



JOB SATISFACTION AND CREATIVITY – THE CASE OF A TRANSITION COUNTRY

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Abstract

The introduction of democracy in post-socialist countries is still accompanied by their struggling to reach political consolidation and economic development. This has come due to the delayed and poor attempts of the transformation of individuals at every institutional and organizational level. The purpose of this paper is to study how can this be reached through a new work ethic and by giving people the opportunity to demonstrate responsibility and the ability to deal with information, power and freedom by showing creativity at work. The primary data were collected by the means of a structured questionnaire, which was distributed to a sample of people residing in the Republic of Albania, mostly at Master level of education, employed in different private and state institutions, representing the creative class of the society. A regression analysis was used, and different tests were undertaken which showed that job satisfaction is very much affected by many of the variables related to the dimensions of creativity. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of the impact of entrepreneurs on employee's creativity, and how can it influence people's mentality, as the missing puzzle of getting out of the prolonged political and economic transition of a Western Balkan country like Albania. As there is a lack of scientific papers in Albania regarding creativity, and the country lays behind in the Creativity Index compared to other countries in the region, this research gains an increased importance for the Albanian academic milieu as well.

Keywords: *Creativity, Job Satisfaction, Mentality.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The scope of this paper is to investigate the role of creativity at work on the satisfaction of employees in albanian entrepreneurial businesses. The objectives are to describe the different dimensions of creativity first, than the various ways an entrepreneur and employees themselves can increase their creative potential in order to reach a greater job satisfaction, as an important tool of the economic development of a transition country. Entrepreneurs need in the first place to be creative themselves before they help create such a working environment, or at least contribute with their actions to a creativity friendly working environment. There do exist many researches about entrepreneurship in general and about the importance of entrepreneur's creativity, but not as many as expected on the relationship between entrepreneurs' decisions and job satisfaction as well as creativity of employees. The latter is of importance to study because entrepreneurial leadership contribute to workplace creativity in terms of creative self-efficacy and team creative efficacy (Cai et al., 2018). On the long run, this creative efficacy will be translated into better work performance and job satisfaction which will account for a better firm performance and more indirect income for the state. Therefore, this study seeks to establish the role of creativity as a mediator on the relationship between different factors that influence creativity and job satisfaction.

In order to better understand this relationship is crucial to define creativity. While many connect it generally with beautiful arts, it is nowadays widely accepted that creativity represents the ability to generate, develop, interpret and manifest new ideas (Martin, Wilson, 2018). This innovative potential of humans evolved even before the appearance of Homo Sapiens themselves 200,000 years ago (Elias, 2012). Nowadays it can be said, that creativity is connected to every field which bears the potential for further development. Creativity can be shown in STEM fields, but also banking, stock market, education, or the group of Creative Workers such as all kind of business services and in community, social and personal services (Florida, 2002). It can be measured on aggregate level by the level of technology, cultural production, per capita production of newspapers, books, music, level of education, leisure possibilities etc., as well as on individual level by personality traits such as autonomy, flexibility, preference for complexity, sensitivity, playfulness, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, curiosity etc. (Conference Proceedings "Can creativity be measured?", 2009). The focus of this study will lay on the individual level, different aspects of the organization and the relationship between employees and their superiors as well as regarding aspects of the type of work, all of which can have an influence on employee creativity and as a result also on job

satisfaction. According to Florida (2002) the key features of creativity which characterize daily problem-solving activities, are inter alia using one's own ideas in work, the ability to choose or change the working methods and order of tasks. The variable chosen to assess autonomy as aspect of measuring creativity was freedom in the decision-making process and the level of decentralization in the organization (Darvishmotevali, 2019). Other ways of increasing creativity are listen to music/ drawing sketches while working (Martin L, Wilson N. 2018), the adjustment of working environment (Kristensen, 2004), taking the time for muse before generating new ideas (Martin L, Wilson N. 2018), regular meditation, engage in physical activity (Baumann, C. E.&Boutellier R., 1997), appreciation by superiors. Another part indicator for creativity is excessive workload on the one hand and the level of formalization of teams on the other (Hirst, Knippenberg, Chen, Sacramento, 2011). In less formalized teams where fewer guidelines do exist according to trait activation theory, there is more discretion and possibility for expression of individual differences.

It will also be discussed the relationship between creativity at work and job satisfaction and how the creative climate affects the feeling of wellbeing at work and the overall working performance (Biswas, 2011). According to Ekvall (1996), the dimensions in a creative climate are i.e. challenge/ involvement, conflict, playfulness/ humor, idea support, freedom, dynamism/ liveliness, trust/openness, idea time, debates, and risk taking. Based on the literature review below, these can be translated into more autonomy and freedom in decision making, more appreciation and support by superiors and a more liberal and decentralized organizational structure which fosters debate, dynamism, trust and risk taking, as well as less administrative work which fosters creativity by fostering liveliness. Further on it can be translated into more creativity as a result of regular meditation and muse time (idea time), listen to music/draw sketches etc. (playfulness/humor), adjustment of the working environment and engagement of physical activity. Each of these factors serve as variables to study the relationship about creativity and job satisfaction, which is known to contribute to working performance (Yee, Pink, Sern, 2014). Accordingly, the research questions are:

1. Do initiative and freedom in decision making increase job satisfaction?
2. Does decentralization increase job satisfaction?
3. Does listening to music or drawing sketches and similar increase job satisfaction?
4. Is the adjustment of the working physical environment important for the job satisfaction?

5. Does regular meditating and taking time for muse before any decision making at work increase job satisfaction?

6. Does regular physical activity increase learning efficiency and creativity?

7. Does administrative work decrease job satisfaction?

8. Does recognition in the form of appreciation by superiors increase job satisfaction?

Of importance to mention is, that the scenery of the study has been chosen to be the Albanian context and business environment. During the last three decades Albania faced a drastic political and economic change. The transition from socialism to democracy carried in itself the responsibility of the society to transform people's mentality first, their way of dealing with freedom of expression of their own and new ideas and therefore change the man first, then the system (Chen, 1969). This was seen in the negative effects it still shows in terms of many facts and figures regarding the Albanian economy. At some important fields for the economy which are for e.g. corruption, we rank at the 106th place, or ease of doing business at the 82nd place, protection of minority investors at 111th place, enforcing contracts at 120th, which are all indicators of the Global Competitiveness Index, that from the other side influences the Global Creativity Index (Florida, R., Mellander, Ch.&King, K.2015). Other indicators which contributed to a low rank in the Global Creativity Index of 2015 (116 th place) are technology where we rank at the 83rd place, regarding talent we are the 90th, regarding tolerance of migrants, minorities etc. we rank even lower, 118th.

Below the study will go on presenting the conceptual framework of the research, followed by a literature review which will first handle the role of entrepreneurs on creating a creativity inducive environment, and than go on describing the dimensions of creativity, the business fields with more creative potential, how entrepreneurs can create a creativity inducive environment, and the way this increased possibility for creative thinking can increase the job satisfaction of employees. The latter will be described in the research method and analysis parts, followed by discussions and conclusions on the importance of this study for the Albanian context and how the situation reagarding the relevant indicators contributing to creativity, job satisfaction and a resulting economic development can be improved.

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The evidences of the influence that the above mentioned factors, which are decisive for creativity, such as initiative and freedom in decision making, decentralization, listening to music or drawing sketchnes during work time (leisure time activities during working time)

adjustment of the working physical environment, regular meditation and taking time for muse before decision making, regular physical activity, administrative work, as well as appreciation by superiors have on job satisfaction, led to the following conceptual framework:

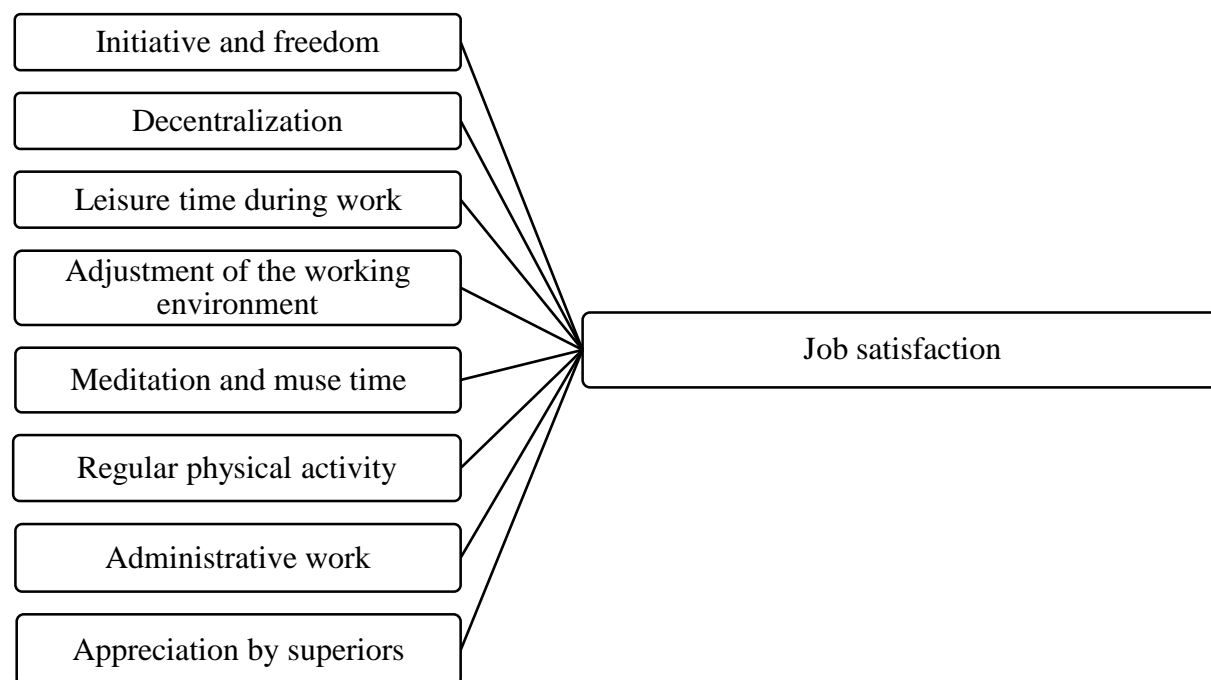


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many attempts by researchers and institutions worldwide to conduct researches and explain creativity from different perspectives. First of all, it is important to define creativity at work and to distinguish it from many other forms of manifestations of creativity. Nowadays it is widely accepted that creativity is the highest form of intelligence, which represents the ability to generate, develop, interpret and manifest new ideas. Therefore, creativity is not only a privilege of creative industries such as fine arts, media, design, architecture, production of music instruments and other neighboring fields (Wiesand, Söndermann, 2005), but also of every field, which bears the potential for further development. **It is** the duty of creative minds to foster these **potentials** and of governments and the society, especially entrepreneurs, to create an environment conducive to further creativity.

As seen above, indicators linked to creativity, such as the perception of corruption, the ease of opening and running a business, competitiveness, innovation capacity, IP legislation etc., can have an enormous effect on the economy as a whole. A way to measure creativity is by distinguishing between aggregate level and individual (Conference Proceedings “Can creativity

be measured?”, 2009). Seen from the point of view of this study, which emphasis the role of the change in people’s mentality, the focus will lay on the individual level of creativity aspects of personality, for examplesuch as autonomy, flexibility, openness to experience, sensitivity, playfulness, tolerance for ambiguity, as well as intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, wide interest or curiosity etc.(Conference Proceedings “Can creativity be measured?”, 2009).

First of all, there should be defined a connection between creativity and job satisfaction. There are not many studies related to this relationship. Nevertheless, the impact of creativity on every day working activities, decisions and related work performance is with no doubt very present and relevant in all fields with creative potential. The creative climate influences the psychological processes, which increases not only innovation but also the feeling of well-being among employees and the effects of which then become evident on not only innovation but also on the well-being of employees, job satisfaction and work performance (Biswas, 2011).

There do exist many papers related to the dimensions of creativity at the other hand. They all use different parameters to measure creativity. One approach is to find the common core of creative potential across fields (Martin&Wilson, 2018). For this purpose there are researches focusing on every day or local creativity of the sort that a large percentage of the working population engage in the course of their daily problem-solving activities to which Florida (2002) refers to when he identifies underlying associations related to key features of creativity such as inter alia using one’s own ideas in work, able to choose or change one’s work methods and order of one’s task etc. Further on, the factors influencing creativity will be analyzed and their connection to job satisfaction will be found out.

These factors range from appreciation by superiors (Akafo&Boateng, 2015), to freedom of initiative, having things in common with colleagues, meritocracy, size of organization, variety in daily work etc.

H1: Initiative and freedom have a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Initiative and freedom in the decision-making process in the organization is used to assess the use of own ideas and autonomy as important aspects of creativity(Darvishmotevali, 2019).Also according to Jensen, Liu & Schott (2017) inter alia, autonomy produces a psychological state that promotes job satisfaction. It exists therefore evidence of an impact of initiative and freedom in decision making process, as antecedents of creativity, on job satisfaction of employees.

H2: Decentralization has a positive impact on job satisfaction

Other factors of importance for job satisfaction are related to the organization structure and the level of bureaucratic practices underlying the daily working activities. Centralization is related to the manner power is distributed in an organizational hierarchy and how much are employees involved in the decision-making process. Therefore, it decreases freedom in decision making and therefore also the creative thinking among employees (Hirst et al., 2011). This supports the hypothesis that decentralization increases creativity and job satisfaction.

H3: Listening to music or drawing sketches and similar do increase job satisfaction.

Performing undemanding tasks during a pause at work could allow new ideas entering the brain (Devaux, 2017). It could be seen as a motivator which increases job satisfaction according to Herzberg's two factors theory.

H4: The adjustment of the working physical environment is important for the job satisfaction

Some studies focus only on the adjustment of working environment as decisive to creative thinking and job satisfaction. Akafo & Boateng (2015) describe as conducive to satisfaction among other factors also supportive working conditions. According to Kristensen (2004) physical space affects inter alia the well – being, the channels of information and tools for knowledge, which are fundamental for creative work.

H5: Regular meditating and taking time for muse before any decision making at work increases job satisfaction

Another method which could enhance creativity at work, is practicing mindfulness training, as a distinctive intrapsychic path to an increased creativity at the working place (Kudesia, 2015). Taking time for muse in general is sometimes helpful in our creative thinking process (Martin, Wilson, 2018). This has also been proved in a study among health care professionals which showed that arts included in their working environment and methods, influenced positively their well-being and job satisfaction.

H6: Regular physical activity increases learning efficiency and creativity.

Among other factors that foster creativity and indirectly increase job satisfaction are engagement in physical activity and the adjustment of the physical working environment. Physical activity influences creativity in the physiological aspect, by increasing the blood flow to the brain where the increased synthesis of neurotransmitters effects positively the memory. It influences creativity also in the social aspect through the expansion of knowledge due to

increased encounters to others and in the psychological aspect by an improvement of mood and mental equilibrium due to the increased synthesis of neurotransmitters (Baumann, Boutellier, no year). It has been also tested that physical exercise can slightly enhance creative thinking, even though independently of mood changes (Steinberg et al., 1997).

H7: Administrative work decreases job satisfaction

The other factor has to do with the formalization which implies clear and specified rules of working procedures (ibid.) It limits the choice of behavior and decision making. Robbins (2001) cited in Akafo&Boateng (2015) describes as conducive to satisfaction among other factors also mentally challenging works. Mentally challenging works imply works where creative thinking is needed and where the administrative tasks take less part in the working routine. This supports the hypothesis that administrative work decreases creativity and as a result also job satisfaction.

H8: Recognition in the form of appreciation by superiors increase job satisfaction

Also rewards and recognition may serve as incentives for employees to increase their productivity. Encouraging the talent and creativity of all employees, not just one individual innovator can be benefitting for the firm. This would increase the collective capacity to create and innovate on the part of the team, the firm, or the organization (Akehurst, Comeche&Galindo, 2008). Robbins (2001) cited in Akafo, Boateng (2015) describes as conducive to satisfaction inter alia equitable rewards and supportive colleagues. Also other studies do recognize the fact that appreciating the job of employees, makes them feel treasured and more positive about themselves and their capacity to contribute, which improves their productivity and increases their satisfaction (Mussie et al, 2013, cited in Abdullah, Shonubi, Hashim&Hamid, 2016). Based on these aspects is build the hypotheses that appreciation and support by superiors increases job satisfaction of employees.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

In the methodology part of a research paper is included the way of collecting and reviewing data (Perry, 1998). Regarding the approach of the methodology, in this study were chosen qualitative data. This approach in general gives the possibility to talk face to face with the respondents, but in this case was chosen to use an online questionnaire using Google Forms, spread to the potential respondents through social medias and WhatsApp, where they could respond anonymously and at any time from their pc or cellphone by submitting it independently. This way, minimizes the contact between the researcher and the respondents.

The questionnaire was spread to 130 individuals (with 65 responses), located in Tirana, approximately at the same education level (MSc.), aged around 25 – 55 years, therefore it could be said, that data was obtained from homogeneous samples, representing a smaller group of the population, with similar characteristics (Sandelowski, 1995). To better identify the sample, Florida's (2002) hierarchical cluster analyses of the three kind of workers was used. The first group of Creative workers characterized by high levels of problems solving, learning and task complexity, using their own ideas and exercising considerable autonomy in carrying out their jobs. The second group of routine problem-solvers with little use of own ideas and levels of autonomy or discretion in work. The third group of tailored workers is composed of persons doing deskilled work. Depending on industrial sector creative learners are over-represented in business services and in community, social and personal services, and under-represented in manufacturing, construction, retail and other services. For the purpose of obtaining relevant data, the questionnaire was distributed to people working precisely in the industrial sectors with high task complexity and autonomy, where creativity is a significant and determinant characteristic, such as to economists and managers or marketing experts in different companies in construction, hotel, restaurant business ect., but also to academics, and experts working in the banking sector, IT, international organizations, accounting and law studio, etc.

For this study have also been used secondary data from articles regarding entrepreneurship, creativity and job satisfaction, as it can be seen by the literature review.

5. ANALYSIS

From the linear regression analysis of the data undertaken using STATA, the following information as in the Table 1 below resulted:

Table 1. Linear Regression Analysis

Variables	Coefficient	P > t
V1	.3176561	0.011
V2	.0248658	0.831
V3	-.1096203	0.116
V4	.0289414	0.773
V5	-.072169	0.450
V6	.1279621	0.260
V7	-.10157	0.355
V8	.4189995	0.001
_cons	1.490869	0.009

R-squared = 0.4446

Adj R-squared = 0.3653

The independent variables are listed in the order of the corresponding hypothesis as described above. The adjusted Coef. of determinability takes values from 0 to 1, maybe in some cases even negative values. The coefficient of value 1 shows high explainability of independent variables versus the dependent variable and in case the coefficient is 0 there is no explanation of the independent versus the dependent variable.

Regarding the p value, only two of the variables are under the value of 0.05 (5%), which means, that only they are statistically important, namely initiative and freedom in decision making and appreciation by superiors.

From the data in the table above it results that statistically significant are the variables V1 and V8 with a security level of 95%.

The linear regression equation is $V9 = 1.49 + 0.317V1 + 0.418V8$.

As noted, V8 is more likely to affect the dependent variable by almost 41% as a weight versus V1 variable which affects by almost 31% versus the dependent variable. The coefficient of determinability and adjusted coefficient of determinability are 0.44 and 0.36, respectively, which means that from this data 36% of the independent variables explain the dependent variable.

In order to better understand the waste significance in this analyses, there were undertaken several test as follows:

The first test performed was Breusch-Pagane in order to investigate the homoskedasticity of the waste, the constant variance of the waste. From this test it results that the selected model does have homoskedasticity. The basic hypothesis stands.

Then it was undertaken the Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity:

Ho: Constant variance

Variables: V1 V2 V3 V4 V5 V6 V7 V8

$\text{chi}^2(8) = 6.74$

$\text{Prob} > \text{chi}^2 = 0.5654$

The third test was Ramsey RESET Test, which serves to investigate the linearity of variables. In our model it turns out that we have linear connections of variables and their explanation, the functional form is linear. The basic hypothesis stands.

Ho: model has no omitted variables

$$F(24, 32) = 1.56$$

$$\text{Prob} > F = 0.1193$$

The forth test was The Akaik criterion of the AIC information, which is one of the most important criteria used for model selection. This criterion was published by Hirotugu Akaike (1974) and provides a relative measurement of lost information of a model attempting to describe reality. The best model is the one with the smallest AIC. AIC simply lists the models and shows which one is better than the others.

Akaike's information criterion and Bayesian information criterion:

Model	Obs	ll(null)	ll(model)	df	AIC	BIC
.	65	-91.49189	-72.37719	9	162.7544	182.3239

Both AIC and BIC are lower than 200, which indicates that the model stands and there is no need of modifying the data.

From the tests performed, it results that our model adheres to the classic principles of waste assessment according to the method of smaller squares, which are closely related to homoskedasticity and linearity of the model. From this we conclude that the variables V1 and V8 are important in explaining the dependent variable V9.

6. DISCUSSION

From the analyses above it derives, that the main factors influencing the most albanian employees of our chosen sample regarding job satisfaction, are initiative and freedom in decision making at work, and appreciation and support by their superiors. As antecedents of creativity, they are decisive for inducing a creativity supportiveworking environment and should be of particular interest for all the levels of the organizational structure.

These are some important results to be taken in consideration from Albanian entrepreneurs, in order to implement such organizational policies which would allow employees a decent level of autonomy and would make them feel appreciated enough to be more creative and more productive as a result of an increased job satisfaction.

The study leaves a gate open for further research on this regard in the Albanian reality in specific fields of interest and with potential of growth using creativity, such as agriculture, agroturism, and technology. Not without purpose, these areas are treated fiscally in a more favourable way, for example according to the Law on "Income Tax" No. 8438, data 1998, legal

entities which perform activities in the field of agroturism, production and development of softwares and agricultural cooperatives are subject to a reduced income tax at a rate of 5 %, compared to the normal tax rate of 15 %, after all the other requirements are met. But these governmental attempts to sustain the economy are not enough in terms of change in human's mentality, as we argued above in the introduction section.

There should be offered and promoted from the government but also from businesses programmes in the field of human development, such as training programmes for employees in the field of leadership and self development. But these innovative attempts must begin from school children with the Schools Tax Education Programme etc. (OECD, 2015), as innovative techniques such as use of technology and entertaining programmes on tax related topics help introducing a new fiscal policy (Lamce, 2019). This is only one aspect of the society which can profit from creativity and innovation, and this study will help in giving incentives to the Albanian businesspeople and professionals working for the state to drive their attention more to creativity and the related job satisfaction.

7. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study would help employees through the difficult way of mentality transformation and the Albanian society as a whole in its way to the political and economic stabilization. As seen above, Albania lays down in very important ratings regarding creativity and innovation, which is considered as one of the drivers of the economy nowadays, furthermore to the knowledge economy (Skippington, 2016). In order to change people's mentality towards more creativity, its antecedents must be fulfilled first. From the study the most important aspects of creativity, which are of relevance at this stage of development of our economy, are initiative and freedom in decision making and appreciation by superiors.

Maybe, if in the future the mentality of entrepreneurs themselves will also change, in order for them to create a creativity inducive environment, and if the study will be conducted again after this change, other results may emerge.

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