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Self-Leadership and Creativity
Differences In Line and Supervisory Defense Acquisition Employees

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Self-Leadership and Creativity Differences In Line and Supervisory Defense Acquisition Employees

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Control Variables
- Age
- Gender
- Education
- # of yrs on job

Self Leadership

Perceived Work Group Support

Perceived Supervisor Support

Perceived Organizational Support

Innovation & Creativity Potential

Practiced Innovation & Creativity

H1

H2

H3

H4

H5
Creativity

• An ability to produce novel yet appropriate ideas in order to maximize organizational efficiencies, solve complex problems, and improve overall effectiveness.

Creative Potential and Practiced Creativity

• Creative Potential - The creative capacity, skills and abilities that the individual possesses (Hinton, 1968, 1970; Tierney & Farmer, 2002).

• Practiced Creativity - The perceived opportunity to utilize creativity skills and abilities on the job (inspired by the research of Amabile, 1996; Hinton, 1968).
Creative Potential and Practiced Creativity

- Gap between creative potential and practiced creativity represents untapped organizational resources.
- Identifying untapped resources may be especially important in defense acquisition organizations that are continually being told to “do more with less.”
Self-Leadership

• The process of influencing oneself to establish the self-direction and self-motivation needed to perform

• Three Categories of Strategies
  – Behavior Focused
  – Natural Reward
  – Constructive Thought Strategies
Creativity and Self-Leadership

• Theorists have often suggested a relationship between self-leadership and creativity (e.g., DiLiello & Houghton, 2006; Houghton & Yoho, 2005; Manz & Sims, 2001).

• This relationship may be partially founded on the concepts of autonomy and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Yun, Cox, & Sims, 2006).
Current Study Purposes

• To examine the relationships between self-leadership and creativity in the context of a defense acquisition organization.

• Specifically, to examine differences in self-leadership, creativity and perceived organizational support for creativity between line and supervisory defense acquisition employees.
Current Study Contributions

• Clarify the nature of the relationship between self-leadership and creativity.
• Examine the role of organizational support in facilitating practiced creativity
• Among the first to examine differences in self-leadership, creativity and perceptions of support between line and supervisory employees (critical for reducing gap between creative potential and practiced creativity)
• Increase knowledge of creativity and self-leadership in the context of defense acquisitions
Method: Sample and Procedures

- Primary data were collected from the Army Contracting Agency (ACA) via an online survey.
- 37% of 1900 employees (high response rate)
- Listwise deletion for missing data resulted in a final overall sample of 654.
- Divided into two subsamples (i.e., supervisory employees, N=215; and line employees, N=439)
Method: Measures

• Self-Leadership: 13 items from the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (Houghton & Neck, 2002)
• Creative Potential and Practiced Creativity: 6 items each (DiLiello & Houghton, 2007).
• Perceived Organizational Support: 6 items from “Keys: Assessing the Climate for Creativity,” used with the permission of the Center for Creative Leadership (Amabile et al., 1999).
Method: Analysis

- t-tests: Mean differences between line and supervisory employees
- Regression Analyses: Effects of self-leadership, perceived support and organizational level on creative potential, practiced creativity and gap scores
## Results

Table 1

*Means and standard deviations (in parentheses)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SL^</th>
<th>CP*</th>
<th>PC*</th>
<th>GS*</th>
<th>OS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervisors N = 215</strong></td>
<td>49.55</td>
<td>25.47</td>
<td>23.58</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>20.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.10)</td>
<td>(2.98)</td>
<td>(4.04)</td>
<td>(4.10)</td>
<td>(5.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Line Employees N = 439</strong></td>
<td>48.92</td>
<td>24.65</td>
<td>20.97</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>18.54</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(7.43)</td>
<td>(3.03)</td>
<td>(4.51)</td>
<td>(4.60)</td>
<td>(5.46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SL=Self-Leadership, CP=Creative Potential, PC=Practiced Creativity, GS=Gap Score, OS=Perceived Organizational Support.

*p < .001; ^ p = .247, ns*
# Results

Table 2  
*Summary of Regression Analyses Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Model 1: $\beta$</th>
<th>Creative Potential $p$ - value</th>
<th>Model 2: $\beta$</th>
<th>Practiced Creativity $p$ - value</th>
<th>Model 3: $\beta$</th>
<th>Gap Score $p$ - value</th>
<th>Model 4: $\beta$</th>
<th>Organizational Support $p$ - value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Leadership</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>Perceived Organizational Support</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>-.551</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>Organizational Level</td>
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<td>Adjusted R$^2$</td>
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<td>.014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>$p$ - value</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Discussion

- Self-leadership was significantly related to creative potential and practiced creativity for both line and supervisory employees.
- Line employees reported significantly lower levels of creative potential, practiced creativity and perceptions of organizational support for creativity along with higher gap scores in comparison to supervisors.
Implications

• Self-leadership is a primary tool for facilitating creativity at all organizational levels

• Active organizational support for creativity may be the key for reducing the gap between creative potential and practiced creativity that represents untapped creative resources

• This gap is much more pronounced among line employees, who generally perceive less organizational support for utilizing their creative resources than supervisors
Implications

• Organizational interventions (e.g., Neck & Manz, 1996; Stewart, Carson, & Cardy, 1996) designed to increase self-leadership capabilities at all levels and to increase perceptions of organization support for creative practices among line employees in defense acquisition organizations would be well advised.
Limitations

• Homogeneous sample
• Self-report items collected utilizing a single survey at a single point in time
Future Research

• Further examine organizational support as a moderator of the relationship between creative potential and practiced creativity and as a key mechanism for reducing the gap between these concepts in organizations.

• Subdivide perceptions of support for creativity from the organizational level to the work group and supervisory levels (e.g., DiLiello & Houghton, 2006).