

# Antinomies of Creative Attitudes of Employees

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Currently the value of intangible resources of the organisation, such as: knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees, is increasingly important. The most valuable asset of any organisation is a creative attitude of the staff. Creative attitude is a willingness to initiate innovative actions, perseverance in achieving ambitious professional tasks, customized approach to problems and conflicts, skillful shaping of relationships with colleagues. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the psychology of creativity has many aspects, it is still not clear, what is the set of conditions that affect the formation of new, brilliant ideas. Due to insufficient knowledge about the conditions of work of employees, the author poses the question: are there universal methods of shaping the creative attitudes? The aim of the article is to show the extreme approaches to shaping creative attitudes due to the antinomial character of creativity. The article is theoretical. In the first part of the article the author explains the importance of creativity in contemporary organisations, then taking individualistic point of view on creativity, describes the concepts of creative attitudes of employees. In the next part of the article refers to the achievements of pedagogy and psychology of creativity to explain the nature of the antinomial attitudes of creative workers.

**Keywords:** creative attitude, creative personality, antinomial character of creativity

## Introduction

Creativity management within an organisation is a relatively new concept resulting from streamlining economic development into creative economic growth (Sokół, 2015). Sokół perceives creativity management as an element of a cycle which positive aspects of functioning of an organisation such as: more efficient use of resources, increase in effectiveness, flexibility and pace of operations, optimization of acting, higher quality, competitiveness, value and efficiency are both the reason for and result of successful creativity management (Sokół, 2015).

It is assumed that developing creativity management programmes should contribute to enhancing effectiveness, target reaching, economical acting and efficient functioning of an organisation, which translated into generating new and valuable concepts to be processed into products or services (Sokół, 2015). The new concept of operativity management tools focused on triggering creativity among employees (Sokół, 2015). Given still growing competitiveness, uncertain and changing labour market it is apparent that there is a growing need to improve the employees' creativity competences called competences of the future (Nawrat, 2013). Following the egalitarian approach to creativity, regardless of the job specificity, everybody possess ability to be creative, referred to as creativity potential, which could be successfully shaped and improved in professional life (Nawrat, 2013).

Creativity of employees, properly moulded and improved, might bring about numerous benefits to contemporary organisations (Sokół, 2015):

- generating added value and enhancing competitiveness,
- stimulating employees' development,
- conceiving novelties (ideas, products, services),
- improving intraorganisational solutions,
- stimulating team creativity (through mutual inspiration),
- eliminating erratic and premature evaluation (integrating varied points of view in teams of employees (Sokół, 2015).

Considering the above, it is the profile of an employee displaying creative attitude and abilities which is the focal point of the article.

## Creative attitude of employees

One of the fundamental processes within creativity management of the development of employees' potential in their organisation. Employees' advancement is perceived as "targeting the actions taken at expanding knowledge of the staff, enhancing their competences, shaping values, attitudes, motivation and abilities, as well as taking care of the staff's stamina and mental state, which overall leads to a rise in efficiency and raising the market value of human resources" (Pocztowski, 2007). Attitude of employees that might be creative is a special kind of the potential in human resources (notably in terms of individual employees).

There is no unanimity among social sciences representatives concerning the definition of creativity. However, it is assumed that creativity is reflected in novelty and pricelessness. "What is creative is original and useful" (Simonton, 2010). Unfortunately, although psychology of creativity is often discussed in literatures, it is still unclear what determines the emergence of new and ingenious

ideas (Nęcka, 1995). Employees' creative potential is, therefore, perceived as the ability of employees to conceive and develop ground-breaking concepts that in the future could result in valuable and original aftermath – innovations. The notion of “creativity” perceived in such a way (personality qualities enabling creative achievements) comes down to “creativity” and “creative attitude” and is interchangeably referred to in this article. The author presents personalised perspective on creativity and the assumption that an employee is the subject of both source of creativity and creative acting within an organisation.

It is commonly assumed that it is Fromm and Maslow who are the fathers of creative attitude concept and “The creative attitude” (1959) is the first article focusing on the phenomenon. Yet, according to Szmids (2013), a pedagogist, the first mention of creative attitude to life could be traced back to the year 1926, when Kornilowicz, a pedagogist, mentioned creative attitude in his writings. However, it is Radlińska, the author of social pedagogy concept, who in 1935 popularised the concept of “active creative attitude”. It was in 1947 when Radlińska pointed out that a man is a living element of the environment he/she operates in and determines the set of phenomena and the emotional surrounding. Moreover, human attitude towards the environment might be of creative nature (Radlińska, 1947). Nowadays the notion of “creative attitude” is referred to qualities of a human being forcing them to being creative (Wróblewska, 2015). The notion has been a focal point of numerous writing, where the authors focused on different aspects of the “creativity attitude”.

**Table 1. Selected definitions of creative attitude**

“The attitude is fully <u>reflected in behavioural patterns</u> of the subject concerning the set objectives; in case of creative attitudes is <u>active searching</u> – initiative to improve the current state of affairs” (Dobrowicz, 1995)
“Creative attitude is the shaped (genetically through experience of an individual) property of cognitive nature as well as personality traits reflected in the tendency, attitude or <u>readiness to transform the world</u> , things, phenomena and a human's own personality. Hence, it is an attitude relationship of an individual with the world and life reflected in cognitive needs, experiencing and conscious (in terms of an objective, not a process) transforming both the realm and the “ego” (Popek, 1990).
Creative attitude is perceived as „overall characteristics of an individual, enabling and streamlining their <u>activity</u> based on emotional and perception sensitivity, personality qualities, motivation, abilities of self-management and pro-active (philocreative) streamlined thinking and imagination processes” (Mirski, 2011).
“Creative attitude is a <u>set of abilities</u> of cognitive nature, emotional, motivational and behavioural ones that makes it possible for an individual to reorganise the hitherto experience, discover and develop something new (things, ideas, way of acting or world perception) and to efficiently launch this solutions in everyday life (Szmids, 2013).

Source: the author's own work.

The above definitions of creative attitude prove that the most significant and visible in the surrounding creative attitudes are the behavioural patterns of an individual. A person displaying a creative attitude is distinguishable thanks to a well developed cognitive need, ability to experience and consciously change the current state of affairs into a new one (Sokół, 2015).

Thus creative attitude covers a cognitive sphere, emotional and motivational one, as well as the area of acting. The cognitive sphere concerns such abilities as cognitive curiosity and being observant, openness to new information, ability to create metaphors, ability to reflect on understanding of reality. The emotional and motivational sphere comprises interest in novelties, creative bravery, persistence, passion, independence or autonomy. The area of acting is reflected in being hardworking, persistent in target reaching, target oriented and in the ability to cease opportunities, being innovative or inventive while solving problems (Szmidt, 2013).

Dobrołowicz, while characterising creative attitude indicated that it is reflected in the behaviour of a subject in relation to an object (Dobrołowicz, 1995). However, Armstrong defines the relation between creative ability (creative attitude) and behaviour in a different way. In the opinion of Armstrong, there could be a lack of convergence (cognitive divergence) between the attitude and the behaviour (Armstrong, 2011), when, e.g. an employee is aware of the necessity to solve professional problems in a new, unconventional and initiative way, and sometimes a controversial one. Yet, in his/her professional life, the employee presents a reactive attitude. The case could also regard an employee able to successfully identify problems within an organisation and formulate ideas of how to solve them, being – at the same time – unable to apply the ideas conceived.

## Shaping employees' creative attitudes

Literature on human resources management is short of publications on how to apply the knowledge on creativity of shaping human capital. According to Lipka (2011) such state of affairs is determined by „treating personal initiative as the one strangled in routine procedures (formalities) and perceived as opposite to creativity” (Lipka, 2011). However, personal activity might be creativity oriented and facilitate accomplishment of such organisational objectives as: developing organisational culture supporting creativity, applying creative managerial styles through attracting and retaining the staff with creative attitude (Sokół, 2015 quoting Lipka, 2012). Therefore, one of key tasks of HR departments seems to be supporting striving for creative accomplishments. According to Popek (2003)

creative accomplishments might result from varied personality qualities, yet, having some characteristics of creative individuals in common. Cudowska, while describing specific traits of people presentive creative attitude (the author is consistent about calling them “people of creative life orientation”) (Cudowska 2004, 2015) indicates that such individuals, regardless of their area of activity and scope of responsibilities:

- “are better prepared to functioning within complex and dynamic reality, in open society as what is new and still unknown to them triggers their need to learning, knowing and experiencing;
- are characterised by autonomous cognitive motivation within which curiosity and the need for experiencing the new streamlines their way of acting;
- accept change as something natural, accept differences and are able to harmoniously combine contradictory qualities;
- are more reality attentive thanks to their ability to identify facts, generalise, think in an abstract way and they display up-to-date cognitive attitude;
- are able to fully focus on an issue and to get fascinated with it” (Cudowska, 2015).

According to Steliga (2012), in order to enhance the creative attitude it is necessary to give priority to such qualities of a human being like: an individual way of world perception, openmindedness, tolerance of ambiguity, independence, bravery, being spontaneous, expressive, having no fear of the unknown, being able to get fascinated with the task to perform or having a kind sense of humour. However, returning to the opinion of Popek (2003) creative achievements might result from divergent personality traits, which is a significant impediment to diagnosing and improving creative potential.

Features of creative individuals are at times incoherent in terms of their classification and they could be contradictory. Among antynomies of creative personality qualities brillians vs naivity, joyfulness vs self-discipline, imagination vs feeling of reality, humbleness vs pride, passion and involvement vs lack of bias (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) could be mentioned. This paradox-like personality of creative humans is also described by Nęcka, a psychologist. He states that relatively frequent enhancement of autonomous cognitive curiosity is an integral feature of creative personalities. On the other hand, creative individuals strive to make achievements and expect the confirmation of their self-esteem (Nęcka, 2016). Creative people are assumed to be able to stayed focused on aht they do and stay committed and dedicated to the task they perform, however, according to Kaufman (2011), e.g. artists are generally not meticulous. Their approach to what they do is usually determined by specificity of tasks they perform (Kaufman, 2011). Creative people combine their work with their interest in and fascination

of what they do and both emotions generate positive feelings in them, although it is negative mood of the artist that might also trigger more creative attitude to the aftermath of their acting (Kaufman, 2011). Creative people also display openness to experiencing: they are able to undertake unpopular and risky activities. Yet, depending on the area they act in, risk taking might not be a symptom of their creativity; reversely, it could herald the lack of responsibility or knowledge. What is interesting is that creative individuals are influenced by social environment, are not afraid to express what they want and expect from the others, and despite the fact that motivation itself is the best incentive to creativity, a reward for completing a piece of art might enhance creativity of an artist (Kaufman, 2011). Creative people are often perceived as capable of expressing their thoughts and feelings, and it cannot be denied. That the symptom of their creative attitude may be the feeling of loneliness need, isolation from society with the creative process.

The fundamental issue in shaping employees' creative attitude the antinomy of the nature and character of creativity. "Creativity (...) requires from the artist both strong involvement and independence and aims to not only suggest solutions, but also to evaluate them. Creativity does not come down to intelligence, although it is very much alike, requiring profound knowledge with no impediments it implies conceiving something new. Yet, it might be studied not in the context of the aftermath of the creative process (product). Creativity requires going beyond social standards, however, acting in such a way that is tolerated by the society" (Szmidt, 2013).

## Conclusions

Characterising a role model creative employee seems to be impossible. "It is difficult to talk about homogenous factors inspiring creative activity, notably in endogenous conditions (psychical) or egzogenous ones (Popek, 2009). The attitude to shaping employees' creative attitude through developing their qualities such as openness, spontaneity or power of expression seems to be unjustified in view of creativity perceived as an autonomous phenomenon. The concepts of creative attitudes presented in the article prove that in majority of cases creative people are being characterised through comparing their qualities with commonly approved set of qualities of artists, even though psychologists point out that creative attitude might result from individual and different-than-the-standard personality traits. It results from the examples given by the author that a creative person might display various behavioural patterns making it impossible to define a universal set of elements of creative attitude.

Summing up, it is worth quoting the discussion of Szmidt (2015), a pedagogist. Characterising the symptoms of excessive quantity of products of an amateur and daily routine activity, he emphasizes three traps to creativity: illusion of reliable evaluation tools and excessive easiness of communicating the symptoms (results) of creativity. Analysing the traps could be useful also in the context of interpreting employees' creative attitudes. Is a creative employee the one who creates a lot, does it quickly and with no room for criticism? Should shaping creative attitudes be limited to stimulating behavioural patterns commonly perceived as creative ones?

All the discussion included in the article paves the way for human resources managers along which they are expected to identify, improve or evaluate their employees' creative attitudes. Presumably the most outstanding creative thinkers and performers could be those who tend not to display themselves excessively to the public, who do not present amateur-like concepts, or those who are not impacted by fashion and trends and do not communicate their creativity excessively.

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