

Essence of Employee Creativity and Innovation for Global Sustainable Business Development: Visualizing the Major Domains

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Abstract

The people factor at work is the crux of present-day organizations across the globe. To bridge the gap between sustainable development and employee performance the context of human creativity, innovation and novelty is of prime concern. The objective of the study is to explore and investigate the prominent domains and items that may be considered in line with employee creativity and sustainable business development globally. The paper makes an attempt to reveal the prominent domains and items that may be considered in line with employee creativity and innovation for sustainable development for the organizations of 21st century millennium.

Keywords: Creativity, Innovation, Sustainable, Employee, Organization

The Notion of Sustainable Development & HR Factor

Sustainable development is the most persuasive thought for present-day organizations. It is concerned with how business can contribute to some of the most significant challenges that the world faces today – from climate change and biodiversity, to working conditions and health amongst the poorest in the world. In today's digital world sustainability and sustainable development can be aptly coined as 'long-term', 'durable', 'sound', and 'systematic' - have become a critical issue for the mankind and for business in particular. Organizations have found

themselves in need to develop more sustainable business models, in which the HR function has a predominant role to play. In order to communicate the sustainability vision and mission, diagnose the existing capabilities of the organization, to implement sustainable business practices and drive change toward sustainability mindset (Docherty, Forslin, Shani & Kira, 2002), HR must be equipped with the capabilities to do so. It has been opined that the nexus between Sustainability and HR is an intangible one. For the HR professional, being an "employer of choice" is synonymous with sustainability. In the domain of people factor the challenge for HR managers is to create the opportunities and incentives that maximize employee contributions to corporate performance – to help the organization for achieving the optimum output out of its people's talents. It can be aptly said that "A sustainable development mindset pushes us to be better – it has encouraged a focus on performance, a consistent eagerness to improve and continual learning" (Wright, McMahan & McWilliams, 1994). Business houses must continually enhance their workforces' skills to respond to the emerging demands of customers, investors and society as a whole – requirements that change with the ways that people live and work. Virtually one of the main canons of sustainability is optimizing the positive benefits of a business' operations for all stakeholders. The congruence of sustainability with human resource factor can be witnessed through training, engagement, employee communication, sustainability-focused volunteering and reducing waste in Talent acquisition process (Mariappanadar, 2003). Organization opt for different practices for the different needs of the employee for motivating them to work efficiently and create a

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sense of belongingness towards the organization. This makes the employee satisfied and loyal and thus helps in retaining the best talent for the sustainable development of the organization. Sustainable development specialists are no longer just responsible for the management of philanthropic initiatives, community engagement programmes or environmental impact assessments in the present day's organizations. The role of 21st century HR managers are tuned to act as agents of change; to develop the structures, systems, ways of working and personal values that will support the organization's sustainable development objectives (Wirtenberg, Harmon, Russel, Fairfield, 2007). The purpose of the study is to examine employee creativity and novelty and domains associated with moving organizations toward greater sustainability and the role Human Resources is and might be playing in that process.

Unleashing Employee Creativity for Sustainable Development

The hub of organizational excellence rests on the human element at the workspace. Present-day high performing organizations are mostly inclined to bring out the best in the people. There was a time when the concept of creativity was only associated with writers, painters, musicians and allied artistic professions. But with the ever-increasing necessity of cultivating a unique brand personality, the need for creative thinking has transitioned from the arts into everyday business. An understanding is drawn by the business houses to nurture the passion of the employees to achieve better results. The very essence of organization escalation is deeply rooted with the continuous process of transforming employee potentials and stimulating the spirit of employee vision- all-encompassing for long-lasting growth and prosperity (Barney, 1991). Harmonizing considerable interest of novelty and intelligence among the workforce is the call for the day. Twenty-first-century organizations have long been concerned with boosting employee creativity to achieve better results. Creativity is the mental and social process used to create ideas, concepts and associations that lead to the exploitation of innovative and new ideas. This creative insight is the nucleolus of the specialized nutrients to flourish and promote divergent levels of thinking. Employees make valuable creative contributions in a wide variety of ways and that means creative work can increase work satisfaction and

engagement to achieve everlasting output. Antecedents of employee creativity have close connectivity with the personal characteristics, job characteristics and team characteristics influencing employee creativity. Business houses hire the right people, put them in the right jobs and improve their skills to reorient themselves into a creative resource of the organizations. Many business owners are recognising that building creativity into their own and their employees, in turn, encourage valuable innovations. The phenomenon to unearth hidden nuggets of individual ideas paves the way *to create an environment where an employee can unleash their creativity. In today's rapidly changing business environment, employee creativity is quite pertinent for organisations to have competitive advantages for an organizational innovation, survival and sustainable development (Ehnert, 2006).*

Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of the current paper is to identify and define a set of select domains and items within in tune with the generation of employee creativity and innovation for sustainable development.

This specific objective of the can be understood in terms of the following detailed objectives of this paper:

- To define the domains.
- To define the items relating to each domain on the basis of literature review. This is being done towards the preparation of a scale as a research tool in this area.

Open Innovation & Knowledge Dissemination for Organizational Sustainance

Strategic ideas and the locus of innovation with the process of ongoing knowledge creation have crossed organisational boundaries in the world of uncertainty. In the era of wide digitalization the promising firms internalizes innovation components as the core to its strategy to visualize innovation streams associated firm's competencies in order to ensure sustained progression. Open innovation is most prominently observed in open source software development. This open-source software innovation regime creates avenues

of new markets blending intrinsic and extrinsic self-motivated, self-selected, self-governed attributes of human skill and behaviour (Burns & Stalker, 1966). The flow of inexpensive computation power with ease of communication permits a fundamentally unique form of innovation identified with sharing-openness-quality and free of formal boundaries and traditional hierarchy. The prominence of solution generation or selection knowledge by the organizations firmly induces the wider use of open boundaries. Under varying, unpredictable and ubiquitous conditions, open innovation as exemplified by the communities and contests, transforms the economies and social organizations of innovation activities (Dahlander & Gann, 2010). The variables underlying for open and closed innovation modes may be complementary but in cases might be substituted dominate the innovative capacities of the new incumbents and building a capacity-based R&D combinative relations for the growing organizations. The congruence of innovative forces, governance, intellectual property, professional and organizational identity, organizational cultures respond to the personal capabilities of the workforce at an increasingly acceleration (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005).

Team Work as a Creativity Device – Pathway for Development Goals

It can be unanimously agreed that team formation works as a strong commitment device in the process of creativity and novelty. In the present day environment, individuals have varying preferences, opinions and perspectives at the organizational domain. Through relational contracts involving teamwork, mutual promise and frequent interactions lead to a situation of self-assessment which in turn paves the way for better performance inducing inventiveness and genuine aspect of the workforce (Bar-Isaac, 2007). Teamwork begins by building trust. The underlying forces behind team building can be projected in Fig. 1. More recently the benefits of teamwork are rather intuitive driven by repeated interaction, mutual monitoring and self-assessment and are ways to increase employee commitment fostering creativity and innovation. Forming a team can serve as a prudent device in enhancing individual effort levels creating avenues for self-growth and self-identity in the process of productivity and performance (Bartling, 2011). Building blocks of team activities can yield a relational framework and

interesting implications of various development projects. It is widely agreed that teamwork can help to overcome an individual's self-control problems and in turn helps to enforce cooperation within a team with beneficial results. The teamwork agents can actually render better inputs in the process of assimilating the innovative capacities of an individual.

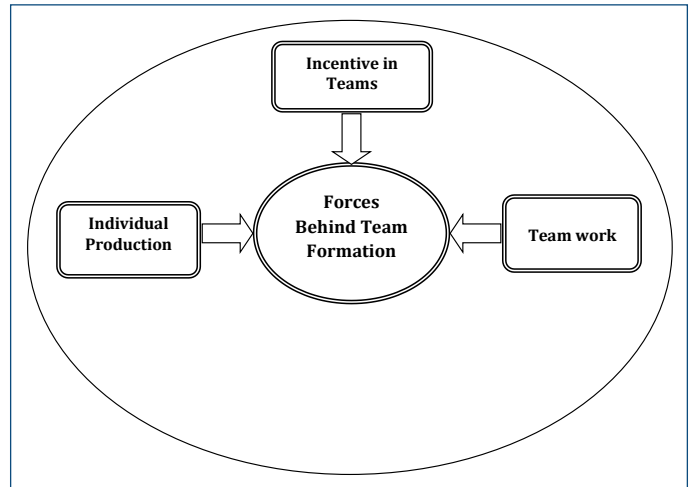


Fig. 1: Constituents of Team Formation

Truth Telling Value: Constituent of Innovation Fostering Success

In the Internet Age of World Wide Web, social networks and instant communication the foundations of honesty, honour, fairness and traditional value is gradually getting weakened with the passage of time. The virtuous circle of loyalty and trust faces new social networking environments such as “Facebook” and “Yelp” as a preferred business orientation. Most business houses today operate in distributed ways, in networked and distributed environments. Truth value markings possess the creditability and positivity, eliminating falsehoods or ungrounded statements and uphold creativity in the grey area between fact and fiction (Bhide & Stevenson, 1990). As the world comes to demand, truthful, high-quality information, business opportunities arise for those who wish to leverage truth-telling. The new value of the potential of truthful information accelerates new management practices in the form of novelty and inventiveness. Managers have a vital interest in sustaining business goodwill and profit free from all competitive turmoil and in turn benefits directly from a focus on truth-

telling. Truth-telling should be a principal measured objective for all Internet-age leaders for the long term survival of the organizations. Businesses need to adopt innovative approaches with the emphasis of Integrity and thereby assuring an increasing level of honesty. The domain of honest dealings, guaranteed trustworthiness, straight talk, effective management techniques strengthen organizations that like to compete on brand promises, especially service quality, reliability and safety. The notion of trusted information enables the business enterprises to create and exploit competitive opportunities for trustworthiness, distinction and differentiation. Truthfulness serves as life-blood for potential businesses that erodes deceptive, negative and inappropriate actions in the present day competitive infosphere (Francis, 1995).

Reframing New Organizations Forms for Business Innovation & Sustainability

It is however very difficult to draw lines of demarcation in order to explore the metaphors for creating a new logic on organizing for better performance. So far, management of the twenty-first century appears not much different from management in the late twentieth century still the continuous practice of developing an organizational special design perspective creates avenues for the managers to better succeed in a complex, volatile and turbulent business world. Organizational limits are difficult to define and to observe. The image of organization as an organizational domain can be identified through six heuristics that provide a motivated explanation for formulation of basic organizational model is depicted in Fig. 2.

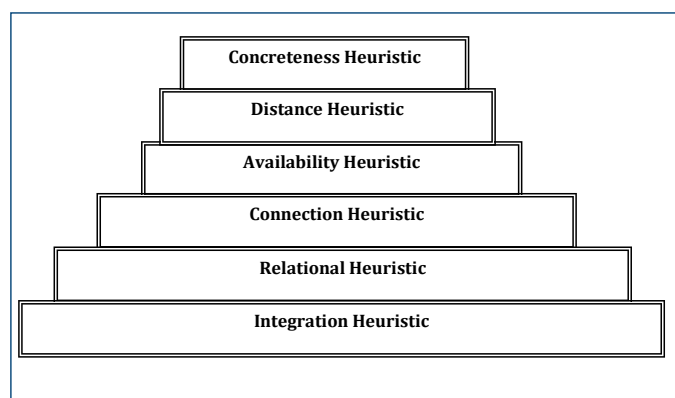


Fig. 2: Levels of Six Heuristic

The makeover of traditional organizations into resource-based organizations created a breakthrough in organizational theory and practice. Resource-based organizations are identified with Dynamic Capability, Absorptive Capacity and Transformative Capacity and these capabilities and capacities improve an organization's ability to convert its input into the valuable outcome. The foundation of creating new organizations is to pursue goals through knowledge, vision and organizations design. Good organization designs bring about new management innovation, organizational thinking and new organizational forms for better performance.

Effective Thinking Strategy for Facilitating Ideation for Continuity

The aspect of diversity and professional expertise is embedded within the layers of core knowledge, unity of thought, communication, reflection, appreciation of failure and positive questioning. The impetus for facilitating innovation is through the ideation process and thus requires effective thinking (Burger & Starbird, 2012). Effective thinking is not likely predominant in the present-day business houses but the conglomeration of various settings, skills, attributes and actions contribute to effective innovative and learning outcomes. Studies reveal that the behaviours of effective thinking in deeply rooted with the five Greek elements viz., earth, fire, air, water and quintessential. Though these behaviours do not project the physical form of elements, they are projected through a philosophical perspective as a means to analyse the ideation process depicted in Fig. 3.

The Five Elements in the Ideation Process viz.

Earth: Represents a deep understanding of a situation, setting and content.

Fire: Represents learning through failure and to embrace risk and reflection.

Air: Builds depth of greater understanding through continuous enquiry.

Water: Represents the connection points of deep understanding with findings and enquiry for future collaboration.

Quintessential: It is the actualization of the aggregate information and facilitates movement within a collation.

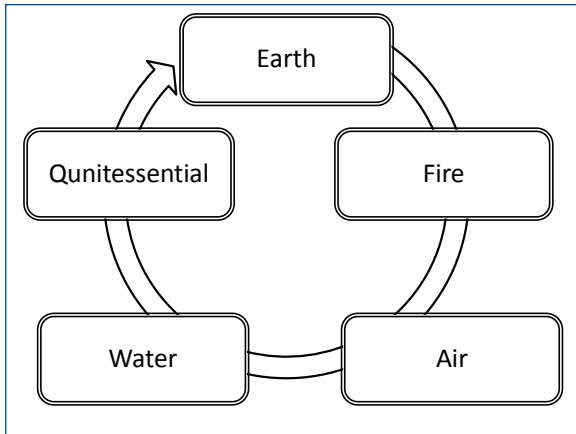


Fig. 3: Five Elements in the Ideation Process

It can be visualized that the culture of an organization encompasses through ideation process (earth), faces development stage (fire), undergoes evaluation and process (air), meets with the directive and knowledge sharing stages (water). Thus in order to advance the ideation process, effective thinking is an essential element to the innovation process to embrace leaning and movement in days to come (Senge, 2006).

Linking Proactive Personality with Employee Creativity

In today's rapidly changing and decentralized environment anticipation of situational contingencies cannot be assessed in the day to day business operations. Moreover, managers cannot specify behaviours that they expect from organizational members. Proactivity at work is crucial for individual and is quite pertinent for present-day organizations. Proactive personality refers to individuals' disposition toward engaging in active role orientations (Amabile, 1997). Employee creativity refers to the creation of valuable, useful new products, services, ideas, procedures, or processes by individuals working together at the organizational system. Employees with proactive personalities actively initiate changes to achieve goals. Proactive individuals are especially effective at looking better ways to do things on the job in the best possible outcome with available opportunities. Creativity is a core thread that binds together difference proactive behaviours with an effort to create a more hospitable and productive work environment (Ashford & Black, 1996). It can be observed that proactive personality is positively

associated with an individual's innovative behaviour such as developing new ideas and showing innovation in one's job. A structural relationship between proactive personality, employee creativity, career satisfaction and perceived insider status can be drawn for effective employee creativity. It is noteworthy that the indirect effects of proactive personality shape work environments with a positive impact on employee creativity and showed that proactive employees are more likely to be creative and develop novel ideas on the workspace.

Research Methodology

The study has been based on secondary literature survey. Based on literature study and understanding, the Broad Domains essentially considered in the paper are Managing Innovation & Knowledge Distribution for Employee Creativity; Managing Teamwork for Employee Creativity; Upholding Truth Telling Value for employee Creativity; Managing Effective Thinking Strategy for employee Creativity; Managing linkage between Proactive Personality with employee creativity. These would be considered as independent variables and the notion of employee creativity and innovation for sustainable development as dependent variables. The scale design that is an attempt in this paper revolves around the identification of whether the independent variables (Broad Domains) effect the dependent variable i.e. whether $Y = f(x)$ and to what extent if Y implies Employee Creativity and Innovation and x implies the Broad domains drafted in the scale.

Findings and Discussion

From the literature explicated in the paper, a clear attempt can be made to identify the items under the broad domains revealed from the study. The five broad domains identified in the areas of Employee Creativity and Innovation for sustainable development, Open Innovation & Knowledge Dissemination, Teamwork as a creativity device, Truth Telling Value: Constituent of Innovation, Reframing New Organization forms for Business Innovation, Linking Proactive personality and Employee Creativity are outlined as:

- Managing innovation & knowledge distribution for employee creativity.
- Managing teamwork for employee creativity.

- Upholding truth-telling value for employee creativity.
- Managing effective thinking strategy for employee creativity.
- Managing linkage between proactive personality with employee creativity.

Each of the above domains can be independently considered to arrive at a handful of items for the scale. The items have been generated from a detailed literature study which has been a significant part of this paper.

The following items can be comprehended as –

Managing Innovation & Knowledge Distribution for Employee Creativity

- Managing innovation & knowledge distribution for employee creativity.
- Strategic ideas across boundaries promote creativity
- Internationalization of innovative capacities enhances creativity.
- Open source software innovation enhances employee skill and behaviour.
- Prominence of knowledge selection induces creativity.
- Innovative capacities of new incumbents accelerates innovative potential.

Managing Teamwork for Employee Creativity

- Team formation enhance employee commitment towards creativity.
- Teamwork induces better performance with inventiveness.
- The forces of Teamwork viz., interaction, mutual monitoring, self-assessment fosters employee creativity and potential.
- Team formation creates avenues for self-growth and self-identity.
- Teamwork promotes cooperation within the team and helps to overcome self-control problems.
- Teamwork agents render vital inputs in assimilating an individual's innovative capacities.

Upholding Truth Telling Value for employee Creativity

- Honesty-Honour-Fairness promotes truth telling component for employee creativity.

- Truth value possesses creditability and positivity upholding creativity.
- Truthful information and practices supports novelty and inventiveness.
- Truth telling component is the principal measure for long term survival for the organizations.
- Truthful functions enhances the integrity and trustworthiness of the organizations .
- Truthful act serves as a life-blood for organizations ensuring quality-reliability-safety.

Managing Effective Thinking Strategy for employee Creativity

- New logic exploration enhances better performance.
- Continuous practice for development perspective creates avenue for managers.
- Organizational domain identified by heuristics provides motivational platform.
- Resource-based organizations are identified as the prominent innovative agency.
- New organizations promote vision ad organizational design.
- Organizational designs enhance new management innovation and reforms.

Managing Linkage Between Proactive Personality with Employee Creativity

- Proactivity at work ensures employee creativity.
- Proactive personality orients employee behaviour towards innovation.
- Employee with proactive personalities induces to achieve goals.
- Proactive employees brings best possible outcomes.
- Linkage between creativity ad proactive behaviours creates productive work environment.
- Positive association with proactive personality and innovative attitude develops employee satisfaction.

Thus the above items have been proposed through this paper as the focal means within each of the five independent domains within this proposed scale. The items and the domains are to be tested for statistical reliability and validity subsequently through further research study towards the creation of this scale.

Summary and Conclusions

Sustainability is an emerging phenomenon in HRM practice and research. Organizations are increasingly connecting the equations between sustainability and its impact on their organization. Trust and Reliability upon the dedicated task force of the organizations have opened dynamic sphere of organizational sustainability. As a result, more and more organizations are seeking ways to transform themselves into sustainable organizations. Organizations are concentrating on economic, environmental and social impact amidst changing corporate environment for long-term survival, growth and prosperity. HR departments of present-day organizations have extended their significant role and potential impact in driving an organization's sustainability agenda. Sustainability is an issue, which in turn creates potential advantages for organizations and positively impacts the employees and other stakeholders. The challenge HR is now facing is to step up to this call and develop the necessary capabilities to help foster greater business and world sustainability. Furthermore, it is employees that drive the sustainability agenda and implement sustainability plans on the ground level. People drive a sustainable culture and bring about enduring change in the organization that revolves around people resulting sustenance and prosperity. It has unanimously agreed that the orientation of employee creativity within organizations has the potential to significantly impact wider sustainable development for the 21st-century business houses in the real sense of the term. The paper therefore humbly unleashes the proposal of a scale in the process of its making in order to measure employee creativity and innovation vis-a-vis five identified broad independent domain. The essentiality of this study is in the fact that employee innovation and creativity are a pathway towards business sustainability in the long run over time.

Notes

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