

## **UNDERSTANDING CREATIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG INDONESIAN RADIO STATION MANAGERS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of the article is to increase understanding in some personal characteristics affecting creative performance among Indonesian radio station managers' leadership context. Organizational researchers and managers alike have long held the view that individual creativity is critical for organizational success. The first element of improvement creativity, that is, the 'person', is obvious. New ideas are not generated or implemented by organizations or technology, but come into being through efforts of dedicated people. Thus, it is important to understand people's personality, motivations, skills, level of experiences, and psychological preferences. A number of propositions for future research in relational of individual creativity model are also suggested.

**Keywords:** *Creativity; Personal characteristics; Motivation*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesian commercial radio has emerged from the New Order era (starting 1967) with a legal and economic framework with a purpose to resist the monopoly control by government that centralized only in Jakarta. Radio, being a verbal medium and relatively cheap agency to run, is continuously developing as a communication tool at a grass roots level. Since the emerging of the Reformation era in 1998, the Indonesian radio landscape has undergone important changes. One new development has been the emergence of so-called community radio, which is meant as an alternative to state radio and commercial radio. Community radio practitioners have been struggled for legal acceptance of their activities in the new Broadcasting Law. As a consequence, commercial private broadcasting in Indonesia has expanded rapidly and at the same time saturated the radio frequencies, especially in big cities, e.g. Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Semarang and Yogyakarta. Therefore, community radio operators merely select a free frequency and broadcast on it, using homemade low-powered transmitters and cheap broadcasting equipment. Interestingly, they were operating without applying for government permission (Senevirantne, 2003). It has been recorded that the total number of radio broadcasting in Indonesia are 1217 radio stations (PRSSNI, 2005). The amount has indicated that this industry faces high competition. Since the appearance of information technology revolution, radio broadcasting business faces various challenges from the continuously renewal of information and news, and to create new and creative entertainment programs. The rapid growth of radio broadcasting business imposes specific challenges on the development of competitive advantage through excellence and unique organizational elements such as speed, mobility (activity), learning ability, and individual or team work capabilities, which to represent global competition (Satria, 2002).

In today's rapidly changing work environment, it is critical for managers to do their best to ensure and realize that creativity is one of the most important elements in order to achieve high performance. Considering this, researchers (for examples, Amabile

& Gyskiewicz, 1988; Feist, 1998; Cooper, Clasen, Silva-Jalonen, & Butler, 1999; Ford & Gioia, 2000; Conti, Collins & Picariello, 2001; Baer, Oldham & Cummings, 2003; Farmer, Tierney & McIntyre, 2003; and DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004) have focused on the understanding of how the myriad of interacting potential creators (i.e., managers) and managers' operating context which can foster their performance. Much of researchers' works have examined the effects of personality by using either Gough's (1979) Creative Personal Scale (CPS) or the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The CPS measure is intended to provide an index of an individual's overall creative potential, whereas the FFM is intended to provide important sets of characteristics that are expected to affect individuals' creativity. Results of previous studies provided some support of the expected positive relationship between CPS and creativity (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Feist, 1998), but all of the FFM dimensions have several components that they hang together as five relatively stable factors (Feist, 1998).

A lot of suggestions regarding creativity have been proposed by Tierney, Farmer, and Graen (1999). They proposed that it would be beneficial to examine creativity in a broader social and organizational context and also extend the knowledge in promoting work creativity. In particular, Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin (1993) suggest that work group appears to hold promise as a social influence on creativity. Although some studies (e.g., McCrimmon, 1995; Oldham et al., 1996; McFadzean, 1998; Cooper et al., 1999; Rickards & Moger, 2000; Taggar, 2002; and Fagan, 2004) have examined work group facets in relation to creative output, additional research is warranted. Given the complex of multiplicative nature of creativity, future studies should focus on additional contextual factor interactions in order to provide better understanding of how creativity unfolds in work setting. Finally, expected result of future study would also advocate the future use of a more inclusive perspective when investigating the impact of leadership on phenomenon of interest. Thus, expansion in terms of how the study determines and operationalizes leadership may elicit a more accurate portrayal of leadership's role that had been overlooked in previous study.

Realizing the importance of extending creativity study, hence, this article will focus on a conceptual model of individual creativity in order to explain the relationship among creativity-relevant variables.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past two decades, most theorists have defined creativity as the development of ideas about products, practices, services or procedures that are novel and potentially useful to organization (Amabile, 1996; Zhou & Shalley, 2003). Ideas are considered novel if they are unique relative to other ideas currently available in the organization. Ideas are useful if they have potential for direct or indirect value to the organization, in either short or long term. Thus, given this definition, creativity can range from suggestions for incremental adaptations in procedures to the extending of radical changes (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988). The definition makes no assumptions about the relative value of incremental versus radical ideas. Therefore, it may be that in some circumstances management might consider incremental ideas desirable, whereas in other circumstances more radical ideas might be valued.

Creativity is an element which many people believe is a vital ingredient in achieving excellence in a wide variety of fields, yet creativity is a “loose” concept which is difficult to represent by words alone (Ford, 1996). There is a great deal of disagreement and confusion in the literature surrounding the term ‘creativity’. As Hudson (1970) pointed out, creativity can be evaluated from the performance on a psychological test. Several authors who have tried to categorize the definitions of creativity have come to the conclusion that ‘creativity is almost infinite’ (Torrance, 1988; Taylor, 1988). Since the early twentieth century, creativity has been viewed as an aspect of intelligence; a largely unconscious process; one of the stages of problem solving; and an associative process (Stavridou & Furnham, 1996). In the trait approach, there are many models that are helpful when considering creative thinking, which serve to demonstrate that thinking is an entirely individual process. Koestler (as cited in Cook, 1998) identified a set of interdependent dimensions that affect an individual thinking, that are: degrees of consciousness, degrees of verbalization, degrees of abstraction, degrees of flexibility, type and intensity of motivation, realistic versus autistic thought, dominance of outer or inner environment, learning and performing, and routine and originality. Considering these dimensions, the critical issue of interest concerns the question, “Have you ever been talking to someone about their ideas or a problem and found that their ideas seem to be in outer space compared to your own views on the same subject?”, and “What aspects you think would you change to convey your ideas in a way that the other person would understand?”. Taking this one stage further, it is helpful to separate the two approaches to thinking that are relevant to creativity. Cook (1998) mentioned that two fundamentally different thinking styles are required throughout the process, that are, convergent thinking which focuses on an issue in depth (to specify precisely), and divergent thinking which looks at the issue from the widest possible set of perspectives. ‘Divergent thinking’ (DT) is considered as a basic thinking style that characterizes creativity. DT is a construct that originally presented by Guilford (as cited in Stavridou et al., 1996), consisting of abilities such as ‘fluency’, ‘originality’, ‘flexibility’ and ‘elaboration’. Several DT tests have been constructed and used to measure trait-creativity. However, DT tests could be considered as estimations of the potential for creative thought.

We know that success in a product and service innovation depends largely on creativity. Without a healthy and continuing supply of ideas, organizations would cease to exist. One fundamental challenge facing organization leaders is how to profit from individual potential and enhance it so that it produces organizational innovation and excellence (Cook, 1998).

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSITIONS**

A review of the published study on creativity showed that enhancing the individual creative performance is a necessary step when organizations are to achieve competitive advantage (Oldham et al., 1996). Woodman et al. (1993) have proposed an interactionist model of creative behavior at the individual level. In their model, Woodman et al. (1993) suggested that creativity is the complex product of a person’s behavior in a given situation. The situation is characterized in terms of the contextual and social influences that either facilitate or inhibit creative accomplishment. The person is influenced by

various antecedent conditions, and he or she brings to bear traits (personality). Within the person, personality aspects of the mind are related to creative behavior.

Therefore, we will adopt the interactionist model of organizational creativity (Woodman et al., 1993) that will make use some of the influence variables. The theoretical framework forwarded in this article (Figure 1) is an adaptation of the Interactionist Model of Organizational Creativity proposed by Woodman et al. (1993) and of the Leadership and Employee Creativity Model suggested by Tierney et al (1999).

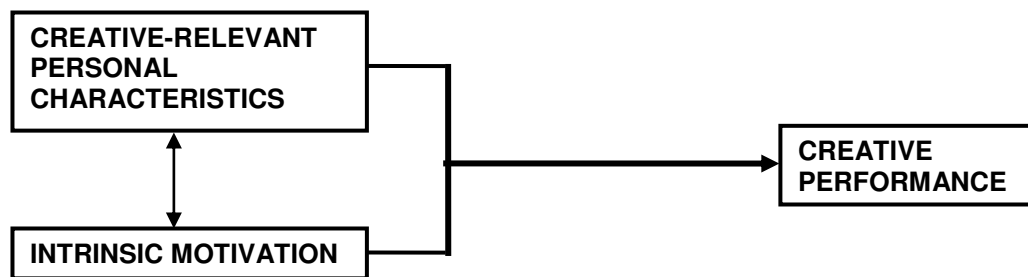


Figure 1 Posited relationships among all variables

In this article, we will discuss all the components that are believed to be the determinants of creative performance. We will start with a discussion of gap in the previous literature, follow by justification of framework and description of variables. Then, two main aspects related to creativity performance are highlighted. There are the relationship between creativity-relevant personal characteristics and creative performance.

In short, two important findings of previous studies have helped to create the foundation for the future research. Firstly, the studies that have suggested future study should consider personal factors and human relationship aspects in order to dig deeper into the importance of managers’ personality facets on creativity. Secondly, the studies that have suggested that managers’ ability and superiority should create situations in which their positive experiences are used to improve their organizational outcomes.

The framework (Figure 1) summarizes the ideas, variables, and relationships that will be explored in this article. The model will explore the direct relationships between the independent variables, that are, Creative-relevant personal characteristics and Intrinsic motivation with the dependent variable, creative performance.

The first predictor of the proposed model is personality. Personality traits have been examined as determinants of creativity in only a few studies (e.g. King, Walker & Broyles, 1996; Martindale & Dailey, 1996). To deal with the potential problem that has been expressed in earlier section of this article, a more comprehensive view of different personality traits is required as well as an understanding of the personality traits required to ensure creative achievement. Before discussing personality in detail, the definition of personality will be mentioned. The theoretical framework endorses the trait psychological view of personality. Traits are “dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions” (Costa et al, 1992). Traits

show some degree of consistency across situations and considerable stability over time. The variety of individual personality differences is almost endless, but the most important differences can be encoded into specific categories.

A large body of literature has focused on determining a set of personal characteristics and attributes associated with creative achievement (Barron & Harrington, 1981; Martindale et al., 1996). This is a potential to examine personal characteristics ranging from biographical factors to measures of cognitive styles and intelligence. Further research needs to demonstrate that a stable set of core personal characteristics, including broad interests, attraction to complexity, intuition, aesthetic sensitivity, toleration of ambiguity, and self-confidence, relate positively to measures of creative performance. A number of measurements have been developed that attempt to reliably assess these personal characteristics. One of the most widely used and respected measurement is Gough's Creative Personality Scale (CPS; Gough, 1979).

The second predictor of the present research is intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation has been cited as one of the most prominent personal qualities for the enhancement of creativity (Amabile et al., 1988). Motivational orientation may be partially shaped by the environment, but there is also evidence suggesting that motivation orientation is a stable trait like nature (e.g. Amabile et al., 1994). Intrinsic motivation energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action. It is manifested in behaviors such as playing, exploring, and challenge seeking that people often do for no external rewards. It is prototypic instance of human freedom or autonomy in that people engage in such activity with a full sense of willingness and volition (Deci et al., 1999). According to cognitive evaluation theory, intrinsic motivation is an inherent motivational tendency that has evolved because it entails many adaptive advantages, but it still requires environmental supports (Ryan et al., 2000). In addition, cognitive evaluation theory proposed that the necessary supports are opportunities to satisfy the innate needs for competence and self-determination (Ryan et al., 2000). The present research will measure the intrinsic motivation by using a 5-item instrument developed by Amabile's (1985) and Tierney's (1999) studies. The five items refer to enjoyment for doing activities related to generating ideas.

We will propose several suggestions to the directions for future research. As implications, potential avenues for future research might include examinations of several propositions. A number of propositions for future research in relational of individual creativity model are suggested. Propositions are proposed to test on the relationships as posited in the theoretical framework for empirical verifications. The following sub-section discusses the relationship among the constructs of the conceptual model, and introduces several propositions based on those relationships.

### ***Creativity-relevant personal characteristics and managers' creative performance***

The study for personality that correlates creativity has provided a diverse set of findings. Barron and Harrington (1981) mentioned that a core of personality traits has emerged from diverse areas. These characteristics include high valuation of esthetic qualities in experience, broad interests, attraction to complexity, high energy, independent of judgment, autonomy, intuition, self-confidence, ability to resolve

antinomies or to accommodate apparently opposite or conflicting traits in one's self-concept, and a firm sense of self as creative. Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1988) reported that traits of persistence, curiosity, energy, and intellectual honesty were consistently identified by research and development scientists as being important criteria for creativity. In addition, a number of studies have shown that highly creative people tend to have high internal locus of control (Woodman et al., 1993).

In Gough's (1979) analysis of the creativity-relevant personal characteristics, ratings of creativity from expert judges, faculty members, assessment staff, and interviewers were examined for 12 groups of individuals from a variety of domains (e.g., mathematicians, architects, and research scientists) who had completed the Adjective Check List (ACL). In two cross validation samples, Gough (1979) reported that the creativity-relevant personal characteristics correlated significantly with ratings of creative performance.

Kaduson and Schaefer's (1991) study has also supported the validity of the creativity-relevant personal characteristics measurement. The study findings showed that high on the Creative Personality Scale which was introduced by Gough (1979) and the Problem-Solving/Creativity scale were found to strive for self-determined reasons, to strive toward greater Self-determination, and to evidence higher Self-determination in measures of both motivational orientation and self-concept. These findings also showed that creative subjects respondents perceived their parents to be more autonomy supportive. Results are interpreted in terms of a general disposition to be self-determining that may help attune creative people to a deeper level of cognitive resources and capacities.

In a more interesting study, Meneely and Portillo (2005) examined domain-specific relationships between creative personality traits, cognitive styles, and creative performance in design. Design students ( $n = 39$ ) completed the Adjective Check List (ACL) and the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) to gauge personality and cognitive style, respectively. The ACL was scored by using the Domino's Creativity Scale (ACL-Cr) to identify creative personality traits. The respondents also completed a design task measurement to evaluate their creativity by using the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT). Findings indicated that participants showing flexibility between cerebral, limbic, right, and left modes of thinking had significantly higher mean scores on creative personality than did those who exhibited a more entrenched cognitive style. Creative personality traits (ACL-Cr) significantly predicted creative performance on the design task. While cognitive style (HBDI) did not predict creative performance, flexibility between styles was significantly correlated to the creative personality. In sum, the study reinforced that individuals exhibiting adaptable thinking appear to possess the flexibility necessary to design creatively and potentially transform the domain with original and imaginative solutions.

Much of the early studies examining the effects of personality used Gough's (1979) Creative Personality Scale (CPS). The 30-item CPS was used to assess creativity-relevant personal characteristics. The CPS measure is intended to provide an index of an individual's overall creative potential. Among the CPS items are broad interests, attraction to complexity, intuition, aesthetic sensitivity, toleration of ambiguity, and self-confidence.

Those who have score high on the measure are expected to approach problems with broad interests that enable them to recognize divergent information and opinions (Barron et al., 1981). In addition, these individuals are thought to possess the self-confidence and tolerance for ambiguity to be patient with competing views, and to persist in developing their own original ideas.

Results of previous studies provide some support for the expected positive relation between CPS and creativity (Feist, 1998; Oldham et al., 1996; Zhou et al., 2001). The results of their studies indicated a positive and significant correlation between the CPS and creativity. These findings imply that when the score index of creativity-relevant personality characteristic is high, so their creative performance tends to increase. On the contrary, if the score index of creativity-relevant personality characteristic is low, so their creative performance tends to decrease. Based on these premises, the following proposition is formulated:

**Proposition 1:** *Creativity-relevant personal characteristics are positively related to managers' creative performance.*

### ***Intrinsic motivation and managers' creative performance***

Intrinsic motivation has been cited as one of the most prominent personal qualities for the enhancement of creativity (Amabile, 1983; Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1988). Motivational orientation may be partially shaped by the environment, but there is also evidence suggesting that motivation orientation is a stable trait like nature (e.g. Amabile et al., 1994). Intrinsic motivation energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action. It is manifested in behaviors such as playing, exploring, and challenge seeking that people often do for no external rewards. It is prototypic instance of human freedom or autonomy in that people engage in such activity with a full sense of willingness and volition (Deci et al., 1999). According to cognitive evaluation theory, intrinsic motivation is an inherent motivational tendency that has evolved because it entails many adaptive advantages, but it still requires environmental supports (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In addition, cognitive evaluation theory proposed that the necessary supports are opportunities to satisfy the innate needs for competence and self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The present research will measure the intrinsic motivation by using a 5-item instrument developed by Amabile's (1985) and Tierney's et al. (1999) studies. The five items refer to enjoyment for doing activities related to generating ideas.

An intrinsic motivation orientation has been postulated by many researchers as key element in creativity (Amabile et al., 1988, Barron et al., 1981). Amabile et al., (1988) postulated that a necessary component of intrinsic motivation is the individual's orientation or level of enthusiasm for the activity. Because it affects a manager's decision to initiate and sustain creative effort over time, intrinsic motivation has been cited as one of the most prominent personal qualities for enhancement of creativity (Amabile et al., 1988). The expected positive relation between intrinsic motivation and creativity was supported by Tierney's et al (1999) study. They found that when someone enjoys

creative-related tasks, his or her level of creative output is high. In view of the above discussion, the following proposition is formulated:

**Proposition 2:** *Intrinsic motivation is positively related to managers' creative performance.*

## CONCLUSION

In this article, we have attempted to develop a model of individual creativity. We have revealed the importance of personal characteristics and intrinsic motivation influence managers' creative performance. Consequently, it is justified to conclude that theories are needed in the investigation of the relationship between personal characteristics and creativity in order to encourage our knowledge. Through the discussion of major theories on leadership, particularly about traits theory that explains the domain of personality which is represented by the Creative Personality Scale (CPS) and intrinsic motivation will make a better understanding of a basic foundation of theories in explaining the relationship in the model of individual creativity.

To conclude, this article has discussed major findings of studies in the creativity field. This article has also introduced the theoretical framework and propositions for the future research where the gap in previous literature, justification of framework and description of variables were discussed. In short, by adopting the framework as illustrated in Figure 1 with underpinning theories, we hope to explain the relationship between personal characteristics and intrinsic motivation to managers' creative performance. The purpose of the article is to provide ideas to investigate personal characteristics affecting creative performance in leadership context and to increase our knowledge of the work-related implications of the role of creative behavior in these relationships.

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