

WORK CREATIVITY: THE CASE OF REAL ESTATE FIRMS IN HANOI AND NEIGHBORING PROVINCES

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Abstracts

Work creativity contributes to increased problem-solving ability. With the ability to think creatively and outside the box, workers are more likely to come up with unique and creative solutions to the obstacles they encounter. This eagerness to solve problems can lead to new ways of completing tasks and contribute to better business performance. This study aims to determine the contents of the work creativity of sales staff at real estate firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces. The research sample includes 230 real estate salespeople working at real estate firms in Hanoi and neighboring provinces. Reliability analysis methods through descriptive statistics, an independent t-test, and an ANOVA analysis were used to interpret the data. The results show that all six contents belonging to the work creativity of real estate salespeople are significant. There is no statistically significant difference in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between these different marital statuses, genders, and ages. But there is a statistically significant difference in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between three groups of professional seniority. In addition, the study also offers some solutions that administrators can use to increase the work creativity of real estate salespeople.

Keywords: work creativity (WC), human resources, labor economics, economics, real estate sales staff, real estate firms

JEL codes: C91, J81, M11

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee creativity keeps firms moving forward with new ideas and innovation. Firms achieve results beyond new products or services, such as streamlining efficiency and productivity.

Firms always encourage the mindset of continuous learning, encouraging employees to seek new information, knowledge, and new ways of doing things. Many unique ideas come from just one person but are molded by a whole group to take on a complete shape.

Work creativity contributes to increased problem-solving ability. With the ability to think creatively and outside the box, workers are more likely to come up with unique and creative

solutions to the obstacles they encounter. This eagerness to solve problems can lead to new ways of completing tasks and contribute to better business performance.

Creativity is one of the important factors that helps bring new values to many different fields.

Work creativity brings many meanings and benefits to individuals and society, including: (i) Development: Creativity helps workers develop imagination and initiative, enhancing creativity and creating new value. (ii) Optimize performance: Creativity helps find new ways to complete work effectively and optimize performance. (iii) Problem solving: Work creativity helps solve new and complex problems, finding new and more perfect solutions. (iv) Creating opportunities: Creativity helps workers find new opportunities and create new values. (v) Growth and development: Creativity is an important factor in the development and growth of individuals and society.

In the environment of the 4.0 industrial revolution, the entire society is implementing digital transformation; many modern works of creativity also play an important role in creating a difference and maintaining a business's position in the industry. It also helps increase employee pride and creates a positive and creative work environment.

The work of a real estate sales staff has characteristics such as:

(i) Regarding working hours: flexible; can work throughout the week depending on job requirements and customer needs. Sales staff need to spend a lot of time preparing a contract and carefully researching the terms related to the field being traded.

(ii) Regarding work location: the sales staff's work location may be located far away from the office and may require traveling long distances when taking guests on tours. Own transportation is required.

(iii) Regarding relationships: in project planning and carrying out work, it is necessary to establish wide and good relationships with many different subjects, such as authorities, banks, and customers, and to know how to plan negotiation.

Each person's need to own real estate is different; some people want to buy to rent out, some people want to buy to live in, and some people want to buy to invest for profit, but there are also people who want to buy just to satisfy themselves. Therefore, real estate sales staff must know how to analyze the product that most accurately meets the target group. This is one of the basic skills for real estate salespeople to begin the selling process. Therefore, the work creativity of real estate sales staff is necessary and meaningful in both theory and practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational innovation performance is enhanced by individual innovation performance, from the perspective of individual behavior, which is innovative work behavior (IWB) (De Jong & den Hartog, 2010; Janssen, 2000; Scott & Bruce, 1994).

From the perspective of employees, perceived organizational support is important and encourages them to engage in innovative behavior (Amabile et al., 1996; Patterson et al., 2005).

Employees can come up with innovations because they are constantly exposed to processes and products and can detect potential opportunities for new development (Nguyen et al., 2019).

In fact, managers tend to design simple and standardized jobs to improve efficiency (Ohly & Fritz, 2010). However, simply designed jobs may not be conducive to employee growth and innovation because they do not have the conditions to challenge and are demotivated in these jobs (Axtell et al., 2000; Wastell & Cooper, 1996).

Nguyen and Diec (2023) examined the impact of transformational leadership style on employees' performance as mediated by work motivation, work creativity, and job satisfaction of employees of foreign direct investment (FDI) enterprises in Long An. The authors used descriptive statistics, scale testing, EFA analysis, CFA testing, SEM testing, and multi-group analysis on SPSS and AMOS software. The study surveyed 411 participants in person and online. Work creativity includes six observed variables.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Two distinct survey subject groups participated in the study's two qualitative and quantitative phases. Experts (managers) in charge of real estate enterprises' business-related and human resources departments serve as survey subjects for qualitative research. The sales employees of real estate companies in the capital of Hanoi are the survey subjects for the quantitative research. The observed variables were constructed on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strong disagreement and 5 representing strong agreement, based on the synthesized theory and representing the primary findings of the study. Five specialists (managers) of real estate companies participated in in-depth interviews as part of qualitative research to add to and modify the previously noted variables to make them more comprehensible and appropriate for the Vietnamese environment. Six observed factors make up the quantitative questionnaire that is derived from the qualitative study findings.

A sample size of 250 real estate salespeople employed by real estate companies in Hanoi City and the surrounding regions was anticipated for the quantitative study. The convenience approach was used to choose the sample. There are two ways to contact the audience: (i) send the Google Doc-designed survey to the real estate salesperson's email address via the company's human resources or sales department; and (ii) send surveys to the real estate sales staff at real estate companies. After the answer papers were reviewed, ten of the 240 ballots that were returned were determined to be void. The final 230 valid surveys were utilized for data processing and interpretation (see table 1).

Table 1. Respondents by genders, ages and professional seniority

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Genders			
Female	77	33.5	33.5
Male	153	66.5	100.0
Professional seniority			
Less than 5 years	84	36.5	36.5
From 5 to 10 years	52	22.6	59.1
10 years or more	94	40.9	100.0

Ages			
From 22 to 30 years old	86	37.4	37.4
From 30 to 40 years old	80	34.8	72.2
40 years old or older	64	27.8	100.0
Total	230	100.0	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

Information on the data collected is shown in Table 1. It shows that among the respondents, 33.5% were female, and 66.5% were male. Among the respondents, 86 participants are from 22 to 30 years old, accounting for 37.4%; 80 participants are from 30 to 40 years old, accounting for 34.8%; and the remaining respondents are 40 years old or older, accounting for 27.8%. Of these, 84 participants have professional seniority less than 5 years, accounting for 36.5%; 52 participants have professional seniority from 5 to 10 years, accounting for 22.6%; and the remaining respondents have professional seniority 10 years or more, accounting for 40.9%.

The analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, an independent t-test, and an ANOVA analysis.

4. RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 indicates that the respondents agree with the variable of the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces, where six attributes were quite high. All six attributes were rated at an average of 3.52 or higher.

The analysis results also show that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are in the range of -1 to 1, so the survey data ensures a relatively standard distribution. Therefore, the evaluation levels of the employees participating in the survey are relatively uniform and concentrated, with little dispersion, so the analysis results have high statistical significance.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of attributes

Code	N	Mini	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
The work creativity of real estate sales staff (WC)									
WC1	230	2.0	5.0	3.75	0.786	-0.285	0.160	-0.246	0.320
WC2	230	1.0	5.0	3.80	0.808	-0.464	0.160	0.413	0.320
WC3	230	2.0	5.0	3.52	0.659	-0.665	0.160	-0.134	0.320
WC4	230	2.0	5.0	4.07	0.793	-0.647	0.160	0.138	0.320
WC5	230	2.0	5.0	4.15	0.803	-0.589	0.160	-0.383	0.320
WC6	230	2.0	5.0	4.19	0.752	-0.517	0.160	-0.471	0.320
Valid N (listwise)	230			3.91					

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

Independent T-test: marital status

A comparison of the results of the evaluation of the differences in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces with participants of different marital statuses (married and single) can be seen in Table 3. According to the results shown in Table 3, sig Levene's test is 0.534, which is more than 0.05. The variance between married and single is not different. Moreover, the sig value t-test is 0.48, which is more than 0.05, which means that there is no statistically significant difference in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between these different marital statuses (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 3. Differences in the work creativity of real estate sales staff with participants of different marital statuses - Independent Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
WC	Equal variances assumed	0.388	0.534	-1.453	228	0.148	-0.15298	0.10531	-0.36050	0.05453
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.379	61.342	0.173	-0.15298	0.11095	-0.37481	0.06885

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

Independent T-test: different genders

A comparison of the results of the evaluation of the differences in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces with participants of different genders (male and female) can be seen in Table 4. According to the results shown in Table 4, sig Levene's test is 0.300, which is more than 0.05. The variance between males and females is not different. Moreover, the sig value t-test is 0.551, which is more than 0.05, which means that there is no statistically significant difference in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between these different genders (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 4. Differences in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces with participants of different genders - Independent Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
WC	Equal variances assumed	1.081	0.300	-0.597	228	0.551	-0.05257	0.08811	-0.22619	0.12105
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.574	137.903	0.567	-0.05257	0.09153	-0.23355	0.12841

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

ANOVA – professional seniority

An ANOVA test was needed to make a comparison of the results of the evaluation of the differences in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between the three subjects, including participants who have professional seniority less than 5 years, from 5 to 10 years, and 10 years or more. Table 5 shows that the sig Levene statistic of 0.027 is smaller than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis of homogeneity of variance among the variable value groups (different professional seniority) has been violated. Table 6 shows that sig. is 0.021, which is smaller than 0.05, which indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between the mentioned three groups of professional seniority (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 5. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Descriptions	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
WC				
Based on Mean	3.688	2	227	0.027
Based on Median	4.826	2	227	0.009
Based on Median and with adjusted df	4.826	2	224.496	0.009

Based on trimmed mean	4.303	2	227	0.015
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Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

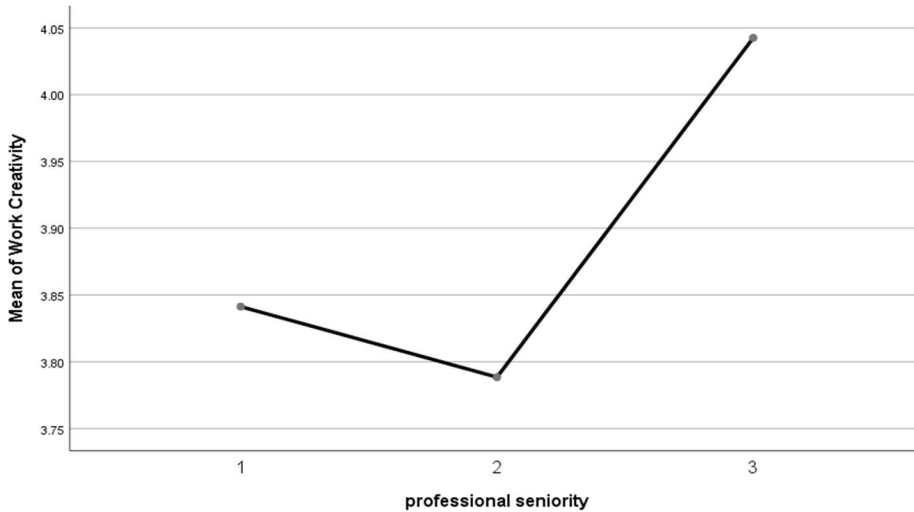
Table 6. Robust Tests of Equality of Means

	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	3.980	2	128.654	0.021

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

The relationship between the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces - professional seniority

Next, the line graph shows the relationship between the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces and each respondent's professional seniority (Figure 1). Figure 1 shows that this line tends to go down when the respondents have professional seniority of 5 to 10 years. But this line tends to slope up when the respondents have professional seniority of 10 years or more.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

Figure 1: The line graph shows the relationship between the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces and each respondent's professional seniority.

ANOVA - Ages

An ANOVA test was needed to make a comparison of the results of the evaluation of the differences in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between the three subjects, including participants who are from 22 to 30 years old, participants who are from 30 to 40 years old, and participants who are 40 years old or older. Table 7 shows that the sig Levene statistic of 0.000 is smaller than 0.05, which means that the hypothesis of homogeneity of variance among the variable value groups (different ages) has been violated. Table 8 shows that sig. is 0.155, which is more than 0.05, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces between the mentioned three groups of ages (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 7. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Descriptions	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
WC				
Based on Mean	8.237	2	227	0.000
Based on Median	5.019	2	227	0.007
Based on Median and with adjusted df	5.019	2	199.536	0.007
Based on trimmed mean	7.404	2	227	0.001

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

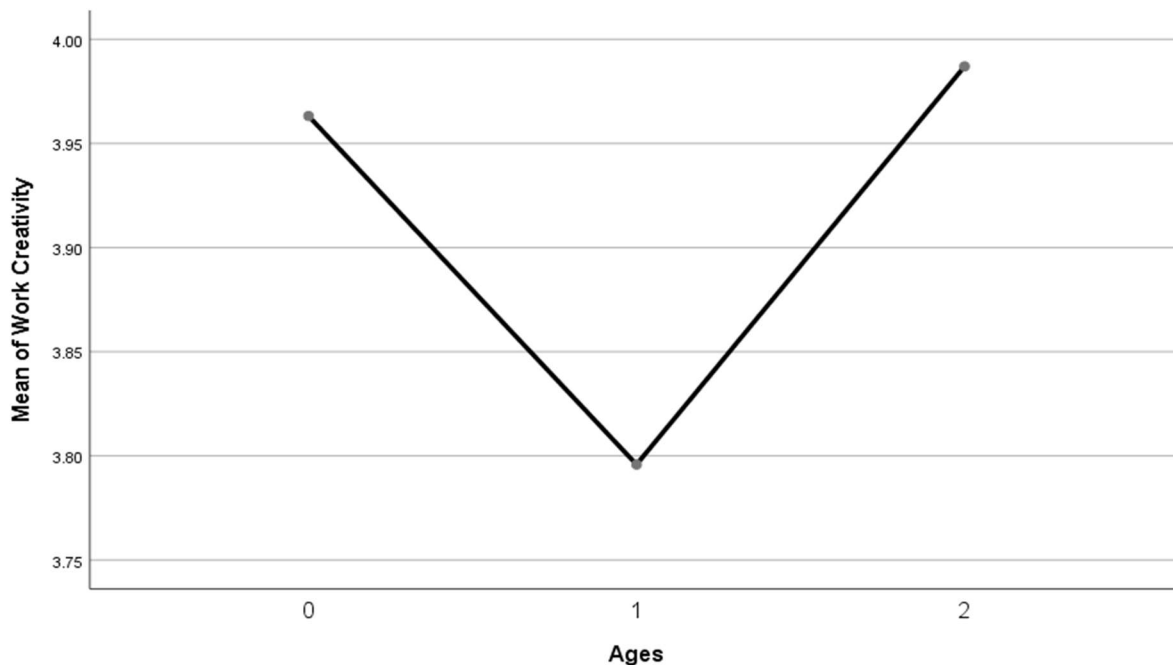
Table 8. Robust Tests of Equality of Means

	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	1.885	2	149.681	0.155

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

The relationship between the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces - Ages

Next, the line graph shows the relationship between the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces and each respondent's age (Figure 2). Figure 2 shows that this line tends to go down when the respondents' ages range from 30 to 40 years old. But this line tends to slope up when the respondents' ages are 40 years old or older.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023) and SPSS software.

Figure 2: The line graph shows the relationship between the work creativity of real estate sales staff in Hanoi and neighboring provinces and each respondent's ages.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Creativity in the workplace is for everyone, regardless of their position.

Most industries have methods for being creative. For example, in the retail industry, there are many ways workers can get creative with low-cost solutions to improve customer service. For the service industry, there are creative ways to improve processes that speed up efficiency while making employees happier.

Workers should always be confident in themselves. According to human resources experts, confidence is part of the victory. First of all, employees should evaluate their own strengths, weaknesses, and strengths and skills. From there, workers' leaders can also assign more suitable work. In addition, firm leaders always want to encourage employees to constantly innovate. Workers should not worry about inventing something sublime but should find new ways to use the old, such as changing thinking, working methods, and methods to solve tasks to save time and be more effective. These changes contribute to creating creative opportunities for workers. In addition, workers should work with a heart full of enthusiasm and dare to think and dare to do.

Work creativity is one of the effective solutions that helps firms continuously develop. Creative thinking is one of the most effective solutions to helping people discover. In addition, work creativity helps workers improve their professional skills and creates many opportunities for career advancement. Therefore, workers should train themselves to think and learn how to listen actively and creatively to best serve life, work, firms, and society.

Work creativity brings many benefits, including: (i) Finding new opportunities: Creativity helps workers recognize new opportunities and find solutions to new problems. (ii) Problem solving: Creativity can help solve complex problems and find more perfect solutions. (iii) Increase productivity and efficiency: Creativity can help increase productivity and efficiency at work and contribute to promoting development.

Work creativity is one of the most important skills at work, helping workers find new and more effective solutions to problems. This brings positive and extremely new results. To practice creative skills, workers should: (i) accept that creativity can come from changes and differences and should be willing to test new ideas; (ii) seek inspiration from new and different things in life by reading books, watching movies, or participating in new activities.

Many studies show that the quality of human resources in the real estate industry in Vietnam has not kept up with market development. In a market economy, to meet the specific requirements of real estate business activities, real estate human resources must have multidisciplinary knowledge in economics, engineering, law, social psychology, and technology. With the mismatch between supply and demand of human resources, the current situation of human resources in Vietnam's real estate industry is described in Table 9 as follows:

Table 9: Human resource needs by technical qualification (%)

Academic level	2019	From January 2020 to June 2020
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Untrained	26.2	24.61
Elementary occupations	6.23	4.45
Intermediate level	54.67	55.91
College	8.03	9.17
Bachelor or higher	4.87	5.86
Total	100	100

Source: Hanoi Real Estate Club, 2020

The need for recruiting human resources in the real estate industry increases every year, but the supply is relatively low, especially for high-quality human resources. The demand for real estate human resources is currently ranked 7th out of 11 human resources needs in the country. Industry groups with high demand for human resources. According to research, the recruitment demand for the real estate industry in the period 2016–2020 is quite large, on average accounting for 4.15% of the total human resource demand per year. Many employees from other fields are also interested and apply.

According to statistics from recruitment news sites, more than 50% of job postings are related to real estate industry personnel. Frequent recruitment frequency, high recruitment numbers (average of 20–50 employees), and competitive salaries make this industry attractive. Along with the development of the real estate industry, workers working in the real estate industry have also increased over the years, accounting for 3.86% of total working workers, with an average labor growth rate of 1.07% per year. Of these, female workers working in the real estate sector account for 38.68% (about 74,913 workers). The need to recruit human resources in the real estate industry in the first six months of 2020 accounts for 2.8% of the total human resource need. In 2021, it is expected that real estate business activities will account for 5.07% of the total human resource demand of the real estate industry (up 1.64% over the same period in 2020).

Demand for real estate human resources tends to increase, while the supply of human resources, especially specialized, trained human resources, is limited. Statistics from the Ministry of Education and Training show that there are currently not many formal real estate economics training programs at universities. Currently, the country has 16 universities specializing in real estate training.

According to the Ho Chi Minh City Human Resources Forecast Center, in the first quarter of 2021, untrained workers accounted for 14.28%, mainly concentrated in the following occupational groups: chemical, plastic, rubber, commercial business, tourism services, and real estate.

Human resource needs in the real estate industry according to salary level: In the real estate industry, in addition to the salary paid by firms, employees also have non-salary income corresponding to their capacity and work performance. According to survey results in the first 6 months of 2020, human resource demand focuses on salaries of over 15 million VND per month, accounting for 48.42%, mainly for positions such as project directors, real estate managers and developers, managing and training sales staff, and real estate investors. Salary from 10–15 million

VND per month accounts for 13.94%, salary from 8–10 million VND per month accounts for 23.36%, and salary from 5-8 million VND per month accounts for 6.91%. In addition, recruitment demand at a salary of less than 5 million VND per month accounts for a very low rate of 3.37% of the total human resource demand in the real estate industry.

6. CONCLUSION

Work creativity is something that requires everyone to make efforts to bring many different values. This is one of the important factors that helps them achieve success and increase work performance. However, being creative is not an easy task.

Work creativity brings enormous physical and spiritual value. In addition, work creativity also helps workers improve their self-worth, thereby helping them achieve their goals and desires.

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