

Theoretical in gender
and creativity, no
clear



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Theoretical Background and Hypotheses
A growing reliance on team creativity in changing and uncertain organizational environments calls for an understanding of the factors that enable teams to be creative.

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

, 2006; Cox, 2002; Dollinger, & Centeno, 2005). While cognitive flexibility (Carter, 1985) and personality traits (Karwowski, 2013) have been considered compelling factors governing the relationship between an individual's sex and their creative performance, gender role identification paradigm remains central to our understanding of differences in creativity among men and women. An emerging literature on gender and creativity has raised more questions than answers about how men and women differ and resemble one another in their creative pursuits.

A pressing reason for that has been the dominant use of the 'main effects approach' in the extant creativity and gender literature (Kemmelmeyer & Walton, 2016). Barring a few studies (Baer, 1997; Kirkland, Kilpatrick & Barker, 1976), scholars have attempted to identify gender differences in creative behavior regardless of situational factors that significantly impact creative outcomes (Kemmelmeyer & Walter, 2016). To address the same, our study serves as an opportunity to revisit and explore the differences that exist in the creative outcomes of men and women and address the contextual features that influence the creative attributes of these individuals. Prior research on creativity has indicated that creativity is jointly affected by individual and contextual factors (Amabile, 1983).

The environment in which an individual works, to a large extent determines the actualization of his or her creative potential. The current study draws from the predominantly accepted interactionist perspective that views creativity as a function of the individual, work context and their interaction (Amabile, 1988; Woodman et al., 1993). The central argument proposed in this framework is that individuals with certain attributes are most likely to value the rewards and opportunities provided by a supportive work context, and thus exhibit higher creativity when both 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 the interactive effects of a range of individual attributes (e. g., creative personality, cognitive style, and intrinsic motivation) and work context on creativity, the effect of an individual's sex as an

individual attribute has not been considered together with the team psychological safety as a contextual characteristic.

Psychological safety is defined as a team attribute and refers to a shared belief held by the team that the work environment provided to them is safe for interpersonal risk taking (Anderson & West, 1998; Edmondson, 1999; Schein & Bennis, 1965). In this study we focus on team level psychological safety, and its propensity to enhance or reduce the differences in creative self-concept and thus creative performance among men and women. Gender Differences in Creative Self-Efficacy/Sex as a Predictor of Creative Self-Efficacy Alongside cognitive abilities, self-efficacy, resulting from an individual's confidence in their ability to control situations and handle problems, has been instrumental in determining the effectiveness of human functioning (Bandura, 1997; Paunonen & Hong, 2010). As for creativity, it is the creative self-efficacy, defined as an individual's confidence that he or she is capable of handling problems requiring creative thinking and creative functioning, mediates the relationship between creative potential and achievements (Choi, 2004; Schack, 1989; Tierney & Farmer, 2002, 2011). The central role occupied by creative self-efficacy (CSE) in predicting creative outcomes has made it an important topic of interest 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 of creativity and gender have mushroomed, these studies inform us little about the differences in creative self-concept i. e. - creative self-efficacy between women and men. Despite the lack of clear

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differences in creative potential between the two sexes (Baer & Kaufman, 2008), there has been empirical evidence suggesting that women succeed less often than men in creative achievements (Abraham & Valentine-French, 1991). The mystery no longer exists about why there are more eminent men than women in the creative field. The cultural values, social roles, and sexist thinking have been recognized as key reasons for the comparative lack of creative accomplishment by women (Helson, 1990).

These factors have not only led to the structuring of social roles in a way that women lack the opportunity to be creative achievers but has also fostered a sense of disbelief in women regarding their own creative potential. Ruth & Birren (1985) identified that women experienced difficulties in externalizing their inner creative processes and possessed a lower need of achievement in creative endeavors as compared to men. They argued that the differences were not inherent, 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 'male hubris-female humility' bias stating that men indeed perceive their general intellect to be higher. As these perceptions are reinforced by parents who recognize their son's intelligence to be higher than their daughter's, and children identify the 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 sexes are usually weak, the results continue to favor men (Beghetto, 2006; Karwowski, 2011b). Men not only perceive their creativity at a higher level, but also engage in overestimating the same, resulting in

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higher results in creative self-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 find social objectives more important than the goals connected with creative achievements (Eagly et al., 2000; Piirto, 1991). Since creative activity requires the tolerance of ambiguity (Zenasni, Besancon, & Lubart, 2008), it conflicts with the more conventional feminine identity (Taylor, 2011), thereby leading women to engage more in tasks of maintaining social harmony and interconnectedness, than to participate in the perceived masculinized creative thinking process. Additionally, according to the role congruity theory, the potential for prejudicial behaviors against females follows from the incongruity perception between gender roles and task roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). As creativity inherently involves risks (Tesluk, Farr, & Klein, 1997), the dominant conception of the creative thinker presents a highly masculinized construal of the creative thought process associated with agentic qualities that are more typically ascribed to men than to women (Proudfoot, Kay & Koval, 2015).

This perceived connection between creative thinking and the stereotypically masculine characteristics results in potential prejudicial bias against females following from the dissimilarity in behavior and expectations that people typically have about creative thinkers. Creative behavior by women is viewed as a violation of injunctive norms of the female gender role. Thus, in order to abide by the prescribed gender roles, women refrain from engaging in creative activity, resulting in a reduced level of confidence about their

creative skills. We therefore propose that owing to the internalization of stereotypical gender-appropriate behavior regarding creativity, females will have reduced levels of CSE as compared to their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 1: Compared to males, females tend to have lower levels of creative self-efficacy. The critical role of psychological safety Creativity does not just happen, it evolves through a trial-and-error process. The innate nature of creativity is that it involves risk taking. Individuals in order to produce something novel and useful, have to be willing to try and become comfortable with the possibility of failing (Tesluk, Farr, & Klein, 1997).

While tendency to be risk-averse or risk-seeking is an individual characteristic, a key motivation for employees to be creative is provided by the work environment. A work environment that ensures that the employees feel encouraged to take risks and break out of routine and safe ways of doing things, fosters creativity. Such an environment is referred to as being psychologically safe. The blame or punishment for failure emerging as a possible consequence of the new idea implementation is not assigned to an individual or team (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Edmondson, 1999). Scholars have established, for organizations where creativity is a valued outcome, fostering an environment where employees are willing to experiment with new ideas and are open to communicating and seeking input from others about new ideas, without the fear of being reprimanded, judged or ridiculed, has been positively linked to creativity (Amabile and Gryskiewicz 1987; De Dreu & West, 2001; Leventhal, 1976; Shalley and Gilson, 2004).

Psychological safety focuses on a belief about a group norm that the team is safe to employ one's self without fear of damaging consequences of self-

image, status or career (Anderson & West, 1998; Edmondson, 1999; Kahn 1990; Schein, 1965), such that when psychological safety is present, team members think less about the potential negative consequences of expressing a new or different idea than they would otherwise.

The theoretical argument underlying the interest in assessing the impact of psychological safety on creative self-efficacy of the team is fairly intuitive. Psychological safety is presumed to enhance the expectancy of engaging in creative behaviors by removing barriers of fear, uncertainty, and self-defensiveness that possibly impede those behaviors. It creates an environment in which team members feel confident to engage in the risky creative behaviors that promote experimentation thereby facilitating the creation of novel and useful products and services. In a context of a psychologically safe environment, having removed the barriers to think and act creatively, it follows that the creative self-efficacy of a group will be high. Greater psychological safety in a team should, therefore, enhance the confidence the team has in their own ability to perform creatively.

Hypothesis 2: Teams with high levels of psychological safety are more likely to have high levels of creative self-efficacy. Interaction effect of individual's sex and team psychological safety on CSE. Scholar has identified an overarching explanation of the lag in women's creative productivity as the unavailability of a conducive environment to develop creative expertise. The context in which an individual's creative performance is judged has been different for men and women. The relative lack of supporting environments, the demands and expectations of society for women to ascribe to the communal characteristics aligned with the stereotypical gender roles contrary

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to the agentic creative role (Proudfoot, Kay & Koval, 2015), and the restrained availability of resources has hindered women's creative growth in virtually all domains (Helson, 1991a, 1992b, 2004; Simonton, 1992, 1994).

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

(Roberts & Pennebaker, 1994; Benyamini, Leventhal, & Leventhal, 2000; Roberts & Afshar, 2007). Therefore, one might speculate that men are more likely to self-assess their creativity based on the affect they experience due to intrinsic factors than women who require extrinsic cues of reassurance from the environment to be able to feel confident about their creative

potential and skills. Because previous research has not generally examined contextual variability in such gender differences, this research revisits this issue and investigates gender differences in self-concept of creativity in a psychologically safe work environment (Kemmelmeyer, 2016). We posit that in teams with high psychological safety, females feel more confident about their creative abilities, as being more sensitive to external factors they perceive the psychologically safe work team as an environment where they feel accepted and respected beyond the stereotypical bias. The psychological safety removes barriers to expressions of creativity by women and reduces the perceived cost of engaging in the risky creative activities.

This safety net is required by females more so than their male counterparts. Owing to the perceived agentic nature of creative processes, males are expected to and supported in being creative; sufficient resources, opportunities and motivation is provided to males to engage in creative behavior, which leads them to have a stronger sense of belief about their own creativity. On the other hand, engagement in creative behavior by females is considered an atypical behavior not aligned with their prescribed gender role.

Thus, to confide in their 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 psychological safety, are higher for women in terms of increasing their creative self-efficacy. Hypothesis 3: There is a cross-level moderation effect of psychological safety on the relationship between sex and creative self-efficacy, such that for teams with high levels of psychological safety, females tend to have higher levels of creative self-efficacy. Finally, as the relationship

between creative self-efficacy and creativity has been already established 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 indirect effect on creativity through the creative self-efficacy of individuals.

On the basis of the interactionist approach to creativity (George, 2007; Shalley et al., 2004; Zhou, 1998), individual's sex and team psychological safety will jointly affect creative self-efficacy, which in turn will predict an individual's creativity. Following the same logic as for Hypotheses 1-3, we posit that females will need more team psychological safety from the organization to develop greater self-confidence about their creative skills than the males in the team. Thus, team psychological safety is likely to have stronger influences on the creativity of females through their creative self-efficacy, as compared to males.

Taken together, we propose an overall mediated moderation model of the multilevel interactive effects of team psychological safety and individual's sex on creativity through individual creative self-efficacy.

Formally stated, Hypothesis 4: The indirect effect of sex on creativity through creative self-efficacy is moderated by team psychological safety, such that for teams with high levels of psychological safety, females tend to have higher levels of creative self-efficacy that further leads to creativity.