

Chapter 21

Thriving at Work as a Psychological Mechanism to Enhance Employee Capability of Innovative Voice

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the mechanism under the relationship between innovative voice and its predictors of person-job fit and supervisor support. Thriving at work, a personal experience, is proposed as a mediator between predictors and outcome variable. To test the hypothesis, data was collected from 467 white-collar employees from several industries employing both convenience and snowball sampling methods. According to the results of structural equation modelling and bootstrapping method for mediation tests, the findings are as follows: Thriving at work fully mediates the relationship between demand-ability fit, but it only partially mediates the effect of supervisor support. Further, multigroup analysis showed that both pathways were mediated by thriving at work for both gender groups. This study showed that thriving at work fuels employees' innovativeness which is nurtured by relationship quality, task focus, exploration, and other key resources.

INTRODUCTION

The recent development in business world require companies to be vested with ability to adapt to rapid changes. This adaptation can be obtained through two ways. First one is following the recent changes in the business world and simply adopting new techniques to own business. Second one is investing on and doing innovation per se. However, legal issues such as copyrights and cost of being simply a follower sometimes exceed the return of following others. Therefore, focusing on and exerting effort for innovation may provide better competitive advantage for organizations.

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From the talent management perspective (Berger & Berger, 2010), the unduplicable way of innovation can be ensured via capitalizing employees innovation ability (Pfeffer, 1994; Pfeffer & Jeffrey, 1998; De Jong & De Hartog, 2007). The recent trends in work setting suggest employee job descriptions to be less rigid and organizing tasks around knowledge-based perspective; where employees can contribute organization's innovation through giving suggestions and generating novel ideas (Amabile, 1988, Unsworth & Parker 2003). However, a sustainable innovative behavior requires cognitive and affective capacity for employees.

In this point, thriving at work, a psychological state in which employees feel joint experience of vitality and learning while working, can be a useful mechanism as it is suggested that thriving experiences encompass both cognitive and affective well-being of employees (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005; Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson, & Garnett, 2012; Paterson, Luthans, & Jeung, 2014; Koçak, 2016), which may contribute to creative behaviors of employees.

According to the socially embedded model of thriving at work (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005), task focus, and heedful relating are prominent antecedents of employees thriving experiences at work. Thus, one can suggest that both a well-established relationship with supervisor and increased expertise can help employees to thrive. While the first one may provide a room for innovation and/or create an environment which value innovation, a congruence between what a job requires and what employee has implicitly highlights a possibility for expertise.

The aim of this study is to emphasize psychological experience of thriving at work as an underlying mechanism between work environment and producing innovative work behaviors. Supervisor support and demand-ability fit of employees are examined as predictors of suggestive voice while thriving at work is modelled as a mediator in this relationship. In addition, a multigroup comparison between males and females is done to underline the gender differences as gender is an important issue in Turkish work environment. Previous research suggests gender differences worth to note in workplace-related studies (Koyuncu & Burke, 2006; Kara, Uysal & Magnini, 2011; Sari, 2004).

The order of the chapter is as follows. Firstly, a theoretical framework along with literature review and hypotheses are given. Secondly, research design and results of a field study are reported. Thirdly, discussion of the given results together with theoretical and practical implications are provided.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Innovative Voice Behavior

Voice behavior has been examined by Hirschman in 1970 and announced as powerful as a magic wand that is particularly effective in times of change. So, as a tool which can be used by organizations to adapt itself to changing environment, employee voice can address weaknesses and strengths of organization. The beginning of voice behavior in organization research was related to managing change processes (Withey & Cooper, 1989; Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks, 1995; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Later, the voice behavior has been operationalized as a tool for employee participation, mostly in decision making processes (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990). In recent years, voice behavior has been defined as dissenting, participation, speaking up, challenging the status quo, or making suggestions as a citizenship behavior.

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