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The componential model has been, and continues to be, a foundational piece of the research on creativity. Through several updates (Amabile, 1983, 1988, 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016) the componential model remains dynamic and open to changes based on the most recent research. These updates, done “in a spirit of creative inquiry” (Amabile & Pratt 2016: 2), are a testament to the impact of Teresa’s work, as well as her passion for continuing to advance the study of creativity in organizations. One of the authors, Mike, was included in the latest revision of the componential model, where he and Teresa included several new elements, including the progress principle (Amabile & Kramer 2011), synergistic motivation (Amabile, 1993), and affect (Amabile et al., 2005). Given that the progress principle was about progress in meaningful work, the two also added additional details about the role of meaningful work, and particularly, work orientations, in motivating and keeping the creative process going. Although Amabile and Pratt (2016) posit several ways in which meaningful work may influence the creative process, this part of the model remains the most speculative. In our chapter, we build on these initial insights from the revised componential model to discuss two important areas for future research at the intersection of creativity and meaningful work. In particular, we suggest:

- 1) Moving beyond whether certain work orientations are more or less likely to be creative, towards uncovering conditions that motivate different orientations to be creative; and
- 2) Moving beyond the role of meaningfulness in relatively short-term persistence (e.g. the progress principle) to better understand how creative workers persist over the long term.

For each of these directions we raise questions and suggestions for fruitful theorizing and future empirical research.

## MEANINGFUL WORK AND CREATIVITY

Meaningful work is, at the broadest level, work that is perceived as purposeful and significant for the individual(s) doing it (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Meaningfulness can be derived from many sources, including: (1) from work itself, such as the types of tasks people engage in (Grant, 2008; Hackman & Oldham, 1976); (2) from our selves: such as beliefs about the role work should play in our lives, including seeing our work as a calling (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dik & Duffy, 2009; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997); (3) and more broadly, from social and cultural accounts, such as how the media portrays “good” work, that provide a justification for why one’s work is worth doing (Boova et al., 2019; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). An important way of exploring meaningful work that is central to the latter two approaches involves the notion of work orientations. Work orientations are “internalized evaluations about what makes work worth doing” (Pratt, Pradies, & Lepisto, 2013: 175). As noted by Pratt and colleagues (2013), although the concept of work orientations has evolved over time (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), the initial seed came from Teresa’s work on intrinsic (i.e. working for its own sake) or extrinsic (i.e. working for something outside the work) motivational orientations (Amabile, 1993; Amabile et al., 1994). Thus, it seems very appropriate that work orientations in their current form have found their way back into the componential model.

### Work Orientations

The most comprehensive model of work orientations posits at least six primary orientations: *utilitarian*, sometimes known as *job*, where work is a means to an end (e.g., a paycheck that I use to support my family); *status*, sometimes known as *career*, where work allows me advancement or achievement; *passion*, where work allows me to do what I love; *kinship*, where work allows me to help my workplace “family”; *service*, where work allows me

to help others or a greater cause; and *craftsmanship*, where work allows me to continuously improve, to achieve quality (Boova et al., 2019; Pratt et al., 2013). The dynamic componential model (Amabile & Pratt, 2016) presents some preliminary ideas regarding how meaningful work should influence the creative process, especially through its effect on motivation. It suggests some ways in which work orientations, in particular, may influence how persistent individuals are in their creative work—which is conceptualized in terms of a progress loop where individuals find making progress in meaningful work highly motivating on a day-to-day basis (Amabile & Kramer, 2011). Although these suggestions provide a solid foundation for future research, they represent only a fraction of the research possibilities at the intersection of meaningful work and creativity.

Teresa and colleagues' (Amabile et al., 2005; Amabile & Kramer, 2011) comprehensive daily diary study—26 teams in seven organizations over five months—illuminated the importance of what they call “the progress principle” (Amabile & Kramer, 2011). Positive inner work life—positive emotions, perceptions, and intrinsic motivation experienced at work—is sustained by the perception that one is making progress in something meaningful every day (Amabile & Kramer, 2011; Ariely et al., 2008; Fishbach & Finkelstein, 2012). Making progress can set off a virtuous cycle, the progress loop, which allows individuals to sustain positive affect and motivation over time, helping them persist in creative projects (Amabile & Kramer, 2011). Progress in meaningful work is construed differently, however, across individuals and contexts; indeed, what is meaningful in one setting may not be meaningful in another (Rosso et al., 2010). For a scientist trying to develop a treatment for a rare disease, for example, meaningful progress may involve finding a new pattern in data which allows them to develop a novel drug compound; such small wins (Weick, 1984) help the scientist feel they are helping others. By contrast, work

on an ad campaign may involve coming up with the “big” idea and then refining it in incremental ways over time. In short, these perceptions of progress in meaningful work are shaped by the individual perceptions around what makes work worth doing in a particular context.

As internalized evaluations about what makes work meaningful, work orientations should shape how individuals persist in creative projects in at least three major ways. First, Amabile and Pratt (2016: 171) suggest that perceptions of meaningful work mediate the relationship between “leaders’ statements and actions about innovation and intrinsic motivation.” One’s work orientation likely plays a key role in this mediation process. Put another way, the degree of “fit” between organizational discourse about work and a given employees’ work orientation is likely to predict whether that employee finds the work to be intrinsically motivating or not.<sup>1</sup> More research is needed, however, to understand the complexities of this “fit” process, and what may thwart it. To illustrate, do work orientations change over time to fit with strong organizational cultures? If they are more stable, do individuals self-select out of organizations whose justifications of work do not fit their work orientations, or do they engage in a type of job crafting “fit work” to reflect their own work orientations?

Second and similarly, work orientations should influence the way employees are motivated by incentives. Teresa and others’ work has shown that extrinsic rewards can interact synergistically or not with intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1993; Amabile & Pratt, 2016) and that work orientations provide a lens for understanding “the meanings people attach to extrinsic motivators” (Amabile & Pratt, 2016: 20). Financial incentives, such as bonuses, for example, are likely to be most effective for individuals who have utilitarian orientations; they may also be

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<sup>1</sup> At present, scholars have not posited a “creative” work orientation. However, if work orientations do start in broader cultural narratives about work (Boova, et al., 2019), then it is possible that the increasing valorization of creativity could lead to such an orientation.

effective for those with a status orientation, especially in industries where money is a symbol of being a high performer (e.g. finance). For individuals with kinship or service orientations, on the other hand, contact with beneficiaries, both inside and outside the organization should be the most meaningful (Grant et al., 2007). For those with craftsmanship and passion orientations, the work itself is the best incentive, so the key is likely removing barriers that prevent creative workers from deep engagement with tasks (see Pratt et al., 2013). Leaders who provide opportunities for personal self-expression, or who allow learning and improvement opportunities are likely to help make work meaningful for these individuals. Although empirical research has focused on calling and service work orientations (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Grant & Berry, 2011; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), there remains a paucity of research exploring other orientations (e.g. kinship, job, craftsmanship) and how meaningfulness unfolds and little to no research on how work orientations and leader messaging play out within the context of creative work.

Third, work orientation should shape the ways that individuals collaborate with other organizational members. Recent research shows that teammates can have an important influence on a sense of meaningful work (Buis et al., 2019); this is likely to be especially salient in collaborative creative work. Since work orientation is believed to strongly influence motivation, groups and teams that are heterogeneous with regards to work orientation may be challenged in how they talk about, justify, and ultimately perform their work. For example, team members with craftsmanship and kinship orientations are likely to focus on different aspects of a project: the craftsmanship-oriented member will likely focus on the quality of the work itself, while the kinship-oriented member will be focused on the team's dynamic and interpersonal climate. Such differences could be especially acute when doing creative work where goals can be nebulous or vague as such conditions may make the justification process for "why work is worth doing" up

for grabs. Such differences in perspective are likely to have an upside, given the benefits of cognitive diversity for creativity (e.g. Hoever et al., 2012; Shin et al., 2012); however, the contingencies and boundary conditions of when work orientation diversity can be fruitful rather than detrimental for creativity is an important topic for future study. In this way, exploring work orientations can contribute to a relatively under-developed part of the componential model: group creativity.

### **Persistence in Creative Work**

A second important area for future research is understanding the impact of meaningfulness in long-term creative work. Consistent with our discussion above, Amabile and Kramer's (2011) progress principle explains persistence towards proximal creative goals, which are relatively immediate and concrete (e.g. finishing a project). However, individuals can also persist toward more distal creative goals—goals that are more long-term and abstract (e.g. making AI emotionally intelligent, developing a cure for a rare disease, etc.). Such goals are often the drivers of radical innovations (Gilson & Madjar, 2011). Although there has been relatively little research on persistence towards these long-term goals (see Bateman & Barry, 2012 for an exception), we believe that a useful starting point is considering whether such work goals are anchored in the past or the future, when examining the issue of creative persistence.

Although most people think about distal creative goals as being oriented towards the future, our work with bespoke shoemakers (Fetzer & Pratt, 2020), who often have a craftsmanship orientation, opened our eyes to the possibility that some creative work is about bringing the past into the present. For these workers, creativity is necessary but is also shaped and constrained by goals to preserve traditional techniques. For other creative workers (e.g. scientists, cutting-edge technologists, etc.), the goal is to bring the future closer to the present

(rather than bringing the past into the present)<sup>2</sup>. As we considered the challenges faced by these different types of creative workers (those focused on the past vs. those focused on the future), we began to think about the impact of different temporal orientations towards creative work.

We argue that long-term creative work, in general, is attuned to temporal dynamics associated with both proximal (e.g., what I am making now) and distal (e.g., what do I ultimately hope to achieve) goals. Although concrete, proximal creative goals are focused on the immediate future (e.g. the end of the current project), more distal goals about what a creator hopes to ultimately accomplish may have a qualitatively different effect. The nature of these effects likely depends on whether one's long-term creative goals are to bring the future to the present (*future-anchored goals*) or to bring the past into the present (*past-anchored goals*). More specifically, each goal brings with it certain challenges that we believe should be explored more fully.

The purpose of such *future-anchored goals* is to imagine and elaborate future possibilities. Creativity is essential to long-term, future-oriented work (Hagtvedt, 2019), yet the characteristics of such work seem to pose challenges that make them less conducive to creative ideas. A wealth of evidence points to the importance of intrinsic motivation to creative engagement and performance (e.g. Amabile, 1993, 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). However, future-anchored projects are often high in ambiguity and uncertainty. When an individual does not know where they are going to end up (i.e., what the final product will look like) or when they will arrive, it can be difficult to maintain intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1985; Bateman & Barry, 2012). This is echoed by research on goal setting which shows that the most motivating goals are one which are specific, concrete, and attainable (Locke et al., 1981, 1988; Locke & Latham, 2004). Future-anchored projects thus present something of a paradox: although motivation is

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<sup>2</sup> One of the authors, Greg, was so enamored with the challenges of bringing the future to the present in creative work that he decided to study these types of creative workers in his dissertation.



needed to continue pushing forward, the ambiguity around goals and possible outcomes may make such motivation difficult to maintain.

Past-anchored work, such as those of bespoke shoemakers and other craft workers, faces a very different set of challenges. On the one hand, what is most meaningful for those who make shoes by hand is to preserve those techniques from the past that would otherwise be lost (Fetzer & Pratt, 2020). On the other hand, current conditions such as differences in shoe styles—as well as limited access to traditional materials and tools—means that creative changes to traditional techniques must somehow be made. The challenge is to balance needed innovations with preserving traditional techniques. Although temporal orientations, such as past- and future-anchored work, came from our research on meaningful work, the connection between temporal orientations and work orientations has yet to be fully fleshed out. We feel that such relationships are likely to be particularly critical, however, in creative work that has more long-term goals than those found in lab-based studies of creativity (see Rouse & Pratt, 2020, for further critiques).

Finally, issues of persistence in meaningful work over the long haul beg the question of what “fuel” can motivate individuals to overcome these various temporally-related tensions, as well as other obstacles workers will confront over time. Although Amabile and Kramer (2011) emphasize the importance of positive affect in maintaining the progress loop, the inclusion of meaningful work opens the door to another possibility: the influence of eudaimonic forces in maintaining such progress. Although not explicitly defined as such, positive emotions in creativity research seem to be conceptualized hedonically—as emotions that bring pleasure to the creator. Some perspectives on meaningful work, however, build on eudaimonia rather than hedonia (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). Like hedonia, eudaimonia is often utilized in conceptualizing well-being. However, eudaimonia also refers to a “process of fulfilling or realizing one’s daimon

or true nature—that is, of fulfilling one’s virtuous potentials and living as one was inherently intended to live” (Deci & Ryan, 2008: 2). Thus, one may be driven not by positive affect, but rather by desires for self-realization (Huta & Waterman, 2014) in the creative process. Taking a more eudaimonic perspective on the progress principle has the potential to fundamentally change how we think about the drive to be creative. For example, Amabile and Kramer (2011: 92) note, “the power of setbacks to diminish happiness is more than twice as strong as the power of progress to boost happiness”. Eudaimonia may be important for carrying creative workers over such abysses of frustration or failure that are part of doing highly innovative work. A meaningful (eudaimonic) purpose—one that invokes a person’s self-realization and unique potential—may be a stronger sustainer of motivation than hedonic feelings of pleasure which appear to be transitory (e.g. the hedonic treadmill; Brickman & Campbell, 1971).

## **CONCLUSION**

Inspired by the latest evolution of the componential model (Amabile & Pratt, 2016) in relation to our own work, we have discussed several pathways for future research at the intersection of creativity and meaningful work. In particular, we explore how work orientations can be better integrated into research on creativity both at the individual- and team-level. Moreover, we build from the proximal goal-oriented focus at the heart of “progress from meaningful work” (Amabile & Kramer, 2011) towards exploring more distal goals and their temporal orientations. As noted in our introduction, the revised componential model introduces the potential for research on meaningful work and creativity, and although we have gone further down this path, we realize that we have barely scratched the surface of the richness this blending of theoretical perspectives can produce.

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