonnentag, & Plunke, 2006; Shalley, Gilson& Blum, 2009; Shin & Zhou, 2003; Tierney, Farmer, & Graen, 1999; Zhou & George, 2001). Although each of these studies has examined theinteractive effects of a range of individual attributes (e. g., creativepersonality, cognitive style, and intrinsic motivation) and work context oncreativity, the effect of an individual’s sex as an individual attribute hasnot been considered together with the team psychological safety as a contextualcharacteristic.

Psychological safety is defined as a team attribute and refersto a shared belief held by the team that the work environment provided to themis safe for interpersonal risk taking (Anderson & West, 1998; Edmondson, 1999; Schein & Bennis, 1965). In this study we focus on team level psychologicalsafety, and its propensity to enhance or reduce the differences in creative self-conceptand thus creative performance among men and women. Gender Differences in CreativeSelf-Efficacy/Sex as a Predictor of Creative Self-EfficacyAlongsidecognitive abilities, self-ef? cacy, resulting from an individual’s confidence intheir ability to control situations and handle problems, has been instrumentalin determining the effectiveness of human functioning (Bandura, 1997; Paunonen& Hong, 2010). As for creativity, it is the creative self-ef? cacy, de? nedas individual’s con? dence that he or she is capable of handling problemsrequiring creative thinking and creative functioning, mediates the relationshipbetween creative potential and achievements (Choi, 2004; Schack, 1989; Tierney& Farmer, 2002, 2011). The central role occupied by creative self-ef? cacy(CSE) in predicting creative outcomes has made it an important topic ofinterest in the creativity literature (Beghetto, 2006; Beghetto, Kaufman, &Baxter, 2011; Jaussi, Randel, & Dionne, 2007; Putwain, Kearsley, & Symes, 2012; Tierney & Farmer, 2002, 2011).

Although empirical studies ofcreativity and gender have mushroomed, these studies inform us little about thedifferences in creative self-concept i. e.- creative self-efficacy between womenand men. Despitethe lack of clear differences in creative potential between the two sexes (Baer& Kaufman, 2008), there has been empirical evidence suggesting that womensucceed less often than men in creative achievements (Abra &Valentine-French, 1991). The mystery no longer exists about why there are moreeminent men than women in the creative field. The cultural values, socialroles, and sexist thinking have been recognized as key reasons for thecomparative lack of creative accomplishment by women (Helson, 1990).

These factorshave not only led to the structuring of social roles in a way that women lackthe opportunity to be creative achievers but has also fostered a sense of disbeliefin women regarding their own creative potential. Ruth & Birren (1985)identified that women experienced difficulties in externalizing their innercreative processes and possessed a lower need of achievement in creativeendeavors as compared to men. They argued that the differences were notinherent, but reflective of the cultural values manifested in upbringing, educational opportunities, and freedom of action available for the two sexes. On similar lines, Furnham, Fong, & Martin (1999) identified the ‘ malehubris-female humility’ bias stating that men indeed perceive their generalintellect to be higher. As these perceptions are reinforced by parents who recognizetheir son’s intelligence to be higher than their daughter’s, and children identifythe intelligence of their fathers to be higher than that of their mothers(Kaufman, 2012), the bias intensifies.

Although, the empirical evidence suggests that differences in perceived CSE between the sexesare usually weak, the results continue to favor men (Beghetto, 2006; Karwowski, 2011b). Men not only perceive their creativity at a higher level, but alsoengage in overestimating the same, resulting in higher results in creativeself-perception (Khanam & Sen, 1998), and self-concept in problem solving(Marsh et al., 2006). On the other hand, women tend to underestimate their CSE(Karwowski, 2011b).

Aligned with the stereotypical gender roles, women often? nd social objectives more important than the goals connected with creativeachievements (Eagly et al., 2000; Piirto, 1991). Since creative activityrequires the tolerance of ambiguity (Zenasni, Besancon, & Lubart, 2008), itconflicts with the more conventional feminine identity (Taylor, 2011), therebyleading women to engage more in tasks of maintaining social harmony andinterconnectedness, than to participate in the perceived masculinized creativethinking process. Additionally, according to the role congruity theory, the potential for prejudicial behaviorsagainst females follows from the incongruity perception between gender rolesand task roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). As creativity inherently involvesrisks (Tesluk, Farr, & Klein, 1997), the dominant conception of the creativethinker presents a highly masculinized construal of the creative thoughtprocess associated with agentic qualities that are more typically ascribed tomen than to women (Proudfoot, Kay & Koval, 2015).

This perceived connectionbetween creative thinking and the stereotypically masculine characteristics resultsin potential prejudicial bias against females following from the dissimilarity inbehavior and expectations that people typically have about creative thinkers. Creativebehavior by women is viewed as a violation of injunctive norms of the femalegender role. Thus, in order to abide by the prescribed gender roles, womenrefrain from engaging in creative activity, resulting in a reduced level ofconfidence about their creative skills. We therefore propose that owing to theinternalization of stereotypical gender-appropriate behavior regardingcreativity, females will have reduced levels of CSE as compared to their malecounterparts. Hypothesis1: Compared to males, females tend to have lower levels of creativeself-efficacy. The critical role of psychologicalsafetyCreativitydoes not just happen, it evolves through a trial-and-error process. The innatenature of creativity is that it involves risk taking. Individuals in order toproduce something novel and useful, have to be willing to try and becomfortable with the possibility of failing (Tesluk, Farr, & Klein, 1997).

While tendency to be risk-averse or risk-seeking is an individualcharacteristic, a key motivation for employees to be creative is provided by thework environment. A work environment that ensures that the employees feelencouraged to take risks and break out of routine and safe ways of doing things, fosters creativity. Such an environment is referred to as being psychologicallysafe. The blame or punishment for failure emerging as a possible consequence ofthe new idea implementation is not assigned to an individual or team (Blake& Mouton, 1985; Edmondson, 1999). Scholars have established, fororganizations where creativity is a valued outcome, fostering an environmentwhere employees are willing to experiment with new ideas and are open tocommunicating and seeking input from others about new ideas, without the fearof being reprimanded, judged or ridiculed, has been positively linked tocreativity (Amabile and Gryskiewicz 1987; De Dreu & West, 2001; Leventhal, 1976; Shalley and Gilson, 2004). Psychologicalsafety focuses on a belief about a group norm that the team is safe to employone’s self without fear of damaging consequences of self-image, status orcareer (Anderson & West, 1998; Edmondson, 1999; Kahn 1990; Schein , 1965), such that when psychological safety is present, team membersthink less about the potential negative consequences of expressing a new ordifferent idea than they would otherwise.

The theoretical argumentunderlying the interest in assessing the impact of psychological safety oncreative self-efficacy of the team is fairly intuitive. Psychological safety ispresumed to enhance the expectancy of engaging in creative behaviors byremoving barriers of fear, uncertainty, and self- defensiveness that possiblyimpedes those behaviors. It creates an environment in which team members feel confidentto engage in the risky creative behaviors that promotes experimentation therebyfacilitating the creation of novel and useful products and services. In acontext of a psychologically safe environment, having removed the barriers tothink and act creatively, it follows that the creative self-efficacy of a groupwill be high. Greater psychological safety in a team should, therefore enhancethe confidence the team has in their own ability to perform creatively.

Hypothesis2: Teams with high levels of psychological safety are more likely to have highlevels of creative self-efficacy. Interactioneffect of individual’s sex and team psychological safety on CSEScholarshave identified an overarching explanation of the lag in women’s creativeproductivity as the unavailability of a conducive environment to develop oncreative expertise.  The context in whichan individual’s creative performance is judged has been different for men and women. The relative lack of supporting environments, the demands and expectations ofsociety for women to ascribe to the communal characteristics aligned with thestereotypical gender roles contrary to the agentic creative role (Proudfoot, Kay & Koval, 2015), and the restrained availability of resources hashindered women’s creative growth in virtually all domains (Helson, 1991a, 1992b, 2004; Simonton, 1992, 1994).

As opposed to actual differences increativity, the discrepancies in self-assessment of creativity for the twosexes can be attributed to the internalized gender stereotypes owing to whichwomen have not been able to express their creative self. Intraditionally male dominated domains of achievement, much like creativityfocused roles, women tend to underestimate their own accomplishments (Beyer, 1990; Correll, 2001) and are less con? dent about their creative skills (Bornholt, Goodnow, & Cooney, 1994). On the other hand, men report higher levels ofself-esteem (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999), and are more likely totake advantage of opportunities to self-enhance (Kurman, 2004; Kemmelmeier& Oyserman, 2001). Studies conducted in many western societies support thenotion that men are more likely to attribute success to their own abilitiesrather than situational circumstances than are women (Nelson & Cooper, 1997), even when their objective performance is identical (Correll, 2001). Asidentified by Roberts and Pennebaker (1994) the reason for that is, with regardto self-perception, men tend to be more focused on internal cues, whereas womenare guided more by external or contextual cues.

(Roberts & Pennebaker, 1994; Benyamini, Leventhal, & Leventhal, 2000; Roberts & Are?-Afshar, 2007). Therefore, one might speculate that men are more likely to self-assess their creativitybased on the affect they experience due to intrinsic factors than women whorequire extrinsic cues of reassurance from the environment to be able to feelconfident about their creative potential and skills. Because previous researchhas not generally examined contextual variability in such gender differences, this research revisits this issue and investigates gender differences in self-conceptof creativity in a psychologically safe work environment (Kemmelmeier , 2016). We posit that in teams with high psychological safety, females feelmore confident about their creative abilities, as being more sensitive toexternal factors they perceive the psychologically safe work team as an environmentwhere they feel accepted and respected beyond the stereotypical bias. Thepsychological safety removes barriers to expressions of creativity by women andreduces the perceived cost of engaging in the risky creative activities.

Thissafety net is required by females more so than their male counterparts. Owingto the perceived agentic nature of creative processes, males are expected toand supported in being creative; sufficient resources, opportunities andmotivation is provided to males to engage in creative behavior, which leadsthem to have a stronger sense of belief about their own creativity. On theother hand, engagement in creative behavior by females is considered an atypicalbehavior not aligned with their prescribed gender role.

Thus, to confide intheir own skills, women need reassurance that they will not be hurt, embarrassed, or criticized for engaging in this so called atypical activity(Edmondson, 2003). As a result, the benefits of having high team psychologicalsafety, are higher for women in terms of increasing their creativeself-efficacy. Hypothesis3: There is a cross-level moderation effect of psychological safety on therelationship between sex and creative self-efficacy, such that for teams withhigh levels of psychological safety, females tend to have higher levels of creativeself-efficacy.  Finally, as the relationship between creative self-efficacy and creativity has been alreadyestablished in the creativity literature (Beghetto, Kaufman & Baxter, 2011; Gong, Huang & Farh, 2009; Jaussi, Randel & Dionne, 2007; Liu et al., 2016; Richter et al., 2012; Tierney & Farmer, 2002, 2011; Wang, Tsai , 2014), we further hypothesize that an individual’s sex will have an indirecteffect on creativity through the creative self-efficacy of individuals.

On thebasis of the interactionist approach to creativity (George, 2007; Shalley etal., 2004; Zhou, 1998), individual’s sex and team psychological safety willjointly affect creative self-efficacy, which in turn will predict an individual’screativity. Following the same logic as for Hypotheses 1–3, we posit that femaleswill need more team psychological safety from the organization to developgreater self-confidence about their creative skills than the males in the team. Thus, team psychological safety is likely to have stronger influences on thecreativity of females through their creative self-efficacy, as compared tomales.

Taken together, we propose an overall mediated moderation model of themultilevel interactive effects of team psychological safety and individual’ssex on creativity through individual creative self-efficacy. Formally stated, Hypothesis4: The indirect effect of sex on creativity through creative self-efficacy ismoderated by team psychological safety, such that for teams with high levels ofpsychological safety, females tend to have higher levels of creativeself-efficacy that further leads to creativity.